

WXPost  
**The 93rd**  
DEC 21 1974  
**Powers**  
**Reasserted**

# Nixon Ouster

## Highlight of

### 93d Congress

By Richard L. Lyons  
Washington Post Staff Writer

History will record the two years of the 93d Congress as the time the sleeping giant awoke, reasserted its powers over war and spending, and preserved constitutional government by driving a President out of office in disgrace.

It seems difficult to believe now, but only two years ago when the 93d came to town Richard M. Nixon had been re-elected in a landslide and was preparing to govern by executive fiat without paying much attention to Congress.

He killed Democratic programs by refusing to spend the money appropriated by Congress, was reorganizing the government by executive order and still bombing Indochina in an eight-year war Congress had never approved. Few believed the President was involved in Watergate.

But soon Nixon did become entangled in Watergate, and Congress—with powerful assists from the courts—was the decisive force that brought him down.

Senate Majority Leader Mike Mansfield handpicked Sen. Sam J. Ervin Jr. (D-N.C.) to conduct the investigation that brought the complicated Watergate story to the nation over television.

It was the Senate that forced the presidential appointment of a Watergate special prosecutor, and when he was fired in the "Saturday night massacre" of Oct. 20, 1973, public opinion had so turned around that an impeachment inquiry was begun in the House. The careful deliberations of the House Judiciary Committee made impeachment appear certain even before the Supreme Court ordered the President to turn over tape recordings of conversations which proved his involvement in the Watergate cover-up.

Never before had a President been forced out of office. And before Nixon went, his Vice President Spiro T. Agnew, resigned after pleading no contest to income tax

See **SESSION, A6, Col. 1**

#### SESSION, From A1

evasion; 25-year House member Gerald R. Ford succeeded him last December. One of this week's final acts of the 93d Congress was to confirm Nelson A. Rockefeller as Vice President. For the first time, neither the President nor Vice President has been elected nationally.

After President Ford pardoned Nixon for any crimes he might have committed as President, the public outcry was so great that Mr. Ford felt obliged to offer to appear before a House Judiciary subcommittee to swear there had been no deal made for a pardon in exchange for the Nixon resignation. It may have been the first time a President ever testified before Congress. It was certainly not an act that would have fitted into the imperial presidency of Richard Nixon.

The day before Congress adjourned, Mr. Ford also felt obliged to sign, reluctantly, a bill which abrogated an agreement his administration made giving Nixon control over his White House records, including the tapes which may contain more incriminating evidence.

The new law, which Nixon yesterday filed suit to overturn, directs the government to keep custody of all the records and forbids their destruction except as approved by Congress. Had the President vetoed the bill, the protest might have equaled that against the pardon.

Summing up the 93d Congress accomplishments yesterday, House speaker Carl Albert put the Nixon-Agnew resignations first on his list, declaring: "We got rid of the most corrupt administration in history."

Wholly apart from the Nixon struggle, Congress moved decisively in other fields to reassert constitutional powers it had watched slip downtown to the executive branch over four decades.

Two of the basic powers the Constitution gives Congress are to declare war and control spending.

Congress ended U.S. involvement in the Indochina war in 1973 when the House

finally joined the Senate to cut off money for further military operations there. Then Congress enacted a law over Nixon's veto to limit sharply a President's power to wage undeclared war.

Congress enacted with presidential approval the budget control act designed to assure tighter congressional control and oversight over current spending.

The 93rd was a reform-minded Congress, especially in the House, which has been moving steadily for a decade from a closed society run by its elders to an open, democratic institution. The House opened most of its committee meetings and broke the grip of the seniority system on electing committee chairmen.

Major reform of committees' jurisdiction proved too big a bite for the 93d House. But last month's Democratic landslide brought in 75 new, younger Democrats who promptly proved they are on the side of change by helping dilute the powers of the House Ways and Means Committee.

A series of bizarre events involving Ways and Means Chairman Wilbur D. Mills (D-Ark.) and a stripper ended the reign of the most powerful legislator on Capitol Hill and cost him his chairmanship.

There were some legislative breakthroughs by this Congress despite its preoccupation with Watergate.

A far-reaching campaign spending reform bill was enacted, providing public financing for presidential elections and imposing tight ceilings on campaign contributions and spending.

Congress finally agreed to trust fund money for mass transit. A separate bill providing major federal aid to help build and operate urban mass transit systems was enacted. Truckers made a partial breakthrough in their efforts to permit heavier trucks on interstate highways.

The minimum hourly wage was increased for the first time since 1966—to \$2 now and to \$2.30 over two years.

A start was made at protecting rights of workers in private pension plans. Veterans' education benefits were increased over President Ford's veto. This was one of several Ford vetoes that appeared hopeless to sustain; Republicans were unhappy at being compelled to appear either against veterans or against the President.

A trade bill, enacted after a two-year struggle, provides new tariff-cutting authority and a formula for extending full trading partner relationship to the Soviet Union if it permits emigration of Jews and other minority group citizens.

Major failures of Congress and the executive were the inability to find a unified energy policy or to halt inflation, though at year's end there were signs that runaway prices were being slowed by the even more scary prospect of recession.

The post-election lame-duck session did provide more than \$5 billion to create more than 300,000 public service jobs and extend unemployment benefits.

Dead for this Congress were proposals for a consumer protection agency,

land use standards, national health insurance, tax reform, and no-fault auto insurance.

These bills have been around for a long time and their incubation period should be about over. The

makeup of the 94th Congress convening Jan. 14 looks much like the 89th. Elected in the 1964 landslide, it promptly passed everything that had been in the legislative pipeline for years.