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CENTOVALLINA

by Richard Pinner

The metre gauge Centovalli (100 valleys) line runs from Domodossola in Italy to Locarno in Switzerland and is operated jointly by the Swiss FART (*Ferrovie Autolinee Regionale Ticinesi*) and the Italian SSIF (*Società Subalpina di Imprese Ferroviarie*). 33 km are in Italy, through the Val Vizegio, 20 km are in Switzerland, through the Centovalli.

It is a mountain line, starting from an altitude of 270m (800ft) in Domodossola, it rises to a height of 835m (2750ft) at Santa Maria Maggiore, descending to 205m (650ft) at Locarno. There are 32 tunnels along the route, and 83 bridges. Since the opening this year of the Locarno Metro section the line begins and ends in tunnels under main line stations, for the line was extended under the FS at Domodossola some time ago.

Ten new articulated trains are on order for delivery during 1992. They are ABe4/6, with tram-type low floor bodies; this is ironic since the tramway section in Locarno has now been swept away. The coaches will be 30m overall, with 82 seats, 18 first class and 64 second.

EDITOR'S NOTE. The sketch plan below depicts the main features of the new Locarno station, where a single platform handles both arrivals and departures. The arrangement allows the departing train to collect a trailer from the arriving train with the minimum amount of difficulty and to shunt arriving trains into the stock sidings. We were unable to determine the exact extent of these which appear to have replaced the former FART depot.

Although one reason for the diversion was to reduce traffic congestion in the centre of Locarno, our impression is that nothing has really changed in this respect.

Sketch plan of new Locarno station, Centovalli line.

