

Fitzgerald Says Pointless Work Filled Last Days at the Pentagon

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By ANTHONY RIPLEY APR 6 1973

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WASHINGTON, April 5—A. Ernest Fitzgerald, whose civilian job with the Air Force was abolished after he told Congress of a possible \$2-billion in excess costs on the C-5A airplane contract, said today that his last days in the Pentagon were filled with meaningless work, isolation and an investigation into his personal life.

His appearance today was his last in an attempt to win his old job back through the Civil Service Commission. Lieut. Col. C. Claude Teagarden, representing the Air Force, declined to cross-examine him.

As the hearing closed for the day, John Bodner Jr., one of Mr. Fitzgerald's lawyers, clashed with Herman D. Staiman, the examiner hearing the case. They argued over Mr. Staiman's questions to the witness.

Mr. Fitzgerald contends the Pentagon abolished his job in retaliation for his testimony about the big cargo plane.

The Air Force is expected to file rebuttal testimony tomorrow and thus end formal hearings in a case that has stretched over two years.

Asked by his lawyer, John Staiman, the examiner hearing the case, they argued over Mr. Staiman's questions to the witness.

Mr. Fitzgerald said today that in his last days at work in

1969 he was "pictured by many sources as being Proxmire's man in the Pentagon—Proxmire's man within."

The reference was to Senator William Proxmire, Democrat of Wisconsin, who is chairman of the Subcommittee on Priorities and Economy in Government of the Joint Economic Committee.

Senator Proxmire has held hearings repeatedly on what he considers wasteful spending on major weapons systems by the Pentagon. Mr. Fitzgerald testified before the Senator's subcommittee in November, 1968, and was laid off a year later.

"They would go to almost any length to keep embarrassing material out of the hands of Senator Proxmire," Mr. Fitzgerald said of his Air Force associates.

Bodner Jr., if there was any truth to accusations that he had secretly fed information to the Senator, Mr. Fitzgerald replied, "None whatsoever."

Mr. Fitzgerald said a series of rumors about his leading confidential documents and about a possible conflict of interest brought on an investigation in his personal background by the Air Force Office of Special Investigation.