

A Good Man to Work With

THE Australian-born historian, war correspondent and radio commentator, Chester Wilmot, who was aboard the Comet jet airliner which crashed into the Mediterranean a few weeks ago, was heard most recently as narrator of the round-the-world radio programme which preceded the Queen's Christmas Day broadcast. Mr. Wilmot was perhaps best known for his best-selling study of Allied war policy, *The Struggle for Europe*. Laurence Gilliam told *The Listener* when he was in New Zealand a few months ago that much of the material on which the book was based was originally commissioned by the BBC for historical documentary programmes.

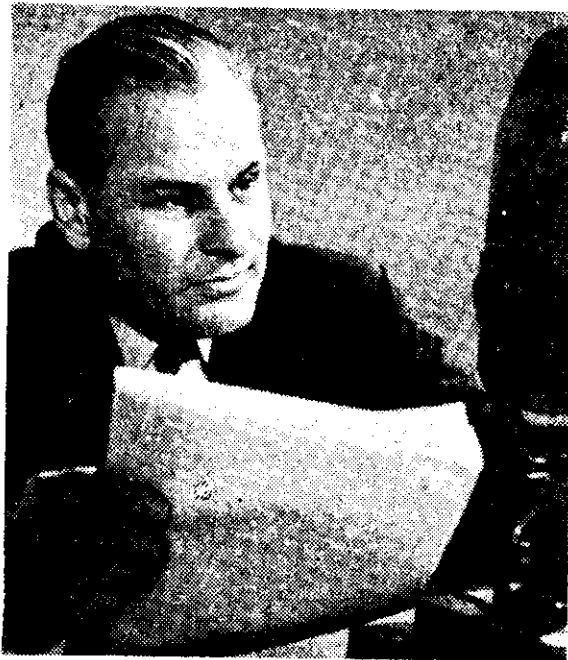
Here is a picture of Wilmot at work as Keith Hay, NZBS Senior Talks Officer, saw him in the autumn of 1950.

"Chester Wilmot was at that time broadcasting from the BBC a weekly political commentary for Australia which I was producing," Mr. Hay told *The Listener*. "Each week he would come into the studio about 20 minutes before his broadcast—straight from the House of Commons, and usually with the latest piece of political gossip from the lobbies. Most of his script would be written out, but there would be several alternative endings so that he could fit his talk accurately into the five minutes allowed. He would tell me as we looked at the script, 'I'm

going to talk about this and this, and if I've time I'll elaborate this point.' The arrangement was that I should nod to him when four minutes was up and give him a signal at four and a half minutes.

"After a run through he would start his broadcast. At four and a half minutes he would begin to round it off, his eyes moving up and down from script to clock. At five minutes dead he would stop."

Mr. Hay described Wilmot as a stocky, dark-haired man with a very forceful, almost "thrusting" personality.



CHESTER WILMOT

BBC photograph



RICHARD FARRELL

★ Farrell from the Studio ★

STUDIO recitals from a link of the four YC stations will be given by Richard Farrell in addition to this week's Royal Concert performance. The first recital, to be broadcast at 8.0 p.m. this Sunday, January 31, consists of works by Brahms: *Variations and Fugue on a Theme by Handel*, and two Intermezzi. The second recital, at 8.0 p.m. on Tuesday, February 2, will consist of works by Ravel. It begins with the celebrated virtuoso piece, *Jeux d'Eau*, and includes *Alborada del Gracioso*, in the original piano version as the fourth section of *Miroirs*. He will also play *Forlane and Menuet* from *Le Tombeau de Couperin*, *Valses Nobles et Sentimentales*, and *Pavane*.

"He was a good man to work with," he said. "He would listen to what you had to say—and either accept or reject it right away. As a news analyst he was the most assured and competent man I've known. He was really on top of his job."

Wilmot was writing his book at that time—he spent five years on it—and friends at the BBC who had seen parts of the manuscript told Mr. Hay it was going to be "a world-beater."

Chester Wilmot's voice will be heard from 3YZ at 9.30 p.m. on Saturday, February 6, in *Town Forum*, in which he is one of a panel answering questions about Australia.

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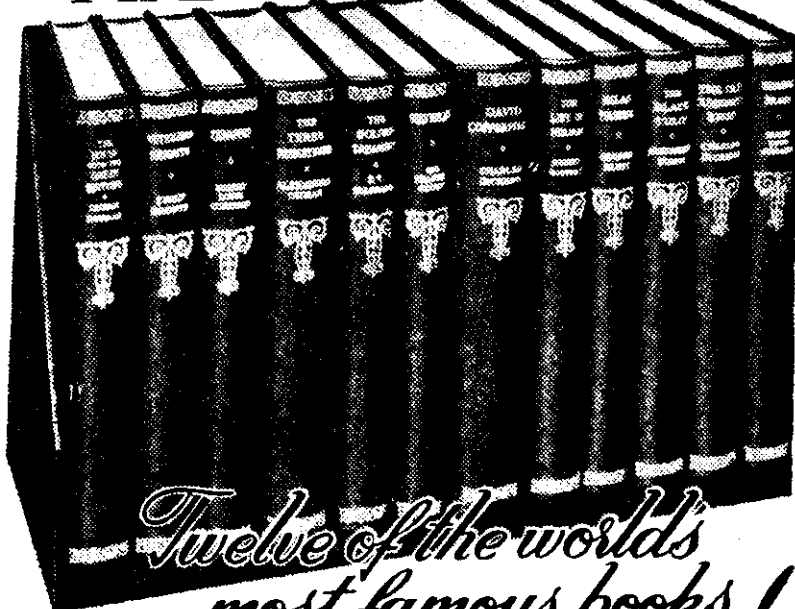
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