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Autor: Hauser-Gubser, A.E.
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Zernez in June 1991, looking to the east. The shunter prepares a string of loaded and empty wagons for the mixed freight for Samedan.

RhB Freight Traffic Part 2

Handling the Traffic

by A.E.Hauser-Gubser

Continued from page 10, June 1993 Swiss Express

Photographs by the author

We must now pay some attention to the various solutions the RhB management has developed to offer a fast freight service adapted to the requirements of its customers. I have already mentioned the 15 regional freight centres. These are responsible of the distribution of consignments to the receivers of and entire specified area and for receiving outbound traffic from shippers. Each centre is equipped with a shunter, generally class Te2/2 or Tm2/2, with the main centres provided with the larger Ge3/3 or Gm3/3 types. In addition, the RhB management has negotiated contracts with local lorry owners for the distribution of mixed freight over a specified route which serves even the most remote of mountain villages.

Wagons left by the freight trains are shunted by the depot tractor to specified

unloading points, such as the freight shed with its unloading ramp, the team track with a crane, a fuel oil transfer point, possibly a cement silo, a warehouse or an industrial private siding. In the meantime the driver of the contract lorry has transferred the merchandise to his lorry and left the station to distribute the loads among the various receivers and customers. On his tour he collects outbound freight as well. The shunting tractor has hauled single wagon loads to the next stations, where the unloading is done by the customer himself.

On the return trip the tractor brings back empty stock from previous deliveries as well as freshly loaded wagons. At the regional centre, the outbound merchandise delivered by customers or collected by contract lorries is loaded into empty wagons and the cars are marshalled



Zernez in September 1978. Note the cement silo, now dismantled and the fuel oil tank cars ready to transfer their load to road tankers arriving from the left. To the right is one of the older flat roofed vans.

according to the stations where they will be dropped. The uphill running trains will pick up loaded wagons for, say, Davos or the Engadin, whereas the loaded wagons for downhill trains will be placed, for safety reasons (braking weight) directly behind the locomotive with empties making up the end of the train. This arrangement is practicable because the great majority of wagons return to Landquart.

I would recommend that modellers should set out to reproduce a regional centre, since the traffic so generated will keep you, and your friends, busy until well past midnight. The larger centres such as Samedan and Thusis also ship or receive bulk trains, but this is not necessarily so. (See in this connection my track diagram of Rabius-Surrhein.) It is my firm conviction that such a regional centre can be achieved on a small layout, even if it is necessary to cut down the size of the facilities slightly, and reduce traffic density to match.

The RhB management has developed an array of containers, both closed and open, adapted to the specific requirements of its customers and promotes this class of business

wherever possible. The container terminal at Ems operated by the RhB exclusively handles containers shipped on standard gauge, with more and more standard UIC 10, 20, 30 and 40 ft. containers being transferred from standard to metre gauge and vice versa.

This also applies to the so-called ACTS (Abroll-Container-Transport-Service) containers shipped on flat cars with turntable frames. Customers today expect door-to-door deliveries, and so, at twelve points on the network, the RhB has stationed lorries equipped with the sophisticated handling gear needed to handle these containers. These lorries collect the loaded ACTS containers at the factories, bring them to the rail depots where the container is transferred to the rail wagon within minutes. At the destination station an identical lorry takes over the shipment and brings the goods to the customer who might well be a building contractor working on a site in a remote valley without direct rail connection. Whilst it is not possible to model the actual movement of these lorries, we can use our imagination. The essential feature is to model a reasonable variety of containers



Cement silos at Tiefencastel in September 1978

and spot some lorries in strategic places alongside the sidings on one of our stations.

I would recommend the inclusion of a warehouse served by a siding on one of your stations. It is common practice of the RhB management to lease store room to retailers or firms working temporarily nearby. The warehouse is then used as a decentralised stock-room which can be readily replenished by rail from the user's base.

To be concluded

Rhätian Station Plans

See facing page

On the facing page you will find some station layout diagrams which I believe are specially suitable for freight traffic modelling. These stations all have one serious drawback; it is almost impossible for the average modeller to reproduce them to exact scale due to the length of the main sidings and loops (220 - 320

metres). One possible solution is to set the season of the model in spring or late autumn when the passenger trains are very short, or even suspended, but the freight traffic remains lively.

Of course you should remember to reduce the number of overhead masts and to do everything you can to maintain the illusion of a long station. You may be able to do something with mirrors. I would also recommend you purchase a copy of *Gleispläne der Rhätischen Bahn*, published by Bemo, though several of the stations have been modified since it first appeared.

Let me comment briefly on the plans:

A: Rabius-Surrhein

This station ships considerable quantities of timber, gravel and ballast and is a receiver of many multilift-container shipments for the surrounding mountain villages. As a model, the layout would have to be compressed in length by about a quarter to a third.

B: Zernez

Zernez is a typical middle sized regional centre with some industry and a warehouse of a construction materials provider. It serves the Münster valey beyond the Ofenpas, with mixed freight, multilift and container shipments, and ships timber and chipwood, ballast and products of the local industries: larchwood furniture and agricultural products.

C: Tiefencastel

Tiefencastel is another regional centre serving the Oberhalbstein and its mountain villages with mixed freight on contract lorries. During the building of a nearby hydro-electric power station, it was provided with a cement silo installation which has since been demolished. There is also an appreciable amount of fuel oil transfer from tank wagons to the road tankers of a local fuel oil concern. The wagons are delivered from the Bernina or Landquart according to the ruling fob prices.

Note: The station layout has undergone change, the main loop having been lengthened and realigned to provide a wide central platform. Track 3 now occupies the former site of track 4, the site has been widened to provide a new ballast loading ramp on a revamped track 4.