

# Editorial

## Wisdom of the Willow

Due to changing circumstances brought about by the passage of time, the needs and the means whereby these needs are to be met also, change. Laws, rules, and regulations which once were adequate may no longer be so. New situations - new problems - necessitate new solutions. Where new problems are subjected to old solutions a new problem is generated which is, of course, no solution at all.

The test for an individual, institution, or society is in its capacity to adjust to the demands of the Present. Resisting the Present is like a brain artery resisting a sufficient flow of blood - apoplexy ensues: degeneration of brain tissue develops leading to inevitable paralysis or death.

Why did Rome fall? The Third Reich? Because they were too rigid; unable to adjust themselves to contemporary demand.

I reject the notions that Rome fell because of internal moral decay; was powerful beyond her capacity; or spread her forces too broadly during conquest and, thus, fell prey to her enemies. These factors were present, not as causal factors, but rather, as symptoms of a more lethal melody - rigidity. "If this were true how, then, did Rome last as long as she did?"

The answer to that is quite simple: Rome experienced minimal technological and scientific advance thus enabling her rigid structure to accommodate it without serious complications. So long as she was constant, she could remain as an empire. But her conquests were to lead to her inevitable defeat because she exposed herself to many cultures with their diversity of achievements. Furthermore, while Rome was in conquest, she was

exerting her force on the world - not vice versa. Therefore, so long as she was militarily victorious she could preserve constancy; however, as stated above, in so doing, she exposed herself to too many diverse cultures which her rigidity could not withstand. Being rigid, she refused change, and that is lethal.

"What of Rome's greatness? Again, the answer to this is simple: although she produced impressive artistic creations; had a set of laws second to none; and was militarily brilliant; she failed to co-ordinate these factors into a cohesive unit. Otherwise put; she was politically weak. Rome was drunk with her own greatness and sought to reduce all the world to her will - the iron will - but the world was too much for her. The moment a nation (or individual) believes it is the center of reality (solepsistic) it is then in decline. Thus, Hitler fell, and with him, the Third Reich.

What of rigidity? In the individual, like the society, rigidity may appear as dormant or latent only to manifest itself in confrontation with a changing reality. He will react negatively with resistance which can take on terrible dimension (e.g. murder, genocide, etc.). He will become fanatic; a condition which re-enforces itself to the point of despair at which time he may either realize his fanaticism and abandon that about which he is fanatic, or destroy himself (Hitler).

If American and Canadian institutions are to survive, they must adapt to contemporary demands. The alternative is decline and, eventually, destruction. Russia and the United States are, due to their power in every aspect, most vulnerable to this threat. If they insist on remaining the same they invite only destruction. The same holds true for our educational institutions. If the Boards of Governors do not respond to the address of contemporary demand, they will soon find themselves in a hot predicament. To respond to enrolment decline by reviving old solutions is to head in the direction of decline. It expresses lack of wisdom, which is characteristic of rigidity.

-Stan Dalton

## Letters to the Editor



Mr. Editor:

As one who has spent too much teaching time rearranging school-style chairs, I would like to express my sincere thanks to the "powers-that-be" for their provision, at long last, of SEMINAR rooms.

I would also like to thank them for making these rooms available in the TOP floor of Dalton Hall and thus nearer to the Sun. This affords a timely reminder that students have spent most of their young lives - just that period when they are normally most energetic and spritied - confined to sitting in rows and being bombarded with waves of sound, exactly like the prisoners in Plato's description of the Cave who were bound with shadows and phantasma.

Of course even what has been unfortunately a traditional high-school set-

ting need not necessarily produce what has been unfortunately a traditional high-school mentality. Surely some fine education does take place in the school rooms of UPEI. However, teaching in school rooms will inevitably be enhanced by the addition - no matter how overdue or limited - of seminar rooms. These will provide an atmosphere not only of teaching but also of learning, an atmosphere in which the student becomes more deeply involved, whether in the lecture hall or the seminar room. It is this that would give UPEI the aura of a community of scholars, the aura necessary for a university, a place in which each learns from all. Or, at least, it won't do any harm to enrolment figures.

There may yet come the time when complaints are heard from students about having classes in school rooms, as there have been heard hitherto - or so some say - about professors holding seminars, desperately, in their homes.

Yours sincerely,

Joe Naylor