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MITCHELL RECALLS TRUST POLICY TALK WITH I.T.T. CHIEF

But Denies in Senate Inquiry
That Geneen and He Spoke
of Three Pending Cases
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By FRED P. GRAHAM

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WASHINGTON, March 14—

Former Attorney General John N. Mitchell disclosed today that he discussed the Government's antitrust policies privately with Harold S. Geneen, the president of the International Telephone and Telegraph Corporation, for some 35 minutes during a 1970 meeting, but he said he refused to talk about the Government's three cases against the company.

In testimony before the Senate Judiciary Committee, which included searching cross-examination by some Democratic Senators, Mr. Mitchell



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AT I.T.T. HEARING: Former Attorney General John N. Mitchell, right, having a final word with William Merriam, I.T.T. vice president, before testifying before Senate Judiciary Committee yesterday. Controversial memo was addressed to Mr. Merriam.

insisted that he had not personally been involved in any way in the handling or settlement of the three suits.

He also swore that he had taken no part in negotiations that led to the selection of San Diego as the site of the 1972 Republican Convention.

He denied categorically that he had discussed the I.T.T. case at a Kentucky Derby party last year with Mrs. Dita D. Beard, the company's Washington lobbyist. When she persisted in raising the subject, Mr. Mitchell said, he told her to "in effect, shove off."

Mr. Mitchell's testimony came as the committee opened its third week of hearings growing out of allegations that I.T.T. had pledged \$400,000 to the Republican convention and simultaneously it influenced the Justice Department to settle the three suits on a basis favorable to the company.

Relates of Complaint

Having disqualified himself from I.T.T. cases because his former law firm once represented one of the company's subsidiaries, Mr. Mitchell said he had made Mr. Geneen promise not to discuss I.T.T.'s cases. The 35-minute session, held on Aug. 4 in Mr. Mitchell's office was therefore "an entirely theoretical discussion," he explained.

Mr. Mitchell said Mr. Geneen had complained that the Government was attacking mere "bigness," and that he had replied that the Justice Department sued only when mergers by big companies were anti-competitive.

Senator Edward M. Kennedy, Democrat of Massachusetts, noted that the three suits against I.T.T. had comprised about one-half of all the anti-merger suits that the Justice Department had against conglomerates. The Senator

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pressed Mr. Mitchell to concede that if he had agreed with Mr. Geneen, it would necessarily have affected the I.T.T. cases.

Mr. Mitchell replied that because he had not concerned himself with the cases, he did not know on what basis the Justice Department had brought them and thus could not answer.

The sharpest exchanges occurred between Mr. Mitchell, who has left the President's Cabinet to manage his re-election campaign, and Senator Kennedy, who is considered by some Republicans as a likely Democratic Presidential nominee.

Mr. Mitchell stood his ground under the questioning and did not contradict himself or the testimony of other witnesses. In several instances, Mr. Mitchell pleaded ignorance.

Says He Read of Pledge

He said he had probably learned by reading the newspapers about the pledge by the Sheraton Corporation of America, an I.T.T. subsidiary, to the Republican convention.

Questioned about public statements by Ed Reinecke, the Lieutenant Governor of California, that he told Mr. Mitchell about the Sheraton commitment last May or September, Mr. Mitchell replied that he could have forgotten the remark because "it made no impression

on me, I having no interest in it."

He said that he had learned later that "the Republican National Committee, or whatever committee makes these decisions, had picked San Diego."

Mr. Mitchell shrugged off published reports that Mr. Reinecke had come to see him as a source of "political input," and explained that Mr. Reinecke paid visits in April and September in efforts to persuade the Government to allocate work on its space shuttle and "aircraft matters" in California.

Mr. Mitchell disclosed that an I.T.T. director, Felix G. Rohatyn, took part in two meetings in his office on April 29, the same day that Mr. Rohatyn made a presentation, two floors below in the antitrust division, that persuaded its staff to settle the three cases.

Purpose of Meetings

According to Mr. Mitchell, the purpose of the two meetings was to confer with Ross Perot, the Texas billionaire, about Mr. Perot's plans to buy the DuPont brokerage firm in New York, which was in shaky financial condition.

Mr. Mitchell said that Mr. Rohatyn had come as chairman of the Surveillance Committee of the New York Stock Exchange and had not mentioned the I.T.T. case.

Among those present at that meeting was Peter M. Flanigan, a White House aide who later

arranged for a New York investment analyst, Richard J. Ramsden, to make an "independent" study of the presentation that Mr. Rohatyn made downstairs that same day.

Senator John V. Tunney, Democrat of California, who has been building a foundation during the hearings for demanding testimony by Mr. Flanigan, asked Mr. Mitchell if "Executive privilege" would shield him from testifying on a matter not involving confidential discussions with the President. Mr. Mitchell replied that Executive privilege "can be invoked in any circumstances in which the President decides to exercise it."

Mr. Mitchell denied virtually every allegation of having dealt with Mrs. Beard, the purported author of a memorandum that linked the settlement of the antitrust cases to the convention commitment.

He said that his encounter with her at the Derby party in Kentucky last May 1 was the first and only time he had met her. He denied earlier testimony by Brit Hume, an investigator for the columnist, Jack Anderson, that they had talked at length or that he had stated the Government's settlement grounds.

Mr. Mitchell said he had never discussed the I.T.T. case with President Nixon, and said that Mr. Nixon had never instructed him to settle the cases, as Mr. Hume had quoted Mrs. Beard as saying.