

Congress Talks of
Impeaching NixonLeaders' Reaction
to Cox Affair

Washington

Congressional leaders of both parties said yesterday that Congress will have to begin looking immediately at the question of impeaching President Nixon.

No one was willing to predict that Mr. Nixon would actually be removed from office, but a consensus seemed to be developing among Democrats and some Republicans that the President had challenged Congress and that Congress would have to accept that challenge.

"I don't think the President has left us any other choice," said Senator Robert C. Byrd of West Virginia, the assistant Democratic leader in the Senate.

The majority leader in the House, Representative Thomas P. O'Neill Jr. of Massachusetts, said that he had talked with many colleagues over the weekend and that "we've all talked about impeachment."

FUROR

Mr. Nixon created the furor Saturday night by firing special Watergate prosecutor Archibald Cox for refusing to obey the President's order to stop court efforts to obtain presidential tape recordings. Attorney General Elliot Richardson resigned and his assistant, Deputy Attorney General William French Smith, was fired after they each refused White House orders to fire Cox.

Mr. Nixon has considerable support among conservative Republicans. Senator John Tower of Texas, chairman of the Senate Republican Policy Committee, said that he thought the President had acted properly "to forestall a constitutional crisis" and added that he did not believe there were grounds for impeachment.

But other Republicans were less generous toward

Back Page Col. 5

From Page 1

Mr. Nixon. Representative John B. Anderson of Illinois, the third-ranking House Republican, predicted that "impeachment resolutions are going to be raining down like hailstones."

Senators Charles McC. Mathias (Rep.-Md.) said that the President's actions Saturday had raised "very serious questions" and that "Congress is going to have to explore them immediately and aggressively."

TOUCH

Many Congressional leaders were out of touch yesterday.

Senator Hugh Scott of Pennsylvania, the Republican leader in the Senate, was said by an aide to be unavailable "in the hinterlands of Pennsylvania."

House Speaker Carl Albert of Oklahoma, who is next in line to become President, would not accept telephone calls. A Secret Service agent at his apartment here said that Albert had left instructions that all calls be turned aside.

Republican leaders outside of Washington were also being carefully silent. Governor Ronald Reagan of California, former Governor John P. Connally of Texas and Governor Nelson A. Rockefeller of New York, all refused comment.

Nonetheless, politicians in the capital were consumed by the turn of events over the weekend, and many members of Congress issued statements sharply critical of the President.

IMPEACH

About a dozen members of the House announced that they would submit one form or another of an impeachment resolution when the House convenes again tomorrow.

Under the Constitution, impeachment proceedings begin in the House. If the House, by majority vote, decided that the President should be impeached —

something like a grand jury indictment — the case goes to the Senate.

The Senate then becomes a court to try the case against the President. It requires a two-thirds majority of those voting to convict the President.

If convicted, he is removed from office.

The initial investigation of accusations against Mr. Nixon could be performed by the House Judiciary Committee or by a special committee set up to conduct the inquiry.

THINKING

Representative B. F. Sisk (Dem.-Calif.), who plans to offer a resolution that would create a select committee to look into impeachment, said that Mr. Nixon's "actions raise real questions to me of whether or not he's thinking straight."

Senator Edmund S. Muskie (Dem.-Maine), who appeared on ABC's "Issues and Answers," declared that "one forum is left that in my judgment is adequate, and that is the impeachment process."

Senator Howard H. Baker Jr. (Rep.-Tenn.), the vice chairman of the Senate Watergate committee, said that he was baffled by Mr. Nixon's actions and predicted that they would "almost inevitably heighten tensions and conflict."

Byrd of West Virginia said there is "no way to avoid the assumption" that there is something on the White House tapes that Mr. Nixon is trying to hide.

In Colorado, Representative Patricia Schroeder, a Democrat, asked her constituents in Denver to call her office to say whether they thought the impeachment process should be begun against Mr. Nixon. By last night, an aide reported, there were 2500 calls for impeachment and only 32 against.

New York Times