

See State Legislature in open 'n' shut session

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ALBANY — The 1972 session of the State Legislature — its 194th — will get under way Wednesday. It should be one of the shortest in recent history.

Because of the state's critical fiscal condition, that's not much ahead of the lawmakers except the budget for 1972-'73. Once that is out of the way it will all be downhill. An early adjournment is likely.

Easter week starts March 28 this year and the legislators traditionally take a breather during the holy days. Since they will not be called on to face many controversial bills during the session, however, they could have their year's labor in Albany completed before the holy days start.

In the last 30 years, the legislature has adjourned 20

times in March and four times early in April.

The past year was a hectic one for the legislators. They were in session until June 6 — and it was a hot one — and they were recalled into special sessions Dec. 6 to remap the legislative district lines and Dec. 27 to come up with a formula designed to put the state out of a \$1.5 billion deficit by March 31.

CHANCE TO CAMPAIGN

So the legislators will welcome a "shortie" this year primarily because it will give them a chance to do some strenuous campaigning. They're not going to be too popular with a lot of folks back home because of the goings-on at the regular session and the doings at the two specials.

In addition, most of them will

be running in districts, parts of which will be, strange to them. This means they'll have to do a cultivating job.

The budget for the next fiscal year, which starts April 1, shouldn't be much of a task because all the legislators know the state's financial condition. Still there will be those who will want to have their say about why the state is in the hole by \$1.5 billion — and they will say it.

Not much of a howl is expected from most of the state departments and institutions. They have come to realize that the days of free spending are over and for a couple of years — perhaps for five years — the strings on the state's purse are going to be tied tight — very tight.

The governor's budget for the next fiscal year will be full of

cuts. The Mental Hygiene Department, the state's biggest agency, is going to take a \$21.6-million reduction and the state university's operating expenses will be slashed by \$14.8 million.

Rocketteller is going to recommend cuts of \$4.2 million for the Transportation Department, \$3.5 million for the Education Department and \$5 million for the Narcotic Addiction Control Commission.

Temporary state commissions will have to get along with what's left of their 1971-'72 appropriation but the Department of Corrections, undoubtedly because of the Attica revolt, will get an increase of \$3.8 million. The office of welfare inspector which hasn't been too active since it was created early last year, will have its appropriation doubled from \$500 to \$1.1 million.

There are no provisions in the governor's budget for salary increases for public employes even though negotiations are now under way between the Civil Service Employees Association and the administration.