

Mayors, Once Disaffected With Washington, Say They

By PAUL DELANEY

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SAN DIEGO, June 27—Two years ago, Gov. Jimmy Carter of Georgia had an appointment at the White House with John D. Ehrlichman, then President Nixon's domestic affairs counselor.

When he arrived, Governor Carter was surprised to find that he was not to meet with Mr. Ehrlichman, but instead with an assistant, Kenneth R. Cole Jr.

Complaining that he had never even heard of Mr. Cole, Mr. Carter refused to see him and left in a huff, criticizing what he said was the insensitivity of the Administration.

Two years ago, most of the nation's mayors might have been accorded the same treatment.

"But not today" remarked Allan T. Thomas, a trim boyish-looking banker who is serving his first term as Mayor of Dubuque, Iowa.

Mayor Thomas and many of his 350 colleagues who at-

tended the 42d annual convention this week of the United States Conference of Mayors said that doors that had been closed to them for the last five years of the Nixon Administration were beginning to swing open. Almost to a man, they felt that the Watergate scandals and impeachment problems of the President were the reasons.

Gain From Watergate

"For the cities, Watergate has been a good thing," Mayor Joseph L. Alioto of San Francisco said. He disagreed with the man he succeeded as president of the conference, Roy B. Martin Jr. of Norfolk, Va., who said Watergate had caused a "vacuum of leadership."

"Watergate has not resulted in a vacuum of leadership," Mr. Alioto continued. "As a matter of fact, to the contrary Watergate has intensified Mr. Nixon's effort both on the international

and national scenes. He's giving us a lot of attention now."

While doors are opening and Administration officials are listening, it does not necessarily follow that problems are being solved. Yet, the mayors are still impressed that all of a sudden somebody in the Federal Establishment is listening to them.

"I used to be unable to get past a receptionist when I called Washington," Mayor Thomas said. "But now I have no trouble at all. As a matter of fact, one high official whom I couldn't get a while back not only took my call but he also accepted an invitation to come to Dubuque."

This change in attitude on the part of the Administration is so pleasing to city leaders that they are now hopeful that some of their problems may be solved.

Besides responding to the

urban officials, the Administration dispatched dozens of officials and scores of staff aides to the conference's meeting, the first time so many had been to an urban convention. They came from the Departments of Housing and Urban Development, Commerce, Health, Education and Welfare, Labor, and Transportation, as well as from the White House staff and the Environmental Protection Agency. Several aides from Congressional committees also attended.

They heard the mayors complain about not getting answers to a number of questions in every domestic area, including health, urban renewal, poverty programs, job training, model cities, transportation, environmental protection and economic development.

Mayor Pete Wilson of San Diego complained that the Fed-

TUESDAY, JULY 2, 1974

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23

Are Impressed by Administration's New Receptivity

eral Government in the past dragged its feet, but he gave high marks to two top officials, James T. Lynn, the Housing Secretary, and Russell E. Train, the E.P.A. administrator, who spoke at the meeting.

"After talks with them, I expect some movement now, but I know it takes a long time to move," Mayor Wilson said during an interview in his office on the 11th floor of the city administration building, located within the new convention complex.

Could See Anyone

"I had no problems the past year getting in to see anyone I wanted in the agencies and in the White House," he added.

He said there was "great momentum" when revenue sharing was enacted in 1972. Many cities had high hopes that were soon dashed, he said.

"The Administration turned its attention to inflation and hoped to achieve its New Federalism by impoundment and revenue sharing," Mr. Wilson commented. "But it ran into strong opposition from Congress. Then Watergate blew and aggravated the impasse between the Administration and Congress."

Mayor after Mayor declared that he could not get answers from Washington on the pressing problems he faced.

"The questions just went unanswered," one said. "People in the agencies didn't know what the policy was and so they just didn't come to the phone."

"So our problems mounted. We didn't know what the hell action to take about land lying deserted because funds for urban renewal had been frozen. That is still the case."

The Mayors said they were caught in a vise of inflation,

impoundment, the freeze on building subsidized housing and cuts and transfers of programs. Inflation was listed as the No. one problem by a great majority of the city leaders. Mayor Wilson said inflation had caused a deterioration in city services.

Most Want Money

Talks with dozens of mayors in public and private gatherings, at official sessions and receptions found nearly as many diverse problems as there were cities represented. Since more money was the single most sought after item, the mayors gave a variety of answers to the question, what would you do with more money? Among the answers were the following:

Maynard Jackson of Atlanta: "Crime is the first priority. I would use unrestricted funds to fight illegal narcotics."
Algernon J. Cooper of Prit-

chard, Ala.: "Jobs. No, I'll take that back, housing is No. One. We need 2,000 units, and we can't move ahead on other fronts until we get them."

Fred Hofheinz of Houston: "The No. One long-term need of Houston is transit. Ten years down the road we've got problems."

James McGee of Dayton, Ohio: "What we need is operating money. People want more police, more parks, more firemen and cleaner streets."

Richard E. Carver of Peoria, Ill.: "If I could really choose I'd like to be able to put money into vocational education. If a young man can find work, many other problems are solved."

Richard A. Hentges of Fargo, N.D.: "We need money to purchase school buses."

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