

Why ITT Aide Had Records Shredded

Washington

The head of the International Telephone and Telegraph Corporation's Washington office testified yesterday that he ordered the shredding of office files after columnist Jack Anderson obtained a controversial ITT memorandum because "there might be a lot of others in there like that."

William R. Merriam, a vice president of ITT, told the Senate Judiciary Committee that he decided it was "time to clean house" after Anderson obtained a memorandum purportedly written by Dita D. Beard.

Merriam's testimony came on a day in which he and Representative Bob Wilson (Rep-Calif.) gave accounts that contradicted statements made by each other and testimony by prior witnesses.

"Somebody's not telling the truth—take your pick," concluded Senator Quentin N. Burdick (Dem-N.D.).

Senator John V. Tunney (Dem-Calif.) called for the empanelment of a special grand jury to look into the possibility of perjury indictments growing out of "direct conflicts under oath" between Merriam's sworn statements and the earlier testimony of Mrs. Beard.

The publication of the memorandum, which has touched off a six-week investigation, linked ITT's "noble commitment" of up to \$400,000 to underwrite the expenses of the 1972 Republican national convention at San Diego with the Justice Department's willingness to settle three antitrust cases against ITT.



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BOB WILSON
An ITT guarantee

Merriam said he ordered the destruction of any documents that might be embarrassing to the company or its officials. But he said he could not remember if he had ever received the one published by Anderson because so many memoranda cross his desk.

"Not alleging the kind of information that was contained in the Anderson-

Beard memorandum, I trust?" Tunney asked.

"Well, you'd be surprised," Merriam replied.

Later, Senator Edward J. Gurney (Rep-Fla.) drew from Merriam the assurance that he did not mean that the ITT files bulged with other documents as politically explosive as the Beard - Anderson one, but only that information about foreign operations and internal financial data could be damaging if disclosed.

During a day in which Democratic Senators expressed incredulity over aspects of both witnesses' testimony, the following statements were made:

• Wilson, who represents most of the San Diego area, said that Mrs. Beard told him in late February that she was not the author of the memorandum published by

Anderson.

The first time the authenticity of the memorandum was publicly challenged was when ITT and Mrs. Beard branded it a forgery in late March.

• Wilson testified that Harold S. Geneen, president of ITT, made a "personal commitment" to guarantee up to \$400,000 of the convention's expenses in San Diego. He said this does not contradict Geneen's testimony that his commitment was only \$200,000, because Wilson was certain he could raise enough money from San Diego businessmen so that the full \$400,000 would not be needed.

• Merriam conceded that he probably told Wilson February 28 that he had received from Mrs. Beard the memorandum that fell into Anderson's hands. But he said he has since learned that he could not have received the memo because he did not go to the office on June 25, the date the memorandum bore.

• Merriam said that out of fear of Mrs. Beard's wrath, he falsely said that he had received an inquiry from the White House about the details of ITT's San Diego commitment. He said the truth was that he dealt with the White House through Jack Gleason, a public relations man whom Mrs. Beard dislikes.

• Merriam denied Mrs. Beard's testimony, given last month from a Denver hospital room where she was a heart patient, that he had asked her to write the memorandum and that he



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WILLIAM MERRIAM
'You'd be surprised'

mentioned a White House inquiry about a possible \$600,000 ITT pledge to the Nixon campaign.

He also denied her subsequent statement in a television interview that he instructed her to discuss ITT's hopes for an antitrust settlement with former Attorney General John N. Mitchell at a Kentucky Derby party last May.

Asked about statements by Wilson that he (Merriam) hated Mrs. Beard and leaked the memorandum to Anderson to "get" her, Merriam insisted: "I have a sentimental attachment for her despite some of her eccentricities." He denied that he was the one who leaked the document to Anderson, but he conceded that it was written by someone inside the company.

Merriam agreed at one point with the Senators' bemusement over this testimony.

"Everything I say I get in worse," he said.

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