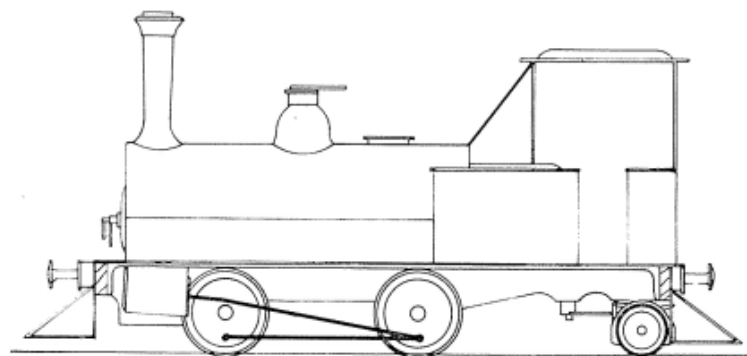




THE FIRST LOCOMOTIVES AT WELLINGTON AND NAPIER

Some Notes on the Old "C" Class Saddle-Tank Locomotives of 1873-76

THE OCCASION of the centenaries of the first railways at Wellington* and at Napier lends some interest to the locomotives that were used on the first trains between Wellington and Lower Hutt and between Napier and Hastings in 1874. They were certainly small, of the 0-4-0 saddle-tank type that later became the first class "C" on New Zealand Railways, and weighed only 15 tons ready for service. Because this class of locomotive was widely used on railway construction work and transferred from place to place with almost gay abandon, the complete history of the individual members of the class is most difficult to piece together, if indeed it is now possible. The following notes are intended as no more than an introduction to their story.

AMONG the several relatively small locomotives that were ordered for the first "Vogel" railways in the early 1870s, there was a batch described as four wheels, coupled, with two outside cylinders 9½ in. diameter by 16 in. stroke. The wheels had a diameter of 2 ft. 6 in. on a wheelbase of 6 feet; the firebox had a grate area of 7.3 sq. ft.; the boiler had an evaporative heating surface of 392 sq. ft.; and the whole was surmounted by a saddle tank holding 300 gallons of water. Ten of these locomotives ordered on 23 January 1872 were intended at that stage for allocation, two each, to the Kaipara, New Plymouth, Wellington, Picton, and Invercargill sections. Another five were ordered

on 10 January 1874, intended for the Napier (2) and Westport (3) sections, and a final one was ordered on 26 September 1874, ostensibly for the Greymouth section.

The first ten were ordered from Neilson and Company, Glasgow, and the remainder from Dubs and Company in the same city. By 30 June 1877 the returns showed these 15-ton locomotives as allocated to Kaipara, 1; Napier, 3; Wellington, 2;

*Wellington to Lower Hutt, 13 km, opened for traffic on 14 April 1874; see "The Railway Comes to Wellington" by D. G. Hoy (NZRO Volume 21, 1964, pp. 40-48, issue No. 100); also "Rails Out of the Capital", by the same author, NZRLS Wellington Branch 1970.

Allocation of "C" Class 0-4-0 Tank Locomotives as recorded in the annual railway returns at 30 June each year to 1879, thence at 31 March.

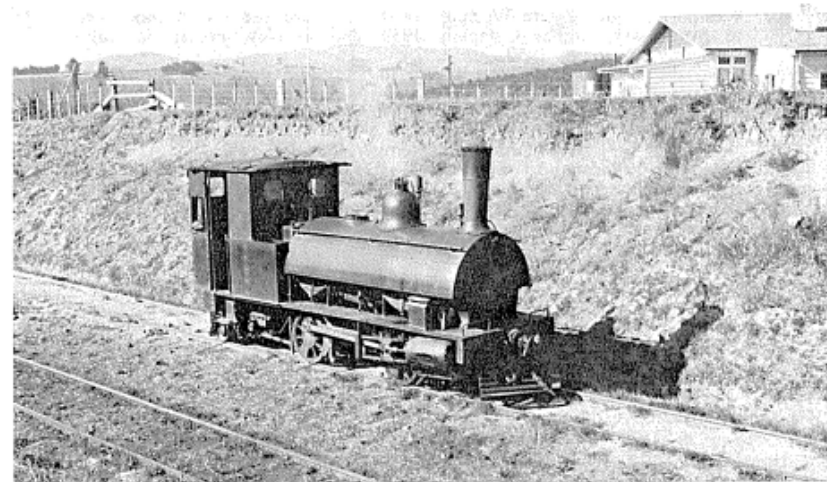
Section	1877	1878	1879	1880	1881	1882	1883	1884	1885	1886	1887
Kaipara	1	1	1	1	1	—	—	—	—	—	—
Auckland	—	—	—	—	—	1	1	1	1	1	1
N. Plymouth	—	—	—	2	2	2	2	2	—	—	—
Wanganui	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	2	3	3
Napier	3	3	3	3	3	—	—	—	—	—	—
Wellington	2	2	2	2	2	1	—	—	—	1	1
Picton	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Westport	3	3	2	2	2	3	3	3	3	2	2
Greymouth	2	2	2	2	2	2	1	1	1	—	—
Christchurch	1	1	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Invercargill	1	1	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Hurunui-Bluff	—	—	—	2	2	4	4	4	4	3	3
Totals	15	15	14	16	16	15	13	13	13	12	12

Note: Some obvious misprints in the printed returns have been corrected, such as the two Picton "C"s, which in 1880 were inadvertently shown in the "D" class column.

Picton, 2; Westport, 3; and Greymouth, 2. At least two are believed to have been on the main South Island section, and one was probably engaged on construction work on the New Plymouth section, although this class was not shown on New Plymouth locomotive returns until 1879.

It appears that the first of the Neilson locomotives, maker's No. 1764, was

allocated to Wellington, where it became known as *Belmont*, the locomotive sold to the Wellington and Manawatu Railway Company in 1882 and later, in 1891, to the Castlecliff Railway Company at Wanganui, where it remained until a further sale in 1918. The second Neilson locomotive, No. 1765, became the Wanganui Section's C-21 in 1882 and No. 166



Photograph: L. J. Hostick

A former NZR "C" class locomotive (Dubs and Co. No. 885) working for the Mines Department at the Renown Colliery, Rotorua, on 29 April 1950.

NZR "C" CLASS SADDLETANK LOCOMOTIVES

Neilson and Co., Glasgow, Scotland, 1873
(ordered 23 January 1872)

- No. 1764 Wellington Section to 1882. Named "Belmont". Sold to Wellington and Manawatu Railway Company in 1882, and in 1891 to the Castlecliff Railway Company, who in turn sold it in 1918.
- 1765 Apparently allocated to the New Plymouth Section, where it became C-21 in 1882 and 166 in 1890. Sold to a contractor in 1892. Purchased by the Castlecliff Railway in 1899.
- 1766 Picton Section C-2 until 1890, when it became No. 148. Renumbered 577 when allocated to Stores Branch in 1912. Sold in 1922.
- 1767 Picton Section C-1 until 1890, when it became No. 147. Sold in 1915.
- 1768 To Invercargill at first. Hurunui-Bluff Section No. 5 by 1880. Sold in 1892.
- 1769 Became Wanganui Section's C-23 in 1886, apparently after transfer from either Westport or Greymouth. Renumbered 168 in 1890. Sold in 1919.
- 1770 From the Napier Section to the South Island in 1882 and numbered 6. Sold in 1888.
- 1771 From the Napier Section to the South Island in 1882 and numbered 31. Transferred to Wellington in 1886 and numbered C-1. Renumbered 194 in 1890. Sold to PWD in 1893 and eventually numbered 505.
- 1772 From Greymouth Section to Greymouth Harbour Board in 1885; on loan to PWD 1922-23; to Stuart and Chapman, Ross, 1924-25; converted to petrol locomotive 1948.
- 1773 Apparently to Canterbury at first. Hurunui-Bluff Section No. 53 by 1880. To Westport in 1888. Withdrawn 1920.

Dubs and Co., Glasgow, Scotland, 1875
(ordered 10 January 1874)

- No. 800 Kaipara Section at first to become the Auckland Section's C-51 in 1882 and No. 239 in 1890. Sold in 1896.
- 801 Wanganui Section C-22 in 1882, apparently transferred from Westport about 1879. No. 167 from 1890. Sold in 1915.
- 802 Westport Section C-2 to Westport Harbour Board 1887; sold about 1921; to Bruce Bay Timber Company 1939, and to New Forest Sawmilling Company, Ngahere, 1950.
- 803 From the Westport Harbour Board in 1922 and numbered 236. Sold to PWD in 1925.
- 804 Westport Section C-1 before 1890, when it was renumbered 158. Sold in 1920.

(ordered 26 September 1874)

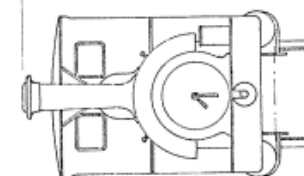
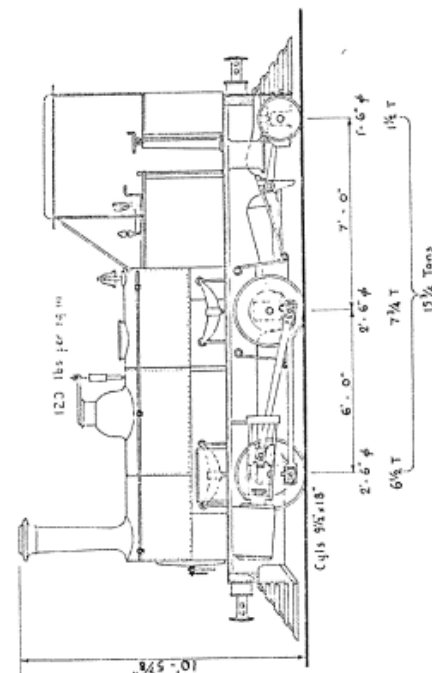
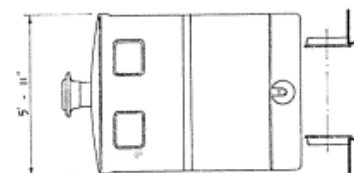
- 885 Apparently allocated to Greymouth at first and transferred to the PWD in the 1880s. Became No. 512. Sold in 1927 to the Renown Colliery, Rotowaro, ultimately to become the property of the Mines Department. Acquired in 1972 by the New Zealand Railway and Locomotive Society's Wellington Branch for preservation.

in the 1889-90 renumbering. It was sold to a contractor in 1892 and purchased in 1899 by the Castlecliff Railway, where it worked for many more years.

The second locomotive on the New Plymouth section in 1879 appears to have been transferred from Westport in that year. It was a Dubs engine and became Wanganui's C-22 and ultimately No. 167 until it was sold in 1915. The second Wellington "C" was transferred away in

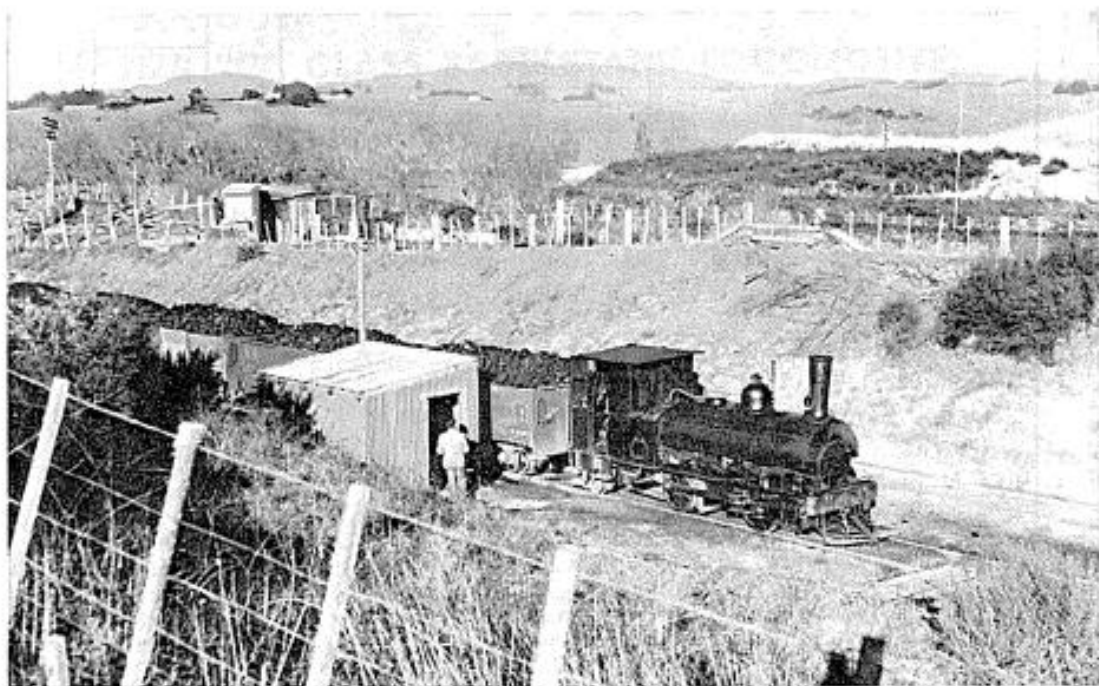
1881, apparently to Westport, so that neither of Wellington's two original locomotives remained long enough to receive a Wellington Section number in the 1882 scheme.

Only the two Picton Section locomotives and the one at Auckland seemed to "stay put" right through to 1891, to receive Nos. 147, 148, and 239 respectively. All three of Napier's "C"s were moved away after March 1881, two of them to the



NEW ZEALAND RAILWAYS	
LOCOMOTIVES	
CLASS C	O-4-2 T.
MAKERS:	YEAR
NEILSON & CO	1873
DUBS & CO	1875
DRAWN	1:7.50
L/2	

TABLE	15% Tons
WORKING ORDER	4061 lbs
FACE	392 44ft
A	7.3
CITY	300 gals
	18 cwt



Photograph: D. Cross

The old NZR "C" class locomotive was still at work at the Renown Colliery in 1957. It has now been acquired by the Wellington Branch of the NZRLS as an example of the first kind of locomotive used at Wellington.

South Island to become Nos. 6 and 31 in 1882. "C" 6 was sold in 1888, whilst No. 31 had gone to Wellington in 1886 to become C-1 and ultimately, in 1890, No. 194. The identity of the third is not known to this writer.

As can be imagined of a locomotive with driving wheels only 30 inches in diameter, the "C"s were unsuitable for any speeds much beyond 20 or 25 m.p.h. Indeed these were the maximum running speeds generally permitted on the railways where they worked in the 1870s. Nor were they particularly powerful, although Charles Rous-Marten commented that they were capable of pulling "very decent loads". In 1888 the working timetable for the Wellington Section showed that the "C" was rated to take up to 140 tons between Wellington and Upper Hutt and could haul 40 tons (about four loaded wagons!) up the 1 in 35 grade beyond Upper Hutt. Forty tons was also the maximum load laid down for a "C" on the climb out of Picton in the working timetable of 1901.

As originally placed in service these little locomotives had a marked tendency

to "wag their tails" or to oscillate as they developed speed while pulling hard, no doubt especially when they were running cab leading. This tendency was checked by the fitting, during the late 1870s and the 1880s, of a Bissel trailing truck under the cab, the opportunity being taken at the same time to extend the cab and thus provide a little more "elbow room".

The accompanying tables summarise some of the information about the early careers of these "C" class locomotives. Many of them survived until quite recent times in industrial service, and Dubs No. 885, in fact, was not released by the Mines Department for retirement until 1971. Earlier in its career, as the Public Works Department's No. 512, it had been used on railway construction projects at Gisborne, 1901-1905; on the West Coast of the South Island, 1905-1914; southward from Blenheim, 1914-1916; and at Stratford, on the line to Okahukura, 1918-1923. Its even earlier life in the 19th century is obscure, but it appears to have spent its first years at Greymouth. Details of the later history of other "C" class locomotives will have to await another occasion.