

Dita's Pain Ends Session

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A Senate committee's hospital questioning of Dita Beard, the ailing Washington lobbyist for the International Telephone and Telegraph Corp., came to an abrupt halt yesterday after Mrs. Beard clutched her chest, moaned and complained of heart pains.

Members of the subcommittee indicated that they

would not risk Mrs. Beard's health by going forward with the question sessions scheduled today and tomorrow.

Declaring that "basic decency would compel us to withdraw from further interrogation," Senator Philip A. Hart of Michigan, subcommittee chairman, announced the seven-member panel will meet officially later to vote formally on ending the hearings.

He conceded that "clearly

it will inhibit" the Senate Judiciary Committee's inquiry into allegations that the Justice Department settled three antitrust cases against ITT in exchange for a large financial commitment from ITT to help finance the 1972 Republican National convention.

The controversy grew out of the publication by columnist Jack Anderson of a memorandum, purportedly written by Mrs. Beard, linking the settlement to ITT's

pledge.

Before her heart trouble ended this afternoon's hearings, Mrs. Beard had declared that unnamed enemies had forged the memorandum published by Anderson.

'MESS'

Mrs. Beard said she has been in "a horrible mess" ever since Anderson obtained the alleged memorandum.

In a 12-page statement read to the senators by her attorney, David W. Fleming of Van Nuys, Calif., Mrs. Beard said:

"I want this committee and the world to know that the Anderson memorandum is not my memorandum, that I am innocent of any wrongdoing and that I shall spend the rest of my life, for however long that might be, in an unceasing effort to find out who did this to me and why."

Under questioning, the 53-year-old lobbyist said "I wasn't there" — in the ITT Washington office — on the date typed at the top of the Anderson memo, June 25, 1971.

OFFER

She confirmed, however, that she had written another memo, probably earlier, which discussed an offer by ITT's Sheraton Hotel Division to guarantee financing

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AP Wirephoto

Dita Beard underwent questioning with oxygen tubes attached to her nose and wires attached to her arm

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of the GOP convention this summer in San Diego.

Mrs. Beard said the memo she did write contained several sentences from the version published by Anderson, including an assertion that former Attorney General John N. Mitchell knew of the convention pledge last spring.

Mitchell, who resigned as attorney general March 1 to head President Nixon's reelection campaign, has testified before the committee in Washington that he was unaware of the financing arrangements for the convention.

CALL

The lobbyist verified a reference in the Anderson-published memo to a "call from the White House" to William R. Merriam, head of ITT's Washington office, concerning the convention contribution.

In that phone call, Mrs. Beard testified, the White House asked whether the contribution might be as large as \$600,000. Merriam then asked her, she said, whether the money would be going "to Nixon's campaign."

Although several Republican officials have said publicly that the ITT pledge was for \$400,000, the corporation itself insists that it intended to spend a maximum of \$200,000 dollars.

Tracking through the first paragraph of the memo as published by Anderson, Mrs. Beard stopped only when she got to the last sentence: "John Mitchell has certainly kept it (the convention contribution) on the higher level only, we should be able to do the same."

"I don't know where in the world that mother came from," she said of the sentence.

Most of the rest of the published memorandum,

Mrs. Beard said, is "pure baloney."

As the Senators talked with Mrs. Beard, complicated electronic equipment monitored her heart beat and other vital signs.

The scene inside the Rocky Mountain Osteopathic Hospital meeting room was a strange setting for a Senate committee hearing.

In one corner, Mrs. Beard, reportedly under minor sedation, was in her bed, flanked by tables covered with sheets. Tubes from an oxygen tank directly behind her ran into her nose.

WIRES

Wires ran from her body to an electrocardiograph monitor scope 18 inches to her left which registered her heart beat on a four-inch oscilloscope screen in full view

of Mrs. Beard and her doctors.

To her right, was a "crash cart" filled with drugs and other equipment including a defibrillator to shock her heart back into action if it should falter.

Mrs. Beard was dressed in a lightweight cotton print nightgown. She was flanked on her right by attorneys Fleming and Harold White and on her left by her physician, Dr. L. M. Radetsky, and Dr. David Garland.

SALTY

In yesterday's session, questioning of Mrs. Beard was halted four times — for blood pressure readings, to adjust oxygen, to reconnect an EKG machine accidentally disconnected and when Senator Edward Gurney (Rep-Fla.), entered the

room and knocked over the Colorado state flag.

Mrs. Beard readily launched into the salty language that her friends and associates say she is known for in Washington.

During Mrs. Beard's sworn testimony, there were several conflicts with information that has previously been submitted to the Judiciary Committee during the past three and a half weeks.

For example, Mrs. Beard's version of her interviews with Brit Hume, an associate of Anderson, was substantially different from that already testified to by Hume.

Mrs. Beard claimed that she told Hume "again and again the memo wasn't mine." However, Hume, who was in Denver for the

hospital hearing, said once more that Mrs. Beard had actually confirmed repeatedly that she did write the memo.

STATEMENT

The lobbyist insisted in her prepared statement that "I have never sought to run away, hide, escape or make myself unavailable to this committee."

She said she left Washington on March 2 "to get some rest which I desperately needed because of my heart condition and on advice of my doctor." She said she was en route to Bozeman, Mont. for a trip to West Yellowstone, when she was stricken with a heart attack on the plane and was forced to stop in Denver.

Robert McCall, a friend with whom Mrs. Beard stayed when she first ar-

rived here, has previously told the Washington Post she called him in advance to that she called him in advance to say she was coming to Denver and never mentioned going on further.

TRIP

In her testimony Mrs. Beard told the subcommittee of a trip to the New York headquarters of ITT immediately after Anderson's release of her alleged memorandum, during which she was denied permission to talk with corporate president Harold S. Geneen.

She said that other ITT officials, including Edward J. Gerrity, vice president for public relations, kept insisting "that I had written it" and demanding a detailed explanation.

"I had absolutely no one to turn to," Mrs. Beard told the senators. "I could not make them listen . . . I didn't know what to do to get somebody to help me prove this . . ."

Her delay in stating pub-

licly that she did not write the memo, Mrs. Beard said, was due to her attempt to figure out "what the blooming hell it was all about."

CASES

She said it was inconceivable that she could have written such a memo as the one published by Anderson. "I didn't understand the anti-trust cases against the conglomerate," she insisted. "I can't add two and two."

Mrs. Beard's testimony raised questions about another memorandum released by ITT last week as the "genuine one" she had written to Merriam on June 25, 1971, reviewing her work in the Washington office and only briefly mentioning the Republican convention.

The presumption was that she could not have written that one on the date claimed either, if she was away from her office at the time, as she testified.

Aside from Hart and Gurney, the senators present were Edward M. Kennedy (Dem-Mass.), Quentin N. Burdick (Dem-N.D.), John V. Tunney (Dem-Calif.) and Marlow W. Cook (Rep-Ky.).