

Antitrust Policy

ITT Talked to U.S. Officials

Washington

The International Telephone and Telegraph Corp. announced yesterday that its president, Harold S. Geneen, has held discussions with more than a score of high government officials — including former Attorney General John N. Mitchell — about the “serious consequences” of the Justice Department’s anti-trust policies.

The statement was released on the eve of Geneen’s scheduled testimony today before the Senate Judiciary Committee. The committee is investigating allegations that ITT made a large contribution to the 1972 Republican National Convention in exchange for a favorable settlement by the Justice Department of three anti-trust suits against ITT.

Mitchell will also testify today.

POINT

In the statement, it was not stated whether Geneen’s complaints about the Nixon Administration’s antitrust policy were concerned specifically with the three suits against ITT. He is likely to be questioned closely about this point at the hearing, as Mitchell disqualified himself from any participation in the matter because his former Wall Street law firm had represented ITT subsidiary companies.

The statement did not say when the various contacts were made, except that they came since the justice department initiated its anti-merger campaign against conglomerates, three years ago.

Last August, after the St. Louis Post - Dispatch published a story that Geneen and Mitchell had discussed the three antitrust cases on June 18, ITT issued a statement calling the report un-

true and denying that “either on that date or subsequent to it” had he negotiated with the Justice Department about the cases.

NAMES

Among those listed as having been approached by Geneen were Peter M. Flanagan, the White House aide who arranged for a New York financial analyst, Richard J. Ramsden, to make an “independent analysis of ITT’s ‘hardship’ plea.

Ramsden’s report, which supported ITT’s claim that a government court victory might have serious economic consequences, played a key role in persuading Justice Department officials to settle the suits.

Others contacted by Geneen were Treasury Secretary John D. Connally, former Secretary of Commerce Maurice H. Stans, White House aides Charles Colson and John Ehrlichman, and Paul W. McCracken, the former chairman of the Council of Economic Advisers.

OTHERS

Also listed among those contacted by Geneen were Dr. Arthur Burns, the President’s former counselor who is now chairman of the Federal Research Board; Peter G. Petersen, former White House adviser on economic policy, who is now Secretary of Commerce; Senators Phillip A. Hart of Michigan, John L. McLellan of Arkansas, Robert C. Byrd of West Virginia and Daniel K. Inouye of Hawaii, all Democrats, and Charles H. Percy, Illinois Republican.

Dita D. Beard, the ailing ITT lobbyist, was quoted at last week’s hearings as having said that Mitchell told her that President Nixon had given orders to “make a reasonable settlement” with ITT.

N.Y. Times Service