

## *G. R. Parkin*

(1896-1977)

G. Raleigh Parkin, who retired in 1961 as a senior official of the Sun Life Assurance Company, died in Montreal on 4 October 1977 after a short illness. He was 81 years old.

Raleigh Parkin was born in Toronto, the fifth child and only son of George and Annie Parkin who were from New Brunswick. His father was headmaster of Upper Canada College and well known in Canada and Britain as a progressive educationist. The son received most of his education in England where the family settled when George Parkin became the first administrator of the Rhodes Scholarships Trust. After attending Winchester School, Raleigh Parkin entered the Royal Military College, Kingston, Ontario, in 1913. At home in England for the summer vacation when the First World War broke out in August 1914, he joined the British army as one of "The First Hundred Thousand" and took part in the landing at Gallipoli. On demobilization, he entered Balliol College, Oxford to read history, but was known to remark that his study of it proved less enduring than the friendships he made there.

On returning to Canada to join Sun Life Assurance Company, he specialized in foreign investments, particularly in the Commonwealth and the United States. From the early nineteen-thirties he was for forty years a governor of the Institute of Current World Affairs (Crane Foundation) of New York, for most of this time being the only Canadian so honoured. He played an influential role in the Foundation's awarding of overseas fellowships to young men. The establishment of the Arctic Institute of North America at Montreal in 1944 was to a considerable degree due to his initiative, and to his skill as a catalyst in bringing together scientists, academics and businessmen from the United States, Newfoundland, Canada, and Denmark. His name is one of the four appearing

in the Act of Parliament which incorporated the Institute in 1945 and in the corresponding Act of the New York State Legislature. He was a member of the Board of Governors of the Institute and later served it for several years as a senior consultant. It was on his initiative that a collection of documents recording the activities of the Institute from its formative years until the present was deposited in the Public Archives of Canada in Ottawa.

He devoted the last decade of his life to the organization and annotation of the voluminous papers of his father, Sir George Parkin. This task might have daunted a much younger man, but he set about it in his customary systematic and thorough style, carrying on a far-ranging correspondence, and turning the completed work over to the Public Archives of Canada shortly before his death. The collection should serve as source material for social and political studies of Canada from the mid-nineteenth century until today, for it includes data from four generations of Parkins and their relatives. His search into family history even extended to Arctic Canada, where half a dozen place names were traced to the great-great uncle of Mrs. Raleigh Parkin, Admiral Cockburn, First Sea Lord of the Royal Navy in the early nineteenth century when the search for the Northwest Passage was revived. The admiral was, as Raleigh Parkin occasionally mentioned when visiting Washington, the one who sailed up the Potomac and burned down the White House during the War of 1812.

Raleigh Parkin was a quiet Canadian, little known to the public and rarely referred to in the press. His influence in North American affairs and internationally, which was far from negligible, was achieved by correspondence and conversation and by the value of his judgement in public affairs. He is survived by his wife Louise (Cockburn) Parkin and two daughters, Elizabeth Pound of Cambridge, England and Jane Blackwell of Los Angeles, California.

*Trevor Lloyd*