

Nixon Challenged

On Four Issues

HE was pale after his week in the hospital and he spoke deliberately — his tone more one of resolution than of defiance.

Neither illness nor hostile criticism, President Nixon asserted last weekend, was going to stop him from pursuing the "great causes" he had been "elected overwhelmingly to carry forward. What we were elected to do, we are going to do," he promised. "We are going to do our job."

Merely doing his job, however, had become a profoundly more difficult task for Mr. Nixon in his second term than in his first — as a recalcitrant Congress was increasingly resisting him on a wide range of important legislation.

In the last ten days alone, the House and Senate had defied him on four separate major measures.

WAR POWERS: The Senate, moving toward a major struggle with the President over his constitutional powers, approved legislation forbidding any President to wage undeclared war for more than 30 days without the express consent of Congress.

Mr. Nixon had warned that he would veto the bill as an incursion on his powers as commander-in-chief — a warning that was repeated

Congressmen vote for a \$2.20 minimum wage

on the Senate floor by Republican Whip Robert Griffin of Michigan. But the Senate brushed aside the threat and passed the bill by an overwhelming 71-to-18 margin.

Senate sponsors, including Jacob Javits (Rep.-N.Y.), Thomas Eagleton (Dem.-Mo.), Edmund Muskie (Dem.-Me.) and John Stennis (Dem.-Miss.), argued that the Constitution expressly granted to Congress the power to declare war, but successive Presidents had ignored it and drawn the nation into undeclared wars that lasted for years.

Under the Senate bill, the President would still be free to take emergency actions to defend the nation against sudden attack without advance congressional approval, but would have to receive formal approval from both chambers to continue the action beyond 30 days. (Under the House bill, approval by

both chambers also would be needed, but the time span was 120 days.)

MINIMUM WAGES: The Senate, again ignoring veto warnings, voted 64 to 33 to raise the \$1.60 hourly minimum wage to \$2.20 — after Democrats had defeated a number of Republican efforts to amend the measure, most of which would have provided for a lower minimum wage for youths.

The Senate bill, similar to a measure already passed by the House, would increase the \$1.60-an-hour minimum wage to \$2 immediately and go to \$2.20 a year later for non-farm workers. It would extend coverage of the wage law to 7 million new workers, and for the first time bring farm workers even with retail and industrial employees, raising their \$1.30 an hour present farm minimum to the new \$2.20 rate over three years.

FARM BILL: Despite the threat of still another veto, the House rejected a version of the legislation favored by President Nixon and instead passed a massive general farm bill that included a ban on food stamps for strikers.

The battle centered on a new concept of target prices for wheat, cotton and feed grains such as corn, in an effort to eliminate billions of dollars for subsidy payments to farmers.

The legislation included an escalator clause, which in later years would be used to adjust the target price to reflect production costs and crop yield changes. The administration contended this would drive the cost of the program to \$12 billion during the four-year lifetime of the House bill.

Under the new target price concept, no subsidies would be required so long as crop production and farm price relationships were unchanged. But a sharp drop in prices would bring on subsidy payments to make up the differences between the sales returns and the targets set by the bill.

HOUSING: The Senate, by a vote of 81-0, passed a \$1.9 billion bill extending federal housing and community development programs to June 30, 1974 — and challenging the President's authority to impound the money.

The bill would require the Secretary of Housing and Urban Development to end the moratorium in effect since January on spending for subsidized housing, rural housing, rent supplements and rehabilitation loans.