

# C. N. Parkinson Says "West Is Decadent"

Western civilization is decadent."

This was the principal theme that evolved from the second and final Henry Marshall Tory lecture given by C. Northcote Parkinson in the Jubilee Auditorium Tuesday night.

The internationally renowned historian, in explaining the laws governing bureaucracy that he is credited with discovering, stated that civilizations go through various periods of existence. "All civilizations," he said, "rise, flourish, decay, and finally collapse. Our civilization is like all others."

## CIVILIZATION EBBING

"Our civilization was in its spring during the middle ages," Parkinson said. "It reached its height in the period before 1900, and now," he went on, "the world is beginning to decay. Marx," he said, "pointed out this beginning of western decline in 1845."

Professor Parkinson warned that the summer of our civilization is past. "Winter is coming soon and we must realize this." The analysis of previous civilizations could help us in overcoming the decadence that most probably is coming.

The three laws that have made him internationally renowned were then used to diagnose the symptoms of a declining civilization.

## FIRST SYMPTOMS

The first of these symptoms is the growth of a top-heavy administrative center. Dr. Parkinson pointed to studies which revealed that in the United States the number of executives on payrolls increases at the rate of over 7 per cent a year, without a necessary increase in productivity.

"It is reported," he said, "that when an organization has a membership of over a thousand persons, that organization can keep itself occupied with its own internal business. It can live on the paper it produces."

The second of these symptoms relates to taxation. "Only by excessive taxation can an excessive bureaucracy exist. Income," he went on, "necessarily causes expenditures." Thus Parkinson's Second Law: "Expenditure rises to meet income."

## MODERN ART DEAD

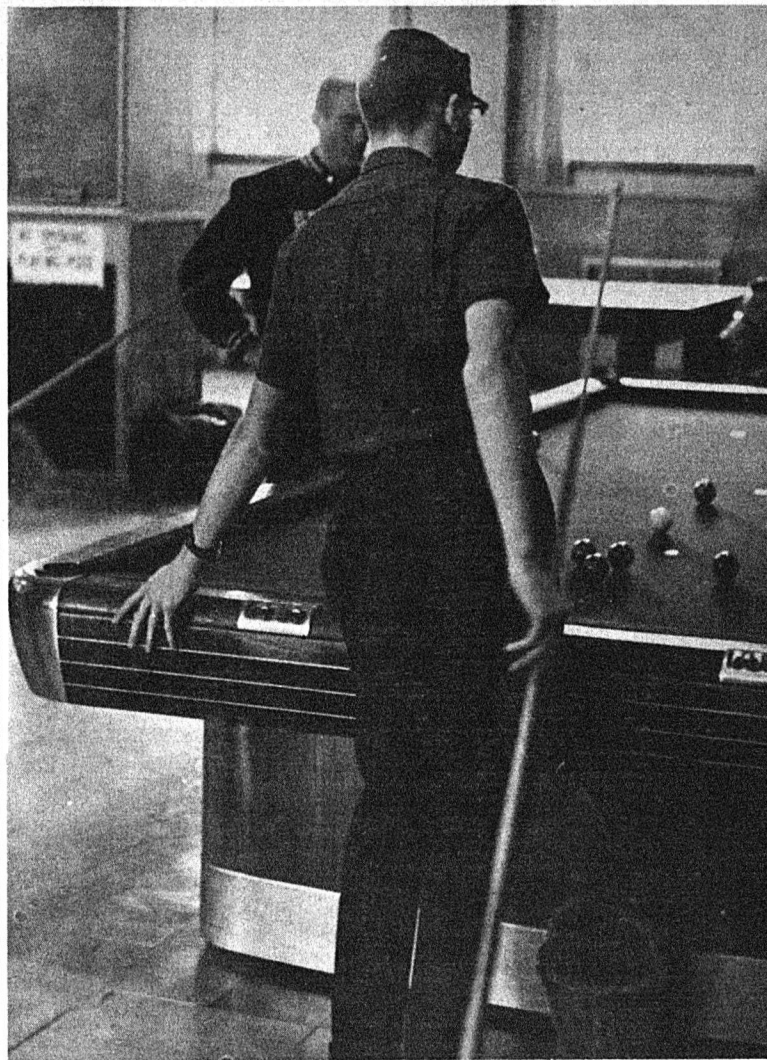
The third of these symptoms relating to our declining civilization may be summed up in the statement "The more complex, the sooner dead." Getting a thing done quickly, smartly, and keenly is the keynote of our present society.

Dr. Parkinson used examples of

modern art and architecture, the United Nations building in New York, the "iron foundry" in front of Edmonton's city hall, to demonstrate that we are in fact in an area of decadence. "Architecture," he said, "should last for centuries. Artists must be aware of the future. These artistic creations look only to the present."

"What's true of art and architecture is true of our lives. In the twentieth century our preference for unreality and fiction is evidence of our decadence." American fiction has a disproportionate influence on our lives. We tend to stereotype the political aspects of the world into the good and the bad, the democracies and the communist states. The American picture of the world is "based on an ignorance of geography and history." Our decadence stems from our preference for fiction and rejection of facts. We value the image more than the reality.

In concluding, Professor Parkinson said that "we must accept the world as we find it, keeping in mind our historical heritage." Perhaps not in Europe, but somewhere in the world a new era of history may be beginning. Somewhat optimistically he concluded "There can be no spring without winter."



**HUSTLERS' SPIRIT**—"A very interesting theory in general dynamics and the refraction of moving bodies in association with the latest advancements of Johannes Kepler. At least that's what I tell my father." Photo by Norman Senn

## Mixed Reaction To Parkinson's Second Lecture

Dr. C. Northcote Parkinson's second lecture met with mixed feelings from the audience. Gateway reporters interviewed a random sample and asked for their opinions.

The idea that Western society is decadent and entering a "winter" period of its existence was Parkinson's main theme. He also analyzed business and government bureaucracy, concluding that growth in size leads to less efficiency.

Most people seemed to enjoy Parkinson, but when it came to agreeing or disagreeing with him, those who disagreed seemed to be more articulate in their reasons.

Some typical responses:

"I agreed, I don't know why, I just think he's right."

"Intellectual poppycock."

"Vague . . . poorly organized."

"No proof given."

"Pungent . . . university administration should take note."

"The man is a genius."

On the whole, it could be stated that although Parkinson was amusing and cuttingly relevant, he was hardly to be taken seriously.

## Join The Rag Doll Squad

## Parkinson Singles Out Pentagon As Least Efficient Bureaucracy

By Robin Hunter

The world-famous authority on bureaucracies, Dr. C. Northcote Parkinson, has singled out the Pentagon as the world's least efficient bureaucracy.

"American bureaucracies tend to be the least efficient," he said, "because they tend to be the worst, with the State Department running a close second."

## MAKE FEWER ENEMIES

When asked to compare Alberta's bureaucracy to others, Dr. Parkinson said it is the best in the world. "I really don't know, but I always say that about the place I'm in because I make less enemies that way."

Speaking on whether his law

(bureaucracy tends to increase at a greater speed than the work it does) applies to private enterprise as well as government, Dr. Parkinson said it does.

"Private industry's ills are similar to government's, especially as it increases in size. In the modern world there seems a tendency to monopolize in any given field, with one or two producers dominating the market."

"The competition we see is more an illusion than the real thing."

## BUREAUCRACY WILL GROW

This means in effect, he said, that both in government and business, bureaucracy is going to get bigger. Business will become less decentralized; more authority will tend to gather at the head office—"the centre of power is always very near the IBM computer."

## PESSIMISTIC OUTLOOK

Dr. Parkinson is a pessimist. He feels these effects are bad, but there is little that can be done to stop them.

Asked if he thought this tendency to be present in the Soviet Union, Dr. Parkinson said yes, but since he hadn't studied Soviet bureaucracy he couldn't say whether it was more inefficient than ours.

He went on to say, however, that the differences in ideology between the USSR and the west are overstressed. Common problems such as automation and industrial development bring them much closer together than capitalism and communism take them apart.

## Civil Service Announces Exams For Foreign Service Officers

Attention graduates and graduating students.

The Foreign Service officers and Junior Executive officers exam will be held Oct. 16 and 17.

The Civil Service exam for engineers will be held Nov. 14.

The Student Placement Office suggests that all students get this "iron in the fire." No self-commitment is implied.

The office goes on to say that "outstanding job opportunities are available in the service of the government" for people qualified in almost any field.

It further states that the government is at present employing people at "almost every level of skill from office clerk to hydrographer." Indeed, some 200,000 Canadians are drawing pay from the taxpayer.

The salaries the taxpayer offers are often attractive—the office calls them "commensurate with industry, and in some areas with better fringe benefits."

In addition to the Civil Service, tax money is also available for people

of such government agencies as the Defence Research Board, Atomic Energy of Canada, and the CNR. These agencies maintain personnel offices separate from those of the Civil Service.

The office issues the following invitation:

"Graduate students from any faculty calling at the National Employment Service, Student Placement Office, will find opportunities for careers with the government which, in return for honest effort, will provide progressive security."

It also offers a folder, issued by the Civil Service, which "offers a fascinating evaluation of work available in Public Administration, Economics and Finance, Law and Engineering." Pamphlets in other fields are also available.

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