

PHILLIPS, Sir THOMAS WILLIAMS (1883 - 1966), permanent secretary to the Ministry of Labour and National Service

Name: Thomas Williams Phillips

Date of birth: 1883

Date of death: 1966

Spouse: Alice Hair Phillips (née Potter)

Parent: Jane Ryder Phillips (née Whittington)

Parent: Thomas Phillips

Gender: Male

Occupation: permanent secretary to the Ministry of Labour and National Service

Area of activity: Politics, Government and Political Movements; Public and Social Service, Civil Administration

Author: Mary Auronwy James

Born 20 April 1883, second son of Thomas Phillips, a schoolmaster at Cemaes, Montgomeryshire, and Jane Ryder (née Whittington), his wife. In 1897 he entered Machynlleth county school where he gained numerous exhibitions and a B.A. degree of the University of London before leaving school in 1902 for Jesus College, Oxford, where he graduated with first-class hon. in classics (Lit. Hum.) and won the Gaisford Prize for Greek prose in 1905. He was called to the Bar at Gray's Inn in 1913. He joined the civil service in 1906 and went to the Board of Trade where he had a special responsibility for copyright matters. In 1919 he was transferred to the Ministry of Labour and soon rose to be deputy secretary of the department and permanent secretary in 1935. He was one of the chief architects of that large department, with responsibility for employment exchanges, unemployment insurance, and trade boards and industrial arbitration. The Ministry of Labour and National Service owed a great deal of its prestige to his work, and especially to his unobtrusive but extremely efficient leadership during World War II when it was brought closely into touch with all areas of employment in the country whilst mobilizing men and women for the forces and the production of munitions. In 1944 he was appointed permanent secretary of the new Ministry created to launch the new scheme of national insurance, and remained there for four years. He afterwards became chairman of many public bodies, including the Central Land Board and the War Damage Commission (1949-59). Seen as possessing shrewd judgement when dealing with complexities, he was a valued counsellor to a long line of ministers. Among his many honours was a knighthood (1936) and an honorary LL.D. of the University of Wales (1946). He was a prominent member of the Montgomeryshire Society in London.

In 1913 he married Alice Hair Potter (died 1965) and they had two sons and a daughter. He died 21 September 1966.

Author

Dr Mary Auronwy James

Sources

Burke's æ| Peerage, Baronetage, and Knightage

Who's who in Wales, (1921)

Machynlleth County School prospectus and list of successes (1905), (1905)

The Times, 24 September 1966

Further Reading

Wikipedia Article: [Thomas Williams Phillips](#)

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