

NEW ZEALAND - TANGIWAH RAIL
CRASH KILLS 136.

These are the first newreel pictures of the tragic rail crash at Tangiwai. On Christmas Eve the Wellington to Auckland express plunged into the Mangahau River when it crossed a bridge that had been weakened by severe flooding. A great wall of water which swept down from a nearby volcano. Of the 278 passengers and crew on board, 136 are believed to have perished.

Later, at Wellington, hundreds of relatives of the dead gather for a mass funeral. The Duke of Edinburgh and Mr. Holland, the New Zealand Prime Minister, attend the burial of 21 unidentified bodies. A wreath of red roses, blue hydrangea petals and arum lilies is laid by the Duke.

To many of the bereaved, the Duke has words of sympathy and comfort. In her Christmas message to the Commonwealth, the Queen said that there was no-one in all her lands who would not grieve at this most tragic disaster.

Soon it is the turn of the Maoris to honour the Queen, their highest chieftain. At Waitangi, Her Majesty is challenged by a chieftain who lays a stick, representing the seced, at her feet.

The crowd swarms forward as the royal visitors walk behind the chieftain to the site where 113 years ago, the Maori ceded their land to Queen Victoria. Now, in welcome to Queen Elizabeth, ritual chants are sung by wives and daughters of Maori chiefs -

To salute the Queen, the men-folk perform a fierce war-dance.
