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APPOINTMENT OF SIR WILLIAM REFSHAUGE  
AS PRESIDENT OF WORLD HEALTH  
ORGANISATION ASSEMBLY

Statement by the Prime Minister, Mr. William McMahon

The Prime Minister, Mr. William McMahon, announced today that the Commonwealth Director-General of Health, Sir William Refshauge, had been appointed President of the 24th World Health Assembly.

Mr. McMahon said : "The election of Sir William Refshauge to preside over the 24th World Health Assembly is a very great honour, both for Australia and for Sir William personally.

"It is a recognition by the 132 member nations of the World Health Organisation of the value of Sir William's personal contribution to the cause of international health, and more generally, of the support Australia, which was one of the founder members of W. H. O. in 1948, has always given to that organisation.

"The World Health Organisation has as its objectives the attainment of the highest level of health by all peoples and this is a cause to which Australia has always given wholehearted support.

"Sir William has been closely connected with W. H. O. activities since his appointment as Director-General of Health in 1960 and he has during that time earned a high reputation as an international statesman and administrator in the cause of world health.

"Sir William has previously been honoured by the World Health Organisation by being appointed Chairman of two of the main committees of the World Health Assembly and in 1969 he was Chairman of the Executive Board of W. H. O. "

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CANBERRA  
5 May 1971

Major-General Sir William Dudley Refshauge, O. B. E., C. B. E., E. D., F. R. C. O. G., F. R. A. C. S., F. R. A. C. P.; Hon. F. R. S. H., F. A. C. M. A.

Major-General Sir William Refshauge became the Commonwealth Director-General of Health in September, 1960, on the retirement of Dr. A. J. Metcalfe. He was formerly Director-General of Australian Army Medical Services.

He was born in 1913 and educated at Scotch College, Melbourne and Melbourne University. His interest in the Australian Army began in 1930, when he enlisted as a member of the Scotch College cadet corps. Nine years later he joined the Commonwealth Military Forces at the outbreak of World War II, and was appointed Regimental Medical Officer of the 2/2nd Field Regiment. He subsequently commanded the 2/8th and 15th Field Ambulance, and was acting Director of Medical Services, 7th Division.

In seven years with the A. I. F. he served in the Western Desert, Greece, Crete, Wau-Mubo, Salamaua, Ramu Valley and North Borneo. He was awarded the O. B. E. in 1944 and Mentioned in Despatches four times.

After the war Sir William was in civil practice until February 1948, when he became Medical Superintendent of the Royal Women's Hospital, Melbourne. He occupied this post until 1951. In May of that year he enlisted in the Australian Regular Army as Deputy Director-General of Army Medical Services. In this capacity he visited Japan and Korea in 1952. He later visited military medical establishments in the United Kingdom, Germany and Canada and attended the 16th Congress of the International Committee of Military Medicine and Pharmacy, in Rome.

On June 15, 1955, he was appointed Honorary Physician to Her Majesty the Queen and on June 26 was promoted Major-General and appointed Director-General of Army Medical Services. He represented the Australian Army at the Bikini and Einewetok weapon tests in 1958.

A former rowing blue of Melbourne University, Sir William Refshauge gained his degrees of Bachelor of Medicine and Master of Surgery at the Melbourne University. He is a Fellow of the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists, London, a Fellow of the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons, and a Fellow of the Royal Australasian College of Physicians.

He was created a member of the Order of the Companion of the British Empire in 1959, and knighted in 1966.

Sir William Refshauge has attended meetings of the World Health Organisation as Chief Australian delegate each year since his appointment as Director-General of Health in 1960. He has been Chairman of the two main Committees of the World Health Assembly and Chairman of the Standing Committee on Administration and Finance of the Executive Board of W. H. O. In 1969 he was appointed Chairman of the Executive Board. He has been appointed President of the 24th World Health Assembly now in session in Geneva.

In August, 1942 he married Helen Elizabeth Stanfield Allwright, daughter of the late Richard Everett Allwright and the late Edith Allwright, of Peckham Vale, Gretna, Tasmania. He has five children (four sons and a daughter) and lives in Scarborough Street, Red Hill, Canberra.

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