

Political, Industry Pressure Cited in

By BILL LYNCH
(States-Item Bureau)

BATON ROUGE — Former Assistant Secretary of the Interior Dr. Leslie Glasgow today said he was ousted from his job for political and business interest pressures and predicted a major slowdown by the Nixon Administration in the environmental protection field.

Dr. Glasgow, who is returning to his old position as a professor at LSU, was fired in a general shakeup of the Interior Department that saw the long-expected departure of Secretary Walter J. Hickel.

The wildlife expert was assistant secretary for fish, wildlife and parks and marine resources. He was director of the State Wild Life and Fisheries Commission in Louisiana before going to Washington.

DR. GLASGOW criticized the method used in his own dismissal by aides to President Nixon.

"The manner in which I was dismissed was certainly not ethical," the 56-year-old professor declared. "They had a right to fire you," he continued, "but everyone has certain moral responsibilities to another regardless of the circumstances."

Dr. Glasgow said, "There was not much ethical responsibility shown in this case.

"I think the President should apologize for it," he said. "The President himself really had nothing to do with it, but it was his staff and in the end it was his his responsibility."

Dr. Glasgow said he was called by a White House aide the same day that Hickel was fired and told that he shouldn't be concerned. He



DR. LESLIE GLASGOW

was informed that his position would continue to be the same, he said.

HOWEVER, THE following Friday, he said he was summoned to the office of an under secretary and met with another White House aide who demanded in curt terms that he submit his resignation that day by the end of office hours.

He said he asked for a reason and they gave none.

"They talked very little," he said, "and they were very direct."

Dr. Glasgow said he decided not to resign and thought about it over the weekend.

"I didn't resign when they asked me to," Dr. Glasgow said. "But I came to the conclusion over the weekend that there was no way I could work with these people. So Monday I gave them my resignation."

He said there also was considerable friction between him

and Fred Russell, the under-secretary who stepped into Hickel's shoes temporarily as acting secretary. They had had run-ins over policy matters in the past, Dr. Glasgow said, and Hickel had decided in his favor.

THE POLITICAL pressures emanated because the administration is getting ready for the 1972 presidential campaign and Dr. Glasgow did not fit in with their plans.

Even while he was in Louisiana with the state agency, Dr. Glasgow had the reputation for making decisions without regard to politics. He gained the enmity of the state administration because he refused to put political appointees to work on the commission staff. Dr. Glasgow said that he treated Democrats and Republicans alike and parceled out programs on the basis of merit rather than political affiliation.

The pressures from industry were not just over one thing, but added up to a total that finally brought the house down on him in Washington.

"We were involved in so many environmental problems around the country, that industry just closed in on me," he said.

HE SAID IT WAS difficult to explain, but the feeling developed in the last few months of the 18-month period he was there that a change was in the making.

He said he had been anticipating for some time that Hickel would be removed and that he and others who had promoted environmental interests would soon be gone. His wife returned to Baton Rouge

last August to reopen their home here.

The differences of opinion with the acting director who succeeded Hickel were just too much for him to remain, he said.

"He represented big business," Dr. Glasgow said, "and I represented what I feel are just ordinary people."

Because of the changes in the administration of the Interior Department, Dr. Glasgow said he foresees a general slowdown in the environmental area.

"But they can't ignore it," he asserted, "because of public opinion. However, it will not have the real effort that Hickel and I put into it."

HE SAID THAT MANY of the programs that Hickel supported which became controversial and drew opposition from business interests were those which he and his staff instigated.

For example, Dr. Glasgow said, forcing utility companies to meet temperature standards in the discharge of thermal pollution into water bodies became a major issue. The Interior Department temporarily lost a courts fight to require the Florida Light and Power Co. to come within acceptable heat standards before operating a nuclear station.

A similar attitude was taken on the thermal pollution of the Great Lakes, he said.

Those within the department and the administration who wanted to compromise the issue wanted to give the power companies a two-year grace period, but Dr. Glasgow took the position that it would be better to require them to begin within standards rather than try later to roll them back.

IN ANOTHER case, Dr. Glasgow wanted the Corps of Engineers to stop dumping dredged soil from the great lakes back into the water. He said this simply moved the polluted material to another spot and wanted it disposed of in land. The Administration, he said, interceded and a compromise was worked out to require it be done in the future.

Another major problem rose in the shale oil projects in the Western states. Production of oil from shale involves strip mining, and Dr. Glasgow protested to the secretary that the proposed regulations that were drafted contained no environmental protection.

"They said they would take care of it," Dr. Glasgow said,

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but nothing was in the regulations and I held it up to Hickel and he said he wouldn't let them proceed until it was taken care of."

The proposed production project was held up for eight months until some protection was written into the law, he said.

REGULATING THE PRODUCTION of oil in the off-shore areas, particularly the Gulf of Mexico, became one of the major problems that drew a lot of resistance from the oil industry, he said.

The resistance was routed through the mineral section of the Interior Department where Dr. Glasgow had gained enemies because he won Hickel's ear in pushing for enforcement of regulations.

Dr. Glasgow had a great deal to do with forcing the oil companies into court with grand jury indictments over failing to obey existing regulations.

There were many other areas involving environmental problems and conflicts with "progress" such as the construction of a mammoth jet airport in the Florida Everglades that has since been halted, and the proposed location of a German chemical company in South Carolina that had been noted for disregarding pollution standards in its homeland.

ALL OF THESE things added together, totaling up the opposition to the environmental protectionists.

"I think Rogers Morton could do a good job," Dr. Glasgow said of the Maryland congressman who is slated to take over as Interior secretary.

In any case, he said, the pattern set by the Hickel clan won't be reversed overnight because of the pressure of public opinion.

"I think Hickel's dismissal, from an environmental impact standpoint, has been a step backward," Dr. Glasgow said.

The university professor said he enjoyed the many things he did so long as he could keep making progress. After Hickel left, he didn't think he could make further progress and then didn't mind leaving.

Although he will resume his duties as a professor of wildlife, Glasgow said he planned to continue his interest in public affairs. He was given an assignment as consultant to the Interior Department on Gulf affairs as a last step in easing his departure.