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ITT executives are irked by effort to hire women

WASHINGTON — Another indiscreet memo, stamped "Personal and Confidential", is circulating in the upper echelons of the International Telephone and Telegraph Corporation.

It's an outgrowth, at least indirectly, of

Jack Anderson

the celebrated Dita Beard memo, which stirred up a witch's brew of bad publicity for ITT earlier this year.

To repair its damaged image, the embattled conglomerate has offered penance and has put its executives on their best behavior. "We are mindful," Harold S. Geneen, the corporate chairman, has said, "of our obligations as citizens in each community in each nation in which we live and work and do business."

The errant Dita Beard has been shifted from handling political deals in Washington to conducting "sales research" in Denver. Her harassed superior, William R. Mirriam, who was on the receiving end of her memo, is being dispatched to Europe.

A new president determined to win good-conduct medals for the company, Francis J. Dunleavy, will take office on January 1. "Tim", as he's known to his friends, has sworn to downgrade ITT's political role and to give the conglomerate a new look.

A gesture to women's lib

All of this was accepted by the high-powered executives who inhabit ITT's Park Avenue headquarters in New York City until the word came down that some of them may be displaced by women, as a gesture to women's lib. This was carrying reform too far, they grumped.

The tip-off came in a private memo from John Hanway, a senior vice president, to Frank J. McCabe, a lesser vice president, about placing more "affirmative action" candidates in top executive posts. The term includes all minorities, but in this case the emphasis was on women.

ITT seeks women

Hanway sent a list of 34 key jobs to McCabe on December 6. "I think these are positions which lend themselves readily to being filled by Affirmative Action candidates," instructed Hanway. "In a number of cases, to do so would require the reassignment or termination of incumbents . . ."

ITT's chief recruiter, R. W. Pausig, im-

mediately launched a search for qualified women. The word quickly spread through the executive reaches, causing tremors in the offices whose occupants were on the expendable list.

One angry reaction was a "Personal and Confidential" memo, dated December 8, which is now being passed among the top executives. In capital letters, the memo calls the search for women executives "ONE MORE CASE OF BLOODY OVER-REACTING."

Complains the memo: "I think our friend (Hanway) has really gone around the bend this time and suggest strongly that we talk to Aibel (Howard J. Aibel, senior vice president and general counsel) or even HSG (Geneen) himself. My spies in Personnel tell me that the real instigator of this is Tim Dunleavy, believe it or not.

'More females in here'

"Even though Hanway's memo talks about 'Affirmative Action candidates,' he really means, I am given to understand, that we have to get more females in here and that this will mean firing some of the males who are now incumbents in the positions he lists on the sheets attached to his memo. In my opinion, not only is this immoral and probably illegal, but it could really raise hell with us internally if it got noised about; morale is bad enough as it is. . ."

Hanway acknowledged to us that he had launched a search for more women executives but denied that he intended to displace a lot of men. Most of them would be replaced, he said, in the course of normal transfers and retirement.

He said ITT is already "about as integrated as you can get," except for women executives. "I happen to believe in the Affirmative Action program," he added. "I would like to see it move a little faster."