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F. B. I. Man's Promotion Raises Question of Hoover Successor

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WASHINGTON, Aug. 20—J. Edgar Hoover has appointed the 58-year-old head of the internal inspection division of the Federal Bureau of Investigation to the No. 3 spot in the agency.

Since Mr. Hoover is 76 years old and his second-in-command, Clyde A. Tolson, the associate director, is 71 and reported to be ill, the appointment of W. Mark Felt has prompted much discussion within the agency and has raised speculation that Mr. Hoover has settled on the man he would like to replace him.

A spokesman for the F.B.I. confirmed Mr. Felt's appointment, but refused to comment on what the shift implied. Mr. Felt also refused to assess the meaning of his appointment.

Mr. Felt was appointed about four weeks ago, but the F.B.I. has made no announcement of the promotion beyond an article in its employe magazine, The Investigator. However, workmen are making a new suite of offices ready for Mr. Felt—across the hall from Mr. Hoover's suite.

Mr. Felt's new title is assistant director-deputy associate director. That places him, in the F.B.I. leadership, between Mr. Tolson and two assistants to the director, John P. Mohr and William C. Sullivan.

In Charge of Divisions

Mr. Mohr is responsible for the identification, training, administrative, files and communication and crime records divisions of the F.B.I. Mr. Sullivan is responsible for the laboratory, domestic intelligence and investigative divisions. Mr. Mohr is 61 years old, and Mr. Sullivan is 59.

The inspection division, which Mr. Felt headed, conducts examinations into the activities of the F.B.I., both here and in the field. It also provides training for staff members who are being considered for executive positions within the F.B.I.

Mr. Felt has been replaced in the inspection division by

Joseph Ponder, who was one of several special agents in charge of the bureau's New York office.

Mr. Felt's new suite has three offices that will presumably be occupied by him, his assistant, William B. Soyars, and their secretaries. The offices were formerly used by Thomas E. Bishop and his staff. Mr. Bishop heads the crime records division and is the F.B.I.'s press spokesman.

29 Years in Bureau

Mr. Felt has been with the F.B.I. for 29 years. He was born in Twin Falls, Idaho, and he graduated from the University of Idaho in 1935.

From 1938 to 1941 he was administrative assistant to Senator D. Worth Clark, Democrat of Idaho. In 1940 he received a law degree from George Washington University here, and in 1941 he went to work for the Federal Trade Commission as lawyer.

He joined the F.B.I. in 1942, working in counter-intelligence operations. From 1956 to 1958 he was special agent in charge of the Salt Lake City office, and from 1958 to 1962 he was special agent in charge in Kansas City, Mo. He took over the inspection division in 1962.

He lives with his wife and two children in Fairfax, Va.