

Neruda Manuscripts Missing, Publisher Here Says

By ERIC PACE

Pablo Neruda, the Chilean poet, had substantially completed writing his memoirs before he died of cancer in Santiago on Sunday, a New York publisher said yesterday, but the whereabouts of the manuscript is not known.

The publisher, Roger W. Straus Jr., president of Farrar, Straus & Giroux, said that Mr. Neruda, who won the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1971, had also left behind the manuscripts of dozens of recently written poems as well as a valuable personal library that was housed in a wing of the poet's seaside home at Isla Negra, outside Santiago.

The fate of this material is also not known here, Mr. Straus reported in an interview, although a New York Times correspondent reported from Santiago Tuesday that a house in Santiago that belonged to Mr. Neruda, an avowed Communist for many years, had been sacked and badly damaged.

Santiago's new ruling junta has called the damage regrettable and denied responsibility for it, but there is a widespread belief that the Santiago house was raided by the military in search of leftist leaders arms, and Marxist literature.

Contract Was Signed

Mr. Neruda, who was 69 years old, was a friend of Dr. Salvador Allende Gossens, the Marxist President who was overthrown by the military Sept. 11.

Last summer, Mr. Straus reported, Mr. Neruda signed a contract under which Farrar Straus was to have the world English-language rights to the memoirs and to six other books. He said the poet had been hurrying to finish his autobiography in time for it to be published on his 70th birthday, July 12, 1974.

"Now what we are all sweating out is where we are in terms of the memoirs," Mr. Straus reported.

Mr. Neruda had suggested that in their completed form they might amount to 80,000 to 90,000 words. Mr. Straus declined to divulge the financial details of the contract except to say that the sums involved "won't change the economy of Chile — under any administration."



Matilde Urrutia, widow of the poet Pablo Neruda, at his funeral in Santiago Tuesday

Associated Press

The eventual royalties are expected to be paid by Mr. Neruda's literary agent, Carmen Barcells, to his widow, Matilde, who appear at his funeral in Santiago Tuesday. The poet's only child, a daughter, died in 1942.

What disclosures Mr. Neruda makes in his memoirs are not known here, but besides writing reams of poetry he had been active in politics from the time of the Spanish Civil War through recent tenure as Chile's

Ambassador to France. He resigned the post in February because of health.

Since then, his friends have reported, he lived and worked in the Isla Negra house, a two-story brick structure with picture windows looking out to sea.

A journalist and friend, Mrs. Rita Ghibert, reported in "Seven Voices," published by Knopf this year, that Mr. Neruda had given the house and the books in the library to the Chilean Communist party.

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