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President's Report

Swiss Federal Railways

The proposals made for a reform of the Swiss Federal Railways (*Groupe de Reflexion*) have been met by the majority of Swiss with amazement, incredulity and disapproval, because the plan signifies the complete abandonment of regional traffic, a drastic reduction of the investments for *Bahn 2000* and most probably the disappearance of the *Taktfahrplan* (sequenced timetable). I have more to say about this in my contribution, "The SBB at a Turning Point on page 22.

Class 460 With the gradual advent of the class 460 locomotives, the freight service over the Gotthard line has been modified since the introduction of the 1993 summer timetable. The multiple control of the class 460 being compatible with those of the Re4/4^{II}, Re4/4^{III}, Ae6/6 and Re6/6 engines, operation cost will be substantially reduced by eliminating the intermediate engines on gradients and by using the same locomotives at the head end from Basel to Chiasso or vice versa. The new system therefore results in the abandonment of the costly engine movements caused by splitting and reforming a train at the start and end of a gradient. The drawbar loads for a 27% gradient at 80 km/h are fixed at:

Re4/4 ^{II}	500 tonnes
Re4/4 ^{III}	580 tonnes
Re4/4 ⁴⁶⁰	650 tonnes
Ae6/6	650 tonnes
Re6/6	800 tonnes

The maximum trailing load is 1300 tonnes.

Though class 460 is easily able to haul 750 tonnes at 80 km/h on a 27% gradient, the goods tonnage assigned to this engine is 650 tonnes, or multiples of that weight if higher loads are to be transported. Since the majority of goods trains vary between 1300 and 1600 tonnes, many economical arrangements are now possible. A 1300 tonne train can be hauled by two class 460 locomotives (650 T each) or an Re6/6 (800 T) assisted by a Re4/4^{II} (500 T) or a Re4/4^{III} (580 T) from Basel to Chiasso. A 1600 tonne train will be assigned the same locomotives at the head end, but from Erstfeld to Göschenen or Giubiasco to Rivera a banker class 460, Re4/4^{II} or Re4/4^{III} will be used. The

tonnage for banker service is limited to 300 tonnes for safety reasons.

Trains heavier than 1600 tonnes will be equipped with an additional locomotive at the head end to avoid the splitting and reforming at Erstfeld. For instance, *Huckepack* trains will be formed of two "half trains", each of 900 tonnes from Basel to Erstfeld hauled, in preference, by two class 460 engines to Erstfeld, where for the ascent to Göschenen and to Rivera, a third class 460 locomotive is added at the head.

Though there is now a requirement for an additional 15-20 BoBo locomotives, with a reduction of eight to twelve 6-axle engines, the savings are considerable when one considers that around 120 goods trains roll daily over the Gotthard. In addition, this new arrangement provides better conditions for the crews.

Reduced Fare Cards In January the SBB sold the 100,000th card for unlimited use on its entire network and almost all private railways. With sales at 2,000,000, the half price card had probably reached saturation point and the general card has been the front runner for the last three years, sales growing by 20-40%. It amounted to 8.5% of the income from passenger traffic in 1992, a trend that is still rising sharply.

Station reconstruction Fehraltdorf station is being modernised at a cost of SFr.24 million. This is being jointly met by the community, the Canton and the SBB.

Cutback Mr Ogi, transport and energy minister, wants to limit the investments for *Bahn 2000* to SFr8 billions, ie the original 5 billions accepted by the voters plus price increments since the vote. This signifies a partial abandonment of new lines, possibly those in the Romandie and the Airport feeder Winterthur - Kloten. *Bahn 2000* is above all a concept for providing fast connections that has been accepted by the Swiss voter, it will therefore be interesting to discover how Mr.Ogi and his staff will make good this promise.

IC Trains It appears more and more likely that future IC trains will be composed of double-decker coaches. Their advantages lie in the low cost per seat and the passenger capacity

available in rush hours with relatively short trains. A disadvantage is the fact that these coaches cannot be used in foreign countries and that no mixed trains of older types and the new ones can be formed. (There will also be an end to the familiar refreshment trolley ED.) Whether these double decked coaches will be available with tilting body technology is not yet known, but if so, then the upper deck will have to be considerably narrowed to remain within the loading gauge.

Tilting body technology On several occasions both Mr. Weibel and Mr. Faganini of the SBB management have hinted in interviews of the possible purchase of passenger trains with tilting body technology. A decision was due to be made on 1 April 1993 regarding the *Pendolino* trains for the Geneva - Brig - Milan and Bern - Brig - Milan services.

Südostbahn The SOB is in negotiation with the SBB for the purchase of the four SBB Re4/4^{IV} locomotives with angle phase control,

to replace the two leased East German engines. With four engines in addition to the existing Re4/4^{III} locomotives, the SOB should be able to meet the increasing demand for goods transport over its metals.

Rhätische Bahn The Vereina Tunnel is progressing fairly well; in the spring it was slightly below the budgeted cost and somewhat ahead of schedule.

Bern-Lötschberg-Simplon Group The BLS has formed a subsidiary company named *BLS AlpTransit AG* charged with the construction of the NEAT tunnel through the Lötschberg.

AlpTransit (NEAT) The transport ministers of the EC have refused to allow the EC Commissioners to negotiate a treaty for free access to the European air market. The main opponents were Portugal, Spain and Belgium. Whilst this is not yet a breach of the relevant clause in the transit treaty, it may well be possible that NEAT will be postponed as a consequence.

Trials and Tribulations

The introduction of the new steam rack locomotives on the Brienz Rothorn and Rochers de Naye lines last year was not without its difficulties. The new locomotives, whilst externally similar to the existing machines on the Rothorn line are internally very different. It is not merely the oil firing, it is that the efficiently insulated boilers with novel design features call for special handling.

Initially, only one driver on the Rothorn was retrained to handle the new locomotive. This was asking for trouble, hardly had the new locomotive entered service than he was called up for his three weeks military duty. With one man short and peak traffic demand putting the rest of the staff under pressure it was not practicable to release anyone else for training, so No.12 languished in the sidings.

When the trained driver returned, the coaches equipped with air brakes for use with the new locomotive had to be tested. Correcting the inevitable faults took more time, at the end of which the driver was involved in a motorcycle accident. Fortunately it was not serious, but he was off work for a couple more

weeks. At this point the BRB decided to train a diesel driver to handle the new locomotive. It was not until August before No.12 was in regular use. Murphy's Law reigns supreme.

It is pleasant to report that these peripheral troubles only delayed the important business of proving the new design in service. Here the story is different, all of SLM's promises were met to the full, indeed the power output is better than predicted and single man operation has been a complete success.

The situation on the Rochers de Naye was complicated by the fact that no steam trained drivers were available and so the new locomotive was initially driven by its designer, Roger Waller. He was simultaneously training three men to handle the locomotive and his task was not eased by the fact that the line is in the French speaking part of Switzerland and his first language is German. Another problem he faced was that, at the same time, he was also concerned with the commissioning of the third new rack locomotive in Austria.

By early August the three drivers were competent to drive without supervision but the