

Railway news : the Swiss like to travel by train

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RAILWAY NEWS

THE SWISS LIKE TO TRAVEL BY TRAIN

According to the latest figures available, every Swiss citizen travels on an average well over 900 miles by rail every year (Swiss Federal Railways and private companies). This total, which foreign workers and tourists help to raise, is exceeded only by Czechoslovakia — and only by very little, approximately thirty miles more per person — that country being comparatively poorly supplied with motor transport. Of all European countries, Greece is the one whose inhabitants travel the least by rail (on an average fifty-four miles per inhabitant).

The Swiss Federal Railways Network is the only national system to be entirely electrified (99.2%). The Netherlands railways come second with 49.9%, the other half consisting of Diesel engines. Italy follows with 49%, then Austria 31.6%, Belgium 20.5% and France 18.7%. For Russia, the figure amounts to only 9.2%, Great Britain 7.2% and the United States a mere 0.8%.

In addition to the Swiss Federal Railways, the Swiss rail network also comprises a number of private companies, the biggest of which, the Berne-Loetschberg-Simplon Company, has entirely electrified its system.

The energy available in Switzerland for traction amounts to 1,140 h.p. per mile of system. The cost of traction per locomotive-mile (77.3 Swiss centimes) is lower in only five other countries.

43.2% of Swiss Federal Railway lines are double track. From this point of view therefore, this network comes fourth after Great Britain, Belgium and the Netherlands. The initial costs including rolling stock amount to 2.6 million Swiss francs per mile of track. They are the highest in Europe, due to the particularly mountainous nature of the country and the numerous engineering feats that have had to be achieved.

In the Swiss Federal Railways, there are fifty railway officials for every 100,000 train kilometres. This very high degree of efficiency is bettered only by the Dutch railway companies (thirty-eight officials).

From the point of view of wages, Swiss Federal Railway officials come third (13,800 Swiss francs per official, i.e. U.S.\$3,360), after the United States and Canada. Fourth come the Swedish Railways with 13,300 Swiss francs.

In co-operation with the Swiss Federal Railways, a Geneva firm has perfected a patented floating bearing consisting of several parts. This device is incorporated in the locomotive crank-head. The bearing, which is made of bronze on steel, as opposed to the earlier models in white metal, allows this important transmission organ of the locomotive to run over 125,000 miles. Previously, on certain types of locomotive, it was necessary to replace the worn bearings after every 12,500 miles only. In Switzerland, almost all crank-driven locomotives both old and new, belonging to the Swiss Federal Railways as well as private companies, are equipped with mixed-type floating bearings. The number involved is over three hundred.

The Austrian, Belgian, French, German and Italian railways have all equipped or are going to equip certain types of their locomotives with floating bearings manufactured in Geneva.

The first train of the "Zurich-Zug Lucerne Railway" arrived at the Lucerne Main Station on 1st June 1864;

the route was at first via Affoltern am Albis, the shortest way. The timetable of that time, one hundred years ago, showed five passenger trains in both directions, making the run in from two to two and a half hours time. There was only one fast train Zurich-Lucerne, and it made the sixty-eight km. route, with five station stops at Altstetten, Affoltern, Zug, Cham and Gisikon in just one hour and forty-three minutes.

When, in 1897 the line Thalwil-Zug was opened, the Lucerne line was shortened by eleven km. and the fast trains made the run in twenty minutes less time. Today, the cities of Lucerne and Zurich are served by twenty-five trains in each direction; half of them fast trains making the fifty-seven km. long run in just one hour time.

The Swiss Museum of Transport in Lucerne displays in its Railway Section a series of old railcars as well as passenger compartments in original size which give a good picture of the comfort which our great-grandparents enjoyed some hundred years ago when travelling by train.

[O.S.E.C. and S.N.T.O. Lucerne.]

	<p><i>On your way home from the Swiss National Exhibition you may visit</i></p> <p>THE MAIN STATION and AIRLINES TERMINAL RESTAURANT ZURICH</p> <p>R. Candrian, prop.</p>
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TELEX IS GAINING GROUND IN EUROPE AND SWITZERLAND

Towards the end of 1963, the automatic telex service was extended to include France and Italy so that 95% of the outgoing traffic to European countries takes place automatically, i.e. without any need to resort to international telex units. The introduction of an automatic service with European countries, which was started in 1957, can thus be considered as practically completed.

The Swiss telex network numbered 5,000 connections at the end of January 1964. In 1934 the Swiss telex service began very modestly with a mere five subscribers. The first thousand was not reached until twenty-one years had elapsed, a delay that can be accounted for by the slump and the war that followed. The 2,000th connection was put into operation four years later and the 3,000th only two years after that. A bare twenty months elapsed before the 4,000th connection was installed and a further sixteen months before the 5,000th was reached.

With over 5,000 connections, Switzerland comes fifth in Europe alongside the Netherlands and after Western Germany, Great Britain, France and Austria. With regard to the density of the telex network, Switzerland is now first with eighty-five connections per 100,000 inhabitants.

The world telex network, which today extends to all five continents, probably numbers nearly 200,000 connections, 50% of which are in Europe, 45% in America and 5% in other parts of the world.

[O.S.E.C.]