



MISS M. J. NEILSON, M.B.E.

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SECRETARY GENERAL WORLD CONFEDERATION OF PHYSICAL THERAPY

Miss Neilson has also been instrumental in the raising of salaries and served on various councils and committees connected with the Whitley Council for the Health Services (Great Britain). It is impossible to enumerate all Miss Neilson's accomplishments during her period with the Chartered Society but it is enough to say that their loss was certainly the World Confederation's gain and the position the W.C.P.T. holds in International affairs today reflects Miss Neilson's efficiency and dynamic personality.

Miss Neilson took a leading part in the preliminary talks which led to the formation of the W.C.P.T. and became Honorary Secretary and Treasurer at the first meeting in Copenhagen in 1951. These posts she held while still Secretary of the C.S.P. By 1961 it was evident that with the expansion of the activities of the W.C.P.T. this would no longer be practicable and she accepted the position of Secretary General of W.C.P.T., the post she holds today.

In 1953 the First Congress of W.C.P.T. was held in London, and its success was due to Miss Neilson's brilliant organizing ability, and it set the high standard of ensuing Congresses. Recent evidence of this was seen again in Copenhagen in June 1963. It is of interest to note that the W.C.P.T. is an International Non-Governmental Organization, having consultative status with United Nations and U.N.I.C.E.F. and World Health Organization (W.H.O.) and collaborates with other international bodies dealing with rehabilitation of disabled and handicapped persons. All this has been gained in a short period of a little over ten years.

While Miss Neilson is with us in South Africa we hope to learn more about the W.C.P.T. organization and through that, more about the wider world of Physical Therapy and how other countries have established themselves in that world. We expect, too, to learn about the developing countries and the training of physiotherapists in those countries and the work done by members of W.C.P.T. sent out to those areas from the older established countries. Meanwhile we hope Miss Neilson will gain something by being with us and will carry home with her an insight into conditions and opportunities which present here, and learn how we are trying to prove and improve ourselves.

This visit is of particular importance at this juncture as South Africa has recently been elected on to the Executive Committee of W.C.P.T. for an eight year period. Miss Jean Blair, our National Chairman, represents us on this committee and we are naturally fully aware of the honour and the responsibilities this recognition has brought us.

By this time the majority of the members of the South African Society of Physiotherapy will have had the opportunity and the privilege of meeting Miss Neilson.

An extensive four week tour of South Africa has been planned for her, and during that time it is hoped that she will meet, besides physiotherapists, many influential persons in other spheres who are interested in our profession and upon whose support we can depend.

To those physiotherapists who are members of the Chartered Society of Physiotherapy in London, and those who have visited or worked professionally in the United Kingdom, Miss Neilson is no stranger, but a friend from whom they have always been able to obtain advice or guidance.

She was the Secretary of the Chartered Society from 1943—1961 and during that time the Society was transformed from a small organization to one capable of taking its place among the leading professional bodies in Britain.

Before being immersed in the world of Physiotherapy Miss Neilson gained varied experience which has been of inestimable value ever since. She acted as Assistant Secretary of the Conference of The Inter-Parliamentary Union, served in public relations with the Institute of Incorporated Practitioners in Advertising and in medical and allied matters with the General Nursing Council of England and Wales.

In 1961 Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II bestowed upon Miss Neilson Membership of the Order of the British Empire, for her work while Secretary of the C.S.P. Miss Neilson is also one of the few women to be accepted by the Administration Staff College at Henley, where administrators from the higher ranks of industry and the Services are trained for top-level posts.

Besides her manifold routine duties as Secretary she steered the Society along the road to State Registration and remained with the Society until this was successfully achieved, through no mean effort on her part.