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# Wilson Denies Conflict With Geneen's Story

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WASHINGTON — Denying he was contradicting sworn testimony, Rep. Bob Wilson, insisted today that a year ago he received a personal \$400,000 pledge from the International Telephone and Telegraph Corp. to help underwrite the costs of the Republican national convention.

Wilson (R-San Diego) said ITT President Harold Geneen in effect put his "arm around me" last May 12 and told him "you can announce you have backing up to \$400,000" for Wilson's effort to lure the convention to San Diego.

Wilson said he did not see how that contradicted Geneen's earlier testimony to the committee that ITT's only commitment to the convention was a \$200,000 "business investment" by the con-

glomerate's Sheraton Hotels division.

"I do not think my statement and his are in conflict," Wilson said.

Wilson, a fishing companion of Geneen, was the witness as the Senate Judiciary Committee began working under an April 20 deadline to finish its politically charged hearings into the nomination of Richard Kleindienst to be attorney general.

Wilson firmly denied there was any connection between the ITT convention pledge and the settlement less than three months later — when Kleindienst was deputy attorney general — of a multi-billion antitrust case involving ITT. He said there were "no strings, not even a thread" on Geneen's alleged guarantee.

A connection between the two matters was suggested in a confidential memoran-

dum written on ITT stationery and published by columnist Jack Anderson a month ago — the development that caused the Judiciary Committee to reopen its hearings on Kleindienst's nomination.

Wilson said he had known Dita Beard, the ITT lobbyist and alleged author of the memo, since 1960. He said Mrs. Beard told him in a telephone call after Anderson's story broke that she had not written the memo.

Yet in three interviews during the next few days with California newsmen, Wilson acknowledged, he never once denied the authenticity of the memo and, in one tape-recorded session with a reporter for the San Diego Union, said "Jack Anderson had the original" of Mrs. Beard's memo.

At another point in that interview, Wilson quoted Mrs. Beard and her boss in Washington, W. R. Merriam, as saying Merriam has ordered her to draft the memo on what the ITT commitment was all about. The interview included the phrase: "When he (Merriam) got that memo that she typed up at Merriam's request . . ."

In his testimony today however, Wilson substantially corroborated Mrs. Beard's story: That she had written a memo about the ITT convention pledge but someone had evidently doctored it to include the passage about the connection with the ITT settlement.

He said this is substantially what Mrs. Beard told him in a visit to his office a month ago — after Anderson broke the story — and, later, in a telephone call in which she told him, "I did not write that memo, Bob."



**REPRESENTATIVE BOB WILSON ON THE STAND**  
Californian said he thought memo had been 'doctored'  
—AP Photo

Wilson said today his reference to the memo being original referred only to the fact that it was typed on authentic ITT stationery with ITT typewriters.

Sen. Quentin Burdick (D-N.D.) said he did not understand how Wilson, knowing of Mrs. Beard's denial,

would not have mentioned it when he was interviewed.

Wilson said it was because the authenticity of the memos was not "the point" of the interviews.

Wilson said Geneen's \$400,000 offer — which he variously called a "guarantee" "pledge" and an "underwriting," — was made to him at the Half Moon Inn in San Diego last May 12.

Geneen has testified that he recalled the meeting, in which he expressed "enthusiasm" about San Diego becoming the host city, but there was never any dollar figure mentioned.

Wilson said both he and Geneen understood that ITT almost surely would not have to put up that money since local sources would begin contributing once they realized that ITT was involved.

"I accepted in effect Mr. Geneen's arm around me," Wilson said. "It was sort of like J. P. Morgan refusing a loan of, say, \$100,000 but putting his arm around you and walking across the floor of the New York Stock Exchange."