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Kleindienst Memory 'Hazy' On ITT Case

WASHINGTON (AP) — Acting Atty. Gen. Richard G. Kleindienst said today he could not remember details of calls and a meeting he had with White House aide Peter M. Flanigan in which an antitrust case against International Telephone & Telegraph Corp. was mentioned.

In answer to a series of questions by Sen. Edward M. Kennedy, D-Mass., Kleindienst said he had only the haziest recollection of the conversations with Flanigan and that they were sparked only by the White House aide's recent testimony.

Kleindienst told the Senate Judiciary Committee Flanigan might have told him that ITT was unhappy with the terms of the settlement put forth by the Justice Department but he does not recall the conversation.

"It was so insignificant, so immaterial and inconsistent with the posture I was assuming in this case, it just didn't stick in my mind," said Kleindienst.

He had previously testified, and repeated today, he had taken the position that Richard J. McLaren, then head of the antitrust division, would handle the ITT case by himself.

"The only thing I was interested in was his final report," he said.

The Judiciary Committee was expected to vote later today on a report to Senate Democratic leader Mike Mansfield on the nomination of Kleindienst to succeed John N. Mitchell, who resigned March 1 to head President Nixon's reelection campaign, to be attorney general.

Kleindienst was recalled by the committee today in an effort to iron out inconsistencies that have appeared in the record during the eight weeks the panel has been investigating Kleindienst's role in the out-of-court settlement of the ITT case.

Chairman James O. Eastland, D-Miss., described the committee action as a compromise between Republicans backing Kleindienst and Democrats who say his role in the out-of-court settlement of three antitrust cases against International Telephone & Telegraph Corp. makes him unfit for the Cabinet post.

The committee approved the nomination unanimously in late February and sent it to the full Senate for action.