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Impeachment crunch coming

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WASHINGTON — The second session of the 93rd Congress opens tomorrow, faced with the possible impeachment trial and ouster of President Nixon.

An arduous legislative workload faces Congress, but the election-year session will be dominated by the first serious impeachment move since the presidency of Andrew Johnson, Abraham Lincoln's successor, in 1868.

Major legislation in the fields of energy, wage-price controls, no fault insurance, tax reform, national health, political campaign reform, housing, mass transit, and pension reform plus the annual battle of the budget are waiting members of Congress returning from a one-month recess.

A hoped for signal from the voters on the question of Nixon's impeachment failed to materialize during the recess, leaving House members no surer about what course to take than before they left Dec. 22.

"I think the story was, before we left for Christmas, that the recess was going to be the determining period, that everyone would come back with a clear message from the American people as to whether or not they wanted the President to resign or be impeached or continue," Sen. William Brock, (R-Tenn.) said. "There's no clear message . . . the condition still seems to be up in the air."

Survey after survey has showed that American voters were unhappy with Nixon, dismayed by the Watergate scandals, but undecided on impeachment.

But a UPI survey showed deep concern about the energy crisis, a mood certain to be reflected in congressional votes this year. The victims

may well be the major oil companies, whose activities have been traditionally in-violate.

These are the issues that should be dominant this session:

● Impeachment — The House Judiciary Committee has opened its inquiry into possible grounds for impeachment of Nixon. The earliest the committee could reach a finding would be the latter part of April.

● Watergate — The Senate Watergate Committee will decide, probably this week, whether to resume public hearings into the Watergate scandal or start writing its report and recommendations. If hearings resume, they would deal with a \$100,000 campaign donation by financier Howard Hughes to President Nixon which was held for two years by C. G. (Bebe) Rebozo, Nixon's closest friend. An appearance by Rebozo could revive interest in the investigation.

● Energy — An almost endless number of Senate and House committees and subcommittees are ready to investigate the energy crisis — whether it exists, who caused it, what can be done about it. The step will be an attempt to pass legislation giving President Nixon sweeping powers to deal with the crisis, including rationing of gasoline. The bill, which includes a curb on windfall profits for the major oil companies, was stymied last session by a Senate filibuster.

● Wage-price controls — Current wage-price controls expired April 30 and Congress will have to take some action — either extending Nixon authority or possibly setting guidelines.

● Taxes — President Nixon has announced he will offer legislation to impose excess profits tax on oil companies for the duration of

the energy crisis. Some form of this proposal is certain of enactment and it could serve as a vehicle for a wide-range of tax reforms.

● Trade — The House has passed trade reform legislation which gives Nixon broad authority to negotiate reductions in tariffs. It includes a provision that denies favorable trade terms to Russia until it liberalizes its emigration policy for Jews. The Senate Finance Committee will begin hearings shortly, but the anti-Russian provision is sure to stay in.

● Pension — The Senate has passed a bill which would protect worker's pension rights if a company has a pension plan. The House is expected to act soon on similar legislation.

● Campaign reform — The Senate has passed and the House plans hearings soon on a broad package of political campaign reforms. The Senate bill would put strict limits on campaign spending and campaign contributions. The Senate also passed legislation which would provide federal financing of presidential elections and primaries and state and house races.