dowment put $350,000 into the creation of a touring arm of the Metropolitan Opera Company. After 2 years of struggle the company sank. Sarah Caldwell's American Opera Company was then given a touring grant, but this venture has been plagued with financial difficulty.

Also in deep trouble is a resident theater company which was set up in New Orleans—one of several pilot theater projects across the country. The endowment played the major role in establishing the theater in a community where little organized interest existed, and efforts are still being made to create a reliable base of community support.

Nevertheless, popularity is not enough to ensure a program's success, since the worth of an artistic institution cannot be judged by standards of cost-effectiveness. While salaries and expenses rise, there can be no balancing rise in efficiency when the product is labor. As one report notes, "it takes as many man-hours to perform a Schubert string quartet today as it did 150 years ago."

With their new 1971 appropriations, Miss Hanks and her council have decided to address this problem with the endowment's first grants to symphony orchestras. Although Straight hails the move as "going to the core of the arts," to the "carriers of our cultural heritage," others question its merits. "Every orchestra in this country operates on a deficit—they're bottomless pits," says a congressional staff lawyer. Endowment policy forbids the funding of deficits, "but that's where the money's bound to go." A music critic points out that only 5 percent of the population goes to one or more performances a year by any of the performing arts. A staff member calls symphony orchestras "gargantuan" monsters, a creation of another era, whose march to extinction will not be slowed by a few million dollars. Critics also mention the $82 million invested by the Ford Foundation into 61 major orchestras over the past 5 years. Services have been expanded and salaries have been raised as a result, they say, but the orchestras' escalated economy has created further needs which leaves them back where they started.

Nevertheless, the endowment believes aid to symphonies will spur their managements to uncover new sources of financial support and, more importantly, will encourage them to break past their hoary role as museums for the classics—to play more contemporary music, to break into small ensemble groups, and to venture out of concert halls and into parks and suburbs.

As the endowment grows, so will controversy within and around it, and the staff is aware that the real battles are yet to come. At present, though, harmony predominates. Nancy Hanks, who was appointed by the President last year to take over from Democrat Roger Stevens, enjoys unusual respect and admiration from her colleagues. Combined with her soft-spoken charm is an awesome political prowess which the Oxford-educated Miss Hanks used to good effect in the course of buttonholing some 200 congressmen to urge this year's hike in appropriations. Nixon offered concrete evidence of his faith in the Hanks leadership when he asked Congress last December to double the Foundation's allocations. The confidence seems to be mutual—"the arts picture under Nixon is the brightest it's ever been," says she.

—CONSTANCE HOLDEN

Department of Interior: Hickel Leaves a Diminished Agency

When Walter J. Hickel was abruptly fired by President Nixon last week as Secretary of the Interior, he left an agency much different from the one he had come to head in early 1969. His successor-designate, Rogers C. Morton, a Maryland congressman who is currently chairman of the Republican National Committee, will take over a Department of the Interior that has suffered a deep erosion of its functions and authority.

The erosion has come as the result of the establishment this year of three new federal agencies. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) took over Interior's water pollution control program, which commanded a larger budget than any other activity of the department. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) absorbed Interior's marine mining and commercial and saltwater sports fisheries programs, which was a setback to the department's aspirations to become a comprehensive department of natural resources. And the new Council on Environmental Quality, established by statute at the turn of the year (EPA and NOAA were established by Presidential reorganization plans), clearly diminished what had been Interior's newly emerging role as the government's "environmental conscience" and center of policy innovation in environmental matters.

Interior remains responsible for managing most of the federal public lands (embracing about one-third of the land area of the United States) and the outer continental shelf. Its other activities include western reclamation projects, promotion of better mining technology and enforcement of coal mine safety, and management of parks, wildlife refuges, and outdoor recreation programs. For the most part, these are responsibilities traditionally associated with Interior, an agency still oriented largely to the interests of the western states.

There is now the possibility at least that Interior can find a major new role for itself by asserting leadership on the problem of developing a national land-use policy. But the official chosen to represent the Nixon Administration last spring at the Senate Interior Committee's hearings on pending land-use legislation was not Hickel, the Secretary of the Interior, but Russell Train, chairman of the Council on Environmental Quality.

Great political skill as well as courage will be required of Rogers Morton if he is to build any ambitious new edifices upon Interior's presently eroded base. In Hickel's case, there has been more courage than finesse. Since President Nixon has not really explained why Hickel was fired, one must look for the explanation in the circumstances of the dismissal. For some time now it has been evident that Hickel is not the kind of political person well adapted for survival in the Washington environment. Whatever the merits of his letter to the President last May on the Administration's alienation of youth, Hickel behaved recklessly in exulting publicly in the attention and acclaim that the letter brought him.

Moreover, he virtually asked for dismissal by later indicating that the White House would not dare fire him. For instance, in an interview reported

in *Life* last summer, Hickel said, "It would be a disaster for them. Take a fellow out in Grand Forks, North Dakota. He thinks, 'This fellow Wally Hickel seems to be doing a pretty good job with those leaking oil wells.' If they fire me he's going to think, 'I guess Hickel is too tough on them. The Administration must want to protect companies like that no matter what they do.' "

By actions such as his prosecution of Chevron Oil Company for oil spills in the Gulf of Mexico and his opposition to the Miami jetport project that threatened the Everglades, Hickel had in fact overcome much of the skepticism and hostility with which conservation groups had first received his appointment. But he was still distrusted by them on some major issues, such as that involving the proposed construction of the huge oil pipeline across his home state of Alaska. Moreover, while Hickel claims credit for having been tough on polluters, the water pollution control program, viewed overall, took no great leaps forward during his time as secretary. In truth, Carl Klein, who recently resigned as Hickel's Assistant Secretary for Water Quality and Research, spent much of his time sowing resentment and confusion in the Federal Water Quality Administration.

There is little to indicate that Hickel has made any really important new imprints on either federal policy or the public mind in regard to problems of natural resources and the environment. In speeches and interviews, he has talked of bringing "parks to the people" (more parks in urban areas), of establishing a national energy policy, of better protection and use of the public lands, and of the need for better land-use planning generally. But nowhere can one find a broad and coherent statement of his views on these subjects.

Hickel is a self-made millionaire who never attended college and who regards the *Reader's Digest* as the staple of his intellectual diet. He is not an articulate man himself and he does not appear to have made effective use of his staff at Interior. His first under secretary, Russell Train, could have been helpful in the formulation of policy but Hickel treated Train first with impatience and finally with disregard.

Furthermore, in trying to take shortcuts through the Washington bureaucracy, Hickel acted in contempt or ignorance of political realities. For example, last June Hickel boldly announced that he had urged the Department of the Army to have its Corps of Engineers suspend work for 15 months on the Cross Florida Barge Canal, pending further study of that project's ecological and hydrological impact. More than $52 million already had been spent on the project and one of its proponents, Representative William C. Cramer of Florida, was in a tough race for the U.S. Senate. Nevertheless, Hickel had not told the White House of his proposal and news of it was received there with astonishment. Since then, the moratorium idea appears to have joined a number of other Hickel proposals now listed as dead or missing.

The New Secretary

As Interior's new secretary, Morton promises to be a more reflective, less impulsive performer than Hickel. A Yale graduate, he is the brother of former U.S. Senator Thurston Morton of Kentucky and has long been familiar with the Washington scene. For the past 10 years he has represented Maryland's Eastern Shore in Congress, and since April 1969 he has also been Republican National Chairman, a position in which he appears to have shown considerable independence of political operatives at the White House such as Murray Chotiner and Harry Dent.

It appears now, however, that Morton may soon have to protect his new fiefdom from intrusions. Last week, without the secretary-designate's knowledge, several high-level Interior officials —including Leslie L. Glasgow, Assistant Secretary for Fish and Wildlife, who has been on leave from Louisiana State University where he was a professor of wildlife management—were summarily dismissed at the direction of the White House. Glasgow has expressed bitterness at being treated as a political functionary. Also among those fired was Donald D. Dunlop, a chemical engineer and former management consultant who was Hickel's science adviser.

Literally a towering figure at six-feet-seven and 250 pounds, Morton has been popular with his Republican and Democratic colleagues in the House. He was a member of the House Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs from early 1963 through 1968, but 2 years ago he was assigned to the Committee on Ways and Means, which along with the Appropriations Committee is one of the two most important committees of the House.

Given Morton's standing in Congress, his nomination as secretary is virtually assured of confirmation by the Senate. Although his record is not one that will please conservationists on all counts, Morton has had a deep interest in environmental matters. Concerned about threats to the productivity of Chesapeake Bay, he is the sponsor of legislation authorizing a $15 million Chesapeake Bay study which will involve the construction of a large hydraulic model and establishment of a research center.

Several years ago, Morton had a crucial role in establishing the Assateague National Seashore in the face of strong opposition from officials of the county in which Assateague Island is located. Most of Assateague is in Morton's district, and the county authorities had visions of another Ocean City rising from the dunes despite the vulnerability of much of the low-lying island to storms. Members of Congress nearly always go along with the wishes of local officials in such a matter, but Morton felt that the park could be a boon to the economy of the Eastern Shore as well as an important public recreation area for the Mid-Atlantic region.

Morton's voting record will be viewed by environmentalists as a mixed bag of the good and the bad. This year, for instance, he cosponsored the timber supply bill, a measure strongly opposed by conservation groups because it would increase logging in the national forests. On the other hand, he voted to eliminate funds for continued development of the supersonic transport, a project opposed by conservationists but supported by President Nixon.

The appointment of an Easterner, such as Morton, as Secretary of the Interior is a desirable break with tradition for a department that is trying to cast off its image of western provincialism. But it remains for Morton to demonstrate whether he can provide leadership on the important, but long neglected, problem of developing a national land-use policy. Such a policy, which some current proposals contemplate having the states administer at the urging of federal officials wielding both carrot and stick, would be aimed at overcoming problems such as urban sprawl and the steady loss of open space and scenic landscapes in many areas. If Morton does not assert leadership on the land-use issue, his department seems likely to continue to be one of declining importance and influence.—LUTHER J. CARTER