



From NZETC Cyclopaedia of New Zealand Otago Southland we learn:

McGregor, John and Co. (John McGregor and Thomas M. Gillies), Engineers, Iron, Steel (Malleable Cast), and Brass Founders, Otago Foundry, Stuart Street, Dunedin. Telephone, 831. Bankers, National Bank of New Zealand. Private residences: Mr. John McGregor, Royal Terrace; Mr. T. M. Gillies, 44 Canongate Street.

The Otago Foundry was established in the late sixties by Mr. William Wilson, who was succeeded by Messrs Davidson and Conyers; and the present proprietors acquired the works in 1894. The plant includes lathes, rolls for plate bending, punching, shearing, and screwing machines, pattern making appliances, a horizontal 12-horse-power steam engine, and a Cornish tubular boiler. The Otago Foundry produces dredge steamers, mining plant of all kinds, water motors, steam engines, dairy and rabbit factory plants, milling machinery, and various other types. This is a diversified list, some of the items in which are likely to astonish the general public, who little imagine that engineering work so complicated and large can be undertaken in New Zealand. But the partners are experienced engineers, who have proved their capability in many ways. The firm makes machinery for mills of all kinds, and constructed three of the largest elevators ever erected in the colony, to the order of Mr. F. W. Payne, consulting engineer; and it has also constructed the complete dredging plant of the Nelson Harbour Board. Considerable work is done in factory plant construction, and the firm has fitted up a number of the dairying factories in the southern district, and also rabbit

factories for the New Zealand Co-operative Company. Messrs McGregor and Co. equipped the Dunback Rabbit Canning Factory, making the combination dies and also the crimping machinery for canning; and the boiling down and concentrating machinery, etc., for Messrs A. and J. Macfarlane. The firm also fitted up the whole of the Croydon works, and the works at Gap Road, Winton, and several creameries. Engines and various other engineering works are manufactured with the utmost success, and during the past few years, the firm's name has rapidly risen in eminence. The main building is of one storey, with a brick front, galvanised iron sides, and a glazed roof; the offices and pattern-makers' shop are situated in the brick portion of the building. [This building was in Thomas Burns Street directly behind the railway station. In my younger days Thomas Burns Street ran slap-bang into McGregors corrugated iron building before taking a dogleg to the right, then another dog-leg to the left to circumnavigate the building. In the later 20th century it was all demolished and a new road and roundabout formed to continue north and over the railway line]

[Mr. John Mcgregor](#) , the Senior Partner of the firm, was born in Linlithgowshire, Scotland, in 1859, and came out to New Zealand at an early age, afterwards returning to Glasgow. Mr. McGregor learned his business with Messrs John Elder and Co., at the North British Locomotive Works, Cowlairs. Glasgow, and with Messrs James Russell and Sons, Falkirk. He returned to New Zealand in 1877 in the ship "Wellington," landing at Port Chalmers, and having qualified as a marine engineer, went to sea for about seven years in the Union Steam Ship Company's intercolonial and coastal vessels, as second engineer. Afterwards for about fourteen years Mr. McGregor was engaged in erecting machinery for several mining companies at Reefton, having charge likewise of reduction and amalgamating works, and was subsequently at Preservation Inlet in a similar capacity. In 1882 Mr McGregor was married to a daughter of Mr. David Nicholson, of Blackburn, and has a family of one son and one daughter.

Advice has been received from Wellington by Messrs John McGregor and Co, Otago Foundry, Dunedin, that they have secured the contract for the construction of the new Government steamer for the Lake Wakatipu service.

Last year a vessel of very fair size was constructed locally for the harbour ferry service; a second steamer of practically similar dimensions is now nearing completion, and the construction of a third, that for the Clutha River Board, will shortly be put to hand.

The fact that the contract for the building of a fourth and much larger vessel has been placed in Dunedin makes it appear reasonably hopeful that shipbuilding is to become a firmly-established industry here.

The construction of the new vessel will be carried out by Messrs McGregor and Co at their foundry yard at the rear of the Railway Station, and as soon as she has been put together she will be dismantled and railed to Kingston, there to be re-erected and launched.

The laying down of the steamer will be put in hand with the least possible delay, which means that a start will be made on it almost immediately.

The plates, angles, and raw material will be cabled Home for, but no time will be lost in giving the necessary orders.

In the meantime the construction of the engines will be gone on with by Messrs McGregor and Co.

The building of this vessel will, it is estimated, give direct employment to about 200 men.

The new steamer will be most modern in every respect, and it should prove equal to the requirements of the Lake Wakatipu service for a good many years.

She will be a steel twin-screw steamer of about 250 tons, and will have installed two sets of triple expansion engines, capable of developing 1150 h.p, while she will be able to attain a maximum speed of 15 knots per hour.

The vessel will be 160ft long, with a beam of about 24ft, and a depth of about 10ft.

There will be two decks, with dining and deck saloons, and she will be capable of carrying from 1000 to 1500 passengers, ample provision also being made for cargo.

The two boilers to be placed in her will weigh 19 tons each.

Electric light will be installed throughout, and the vessel will also be provided with steam steering gear, and steam winches.

It will probably be a little over a year from the date of signing the contract before she is built and ready for service.

The placing of this up-to-date vessel in commission on the Lake Wakatipu service will involve the Government in an expenditure of about 30,000. - ODT, 19.10.1910.

The company ceased trading in 1988.

McGregor had early links with another Dunedin partnership established by **Wilkinson and Callon** in 1880. From 1896 to 1905, the two businesses occupied the same premises.

John McGregor died on 31 March 1933 aged 78 years and is buried in Dunedin's Andersons Bay Cemetery.