

White House

No Repeat of Nixon Tax Vow

Washington

The White House yesterday refused to repeat President Nixon's earlier pledge to pay any back taxes that may be recommended by a congressional committee investigating his returns for the years 1969 through 1972.

The refusal suggested that the President may be moving toward a tougher position in his dealings with Congress.

The impression was reinforced when deputy press secretary Gerald L. Warren criticized the Democratic Congress on the tax issue, and GOP leaders, after a two-hour meeting with the President, joined in a general attack on Congress.

The Joint Committee on Internal Revenue Taxation will receive a staff report today on Mr. Nixon's possible tax liabilities. When Warren was asked to comment on the committee's work and on the President's reaction to it, he replied: "We'll address this all at one time."

When asked specifically whether the President would abide by his earlier promise to accept the tax committee's findings, Warren ducked the question.

He was reminded that as recently as last week he had said the President stood by the promise, but he declined to comment except to say that the matter would be discussed all at one time.

Warren also took issue with Democrats on Capitol Hill who have predicted that the House has the votes to impeach the President.

It is "unusual" for members to begin counting the votes against the President even before the material supplied to the House Judiciary Committee has been assessed, Warren said.

A few moments earlier

from the same podium, House minority leader John J. Rhodes (Rep-Ariz.) said that "until the evidence is in, I don't think it would be proper for anyone else to ask anyone how he is going to vote, and I won't do that."

Rhodes and Senate minority whip Robert P. Griffin (Rep-Mich.) assailed Democrats for doing little or nothing to act on the President's legislative program.

"I think the record of the Democratic Congress with respect to energy is the biggest scandal of all," Griffin said. Rhodes said there was "absolutely no motion" toward enactment of the President's program.

Congress has acted on only one — the Alaska Pipeline Act — of a score of Nixon proposals on energy, Rhodes said. Griffin raised the question of whether the Democrats "want to do something about the energy shortage" or "just want an issue in the November election."

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