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I.T.T. Scandal

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It now appears that I.T.T. lobbyist Dita Beard, who collapsed with a heart seizure while being questioned in a Denver hospital by Senate Judiciary Committee members, will not be able to testify again for six months or more.

It is difficult to see what further testimony by Mrs. Beard would accomplish. The contradictions in her own statements, and in the words and deeds of her employers, have already shaken whatever credibility they may have had, and have harshly exposed the duplicity of their behavior. This conclusion has been unavoidable ever since the arrogant destruction of documents in the corporation's Washington files immediately after disclosure of the first memorandum linking a huge financial contribution to the Republican National Convention with the decision by the Justice Department to call off its antitrust suits against I.T.T.

At this point, the most urgent question is why the Senate Judiciary Committee does not subpoena I.T.T.'s files in New York or in other cities at home or abroad relating to these matters of lobbying and suspected bribery. Such a subpoena would not involve a "fishing expedition"; communications from I.T.T.'s Washington office could quite properly be sought covering the limited time period when high corporate officials and lobbyists were meeting with high Government officials and politicians on the antitrust suits.

It would only add to the suspicion of illegal behavior if it should be discovered that all relevant documents had been destroyed throughout I.T.T.'s farflung empire. Conceivably, there may also be material for a grand jury investigation. Destruction of documents that affect corporate income tax liabilities—as would large outlays for Government favors—would be a criminal matter.

The I.T.T. affair demonstrates the atmosphere of favoritism and corruption that too frequently taints the relationship between some great corporations and some high Government officials. The I.T.T. case already suggests, in a way reminiscent of Teapot Dome in an earlier generation, the urgency of reforming the processes of both big business and big government when they act in concert.