

Ruined Records-- ITT Aide's Story

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A senior ITT vice president testified yesterday that Washington staff employees were ordered to destroy any documents in their files that columnist Jack Anderson might use to "cause unwarranted embarrassment" to anyone mentioned in them.

Aibel denied a charge by Senator John V. Tunney (Dem-Calif.) that the shredding of several sacks of documents "appears to be an attempt to destroy documents pertinent to this inquiry."

The ITT witness said a fel-

low employee who helped Mrs. Beard go through her files was John Ryan, a neighbor of acting Attorney General Richard G. Kleindienst in suburban McLean, Va. It was Ryan who approached Kleindienst at a cocktail party early last year and persuaded him to discuss the Justice Department's antitrust suit with Felix Rohatyn, an ITT board member and economist.

"So there were just those three — Mrs. Beard, Mr. Ryan and the shredder," Senator Edward M. Kennedy (Dem-Mass.) observed.

There was no explanation

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why Hume's "original ribbon copy" of the controversial Beard memo was the only one found by Washington ITT officials. Aibel said Hume's copy "appeared to be an ITT memorandum which had come into his possession through theft or other misappropriation," but he did not deny it might have been written by Mrs. Beard.

Mrs. Beard, hospitalized in Denver with a serious heart ailment, has not denied authorship of the memo, but has denied through her lawyers that there was any suggestion of a link between the ITT convention contribution and the antitrust settlement.



AP Wirephoto

WILLIAM MERRIAM
He gave the order

Howard J. Aibel, who also is general counsel of International Telephone and Telegraph Corp., said the order came from William R. Merriam, the conglomerate's Washington vice president, the day after Anderson Associate Brit Hume appeared at his office February 23 with a copy of a controversial memorandum attributed to ITT's Washington lobbyist, Dita D. Beard.

The memo, published in Anderson's column six days later, suggested a connection between ITT's out-of-court settlement of an antitrust suit brought by the Justice Department and an ITT offer to help underwrite costs of the Republican national convention in San Diego next August.

In a report of a "preliminary investigation" filed with the Senate Judiciary Committee, Aibel said Mer-

riam immediately telephoned ITT headquarters in New York, which sent a security officer to check the Washington office.

found of the memorandum which Hume had displayed during his visit." Many of the documents removed from the office files were "put through the office shredding machine," Aibel said, but none was destroyed which should have been preserved under the Internal Revenue Code or other law.

The memo, about which Mrs. Beard will be questioned Monday by a committee delegation of six senators, is the central point of the ITT controversy that has delayed indefinitely a Senate vote on President Nixon's nomination of Kleindienst to succeed John N. Mitchell as attorney general.

Mitchell, who quit March 1 to run Mr. Nixon's reelection campaign, insists he knew nothing of the ITT financial offer and took no part in the antitrust settlement. ITT president Harold S. Geneen likewise has denied any connection between the two.

Geneen, testifying before the Judiciary Committee for the second day, said the convention guarantee made last July 21 was an "ordinary, normal business expense" intended to give the ITT Sheraton hotel chain a million dollars worth of publicity for its new hotel in San Diego.

Geneen said Sheraton has not contributed any money to the Democratic convention in Miami, although there are two Sheraton hotels there. The difference, he said, is that Sheraton has three hotels in San Diego, including the new one that will get a boost because Mr. Nixon's headquarters will be located there.

The next day, Merriam told his staff to review files to find out if any documents were missing and "to remove any documents that were no longer needed for current operations as well as documents which, if put into Anderson's possession, could be misused and misconstrued by him so as to cause unwarranted embarrassment to the people mentioned therein," Aibel said.

Mrs. Beard took part in the review of her files, he said, but "no copies were