



BBC photograph
LAURENCE GILLIAM, BBC Head
of Features

LAURENCE GILLIAM, who has been producer for the last 20 years of the BBC Commonwealth Christmas programme, told *The Listener* that New Zealand, as host country to the Queen at Christmas time, will be "the senior partner in this triple partnership."

"The New Zealand Government," he went on, "will suggest to the Queen a suitable time for the broadcast, after consultation with the governments of all other countries in the Commonwealth to decide which time will be most suitable to their peoples. Radio engineers from the countries involved will hold discussions to decide what time of day will give optimum reception of short-wave signals from New Zealand in the rest of the world. They will have to decide when the best signals will fall around the world on

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country, and a Foundation has now been established to support the Players, to guarantee an audience and to share some of the burdens of a long tour. The response to the Foundation has been excellent everywhere.

"We find it very encouraging," Richard Campion said to me, "that people inside the amateur theatre and outside in the business world are so interested in what we're trying to do."

I asked what plans he has for the next tour. "First of all Ngaio Marsh will produce a Christmas play for us to attract the children especially. Then the second tour will include the Fry translation of *Ring Around the Moon*, by Anouilh, and *Ned Kelly*, by the New Zealander Douglas Stewart.

"Did anything specific emerge from Anthony Quayle's visit?"

"Well, yes. A lot of encouragement. He has asked Raymond Boyce to send designs to him at Stratford. When he gets back to England he will help us get English actors out here for short seasons."

Here, then, is something new in New Zealand theatre—when the curtain goes up on the premier performance in Wellington this Friday, May 8, our cultural life will be broadened. Anthony Quayle left us with the firm assurance that his company would return in 1957. But four years is a long time to wait and if it were not for the courage and enterprise of Richard and Edith Campion we

BBC, ABC, and NZBS Will Work Together

PLANS for the world-wide broadcast of the Coronation ceremony, and of the Queen's Christmas message to the Commonwealth from Auckland this year, moved a stage closer to completion in Wellington last week when Laurence Gilliam, BBC Head of Features Department, and Patrick Jubb, BBC Representative for Australia and New Zealand, conferred with officers of the NZBS. After the discussions, it was announced that the 1953 Commonwealth Christmas Programme, in which the Queen's Message forms the climax, will for the first time be presented, not by the BBC alone, but by the BBC, ABC and NZBS in partnership. To New Zealand will fall the onerous responsibility of ensuring that the rest of the Commonwealth receives clear reception of the Queen's voice.

Christmas Day. It is New Zealand's task to ensure that the rest of the Commonwealth will receive clear reception of the Queen's voice."

Every available shortwave and radio-telephone installation in the Dominion will be called into service. The transmitters available for this immense undertaking include the Radio New Zealand shortwave transmitters at Titahi Bay, the new Post Office 40-kilowatt transmitter at Himatangi, which will be completed by Christmas, the Navy's 40-kilowatt transmitter at Waiouru, and the Telecommunications radio telephone circuit to Sydney. "Everything that New Zealand has got will be used," Mr. Gilliam said.

The production of Commonwealth Round-up, in which people from all walks of life in 19 or 20 Commonwealth countries contribute items describing how they are spending Christmas Day, will originate this year from the Sydney studios of the ABC, Mr. Gilliam said. The last item will come from New Zealand itself as an introduction to the Queen's speech from Auckland. "The programme will begin

with the words, 'This is the New Zealand Broadcasting Service, the Australian Broadcasting Commission, and the British Broadcasting Corporation calling the Commonwealth from Sydney.'"

"The theme of this year's Commonwealth Round-up, which in England is regarded as the most important broadcast of the year, will be in the form of a radio retracing of the Queen's journey to New Zealand," he said. "The programme will follow the route taken by the Queen across the Atlantic to the West Indies, down through the Pacific to Fiji and New Zealand, calling in speakers from the Commonwealth countries on each side as the journey progresses, and then follow the route to be taken by the Queen on her return, through Australia, the Indian Ocean and around the African coast back to England."

"The programme will include items from more of the Commonwealth's Pacific countries, such as Fiji and possibly New Guinea, than it has previously done. Countries which will certainly contribute to the programme—besides the United Kingdom, Australia and New Zealand—are Canada, South Africa, Rhodesia, Kenya, the Gold Coast of Nigeria, Cyprus and Malta, the West Indies. If it is technically possible, Fiji, New Guinea and the Antarctic will also join in."

The steps by which the programme will be built up were briefly described by Mr. Gilliam. Suggestions would be invited from the countries involved for the form of their contributions, scripts and test recordings would be airmailed out, and finally an agreed item would be arrived at. As Christmas approached test rehearsals would be made by radio telephone, a recording would be made of the item over radio telephone, and an additional recording would be sent by airmail. From these 19 or 20 items the producer would build up his programme, write the linking narration, employ a composer to write the linking music, engage a symphony orchestra to play the music, and a well-known personality to speak the narration. This year all these things would be done in Australia. An Australian narrator would be used, an Australian composer would write the music, and the Sydney Symphony Orchestra would play it.

"When the programme goes on the air," he said, "every attempt will be made to get live, direct contributions from the 19 to 20 countries taking part, and the recordings will be held as a safeguard against poor reception at the transmission point."

"The Commonwealth Christmas Round-up has the largest listening



Spencer Digby photograph
WILLIAM YATES, Director of the
NZBS

audience of any programme broadcast by the BBC," he said. "In Britain alone 25 million listeners heard it, and in addition to the millions of listeners in the Commonwealth itself, there were millions more in America, where at least one of the major networks rebroadcast it, and on the Continent of Europe."

CORONATION TIME-TABLE

NZBS arrangements for rebroadcasting the Coronation Service, the State Procession through London, and the Queen's Coronation Day message, were announced last week in Wellington. From 9.15 p.m. on Coronation Day, Tuesday, June 2, until 4.30 the next morning, all the YA, YZ, ZB, ZA and X stations will rebroadcast the ceremonies direct from the BBC.

The Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh leave Buckingham Palace at 9.25 a.m. G.M.T. (9.25 p.m. in New Zealand) and arrive at Westminster Abbey at 10.0. At 10.15 the Coronation Service will begin and continue until 12.45. This will be followed by a broadcast of music from the Abbey and commentaries on the departures. At 1.50 the Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh return to Buckingham Palace through the streets of London, arriving at the Palace at 3.30. Until 4.15 there will be descriptions of the scene outside the Palace and along the processional route. At 4.15 the Queen will appear on the balcony. Station 2YA only will continue with a musical programme, following the Queen's appearance on the balcony, until 6.0 a.m. (June 3). At 7.0 a.m. the YA and YZ stations will rebroadcast the BBC programme *Long Live the Queen!* narrated by Robert Donat. At 8.0 a.m. the Queen's Coronation Day message will be rebroadcast by the YA, YZ, ZB, ZA and X stations, and this will be repeated by the YAs and YZs following the weather forecast at 12.30 p.m. At 7.0 p.m. a shortened version of the Coronation Service and Procession will be broadcast by the YA, YZ and X stations, followed by a further repeat of the Queen's message. At 8.15 p.m. the YA and YZ stations will broadcast the BBC programme *Coronation Day Across the World*.

could be facing another vacuum in professional theatre in this country. Whatever financial resources and whatever creative energies they are prepared to put into this company, it is surely the responsibility of us all to keep the New Zealand Players on the road.



ONE of the costume sketches by Raymond Boyce for the New Zealand Players' production of "The Young Elizabeth"