

New Twist In Probe of ITT Case

Washington

The Securities and Exchange Commission has abruptly turned over to the Justice Department its entire file on International Telephone and Telegraph Corp., the firm charged last spring with attempting to win influence with the Nixon administration by pledging support for the Republican national convention.

The SEC action followed pressure by a congressional committee to obtain many of the same documents related to the same charges.

Representative John E. Moss (Dem-Calif.), who has been seeking the documents, called the SEC action "a clear and willful effort" to place the records beyond the reach of Congress until after the November 7 elections.

The SEC's action, combined with renewed congressional interest in the International Telephone and Telegraph Corp.'s relationship to the Nixon administration, threatens to thrust the giant conglomerate into the political spotlight once again this year.

The SEC confirmed that it turned 34 boxes of ITT-related papers over to the Justice Department last week, after two written requests for some of the files from Representative Harley O. Staggers (Dem-W. Va.), chairman of the House Commerce Committee. But the commission denied its action was designed to shield the records from congressional scrutiny.

In an October 6 letter to Staggers, which the commission made available to the Los Angeles Times, SEC chairman William J. Casey noted that both his agency and the Justice Department are investigating possible criminal violations arising from ITT's much-publicized troubles of last spring.

"In the final analysis," Casey wrote, "The Justice Department would have to draw the whole matter together and handle any prosecution."

Therefore, he said, because lawyers for ITT and others have complained about having to respond to two separate investigations, he decided to drop the whole issue in the lap of the Justice Department.

The administration's contacts with ITT became the subject of extended Senate hearings in March and April, following allegations that the company had pledged support for the Republican national convention in San Diego in return for settlement of antitrust disputes with the Justice Department.

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