

Sanders Staffs Empire in City Hall With Friends

For a man who once proclaimed himself an enemy of patronage, Mayor Bernard Sanders has done a remarkable turnabout on the issue in a relatively short time.

The public can only assume that Sanders' remarks on the subject of cronyism during his 1981 bid for office were nothing more than political rhetoric. At the time, however, it appeared that he was prepared to take the high road by surrounding himself with aides who had no ties to his campaign organization.

His first slip came when he named Richard Sartelle, who had been one of his confidants during the mayoral race, to be his unofficial assistant in City Hall. Paid out of Sanders' pocket, Sartelle soon was playing the role as the mayor's understudy in dealing with various city departments. He has since taken a job as citizen assistance officer with the Champlain Valley Office of Economic Opportunity. His



salary is paid partially by the city under a cost-sharing arrangement with the agency.

But it was not until this year that Sanders began a more ambitious program to fatten his staff. In a matter of weeks, he created seven new jobs in City Hall. Perhaps the most controversial position was that of head of the Youth Office, a job which was given to Jane Driscoll, a close friend and companion of the mayor.

Aldermen stalled a Sanders effort to install Doreen Kraft, another supporter, as coordinator of the Mayor's Council on the Arts by appropriating funds only on the condition that the position be advertised. But the aldermen cannot declare a victory in that case.

Job specifications could be so carefully tailored by the administration that Kraft would emerge as the only candidate to fit them. Sanders has won aldermanic approval for an administrative assistant in his office and a legislative assistant for the aldermen.

In May, he created a community and economic development office whose staff will try to keep business in the city and attract new industry. It will be headed by a director who, some aldermen believe, will be Peter Clavelle, now city personnel director. Two staff members will be hired to assist the director. Questions have been raised about the need for

such an office.

What emerges is the picture of a mayor who is busily building an empire in City Hall and staffing it with several of his friends. The costs, of course, will be borne by the same city taxpayers for whom Sanders has shed copious crocodile tears in the past. The salary tab for the new positions will be about \$130,000, excluding fringe benefits.

In the meantime, Sanders has been seeking new sources of revenue, among them a tax on utilities which will no doubt be passed back to customers, to pay for city services.

Perhaps Sanders could cut the costs of government by curbing his appetite for a larger City Hall bureaucracy, even if it meant that he would incur the anger of his friends.

As it stands now, the cronyism he so firmly denounced in 1981 is alive and well and still living in City Hall.