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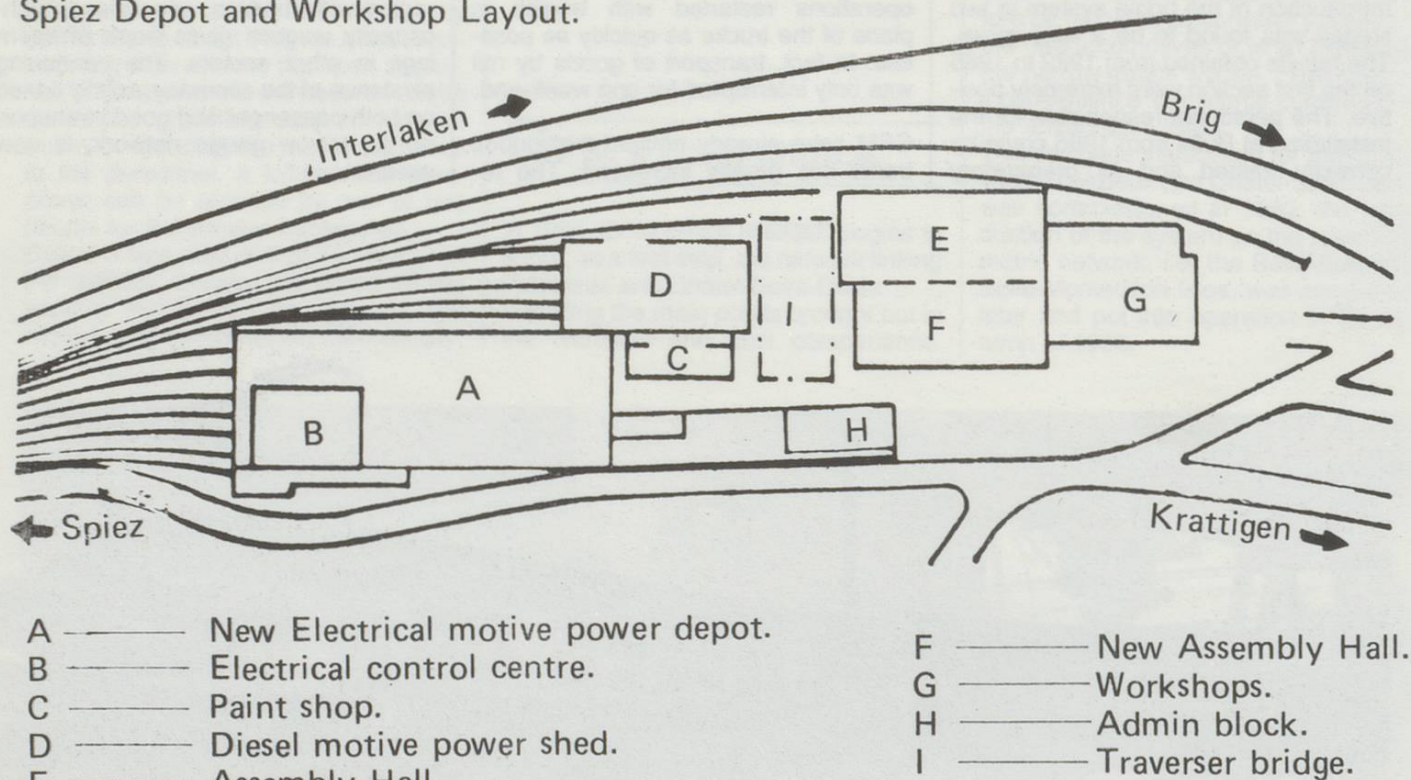
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## THE DEPOT AND WORKSHOPS OF THE BLS. SPIEZ by M.Hardy-Randall

The depot and repair workshops of the BLS, which are located at Spiez in the Bernese Oberland, have been rebuilt to cater for all work on the Locomotives, Tractors and Triebwagens used on the network. The depot is responsible for the maintenance, inspection and repair of the 96 locomotives, tractors and railcars of the Bern Loetschberg Simplon Bahn, whilst the workshop carries out repairs on the locomotives and railcars of the BLS group, such as the BLS, SB, GBS and BN. Due to the increase in locomotives needed for the improved timetable which was introduced in 1982, the double track working over the Spiez Brig route and the rebuilt trackwork around the depot area, it was necessary to redesign the depot layout. The finance for the work was arranged in 1976 at the same time as the plans for the two track system were approved. As Spiez is the junction for the lines from Interlaken, Brig, Zweisimen and Thun it is the ideal rostering point for the 150 drivers and control centre for traction units. Because of the proximity of Spiez Station and ease of access for both staff and locomotives alike it was felt that it would not be convenient to find a new site for the works, so plans were drawn up to improve the facilities in the old depot. Of all the buildings which form the depot and workshops, only the old depot shed and the assembly shops are not new. The whole area is designed so that all buildings are low profile and blend in as much as possible with the surroundings. Non traffic areas have been planted with bushes and trees and the area on the lake side is being landscaped with the co-operation of the Spiez council.

Spiez Depot and Workshop Layout.



### Depot Shed

This is a new 6 track building, each track being 110 metres long, which is used for the maintenance of all electric locomotives and railcar sets. Tracks number 1 and 2 are fitted with high platforms over the entire track length which enables them to be used for the repair of locomotives and railcar sets. On these two tracks will be found all the



requirements for general servicing, such as compressed air, oil and grease. Located in track 1 is a 22 ton scissors type hydraulic lift to cater for the change of wheelsets from locomotives etc. A locomotive requiring a bogie change has its body supported on jacks whilst the bogie is disconnected and lowered down into a chamber under the main depot floor. An exchange bogie is then placed onto the lift and raised up under the locomotive. Changeover time is estimated to be 1 hour. The tracks numbered 3 to 6 can be used for the storage of railcar sets. On the street side of the depot is the work area for the electrical department, which is responsible for the maintenance of all overhead power contact systems plus the telecommunications equipment and batteries. There are two extra tracks on the Krattigstrasse side of the depot for the storage of the special vehicles of the electrical department. Over the depot is the electrical control centre which is responsible for the switching of catenary power throughout the BLS system. The old depot building is now used for the maintenance of diesel powered motive power units. Any work required on locomotives etc that cannot be carried out by the depot staff is referred to the workshop. Beside the old depot is the new building for the painting of locomotives, bogies and other large units, it is fitted with complete spray and exhaust equipment.



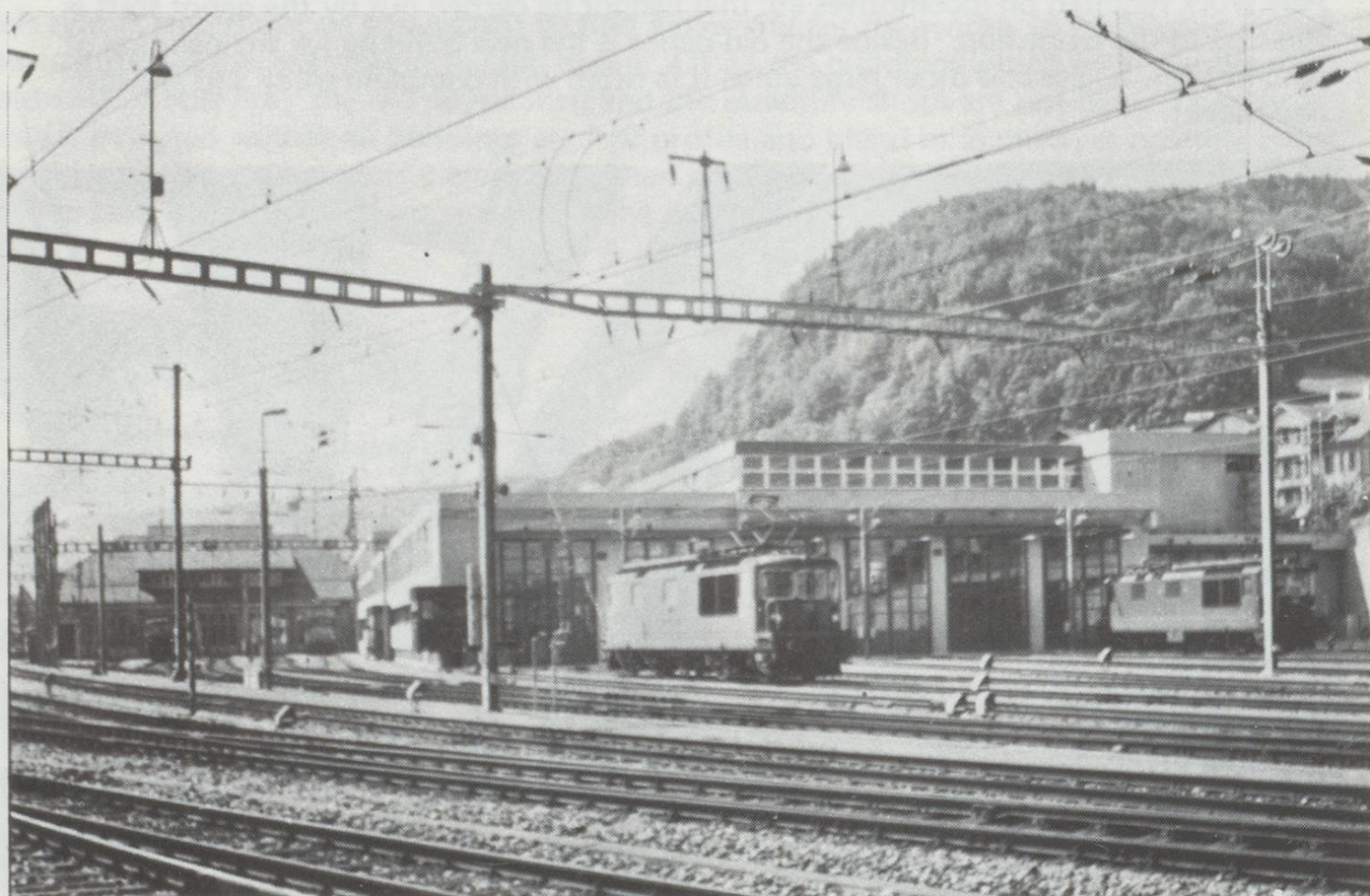
*Interior of new depot. Photo B.L.S.*

#### **Assembly shops and workshop**

To the rear of the old depot shed are the new assembly shops and the main workshop area in which all repair work, modifications and complete overhauls are carried out. When required damage repair work is also carried out. Locomotives, railcars or just bogies can be fed into this shop via a large traverser bridge which runs the full width of the depot. In the assembly hall are two 38 metre long tracks for the inspection and



repair of bogies and a 45 metre long track for locomotive work. The work area is planned to give staff access to the locomotives from either side enabling them to work on brakes, motors and subframes. There is a large capacity crane for locomotive body lifting. As well as the usual workshops for plumbers, fitters and metalworkers there is a large workshop on the upper floor for the electrical equipment such as motor windings and control gear. In the main workshop are located all the larger machine tools, wheel bank and balancing equipment. A small forge can cater for the small parts that will have to be made on site, but for larger forge work the workshop at Bonigen is asked to help. On the second floor of the workshop is the apprentice training section where the trainee staff are given a thorough schooling in all the various work done by the workshop and depot staff. Also on this floor are the workshops for carrying out repair of the pneumatic and speed indicator equipments.



*B.L.S. Depot and workshop at Spiez. Photo B.L.S.*

#### **Administration building**

In the basement of this building are the Civil Defence rooms, which are a requirement of Swiss Law and the coal fired heating system for the workshops. On the main floor are the stores and staff rooms for locomotive staff. On the top floor are the instruction rooms, conference rooms and bedrooms for locomotive staff. Plus of course the general office, which looks after the rostering of the 150 drivers and all of the carriage and wagon examiners and cleaners based between Thun and Brig.

It is worth noting that a large number of the main line locomotives and many of the railcars in use on the lines of the BLS are nearly forty years old, and still giving excellent service. A real indicator on the skill of the workshop staff. Once again my thanks to Herr Barben of the BLS in Bern and to Herr von Kaenel of the BLS depot in Spiez for the information supplied and help given during the depot visit.