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FRIDAY, 29 JANUARY, 1954

CENTRAL CHANCERY OF THE ORDERS  
 OF KNIGHTHOOD.

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

*29th January, 1954.*

The QUEEN has been graciously pleased, on the advice of Her Majesty's New Zealand Ministers, to give orders for the under-mentioned awards of the George Medal and of the British Empire Medal:—

*Awarded the George Medal:—*

Arthur Cyril ELLIS, Postmaster, Taihape.  
 John Warren HOLMAN, South Beach,  
 Plimmerton.

*Awarded the British Empire Medal  
 (Civil Division):—*

Arthur Dewar BELL, Raetihi.  
 William Ian INGLIS, Railway Guard, Ngaio,  
 Wellington.

The central pier of the railway bridge over the Wangwaeko River at Tangiwai, North Island, was washed away by flood water on the night of 24th December, 1953, and the Wellington-Auckland Express crashed through the bridge into the river below. The locomotive and five coaches plunged into the raging waters, one coach hung for a while on the edge of the broken bridge before it, too, fell into the water, and three coaches remained safely on the track.

Mr. Ellis was driving a truck along the road which runs parallel to the railway line. He saw that the road bridge was under water and attempted to stop the train but was unsuccessful.

Immediately after the accident Ellis entered the last dangling coach in an effort to rescue the passengers. He was helped by Mr. Holman, a passenger in the coach, but before much could be done the coach fell into the river with Ellis and Holman and the rest of the passengers inside it. Ellis then smashed a window in the roof of the coach and he and Holman, who was standing in water up to his neck, passed passengers out through it to comparative safety. As a result of their gallant efforts only one life was lost in that coach.

Mr. Inglis was the guard on the train but was not in the coaches which first fell into the river. He made his way to the coach which was dangling over the edge of the bridge, and persuaded passengers to leave quietly. He then joined in the rescue work and helped many to safety. His coolness and courage were outstanding.

Mr. Bell, who was driving a car along the highway when the accident occurred, immediately started rescue operations. While working in deep water between two cars he helped many women and children to safety and although injured himself continued his efforts until exhausted.

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