

Hunt for Capital Mayor Is a Dilemma for Nixon

By JAMES M. NAUGHTON
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WASHINGTON, Aug. 17— President Nixon, who is trying to improve his political image among Negro voters, is also preparing to replace Walter E. Washington, the black Mayor of the District of Columbia.

But the search for a suitable successor to the 55-year-old Democrat — ideally, a black Washington Republican who is aggressive on law enforcement — has not been easy. It is one example of the problems that bedevil Presidents, and lesser political leaders, as they attempt to strike a pose that appeals to voters.

Mr. Nixon has become increasingly concerned that Negro leaders have accused his Administration of lacking sympathy with their efforts to achieve equality.

Simultaneously, the White House has become perturbed that Mayor Washington has not established for himself, and thus for the Republican Administration, a clearcut image as a crime-stopper in the one city where the Government has direct responsibility for general law enforcement.

The Mayor—serving at the pleasure of the President in a four-year appointment—publicly opposed the most controversial sections of the Administration's "model" D.C. crime legislation, objecting to its provisions for preventive jailing of criminal suspects and "no-knock" entry by the police into private homes.

Although Mr. Washington, a taciturn moderate, was willing to satisfy the White House, he had his own image problems. In a city with a black majority and numerous white liberals, he could not afford to posture as a hard-line law-and-order man.

The White House has given Mr. Washington the option of

finding a new job on his own or accepting transfer to another Federal post, most likely in the Department of Housing and Urban Development, where he could use his background in public housing.

The Administration would like to replace the Mayor with a black Republican, both to protect itself from reaction to Mr. Washington's removal and to satisfy party leaders pushing for one of their own in the district job.

But the speculation on a successor so far has focused on Sterling Tucker, vice chairman of the City Council, and Philip J. Rutledge, director of the District's Department of Human Resources, who are black but Democrats, and Gilbert Hahn Jr., the council president, who is a Republican but white.

The campaign to soften the stern image of Attorney General John N. Mitchell continues, meanwhile. Earlier this year the White House assigned Richard A. Moore, a Los Angeles expert on the use of radio and television and a personal friend of the President, as a special assistant to Mr. Mitchell.

Now Mr. Moore has hired Remi Nadeau, a California writer, to compose speeches for the Attorney General. Mr. Nadeau has done a half dozen respected California regional histories, including "The Water Seekers" and "The City Makers."

The General Services Administration's past attempts to establish a reputation for economy have put an ir damper on the more search for ways to

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