

ITT Scandal Is Old Stuff

WASHINGTON — There are so many sordid aspects to the scandal over the Justice Department's ITT settlement and that corporation's proposed gift of \$400,000 to the Republicans that you can drown in disgust just pondering them.

How desperate ITT and the administration must be to go to such lengths to try to portray Mrs. Dita Beard as a half-crazy drunk.

BECAUSE SHE WROTE the embarrassing memorandum calling the \$400,000 a payoff for favorable settlement of Justice's anti-trust suit against ITT, they trot out a former Kentucky governor and her doctor to give ungentlemanly and unethical testimony designed to destroy a reputation that was good enough to gain her access to the best Republican social circles — until her memo was published.

But there's really nothing so unusual about ITT's generosity. Does anyone remember how, last March, a dozen disgruntled dairymen called on President Nixon and 48 hours later Secretary of Agriculture Clifford Hardin reversed policy and announced that he was raising government price supports for milk used to make butter and cheese?

The dairymen got a price increase worth about \$400 million a year, and they were quick to show their gratitude by pumping wads of it into phony committees set up here for one purpose: to collect money for the reelection of Richard M. Nixon. At last count, these grateful dairy farmers had given \$329,500 to the Republican Party in 1971 alone.

When the record is so clear that administration decision-making flows in the same direction as cash, who is going to believe that ITT just accidentally found \$400,000

lying around and figured the San Diego convention was as good a place as any to spend it?

Perhaps we all now understand better why the administration was so bitterly opposed to that congressional tax-checkoff plan where each of us could have contributed a dollar to financing presidential campaigns. That scheme would have spread the money out fairly.

The Senate hearings supposedly are about Kleindienst's fitness to serve as Attorney General.

Well, the record is clear that Kleindienst is a law-and-order man of the toughest variety. He likes to give the impression that he would put a ghetto waif in jail for stealing a loaf of bread, but he has a peculiar astigmatism that renders him unable to recognize a breach of law or ethics in a \$400,000 corporate gift to his party.

FOR A SMART LAWYER with a Phi Beta Kappa key, Kleindienst shows an astonishingly poor memory. First he testifies that the ITT merger business was handled "exclusively" by the anti-trust division at Justice, and that he did not intervene. Then his memory is "refreshed" and he recalls personally conferring with ITT brass, and ITT lawyers, and hauling ITT people around to meetings with the head of the anti-trust division. His memory is further "refreshed," and he recalls dealing with Peter Flanigan, the White House's ambassador to big business, about the matter.

Does that make him unfit to serve as Attorney General? The Senate already seems to have decided that the President is entitled to have any kind of Attorney General he wants. The question, then, is whether the forgetful Kleindienst is still what Mr. Nixon wants.