



# 8417-8422



P-5-j

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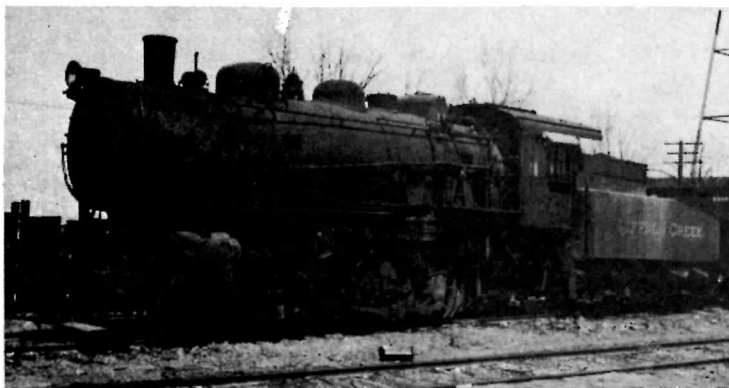
Formerly Buffalo Creek Railroad 21, 23, 25, 26, 27, 28

A recent C.N.R. locomotive purchase which has caused considerable interest was the acquisition in 1947 of six eight-wheel switchers second-hand from the Buffalo Creek Railroad of Buffalo, New York. These engines represent one of the very few groups of second-hand locomotives ever purchased by the Canadian National Railways, and are also the only steam locomotives that have been obtained by the system since the end of the war.

These locomotives comprised six of the eleven O-8-O switchers owned by the Buffalo Creek R.R., numbered 20 to 30, which were obtained by that road between 1914 and 1923. The Buffalo Creek is a terminal switching company entirely within the confines of the city of Buffalo; it owns approximately six miles of line and 35 miles of track extending generally from William Street to Peck Slip with branches. The railroad was opened in 1871 and leased in 1889 to the Erie and the Lehigh Valley Railroads, which together own all of the Buffalo Creek stock; general offices are in New York City.

The Buffalo Creek owned, in the years prior to and during the last war, a fleet of six and eight-coupled switchers. The first two diesels were purchased in 1938, and with the growing traffic in 1940, two more were added. After the end of the war, most of the steam locomotives were retired from service as the railroad, in common with many other terminal properties, realized the economies of diesel operation. The steam locomotives were not replaced directly by the diesels but were withdrawn as traffic slackened during 1945-46, and were either put in dead storage or held as reserve power at the Erie Railroad's Buffalo roundhouse. Those in storage were seen on the excursion of June 23, 1946, when U.C.R.S. members visited various railroad properties in Buffalo (see News Letter #9).

The occasion for numbers 21, 23 and 25 to 28 entering service on foreign soil came in the winter of 1946-47 when a serious motive power shortage due to heavy traffic plagued the Central Region of the Canadian National Railways. To fill the breach, the C.N.R. rented the six aforementioned switchers from the Buffalo Creek, along with road locomotives from the Lackawanna, Lehigh Valley, Erie and Wabash Railroads. The Buffalo Creek engines were rented in February, 1947; accordingly they were reconditioned and arrived at Fort Erie (across the river from Buffalo) where they entered service in March. On July 25, 1947, the C.N.R. decided to purchase the locomotives outright. During July and August, all except # 28 were moved to Toronto for operation from Mimico roundhouse; then # 28 was brought to Toronto on December 19th of that year.



Buffalo Creek 28 in Danforth (Toronto) yard on April 17, 1948



G.T.W. 8421 at Bathurst Street (Toronto) on August 14, 1948

The C.N.R. assigned them to the Grand Trunk Western, although they have never been operated on the rails of this C.N.R. subsidiary. They were given road numbers 8417-8422, Class P-5-j, thus following right after the last O-8-O's purchased in 1930. The locomotives operated for a considerable time with the "Buffalo Creek" name on their tenders, but were gradually taken to Stratford shops and given a thorough overhaul, from which they emerged with their new numbers and the G.T.W. herald. # 23 was the first engine to go through, in February of 1948, and was numbered 8417. A little later it was decided to renumber the locomotives consecutively with the old Buffalo Creek numbers, thus 8417 was changed to 8418.

In spite of the rather widely separated dates of construction, the 11 Buffalo Creek locomotives were very closely alike and differed only in minor specifications; 20 to 22 were constructed in 1914, 23 to 25 in 1916 and 26 to 30 followed in 1923. The last group was originally built for the Rock Island, but were sold from the builders to the Buffalo Creek; all were from the Brooks Works of the American Locomotive Company. Several alterations have been made at Stratford which give the locomotives a rather different appearance, making them look more like members of the Canadian National family. These include different location of the bell, turbo-generator, headlight, new footboards, pilot beam and cylinder heads, and application of running board steps, among other things.

At the present time they carry standard C.N.R. numberplates under the headlight, but metal bars are bolted over the words "Canadian National".

The renumbering and date released by Stratford shops is shown below for each locomotive:

B.C.R.R. Nos.	G.T.W. Nos.	Date Out of Stratford
21	8417	A June 23, 1949
23	8418	Feb. 6, 1948
25	8419	Mar. 24, 1949
26	8420	A Aug. 29, 1949
27	8421	July 3, 1948
28	8422	A Nov. 10, 1949

(A - Indicates date approximate)



- Courtesy Canadian National Railways