

Zeitschrift: Swiss express : the Swiss Railways Society journal
Herausgeber: Swiss Railways Society
Band: 3 (1991-1993)
Heft: 9

Rubrik: President's report

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President's Report

Alptransit: As reported by *Swiss Express*, Switzerland's voters, by a comfortable majority of 2:1, accepted the building of the two base tunnels through the Gotthard and Lötschberg as well as the considerable amount of work to be done in this connection on the various feeder lines. At present however, it seems that the start of the 'work of the century' will be postponed. The transit treaty with the European Community contains a clause which binds the EC to enter into negotiations with Switzerland to provide free access to Swiss airlines, such as Swissair, Balair and Crossair to the European Airtransport Market under the same conditions as enjoyed by EC countries on the start of the 1993 market deregulations. EC airlines are now lobbying at Brussels to prevent this access, or at least to postpone negotiations with the objective of eliminating one competitor. As a result, the Federal Council has decided to delay ratification of the transit treaty until the negotiations regarding access to the Air Market have been concluded.

In Switzerland, the unholy alliance between former adversaries of Alptransit are profiting from this situation and new proposals are being made. One of them, put forward by the former party leader of the 'Independants Alliance (Migros) Party' wants to restrict the number of 40 tonne lorries, or even all lorries regardless of weight and whether loaded or not, and to tax those lorries admitted for transit at a level that forces them onto the railway. So far, no referendum will be held on this or on other requirements, but it is quite obvious that a large block of voters, whose opinions cannot be ignored, are of the opinion that Switzerland's concessions in the Transit Treaty were far too generous.

In my opinion, the EC would be well advised not to make the same mistake as in the negotiations on the adherence to the European Economic Space, where the negotiating EC delegation, led by the German, Herr Horst Krentzler, refused to accept almost all proposals by the Swiss delegation with the immediate consequence that the agreement has been rejected by the Swiss voter. This

even in the face of thinly veiled threats of economic countermeasures, especially by Herr Bangemann and other German politicians.

Swiss Federal Railways: In view of the satisfactory results obtained with the class 460 locomotives now in service, an additional order for 20 engines has been given to the industry. It is estimated that there is an overall requirement for 300 to 400 further engines until 2005, since all existing locomotives over 40 years old will have to be replaced, and there must be sufficient reserves to cope with rising traffic. Whether the power of the forthcoming machines will be raised to 7000 Kw, as with the new BLS locomotives, or whether an Re6/6, with a 12000 kW output will appear on the Federal system, as well as a lighter engine similar to the Re4/4 of the private railways is not yet decided. Much will depend on the development of the European freight car and the possible introduction of a central coupling capable of handling far higher drawbar pull than current equipment.

A class 460, with a 4-car test train has reached 200 km/h under a new, extremely light catenary system between Martigny and Riddes. In view of these very satisfactory test results, further experiments will be made at much higher speeds during 1993. Seven different catenary systems will be on trial. However, the most surprising results were obtained from the measurements of lateral accelerating forces. Due to the entirely new bogie design, the free lateral acceleration force of 1.8 m/s² was far below the admissible 110 kN. This result was obtained despite 3 tonnes of additional weight due to performance modifications of the electrical parts. In conclusion, there is at the very least, a high safety margin for high speed running around curves.

Credits for a further 60 Eurocity coaches and 300 freight wagons were obtained by the SBB administration board

Industry

The Finnish State Railways have placed an order with ABB/SLM for an initial batch of 20 locomotives, similar to the SBB class 460, but adapted for broad gauge.