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PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Berner Alpenbahngesellschaft Bern-Lötschberg-Simplon (BLS)

The management board of the BLS has voted the credit for 8 Re4/4 465 class locomotives, similar in design to the 99 class Re4/4 460 of the Federal railways, except for the power rating data given below:

Maximum one-hour rating	7000 kw/h	(SBB : 6100 kw/h)
	9250 bhp	(SBB : 8296 bhp)
Maximum tractive effort	300 kN	(SBB : 275 kN)

This considerable increase in output has been achieved by providing one converter per axle instead of one converter per bogie. The BLS locomotives will pull 650 tonne trains on an 11% gradient at 160 km/h and will be compatible with the BLS Re4/4 161-195 series, Ae8/8 and the SBB Re4/4^{III}, Re4/4^{III}, Re4/4 460 and the Re6/6. It will therefore be possible to haul heavy goods trains with locomotives of both companies over the Lötschberg as well as the Gotthard.

Rhätische Bahn (RHB)

The company has published its forward plan until 2007, involving an investment of 3 billion Swiss francs. Of this sum, one billion will be expended on the new 19 km long Vereina Tunnel from Klosters to Susch-Lavin and a further SFr.300 million will be expended on the diversion of the Chur-Arosa line from its present terminal outside the main station to underground platforms under the present tracks and in changing the traction current from the present 2000 V dc to the standard Swiss 16 2/3 Hz ac traction frequency at the RhB standard 1100 volts.

A further SFr.260 millions will be spent during 1991 on six new Ge4/4^{III} converter technique locomotives, 25-35 new passenger coaches and about 100 modern freight cars. Also included in the programme will be the reconstruction of Thusis station and the rebuilding of the Hinterrhein bridge.

From 1993-1997 the RhB will expend SFr.600 m, of which SFr.231 m (38%) will be set aside for increasing line capacity, particularly on the congested Chur-Albula-Bernina-Tirano route. This will mainly consist of more and longer passing loops, more and longer double track sections and more block sections. It is anticipated that an increase of train capacity of the order of 25-30% will result.

SFr.79 millions (13%) is to be set aside for new locomotives, coaches and freight stock. Operational safety is to be improved by the introduction of the latest generation of interlocking installations, new avalanche protection galleries and the replanting of trees, costing SFr.72 m (12%).

The increase in line capacity and train frequency will require a corresponding improvement to the traction supply and a further SFr.67 m (11%) is to be expended on an improved network of feeders. In view of the increased rolling stock roster, another SFr.53 m (9%) will be spent on improvements to the workshops and maintenance equipment.

Further rationalisation will account for some SFr.23 m (8%) whilst SFr.23 m (4%) will be invested on track improvement, mainly on curve realignment or elimination to increase average speeds. SFr.19 m (3%) will be used improving passenger facilities and comfort at stations, this will take the form of a programme to provide better waiting rooms, etc. Finally, SFr.10 m (2%) will be used to acquire the most modern line maintenance equipment.

In a similar way SFr.400 million will be invested in the period 1991-2002 and a further SFr.340 million from 2003-2007. The amounts and priorities may change during this time, but the intention to modernise and create a commercially sound enterprise will remain the prime objective. The latest figures for passenger and freight traffic are most encouraging.

Zurich S-bahn.

Recently the Press has been publishing articles from which one might conclude that the new double-decked trains are a faulty design. One well known journal, the *Neu Zurcher Zeitung* has even recommended the complete abandonment of the S-bahn! What has really happened?

First and foremost we have to appreciate that in one fell swoop on 7 May 1990 the number of trains provided for the public was increased by no less than 30% and the daily train movements in and out of Zurich Hauptbahnhof was increased from 1200 to 2000. To complicate matters still further, thanks to a tardy agreement on the type of stock to be used, the industry was not able to deliver in time for the opening all of the 100 double-decked trains needed to work the service and so it was necessary to press into service trains made up from almost every type of traction vehicle owned by the SBB.

The heavy Re4/4^{II}, Ae4/7 and Ae6/6 locomotives pressed into service were powerful enough, but lacked the acceleration needed for this exacting service. Many of these trains ran late, whilst the late arrival of IC and EC trains also delayed S-bahn services. The situation has been greatly improved, by the end of 1990, 90% of all S-bahn trains were either on time or were not more than 60 seconds late. Efforts to attain 97% punctuality are continuing.

The double deck trains had teething troubles, of which the most significant was that the automatic doors closed too slowly to allow a 30 second station stop. In addition, some of the rubber parts in the self-steering drive broke down after 60000-80000 km in service. It is probable that the combination of bogie and converter are producing vibrations during starting and stopping of such a frequency as to damage these parts. Several locomotives have now been fitted with frequency meters and those responsible believe that a cure will have been found by spring 1991. The door closing mechanism has already been modified and is now satisfactory.

Other improvements have led to a more satisfactory situation which is improving with the delivery of each new double decker train. The steady increase in passenger numbers prove that, whatever the Press may say, the public is on the whole satisfied. The most convincing evidence of this is that whereas elsewhere in the Confederation, sales of cars have increased substantially, car sales in the Canton of Zurich have fallen, suggesting that people here are turning to public transport and, in particular, to the S-bahn.

Above all, the Deutsche Bundesbahn is interested in obtaining double-decked trains of the same design. The fact that a train of only 100 m length is able to carry almost 900 persons has proved to be very convincing. One only has to see three unit train formations transporting 2700 passengers during the rush hours to be convinced of the value of this system ■



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