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**CENTRAL CHANCERY OF THE ORDERS
OF KNIGHTHOOD,**

St. James's Palace, S.W.1.

19th December, 1944.

The KING has been graciously pleased to give Orders for the undermentioned appointments to the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire, in the Merchant Navy, and for the publication in the London Gazette of the names of those specially shown below as having received an expression of Commendation for their brave conduct.

To be Additional Officers of the Civil Division of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire:—

Captain Leslie William Cooper, Master, s.s. "Samlong" (Managers: Prince Line Ltd.).

The ship, engaged on Normandy operations, was torpedoed and badly damaged. The boats were ordered away but the Master and four of the crew remained on board to inspect the damage.

The Master showed outstanding courage and determination. After ensuring the safety of most of his crew, he remained on board to examine the damage. The inspection of the wrecked engine and boiler rooms was fraught with considerable risk as all lights had failed and it was not known whether the bulkheads would collapse. It was mainly due to Captain Cooper's determined efforts that the ship was brought safely to port.

Captain Charles Henry Whitehouse, Master, s.s. "Ascanius" (Ocean Steamship Company, Ltd.).

When returning from Normandy to the United Kingdom, the ship was torpedoed and casualties were sustained. The vessel was badly damaged and two of the holds were flooded. Fire broke out in the forepeak but this was promptly tackled and extinguished. The ship was then taken in tow and brought to safety.

The Master displayed great courage and coolness throughout and, by his determination and leadership, did much to ensure the

saving of his ship. Previous to this attack his ship had remained off the Normandy beaches for six weeks, anchored in-shore as close as possible. In spite of many air attacks during this period she was brought through without damage or casualties. Captain Whitehouse has been in command throughout the war and on many occasions has been subjected to severe enemy attacks. On each occasion however, all attacks have been beaten off and, mainly due to his skilful seamanship and excellent defence, the ship escaped serious damage.

To be an Additional Member of the Civil Division of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire:—

George Francis Robert Ellerby, Esq., Second Officer, s.s. "Empire Morn" (Managers: Headlam & Son).

The ship, sailing with an escort, was torpedoed in darkness. Two explosions occurred, killing 21 of the crew. As the damage was extensive the remainder of the crew left the ship and lay off in the boats. At daybreak the Master and a number of the crew re-boarded and, with the assistance of a tug, the ship was brought back to port despite considerable difficulties.

The Second Officer displayed outstanding courage and devotion to duty. While the boats were being lowered, he did much to ensure the safe disembarkation of the crew and, but for the excellent example set by his leadership and steadiness in the difficult and dangerous circumstances, further casualties might easily have occurred.

COMMENDATIONS.

Those named below have been Commended for brave conduct when their ships encountered enemy ships, submarines, aircraft or mines:—

Basil Leo Brind, Esq., Staff Captain, s.s. "Ascanius" (Ocean Steamship Company, Ltd.).

Peter Dunsire, Esq., Chief Officer, s.s. "Ascanius" (Ocean Steamship Company, Ltd.).