

THE LINE OF "ENDEAVOUR"

Napier - Wellington Train Services Since 1891

By T. A. McGavin

INTRODUCTION this year of the new "Endeavour" buffet-car train service between Napier and Wellington, 197 miles (317 km), focusses attention on the trains that have linked these two centres over the past 80 years. Passengers were first able to travel all the way by rail in March 1891, when the last section of the Napier-Palmerston North railway was completed. An "express" train was then introduced between Napier and Palmerston North daily except Sunday to connect at the latter station with the mail trains that were run between Wanganui and Wellington in conjunction with the Wellington and Manawatu Railway Company.

Prior to 1891, and since 22 March 1887, when the line was completed to Woodville, two mixed trains were run in each direction daily except Sunday between Napier and Woodville, taking nearly 6½ hours to cover the 94.3 miles. In March 1891, however, Dannevirke became the terminal for the mixed trains to and from Napier, still two each way daily; another mixed train was put on from Dannevirke to Palmerston North in the mornings, returning in the evening; and "express" trains were introduced leaving Napier at 10.45 a.m. for Palmerston North, and Palmerston North at 11.55 a.m. for Napier. These trains covered the 111.8 miles southbound from Napier in 5hr. 45min. (Woodville being reached in less than 5 hours), and the

northbound run from Palmerston North in 5hr 50min. They were "express" in name only, in that they stopped at only 15 of the 29 intermediate stations, but the highest running speed allowed on any part of the line was 35 m.p.h., and in many instances less. There were of course no continuous brakes on the trains, and the 36 minutes allowed for the 14.4 miles between Hastings and Te Aute (now Opapa), start to stop, were typical of the schedules over the easier sections of the line, which attains an altitude of 1,013 feet (309 metres) at Matamau.

Travellers leaving Napier at 10.45 a.m. would change at Palmerston North on to the Wanganui-Wellington mail train, which was due to reach the Manawatu Company's Thorndon station in the city

NAPIER - PALMERSTON NORTH RAILWAY OPENING DATES

(Note: Distances in this table are from end to end of rails, whereas distances usually quoted are from centre to centre of stations.)

Section	Distance		Opened
	Miles	Km	
Napier-Hastings	11.76	18.9	12 Oct 1874
Hastings-Pski Paki	4.32	7.0	1 Jan 1875
Peki Paki-Te Aute ¹	10.19	16.4	17 Feb 1876
Te Aute-Waipawa	12.64	20.3	28 Aug 1876
Waipawa-Waipukurau	4.60	7.4	1 Sep 1876
Waipukurau-Takapau	12.95	20.8	12 Mar 1877
Takapau-Kopua	5.77	9.3	25 Jan 1878
Kopua-Makotuku	5.26	8.5	9 Aug 1880
Makotuku-Matamau	4.26	6.9	23 June 1884
Matamau-Tahoraiti	7.52	12.1	1 Dec 1884
Tahoraiti-Woodville	15.09	24.3	22 Mar 1887
Woodville-Palmerston North	17.32	27.9	9 Mar 1891
	111.68	179.8	
Ormondville Deviation, Deduct	0.47	0.8	9 Jan 1907
Adjustments, Deduct	0.32	0.5	23 July 1923
	110.89	178.5	

¹ Te Aute was later renamed Opaia.

at 9.50 p.m. The total journey time over the 199 miles (320 km) from Napier to Wellington was thus 11hr. 5min. Northbound the "Mail" left the Thorndon station in Wellington at the early hour of 6.30 a.m., so the journey to Napier, after changing trains at Palmerston North, occupied 11hr. 15min. Through single fares were 41s 8d first class and 27s 10d second class.

Passenger cars on the Napier Section just before it was merged with the Wanganui-Taranaki Section in 1891 comprised five 4-wheel "D" class, six 6-wheel "C" class, two 30ft. "B" class bogie, and 18 "A" class bogie vehicles. The latter would no doubt have been mainly of the Addington design with clerestory roofs. Three locomotives of the "J" class 2-6-0 type were available on the Section for working the expresses, but other trains would have been worked by the ubiquitous "F" class 0-6-0 saddle-tanks, of which 11 were allocated to Napier. The weight of the express trains was limited to 80 tons, but they were per-

mitted to take goods wagons to and from the principal stations.

No major change took place during the 1890s until 1897 when, from 13 December, following completion of the Wairarapa line southward from Woodville, the service was rearranged to follow the new route. Southbound, the express train, now No. 69 in the working timetable, was retimed to leave Napier at 8.05 a.m. and, although there were now 17 stops between Napier and Woodville instead of 12, Woodville, 94.4 miles, was reached in 4hr. 50min. Reversal of direction was necessary at Woodville, and the train, now with the reporting No. 39 and classified mixed, was due to leave at 1.15 p.m. after a 20min. stop. Wellington, 114.8 miles from Woodville and 209.2 miles (336.7 km) by this route, was to be reached at 8.25 p.m. and Te Aro

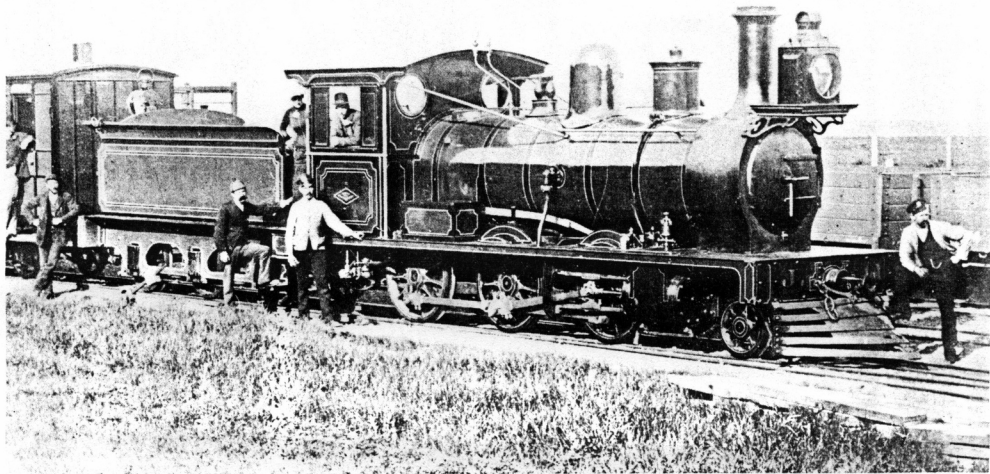
NAPIER - PALMERSTON NORTH TRAIN No. 9

From 11 May 1891

Distance	Stations	Express
Miles		a.m.
0.00	Napier	dep. 10 45
6.00	Farndon	" 11 02
11.87	Hastings	arr. 11 20
	"	dep. 11 24
26.31	Te Aute	arr. 12 00
	"	dep. 12 02
35.12	Kaikora	" 12 27
38.75	Waipawa	" 12 40
43.37	Waipukurau	arr. 12 55
	"	dep. 1 15
56.50	Takapau	" 1 47
65.64	Ormondville	arr. 2 15
	"	dep. 2 18
67.50	Makotuku	" 2 23
71.69	Matamau	" 2 39
78.11	Dannevirke	arr. 2 53
	"	dep. 2 58
85.57	Matahiwi	" x
94.32	Woodville	" 3 37
102.85	Ashurst (sic)	" x
111.77	Palmerston N.	arr. 4 30

Connected with Wanganui-Wellington mail train due to leave Palmerston North at 4.51 p.m. and to reach Wellington (Thorndon) at 9.50 p.m.

x Stops if required for passengers.



From the W. W. Stewart Collection.

In September 1887 three "J" class 2-6-0 locomotives, Nos. 107, 108 and 109, were transferred to Napier, where they became J-41, J-42 and J-43 respectively, following the completion of the railway from Napier to Woodville. Here J-41, in the immaculate finish of the period, is seen during a trial run.

NAPIER - WELLINGTON "MAIL"

Distance		Dec. 1897 69	Jan. 1904 109
Miles		a.m.	a.m.
0.0	Napier	dep. 8 05	8 45
6.0	Farndon	" 8 30	9 00
10.1	Tomoana	" x	x
11.9	Hastings	arr. 8 50	9 15
	"	dep. 8 55	9 19
16.2	Paki Paki	" 9 05	—
26.3	Te Aute	arr. 9 27	—
	"	dep. 9 31	—
30.7	Pukehou	" x	—
35.1	Kaikora	" 9 53	10 09
38.7	Waipawa	" 10 10	10 21
43.4	Waipukurau	arr. 10 22	10 32
	"	dep. 10 27	10 37
56.5	Takapau	" 11 02	11 09
65.7	Ormondville	" 11 33	11 36
67.5	Makotuku	" 11 40	11 43
71.7	Matamau	" x	—
78.1	Dannevirke	arr. 12 10	12 11
	"	dep. 12 15	12 16
80.7	Tahoraiti	" x	—
85.6	Matahiwi	" x	—
90.2	Victoria	" x	—
94.4	Woodville	arr. 12 55	12 55
		p.m.	p.m.

at 8.37. The Napier-Wellington journey was now about an hour longer than before. It would have been a long day.

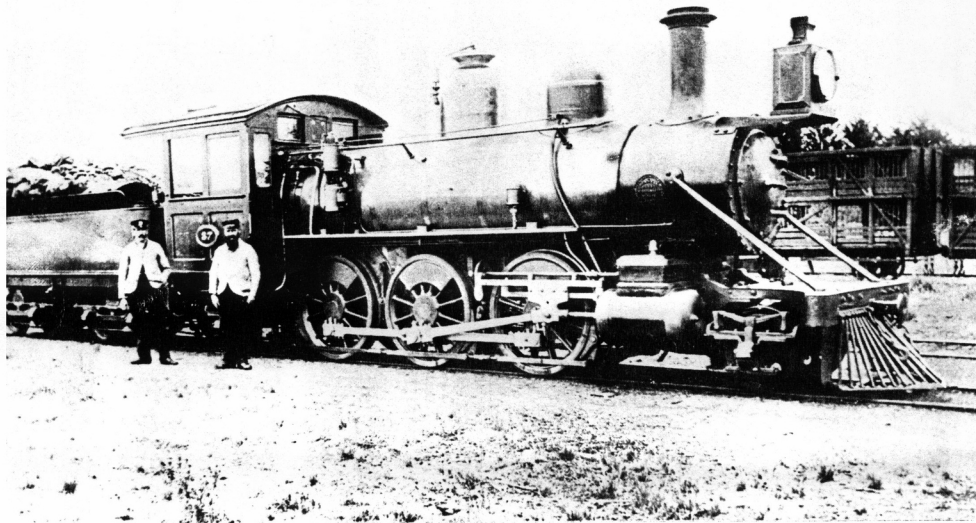
Northbound, the service was provided by mixed train No. 6 due out of Te Aro at 7.0 a.m. and Wellington at 7.15 to reach Woodville at 2.15 p.m. The train then became No. 82 express leaving Woodville at 2.35 p.m. and reaching Napier at 7.23 p.m. Single fares between Napier and Wellington by the Government route throughout were 41s 6d first class and 27s 8d second; to Te Aro they were just twopence more in each instance.

Early in 1898 both trains were reclassified "Mail". Their numbers then became 71 and 39 down (southbound) and 8 and 86 up, and from 1 September 1899 the remarkably liberal allowance of 45 minutes for the 11.9 miles from Napier to Hastings was cut to 30 minutes. Departure time from Napier became 8.20 a.m., and evening arrival at Napier was changed from 7.23 to 7.15 p.m.

The service was substantially accelerated from 1 December 1900, as part of

			39 p.m.	109 p.m.
0.0	Woodville	dep.	1 15	1 15
3.4	Ngawapuru	"	x	—
6.3	Mangatainoka	"	1 34	1 29
9.6	Pahiatua	arr.	1 42	1 38
	"	dep.	1 48	1 46
14.0	Makakahi	"	x	—
15.7	Tutaekara	"	x	—
15.7	Mangamaire	"	—	x
20.4	Hukanui	"	x	x
24.8	Newman	"	x	x
26.9	Eketahuna	arr.	2 40	2 32
	"	dep.	2 45	2 33
33.2	Mangamahoe	"	x	x
37.0	Mauriceville	"	3 15	2 59
41.4	Kopuaranga	"	x	x
45.4	Opaki	"	x	—
49.3	Masterton	arr.	3 50	3 25
	"	arr.	3 57	3 30
50.8	Kurupuni	"	x	—
56.5	Clareville	"	x	—
58.2	Carterton	"	4 25	3 50
60.2	Dalefield	"	x	—
62.6	Matarawa	"	x	—
65.4	Woodside Jn.	"	4 50	4 08
67.9	Fernside	"	x	—
70.3	Featherston	arr.	5 03	4 20
	"	dep.	5 06	4 22
74.4	Pigeon Bush	"	x	—
77.6	Cross Creek	arr.	5 31	4 41
	"	dep.	5 38	4 46
80.6	Summit	arr.	6 18	5 26
	"	dep.	6 23	5 30
88.0	Kaitoke	arr.	6 46	5 53
	"	dep.	6 56	5 58
92.7	Mangaroa	"	x	—
95.1	Upper Hutt	arr.	7 21	6 20
	"	dep.	7 23	6 21
98.7	Silverstream	"	7 33	x
100.4	Haywards	"	x	6 34
104.3	Belmont	"	x	x
106.7	Lower Hutt	"	7 57	6 52
108.1	Petone	"	8 02	6 56
111.6	Ngahauranga	"	8 14	x
113.1	Kaiwarra	"	8 20	—
114.8	Wellington	arr.	8 25	7 15
	"	dep.	8 30	7 20
115.8	Te Aro	arr.	8 37	7 27
			p.m.	p.m.

the new, more progressive policy then being adopted. By eliminating some intermediate stops and making other small adjustments, the down train was now timed to leave Napier at 8.45 a.m. and to reach Wellington at 7.35 p.m., a saving of almost an hour. Northbound, departure time from Wellington became



From the W. W. Stewart Collection.

In the South Island before its 1899 transfer to Napier, "N" 37 poses with Driver J. Trevella and Fireman A. Stewart. All six of these locomotives worked in the North Island between Cross Creek and Napier after 1901.

8.20 instead of 7.15 a.m., but arrival at Napier remained at 7.15 p.m.

A further improvement was made on 1 November 1901, when the schedules through the Wairarapa were tightened up still more. Wellington was now reached at 7.20 p.m., in 10hr. 35min. from Napier, and the Napier arrival time became 6.50 p.m., only 10½ hours for the 209.2 miles.

The new service of 1897 may have been satisfactory for travellers between Napier and the Wairarapa or Wellington, but it effectively destroyed the convenience of the former service between Napier and Palmerston North. The public became highly critical of the new arrangements, which involved a wait of 1½ or 2 hours at Woodville for passengers travelling from Napier or Hastings to Palmerston North or other towns in the Manawatu and Wanganui districts, or vice versa. It was claimed that the Government had deliberately arranged the entire timetable to prevent northern Hawkes Bay passengers from being enticed on to the Manawatu Company's trains. A study of the timetable, however, shows that it would not have been easy to meet all the requirements without involving additional train mileage.

The problem was solved 12 months after the purchase of the Wellington and Manawatu Railway in December 1908 and its incorporation into the Government system. From 6 December 1909 the Napier Mails were rescheduled to run via the Manawatu, and a connecting service, which became known as the Wairarapa Mail, was put on between Woodville and Wellington via Masterton. By this time the growth of traffic had made the running of additional train mileage a more economic proposition. Initially the through trains left Napier and Wellington at 7.30 and 10.50 a.m. respectively, and the journey times were brought down to 9hr. 45min. down and 10hr. 30min. up for what was a distance of 198.9 miles (320.1 km).

These new schedules lasted less than four months because, from 1 April 1910, the down train was rescheduled to leave Napier later, at 8.50 a.m., and to run about an hour and 20 minutes later throughout. The up train now left Wellington earlier, at 9.10 a.m., to reach

Napier at 7.18 p.m. All this time, the principal refreshment stop was at Palmerston North, but from 1 July 1912 the timetable for the down train was adjusted to provide for a meal stop at Woodville, and to allow considerable extra time between Palmerston North and Wellington. Presumably there had been difficulty with timekeeping here.

Maximum authorised speeds were still no more than 35 m.p.h. between Napier and Woodville, but now over longer sections, and 40 m.p.h. was permitted on parts of the Manawatu line. To assist in working the Napier Mail trains through the Wairarapa when this service began in December 1897, two of the old "K" class 2-4-2 locomotives, Nos. 93 and 96, were transferred from the South Island to Cross Creek. They were reputedly fast, but did not have much power, being rated to take only 55 tons up the 1 in 40 grade into "the Creek", and 100 tons up the 1 in 80 gradients between Masterton and Eketahuna. It was not long (1899) before three of the "N" class 2-6-2s, Nos. 34, 37, and 42, were brought up from the South Island. The other three "N"s, Nos. 27, 30, and 36, followed in 1901 and the little "K"s were dispatched in 1902 to Auckland.

The more powerful 50-ton "N" class locomotives ruled the roost between Napier and Cross Creek during the first decade of this century, being able to take seven cars and a van of the contemporary 44ft. stock on the mail train workings. Up the 1 in 46 of the Opapa bank southbound, they were rated to haul 120 tons; up the 1 in 47 Matamau bank northbound from Dannevirke, 120 tons; and up the 1 in 80 grades between Hukanui and Masterton, 130 tons. They were listed to take 80 tons from Featherston to Cross Creek.

At one stage, the usual day's work for one "N" engine and its crew was to run from Masterton to Cross Creek with the morning train to Wellington, and then run the "Mail" from Cross Creek to Napier. The next day they would return from Napier to Cross Creek and finish up with the last leg of the Wellington-Masterton evening train. This was the best part of 12 hours each day, almost all spent "on the road".

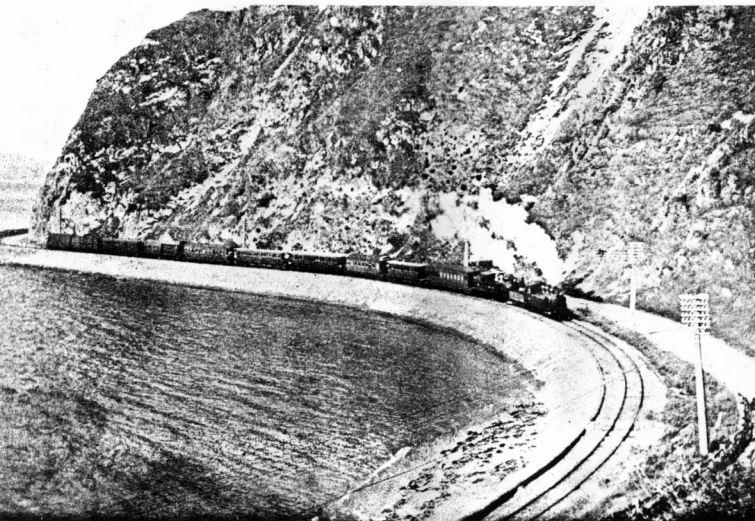
By 1907, however, the Napier men were working down to Woodville and back in the one day; and presumably the Wairarapa men were also now getting back to their own beds each night. The locomotives allocated to Napier were now Nes. 27, 37, and 42, with Nos. 30, 34, and 36 at Cross Creek. The late A. A. Boulton, in his valued contributions to these pages some 20 years ago, recorded that mail drivers in 1907 were Mick McGrath with "N" 27, Harry Davis with "N" 37, and Bob Durrant with "N" 42. He also noted that he had sometimes seen the "Mail" taken by two small "M" class 2-4-4 tank locomotives when it was too heavy for one 2-6-2. The "M"s were facetiously dubbed the "Pulleys". Another combination of

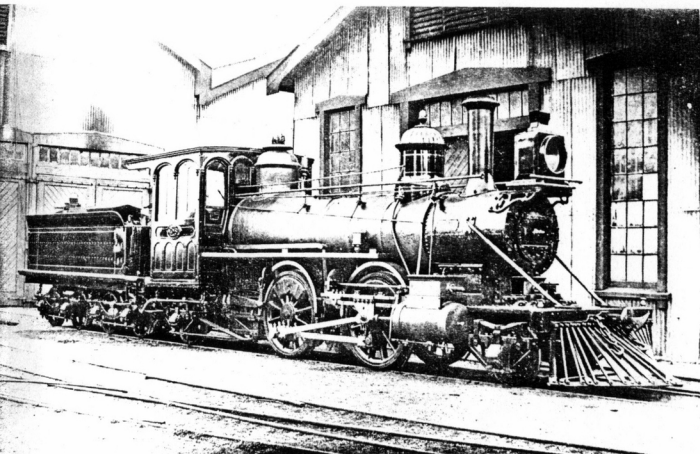
power that was not uncommon at this period was an "N" class 2-6-2 and an "M" class tank, an arrangement that I have heard described as the "hen and chicken".

As traffic grew, the need for more powerful locomotives became more pressing. Mr Boulton, who was located at Napier from November 1907 until early 1915, has recorded in these pages that ultimately, about 1914, the two former Manawatu 4-6-0 locomotives, NZR "Ud" class Nos. 464 and 465, were sent up to Napier, and the mail train load could be increased to ten total without assistance. Load schedules for the "Ud" class between Napier and Palmerston North appeared in the working timetable for 1 November 1914 for the first time,

The "Napier Mail" rounding Rocky Point, five miles from Wellington, early one morning in 1901. The locomotives were "Wb" 298 and "S" 214. Note the postal car immediately behind the locomotives and the motley collection of passenger cars, including a "birdcage."

Photograph: A. P. Godber.





Photograph: A. P. Godber (courtesy Alexander Turnbull Library).

The Rogers "K" class locomotive No. 96 was one of the two transferred from the South Island in 1897 for service in the Wairarapa. It is seen here at the Petone Workshops.

showing a rating of 175 tons for the Opapa bank and 180 tons for the Matamau bank. Soon afterwards, however, two new "A" class 4-cylinder compound Pacifics, Nos. 585 and 600, replaced the "Ud"s which appear to have gravitated later to the Wairarapa line. As a boy in the mid-1920's, I recall having seen a faded snapshot of a "Ud" outside the Masterton shed. The compound "A"s were rated to take 225 tons up the Opapa and Matamau banks.

In 1914 the authorised speed between Napier and Woodville, as on several other lines, was raised in one fell swoop from 35 to 45 m.p.h., a programme of relaying with heavier rail having been completed. The speed limits on the Manawatu and Wairarapa lines were also raised to 45 m.p.h., and all train schedules were revised. From 1 November 1914 the 8.45 a.m. Napier-Wellington "Mail" was accelerated by a full hour to reach Wellington at 5.50 instead of 6.50 p.m.

The train still made 29 intermediate stops in the 199 miles, however, only those at Khandallah and Ngaio having been cut out. Similar changes took place with the up train, which now left Wellington at 9.10 a.m. to reach Napier at 6.12 p.m. It was about this time that the numbers 913 and 612 were allocated to the trains from Napier and Wellington respectively, numbers which they were destined to hold for reporting purposes for more than 40 years until they were finally replaced by diesel railcars in December 1954.

A further major acceleration of the Napier-Wellington train service came in 1925 when, from 9 August, as part of the comprehensive train service revisions of that year, the speed limit was pushed up to 50 m.p.h., the number of intermediate stops was slashed to 16, and the Napier-Wellington journey was cut from 9hr. 5min. to 7hr. 46min. The trains now left Napier at 8.30 a.m. and



Photograph: courtesy N.Z. Railways.

Leaving the Thorndon station in Wellington with the Napier express, a "Wab" class 4-6-4T and an "Ab" Pacific attack the 1 in 40 climb to Khandallah. We believe this view could be dated in the early 1930s.

TYPICAL NAPIER-WELLINGTON SERVICES SINCE 1909

Distance (1)	Stations		Apr 1910	July 1912	Nov. 1914	Aug. 1925	June 1937	Nov. 1949	Dec. 1954	July 1956	June 1964
			631 Mail	631 Mail	913 Mail	913 Exp.	913 Exp.	913 Exp.	955 R'car	955 R'car	955 R'car
Miles			a.m.	a.m.	a.m.	a.m.	a.m.	a.m.	a.m.	a.m.	a.m.
0.0	Napier	dep.	8 50	8 45	8 45	8 30	8 28	8 30	8 05	8 05	8 05
6.0	Farndon ⁽²⁾	"	9 05	8 58	x	—	—	—	—	—	c
10.1	Tomoana	"	x	x	x	—	—	—	—	—	—
11.8	Hastings	arr.	9 20	9 12	9 12	8 51	8 49	8 50	8 21	8 22	8 23
		dep.	9 24	9 17	9 19	8 59	8 57	8 55	8 22	8 25	8 25
26.3	Te Aute	"	9 57	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
30.7	Pukehou	"	x	x	x	—	—	—	—	—	—
35.1	Kaikōra ⁽³⁾	arr.	10 20	10 14	10 09	—	9 36	9 36	8 54	—	—
		dep.	10 21	10 15	10 12	—	9 37	9 37	8 55	x	x
38.7	Waipawa	"	10 37	10 28	10 23	9 45	9 47	9 47	x	x	x
43.4	Waipukurau	arr.	10 49	10 39	10 33	9 54	9 58	9 58	9 10	9 14	9 14
		dep.	10 55	10 44	10 38	10 00	10 05	10 05	9 16	9 20	9 20
47.9	Hatuma	arr.	11 06	—	—	—	10 14	—	—	—	—
		dep.	11 07	x	x	—	10 18	—	—	—	—
56.5	Takapau	"	11 30	11 20	11 13	10 30	10 37	10 31	x	x	x
62.2	Kopua	"	11 50	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
65.2	Ormondville	"	12 02	11 48	11 39	10 51	11 00	10 54	x	x	x
67.0	Makotuku	"	12 09	11 55	11 45	—	—	—	—	x	x
71.2	Matamau	"	12 20	—	x	—	—	—	—	—	—
77.6	Dannevirke	arr.	12 34	12 21	12 08	11 12	11 23	11 22	10 11	10 19	10 19
		dep.	12 38	12 25	12 11	11 15	11 27	11 23	10 12	10 20	10 20
93.8	Woodville	arr.	1 15	1 00	12 40	11 41	11 55	11 50	10 33	10 45	10 45
		dep.	1 22	1 22	12 59	12 04	12 04	11 56	10 35	10 50	10 49
102.4	Ashhurst	arr.	1 51	1 52	1 28	12 28	12 28	12 25	—	—	—
		dep.	1 52	1 56	1 32	12 29	12 29	12 26	x	x	x
111.3	Palmerston North	arr.	2 20	2 18	1 52	12 52	12 50	12 42	11 20	11 30	11 26
		dep.	2 43	2 33	2 02	1 08	1 08	12 52	11 31	11 40	11 34
115.2	Longburn	"	2 54	2 44	x	1 17	1 17	1 03	x	x	x
118.9	Linton	arr.	—	2 53	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
		dep.	—	a2 57	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
122.4	Tokomaru	arr.	3 10	—	2 25	—	—	—	—	—	—
		dep.	3 13	x	2 28	—	—	—	—	—	—
129.8	Shannon	"	3 28	3 26	2 43	1 43	1 43	1 26	x	x	x
139.1	Queen St.	"	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	b	b
139.9	Levin	"	3 52	3 54	3 06	2 04	2 03	1 44	12 12	12 21	12 12
143.1	Ohaui	arr.	—	—	3 13	—	—	—	—	—	—
		dep.	—	—	a3 17	—	—	—	—	—	—
146.7	Manakau	"	x	x	x	—	—	—	—	—	—
152.2	Otaki	arr.	4 20	4 24	3 37	2 25	2 27	2 06	—	—	—
		dep.	4 21	4 30	3 42	2 30	2 28	2 07	x	x	x
161.6	Waikanae	"	4 39	4 51	x	—	—	—	—	—	—
165.1	Paraparaumu	"	—	x	x	—	—	—	—	—	x
172.0	Paekakariki	arr.	4 59	5 10	4 23	3 02	2 58	2 36	—	—	—
		dep.	5 00	5 20	4 27	3 12	3 06	2 44	x	x	b
180.8	Plimmerton	arr.	—	—	—	—	3 27	—	—	—	—
		dep.	—	—	—	—	a3 31	—	—	—	—
182.5	Paremata	"	—	x	x	—	—	—	—	—	—
185.3	Porirua	"	x	x	5 04	—	—	—	—	—	b
192.3	Johnsonville	"	5 58	6 25	5 30	4 00	D	D	D	D	D
193.9	Khandallah	"	x	x	—	—	D	D	D	D	D
195.4	Ngaio	"	x	6 41	—	—	D	D	D	D	D
198.3	Wellington	arr.	6 22	6 50	5 50	4 16	4 00	3 32	1 35	1 50	1 35
			p.m.	p.m.	p.m.	p.m.	p.m.	p.m.	p.m.	p.m.	p.m.

(1) The distances shown are those that applied after the opening of the new Ormondville viaduct deviation in January 1907 (although they were not corrected in the working timetable until 1939). They are correct for all schedules prior to 1937, and for schedules prior to 1959 they are correct as far as Porirua. The 1964 schedule is via the Milson deviation and new Palmerston North station.

(2) Clive from 1915.

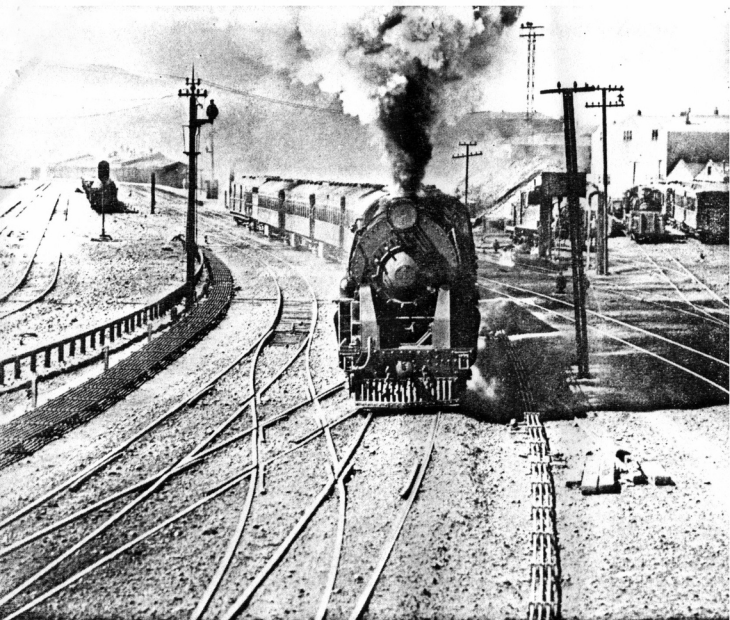
(3) Otane from 1911.

a Stops for train purposes only.

b Stops only to set down passengers.

x Stops for passengers if required.

D Via Tawa Flat Deviation to new Wellington station.



Photograph: N.Z. Railways Publicity.

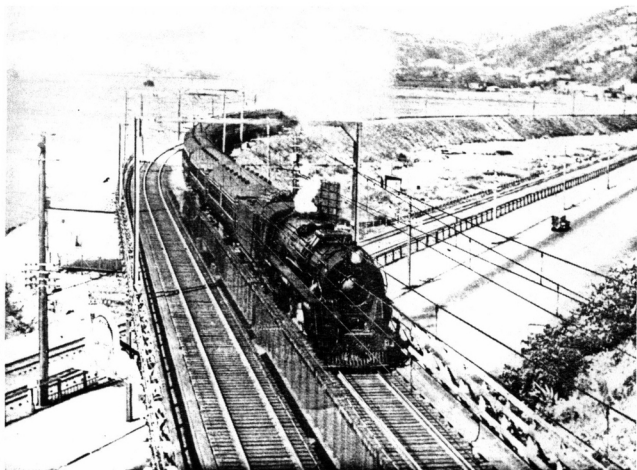
A "K" class 4-8-4 No. 910, built in 1934, leaves Thorndon with an express for Napier. This would be about 1935. Note a "birdcage" first-class car still in use.

Wellington at 9.20 a.m., the latter being timed to reach Napier at 4.57 p.m., in 7hr. 37min. for the 198.9 miles.

By June 1937, when the Tawa Flat deviation and the new Wellington station were brought into full use, train 913 was leaving Napier at 8.28 a.m., a departure time that persisted for more than another 12 years. The new route into Wellington, however, enabled the arrival time to become 4.0 instead of 4.14 p.m. Train 612 now left Wellington at 9.40 instead of 9.20 a.m., but maintained the former schedule from Paekakariki onwards, to

reach Napier at 4.57 p.m. as before. The distance was now 196.8 miles (316.7 km). The up train stopped only at Paekakariki and Levin, south of Palmerston North, and had the quite respectable schedule of 45 minutes from start to stop over the 28.6 miles from Levin to the latter centre; "respectable" having regard to three severe speed restrictions that tended to hamper progress for the heavier locomotives, though only one affected the "Ab" Pacifics.

A long sad period for these express train services began in January 1944,



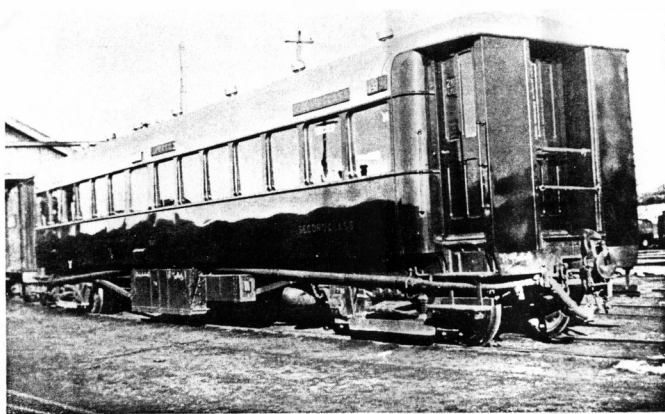
Photograph: N.Z. Railways Publicity.

Now with its new steel-panelled cars and travelling via the Tawa Flat deviation, the Wellington-Napier express, headed by a "K" class 4-8-4, crosses the Hutt Road to enter No. 1 Tunnel in 1937.

when a "Coal Saving Timetable" had to be introduced reducing the frequency of these trains from six days to three days a week. Indeed, there were times, as in 1946, when frequency declined to only two days a week. It would be tedious to attempt to detail all the changes in frequency and times that took place between 1944 and 1954, but we may note that, during a brief period of resurgence of development, the schedules were noticeably improved from 28 November 1949. Train 913 then left Napier at 8.30 a.m. to reach Wellington at 3.32 p.m., while the up train, No. 612, was retimed to leave at 9.25 a.m. and to complete its run in the even seven hours. The working timetable distance was now 196.3 miles. Schedules

of this character remained until the Napier expresses (the term "Mail" was dropped on this route in 1925) were completely replaced by diesel railcars from 1 December 1954.

Through all the years from 1897 to 1954 there was gradual change in the character and type of passenger cars used on the Napier-Wellington trains. From the motley collection of gas-lit, unheated, bench-seated and "birdcage" cars to be seen about 1900, they progressed gradually to a greater proportion of the 47½ ft. round-roofed cars introduced in the first decade of this century, complete with continuous brakes, though these still had the long bench seats in the second class. By the 1920s, the standard 50 ft centre-lavatory main-line



Photograph: J. D. Mahoney.

The last 15 of the steel-panelled 50 ft. main-line cars were built in 1936 and featured the modified roof curved right over to the top of the windows, as illustrated here by No. 1853 at Dunedin. Nos. 1836-39 (first-class) and 1840 (second) were built at Otahuhu for use on the Napier expresses, and Nos. 1846-55, of which the first four were first-class, were built at Addington for South Island service.

cars were available to provide chair seating for all customers, and steam-heating of these more important trains had been introduced. Electric lighting replaced the old gas lights on the principal long-distance trains in the later 1920s, and the introduction of new steel-panelled cars on the Main Trunk expresses between 1931 and 1933 meant that some of the former main trunk cars, which were of wider dimensions, could then be transferred to the Napier run.

Between 1934 and 1936 a series of new 50ft. steel-panelled centre-lavatory cars with vestibules and covered gangways instead of open platforms was built especially for certain provincial express and passenger train services. Fifteen of these cars, Nos. 1809, 1812, 1813, 1814, 1826-35, and 1840, with second-class Scarlett seats, were allocated to the Wellington district together with four first class cars Nos. 1836-39 for use

mainly on the Wellington-Napier services. These cars provided the basis of train formations on this route from the later 1930s until they were gradually replaced by 56ft. stock in the later 1940s.

It appears that the two-cylinder superheated "Ab" class 4-6-2 locomotives replaced the "A" class on trains 913 and 612 about 1926, when load ratings for the "Ab"s between Napier and Palmerston North first appeared in the working timetables. The "Ab" was the normal power on these trains through the 1930s, though at the end of that period a "K" class 4-8-4 would sometimes be seen on the Wellington-Palmerston North section. Then, with the advent of the "Ka" class 4-8-4s during the early 1940s, coupled with the increase of train loads during those wartime years, these powerful locomotives soon took over all the express workings on this line. It became not uncommon for train weights to rise to 15 cars or

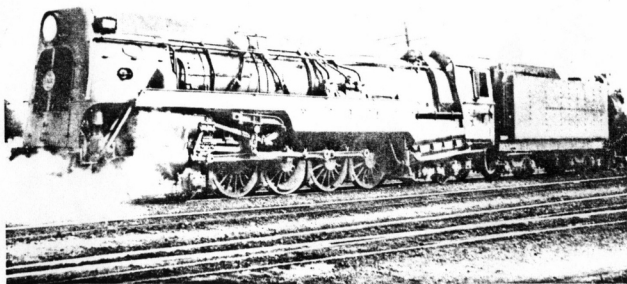
more during holiday periods, and even then the crowds were such that passengers could be heard to declare that never again would they travel by train if they could help it. This was the period that developed the unfortunate image of the mad scramble for refreshments at station stops, an image that only now is being slowly dissipated.

By 1954, with the conversion of many steam locomotives in the North Island to burn oil instead of coal, the motive power position was not too bad, but there was great difficulty in maintaining an adequate staff of trained men. On November 26 the Railways Commission announced that "the immediate, urgent need for releasing steam locomotives and crews to move the steadily increasing goods traffic has made it imperative to withdraw steam express trains from the Wellington-Napier-Gisborne route" as from 1 December. The announcement went on to explain that, fortunately, the near-completion of a programme of replacing the diesel engines in the six "Standard" railcars made it possible to institute a suitable substitute railcar service and that most of the express trains already scheduled to run during the summer

holidays would still run as well as the new railcar service.

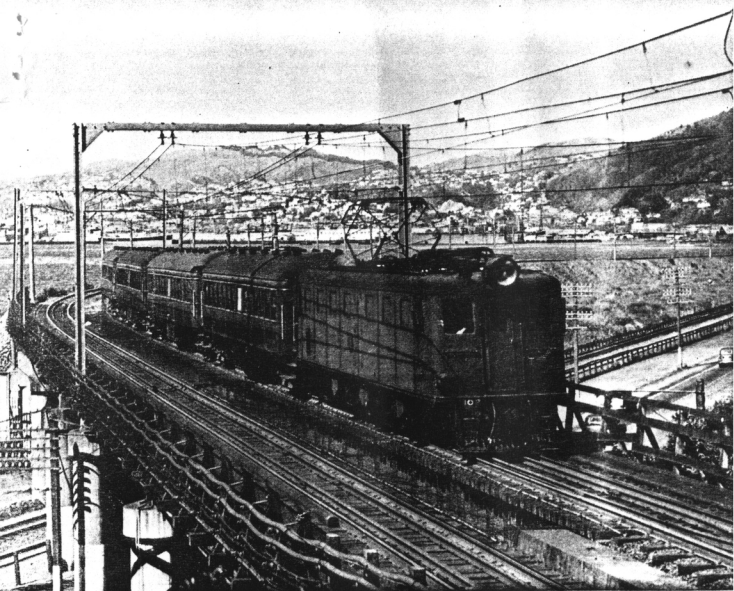
This new service accordingly provided for two railcars each way every weekday between Wellington and Napier, leaving Wellington at 7.57 a.m. and 2.25 p.m., and Napier at 8.05 a.m. and 1.50 p.m. The average allowance for the run, now 196.3 miles, became 5½ hours, compared with the average of about 6hr. 50min. for the locomotive-hauled express trains. On Friday evenings an extra railcar was put on between Wellington and Napier, leaving Wellington at 7.45 p.m. and Napier at 9.10 p.m., and on Sundays there was a new service at 2.0 p.m. from Wairoa to Wellington in addition to the previous 2.10 p.m. Wellington-Gisborne service, which continued to run. Gisborne was served by running some of the cars through to and from that centre.

With the arrival of the new articulated 88-seat twin-coach railcars from March 1955 onwards, these much bigger cars gradually took over the work on this route, and from 1 August 1955 the entire service was revised to introduce daily running between Wellington and Gisborne. Engine troubles with the new



Photograph: J. W. Sutherland.

In August 1940 "Ka" 4-8-4 No. 933, assisted by an "Ab" Pacific, was seen at Woodville on the Wellington-Napier express. At that time it had not long been at work.



Photograph: N.Z. Railways Publicity.

By 1949, express trains out of Wellington were being worked by electric locomotives over the first 24 miles. Here the train to Napier is headed by "Ed" 102.

railcars, however, made it necessary to ease their schedules for a time, and from 16 July 1956 the average time allowed between Napier and Wellington became about 5½ hours. Since that time there have been some small changes and accelerations where possible, and since 1964 the times allowed between Napier and Wellington have ranged between 5hr. 30min. for the 8.05 a.m. service from Napier to 5hr. 45min. for the two afternoon services between Napier and Wellington, 12.10 p.m. from Napier and 2.55 p.m. from Wellington.

Now we have, from 6 November 1972, the new "Endeavour" buffet-car express replacing the morning railcar from Wellin-

ton and the afternoon railcar south from Napier. This "Da"-hailed, 6-car, 180-ton train introduces, for the first time on New Zealand Railways, a 50 m.p.h. start-to-stop booking for a locomotive-hauled service (Levin-Palmerston North, 28.5 miles in 34 minutes). Although the overall time of 5½ hours is not quite as short as some people had hoped, it is well over an hour better than the fastest previous time for a locomotive-hauled express. The average of 33.7 m.p.h. required from Napier to Woodville, including three stops, needs much smarter running, having regard to grades and curves, than might appear at first. More details will have to await our next issue.