

AF Must Rehire The C-5A Critic

Washington

The Air Force was ordered by the U.S. Civil Service Commission yesterday to rehire A. Ernest Fitzgerald, the financial analyst who was fired after disclosing the \$2 billion in unscheduled costs on development of the C-5A jet transport.

Fitzgerald, 46, said he would like to return to his job, which now pays \$33,000 per year, because "there is still a lot of fat to trim out."

"I'm certainly willing to go back if the Air Force doesn't balk," he said. "I have unfinished work at the Pentagon."

The order, which may be appealed by the Air Force, directs that Fitzgerald be given back pay to Jan. 5, 1970, when he was fired from his job as deputy for management systems. The job then paid \$31,874 annually.

APPEALS

The Air Force had no comment on the decision issued by Herman D. Staiman, chief of the commission's appeals examining of-

vice. It becomes final in 15 days if there is no appeal.

Staiman rejected Fitzgerald's claim that his C-5A testimony in 1968 before a congressional subcommittee caused his dismissal. Instead, the examiner ruled, the Air Force improperly used a manpower cutback to get rid of the controversial analyst.

Fitzgerald would be entitled to more than \$120,000 back pay if the decision stands, but an Air Force spokesman said the amount could be reduced by Fitzgerald's earnings since the dismissal.

ESTIMATING

Fitzgerald testified in 1968 before a subcommittee headed by Senator William Proxmire (Dem-Wis.) that the program involving the world's largest aircraft would cost \$2 billion more than the original estimate of \$3.1 billion. He blamed it on faulty estimating by the Air Force, and inadequate controls and planning, among other things.

In November the following year, the Air Force notified him he was to be dismissed as one of some 850 military



AP Wirephoto

A. E. FITZGERALD

He was fired in 1969

and civilian reductions ordered in the service. Fitzgerald and Proxmire called the dismissal retribution for his testimony, which the Air Force denied.

Since his ouster, Fitzgerald has worked as a part-time consultant for the Joint Economic Committee headed by Proxmire and for a small textile firm in Baltimore. He also has written a book about waste in the Pentagon.

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