

**Zeitschrift:** Swiss review : the magazine for the Swiss abroad  
**Herausgeber:** Organisation of the Swiss Abroad  
**Band:** 24 (1997)  
**Heft:** 2

**Vorwort:** Editorial  
**Autor:** Tschanz, Pierre-André

### **Nutzungsbedingungen**

Die ETH-Bibliothek ist die Anbieterin der digitalisierten Zeitschriften auf E-Periodica. Sie besitzt keine Urheberrechte an den Zeitschriften und ist nicht verantwortlich für deren Inhalte. Die Rechte liegen in der Regel bei den Herausgebern beziehungsweise den externen Rechteinhabern. Das Veröffentlichen von Bildern in Print- und Online-Publikationen sowie auf Social Media-Kanälen oder Webseiten ist nur mit vorheriger Genehmigung der Rechteinhaber erlaubt. [Mehr erfahren](#)

### **Conditions d'utilisation**

L'ETH Library est le fournisseur des revues numérisées. Elle ne détient aucun droit d'auteur sur les revues et n'est pas responsable de leur contenu. En règle générale, les droits sont détenus par les éditeurs ou les détenteurs de droits externes. La reproduction d'images dans des publications imprimées ou en ligne ainsi que sur des canaux de médias sociaux ou des sites web n'est autorisée qu'avec l'accord préalable des détenteurs des droits. [En savoir plus](#)

### **Terms of use**

The ETH Library is the provider of the digitised journals. It does not own any copyrights to the journals and is not responsible for their content. The rights usually lie with the publishers or the external rights holders. Publishing images in print and online publications, as well as on social media channels or websites, is only permitted with the prior consent of the rights holders. [Find out more](#)

**Download PDF:** 17.04.2026

**ETH-Bibliothek Zürich, E-Periodica, <https://www.e-periodica.ch>**

## CONTENTS

<b>Forum</b>	
Railwayland Switzerland	4-8
<b>Official News</b>	9/10
<b>SRI News</b>	11
<b>Dossier</b>	
Visit Switzerland in 1998	11
<b>Social</b>	
Patients' rights and assistance to die	12
<b>Culture</b>	
On the 200th birthday of Jeremias Gotthelf	13
<b>Votes</b>	
Federal referendums of June 8, 1997	15
<b>Mosaic</b>	16/17
<b>Ping-Pong</b>	
In Lucerne there is a Children's Parliament	18
<b>SSA News</b>	19
<b>Cover:</b>	
<b>On December 11, 1845, the French railway station in Basle was inaugurated. This marked the conclusion of the first railway line on Swiss soil, but it was only 1,800 metres long. Detail from a painting in the Basle Historical Museum. (Photo: Max Baumann)</b>	

## I M P R E S S U M

Swiss Review, the magazine for the Swiss Abroad, is in its 24th year of issue and is published in German, French, Italian, English and Spanish in more than 20 regional editions. It has a total circulation of over 320,000. Regional news appears four times a year.

**Editors:** René Lenzin (RL), Secretariat for the Swiss Abroad (Chairman); Alice Baumann (AB), Press Bureau Alice Baumann Conception; Pierre-André Tschanz (PAT), Swiss Radio International, Berne; Editor of Official News: Robert Nyffeler (NYF), Service for the Swiss Abroad, Federal Department of Foreign Affairs, CH-3003 Berne. Translator: Ian Tickle.

Publisher, Editorial Office, Advertising: Secretariat for the Swiss Abroad, Alpenstrasse 26, CH-3000 Berne 16; Tel: 41 31 351 61 00, Fax: 41 31 351 61 50, Postal Cheque Account (Swiss National Giro): 30-6768-9. Printed by: Buri Druck AG, CH-3084 Wabern.

Internet: <http://www.revue.ch>

No. 2/97 (15.04.1997)

« A special postage stamp would have been enough to mark the 150th anniversary of railways in Switzerland if the latter had only been a mere form of transport. Can you imagine what our society would have been today without railways? Have they not widened our horizon? Strengthened our cohesion? Conditioned our prosperity? Have they not forged our identity? With more than 5,000 km of railway, Switzerland has the densest network in the world, and with the exception of the Japanese, no one takes the train more often than we Swiss. This is why it has seemed to us indispensable, in this commemorative year, to open the window of Swiss Review onto our railways.

700,000 people are transported daily. This makes 40 trips per inhabitant per annum. The railways seem to have health of iron. But the statistics are deceptive. 150 years after the first railway line entirely on Swiss soil was opened, that between Zurich and Baden, our railways have to face up to very sizeable problems and their future is uncertain.

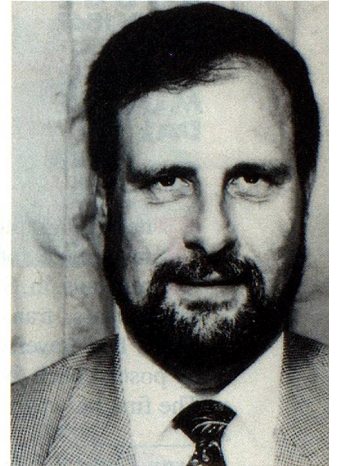
The individualisation of our society, with the huge expansion of road traffic during the last half century, is crushing the railways, which today account for no more than 12% of passenger traffic and less than 7% of goods transport. To that we may add the wind of liberalisation leading to more intense competition, the opening up of markets, the spiral of indebtedness and the reduction of services during the last few years.

Never has the climate been so hostile to railways. Numerous lines

in the outlying regions have been sacrificed in the last 20 years and replaced by road services. Apart from the main lines, timetables have been reduced, stations are no longer used, and staff numbers have fallen greatly. It is true that it may be said on the upside that installations and equipment have been modernised and services increased on the main lines. Substantial efforts have also been made to promote complementarity between the various types of transport, and ambitious projects such as Rail 2000 and the new railway lines through the Alps are now being realised or developed.

The present situation is paradoxical. On the one hand we have heavy menaces and a political and economic climate which is more or less hostile to railways, whose worst enemy is the individualisation of society. And on the other hand at the same time we have new prospects and opportunities opening up by the exaggeration of this phenomenon of individualisation, whose symptoms are clogged roads, pollution, accidents and stress.

It is impossible to imagine our society of tomorrow without a form of transport which is collective, clean, reliable and fast. This means that the railway should still have many fine years ahead of them!



PA Tschanz

Pierre-André Tschanz