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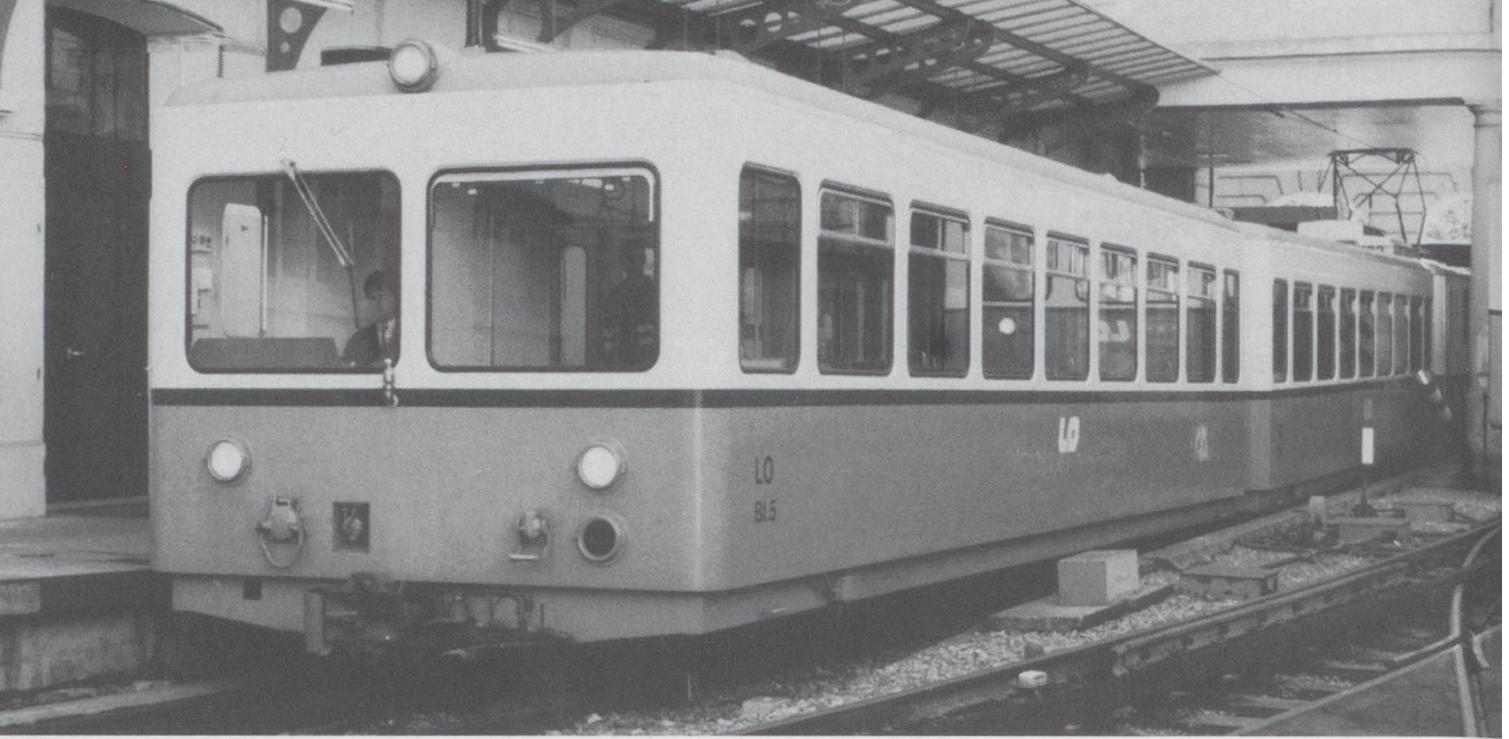
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Private Railways in Switzerland - 15 by Brian Hemming

The railways covered in this edition all have one thing in common in that they all terminate close to the shores of Lac Leman (Lake Geneva).

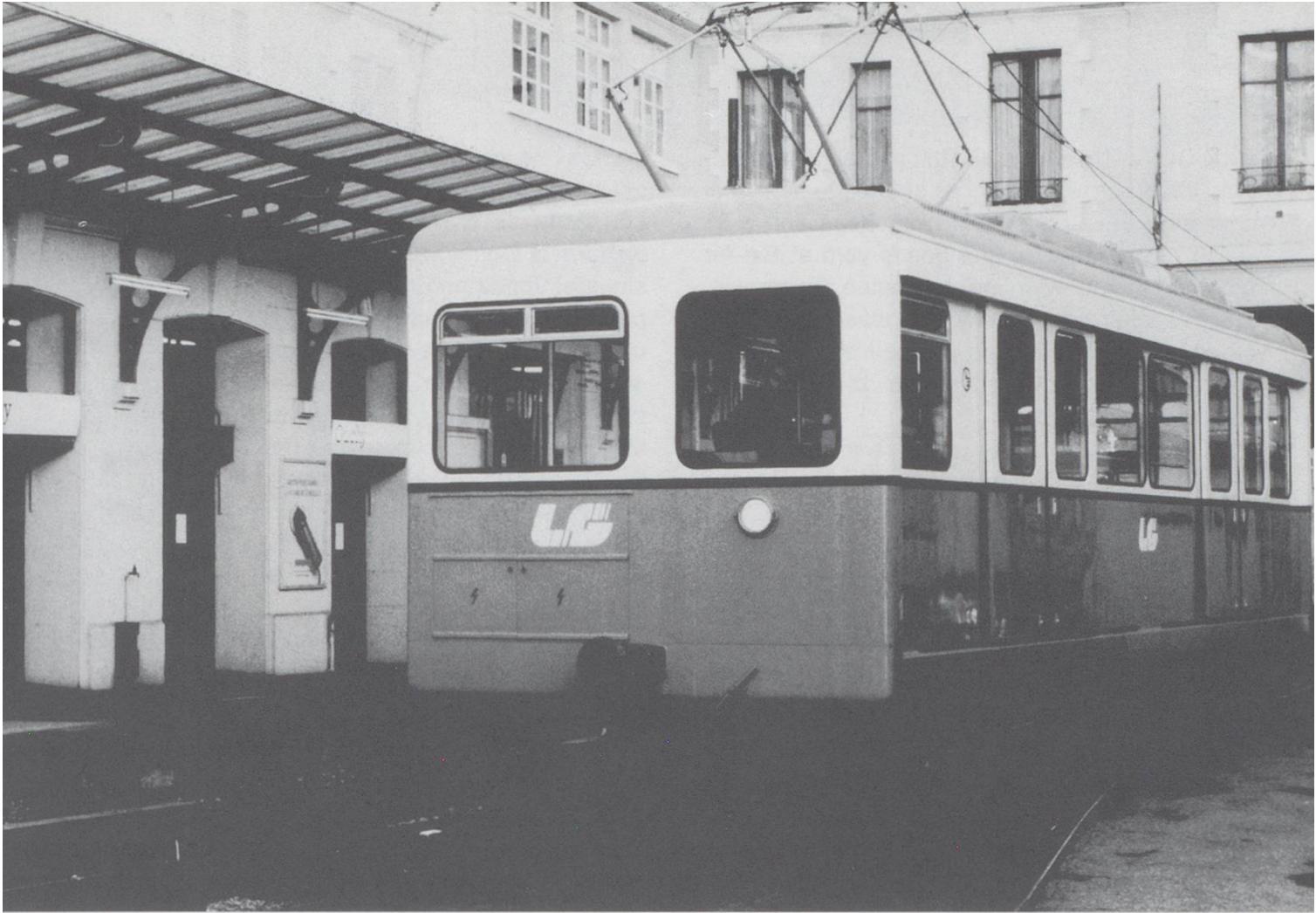
If size is measured in terms of the stock operated, then the Vevey-Chexbres (VCh) must be the smallest private railway in Switzerland. It has no stock and carries little more than the Federal Railways two car "Colibri" unit which operated the daily service. Nevertheless it is profitable and provides a valuable transport link to those communities which it serves. It is also available as a diversionary route if required.

Step outside the main line station at Lausanne and you may miss seeing on the opposite side of the Place de la Gare, midst McDonalds and the like, the station of the Lausanne-Ouchy (LO) and its associated line the Lausanne-Gare (LG). As part of the Lausanne transport system the LO and LG have a very important role in that they connect the centre of this hilly city with its main line railway station and the lakeside. Starting life as a funicular railway, they are now rack operated and together are the busiest rack railway in Switzerland not only in terms of the frequency of the service but in the numbers of passengers carried. It is a staggering fact that these lines with an end to end length of 1.5km carry annually over a third of the total number of passengers carried on all Swiss rack railways. They are an interesting diversion when in Lausanne and well worth spending a little time on looking for evidence of times past.

The Montreux-Oberland bernois (yes, it is a little 'b') is for many, including your author, THE private railway in Switzerland. But, the MOB is

more than a railway as it is only part of the MOB Group. With its head office in Montreux, the MOB Group has many transport and related activities. It controls three railways (the MOB, CEV and MTGN), three funiculars (Territet-Glion, Les Avants-Sonloup and Vevey-Chardonne-Pèlerin), bus operations based on Château d'Oex and Aigle, and has a number of interests in hotels and travel centres. In relation to its railway activities, rolling stock of the three operating railways is maintained in fine condition at the central workshops at Chernex which undertakes many tasks from minor repairs to complete rebuilds. The MOB as a railway operator is innovative and forward looking.

For many years the MOB has participated in the "Golden Pass" concept of linking by public transport the lakes of Geneva and Luzern. Because of gauge considerations it has not been possible to undertake the journey between Montreux and Luzern without two changes of train, but now after many years of frustration and debate the standard gauge part of the "Golden Pass" route between Zweisimmen and Interlaken Ost is to be converted to dual gauge thus enabling through coaches to make the "Golden Pass" journey. (see Swiss Express Vol.5/4 pp 17-18). Two schemes being proposed with which the MOB may or may not be involved are the extension of the Aigle-Sepay-Diablerets (ASD) line from Diablerets to Gstaad and a line from Gstaad southwards to Gsteig and then through a tunnel under the Sanetsch to Sion in the Rhône valley.



LO (& LG) La Compagnie du Chemin de fer Lausanne-Ouchy (incorporating the line Lausanne-Gare)

These two lines are part of Transports public de la région lausannois (TL) running parallel in a tunnel between Lausanne Gare and Lausanne Flon.

The Lausanne-Ouchy (LO) was opened in 1877 as a funicular railway from Ouchy, close to Lac Leman, to the centre of Lausanne at Flon. The Lausanne-Gare (LG) was opened in 1879 to handle the heavy traffic between the LO intermediate station of Sainte-Luce (now Gare) and Flon. Like the LO it was a funicular railway. Both were powered by water turbines supplied from Lac de Bret above Puidoux via a reservoir at Chailly.

In 1954 the LG was converted to rack operation and two 16 seat + 48 standing Beh2/2 railcars were purchased. In anticipation of the extra traffic which would be created by Expo 64 being held in Lausanne, these were replaced in 1964 by the two larger capacity Beh2/2 railcars (20 seats + 134 standing) which are still in

Previous page: LO unit He298.822 at Ouchy station.

Above: Lausanne Gare unit Bhe2/2 598811-8 at Ouchy about to leave for Lausanne Gare.

service. The original railcars were scrapped in 1975 following unsuccessful attempts to sell them for further use.

Conversion of the LO to rack operation took place in 1958, and unlike the LG locomotive propulsion was adopted. Three locomotives and 5 Bt coaches were purchased. The train sets normally consist of a locomotive pushing two coaches; two sets being required for the service.

The LG and LO were unusual in that until the introduction of rack operation both carried goods traffic using rope haulage on the inclines. Transfer of traffic between the LG and the Federal Railways (CFF) lines at Gare and also from the terminus at Ouchy to the lakeside was carried out by three small DC electric locomotives, one of which, E74, has been preserved and was on display at the Lausanne CFF depot open day in 1997. Transfers at Flon were made by means of a traverser which although originally rope hauled was converted to

600v DC overhead line electric operation in 1908. This traverser fed a number of lines to industrial premises, the Companies' workshops and a lift which raised wagons to a goods yard at Bel-Air for interchange with the Lausanne Tramways. Freight traffic from Ouchy was taken to Flon on the LO, moved by means of the traverser to the LG and then lowered down to Gare and transferred to the CFF.

The conversion of the LG to rack operation in 1954 made it necessary to change the arrangements for the transfer of goods to and from the CFF. A standard gauge line, electrified at 15kv AC as far as the entrance to Flon goods yard was therefore built by the Federal Railways from the their goods depot at Sébillon to Flon. It followed existing roads and was opened in 1953. This line terminated at Flon at a newly installed 14 metre turntable which permitted the handling of larger wagons and necessitated the modification of the traverser to take wagons with a 7.4 metre wheelbase. Hitherto the traverser at Flon and the turntables at Gare and Ouchy had a capacity for wagons with a maximum 5.5 metre wheelbase. The newly created sidings at Flon were electrified at 600v DC to permit the handling of traffic by the two remaining Te1/2 locomotives of the LO/LG. The change in traffic patterns meant that the traverser at Flon was now only required to gain access to the railway workshops. A new workshop was built in 1975 at Ouchy and after transfer of all equipment down the incline to Ouchy and the movement of the withdrawn He2/2 railcars, 101 and 102 to the old workshops for cutting up, the traverser was taken out of service. It was at this time that the first physical connection was made between the LG and LO in the Montbenon Tunnel below Flon. The line to Sébillon lasted until 1979 when rail freight operations on the LO/LG were turned over to road haulage. The two remaining Te1/2 shunting locomotives were attached to the end of the final freight from Flon on 28th December 1979.

The LG and LO passed to the control of the TL in 1985 whose blue and cream livery was adopted. The upper station of the LG and LO, Flon, is already an interchange point with the Tramway sud ouest lausannois (TSOL) whilst tunnel boring to bring the Lausanne-Echallens-Bercher (LEB) line to Flon is at an advanced stage. Future plans are to build a north west

tramway which will also terminate at Flon.

The lines are rack operated throughout. The LO starts its 6 minute journey from a single platform at Ouchy and climbs in a cutting making stops at Jordis and Montriond, where there is a passing loop. It then enters a tunnel, passing under the CFF main line before reaching the station Gare which is located on the opposite side of the Place de la Gare to the main line station. Continuing in tunnel the LO line runs parallel to the LG line for the final 2 minute run to Flon where trains from the two lines terminate at opposite platforms. Trains on the LO run every 7½ minutes in each direction and those of the LG every 3½ minutes.

Although the lines retain the workshop facilities at Ouchy, the majority of heavy work is now carried out at the modern workshops of the TSOL adjacent to the station at EPFL.

Lausanne - Ouchy

Length: 1.5 km
Gauge: 1435 mm
Rack system: Strub
Voltage: 650v DC
Maximum gradient: 120‰
Depot: Ouchy
Works: Ouchy
Nearest SBB station: Lausanne (2 minutes)
Kursbuch table: 103

Powered Stock (livery: light blue & cream)

Class	Numbers	Built
He	298.821 - 298.823	1958

Lausanne - Gare

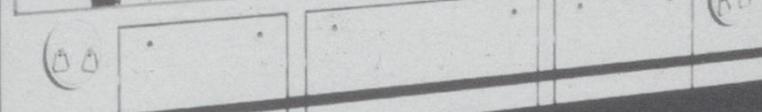
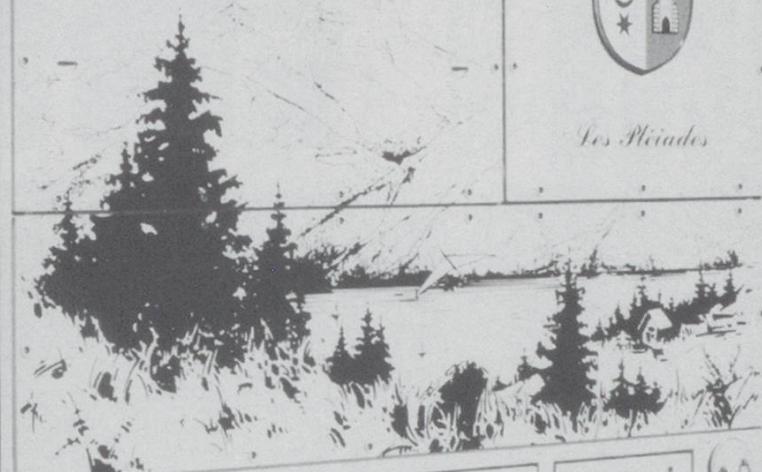
Length: 0.3 km
Gauge: 1435 mm
Rack system: Strub
Voltage: 650v DC
Maximum gradient: 120‰
Depot: Ouchy
Works: Ouchy
Nearest SBB station: Lausanne (2 minutes)
Kursbuch table: 104

Powered Stock (livery: light blue & cream)

Class	Numbers	Built
Bhe	598.811, 598.812	1964



Les Pléiades



MOB

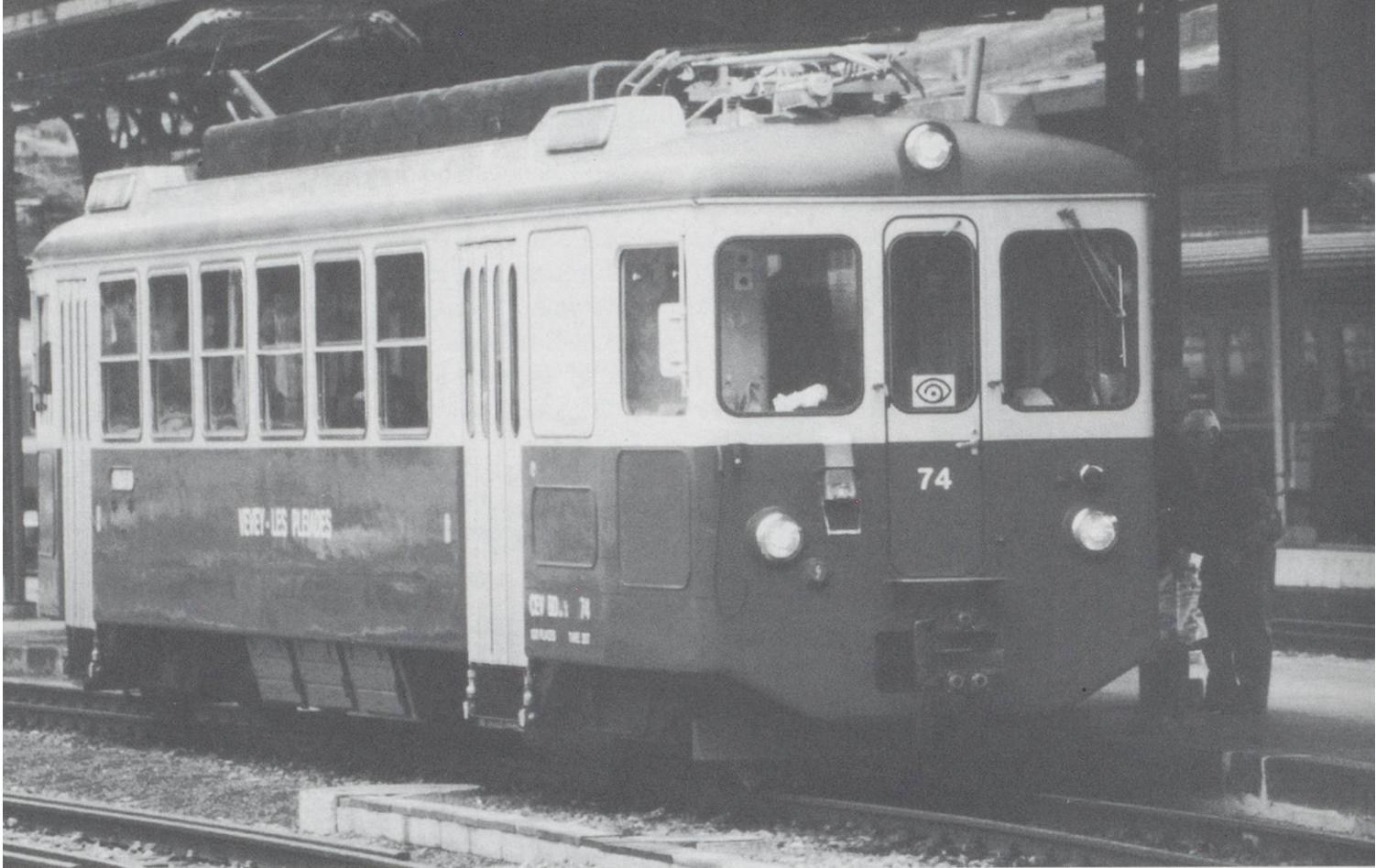
Le chemin de fer Montreux-Oberland Bernois

After a number of early proposals for railways linking Lac Leman with the Bernese Mittelland including a rack railway from Montreux to Montbovon via the Jaman Pass and a standard gauge line from Vevey to Thun, a concession was granted in 1898 to build a narrow gauge adhesion line from Montreux to Les Avants and Montbovon. Following the granting of this concession the "Compagnie chemin de fer Montreux-Montbovon" was founded in Montreux on 26th June 1899 with a starting capital of 2 million francs. On 22nd December 1899 this company obtained a further concession to build a narrow gauge line from Montbovon to Zweisimmen, and on 10th May 1902 the shareholders ratified a change of name of the company to "la Compagnie du chemin de fer Montreux-Oberland bernois (par le Simmental)"

The first section of line from Montreux to Les Avants (10.85 km) opened in 1901 and included some of the steepest inclines on the new route. In 1903, upon completion of the Jaman Tunnel (2424 m long) the line was extended to

Montbovon (22.14 km) where it made a junction with the Gruyère-Fribourg-Morat (GFM) line from Bulle. By 1904 the line had been extended firstly to Chateau d'Oex (32.67 km) and then Gstaad (45.76 km). The final section of the MOB main line to Zweisimmen (62.43 km) was completed and opened in 1905 and thus the connection between Lac Leman and the Bernese Mittelland was realised. The whole of the route was electrified from the beginning at 750v DC. At Zweisimmen the MOB line terminated at platforms adjacent to those of the standard gauge Simmental-Erlenbach-Zweisimmen Bahn (SEZ).

Before the line was completed through to Zweisimmen, a petition was lodged in 1904 to build a line from Zweisimmen to Frutigen by way of Lenk, the Hahnenmoos Pass and Adelboden. This project did not come to fruition but instead a concession was granted in 1906 for a line from Zweisimmen to Lenk (12.83 km). This line was opened in 1912 and thus the whole 75.3 km network of the MOB was completed. A serious decline in traffic led to the closure of the Lenk



branch in 1975. After a number of proposals from the Federal authorities, including converting the whole branch to standard gauge and transferring it to the SEZ, it was finally decided that it would remain narrow gauge and be modernised prior to the re-opening which took place in 1979.

Immediately before and during World War II a number of developments took place as a result of the route being regarded as of strategic importance. The trackbed and overhead equipment were largely replaced whilst the opportunity was taken to raise the line voltage to 810v DC. Most of this work was undertaken by military personnel and it has been recorded that at times up to 8000 troops were engaged in various activities on the railway infrastructure. Federal funds are still provided for the railway to maintain its strategic status. A typical example was the substantial contribution made to the cost of the French built heavy Gm4/4 diesel locomotives which as well as providing power for works trains are available to haul trains in the event of a major interruption in the power supply. In recent years there has been continued upgrading of the infrastructure including the raising of the line voltage to 900v DC, the replacement of some of the older bridges and the easing of some of the tighter curves.

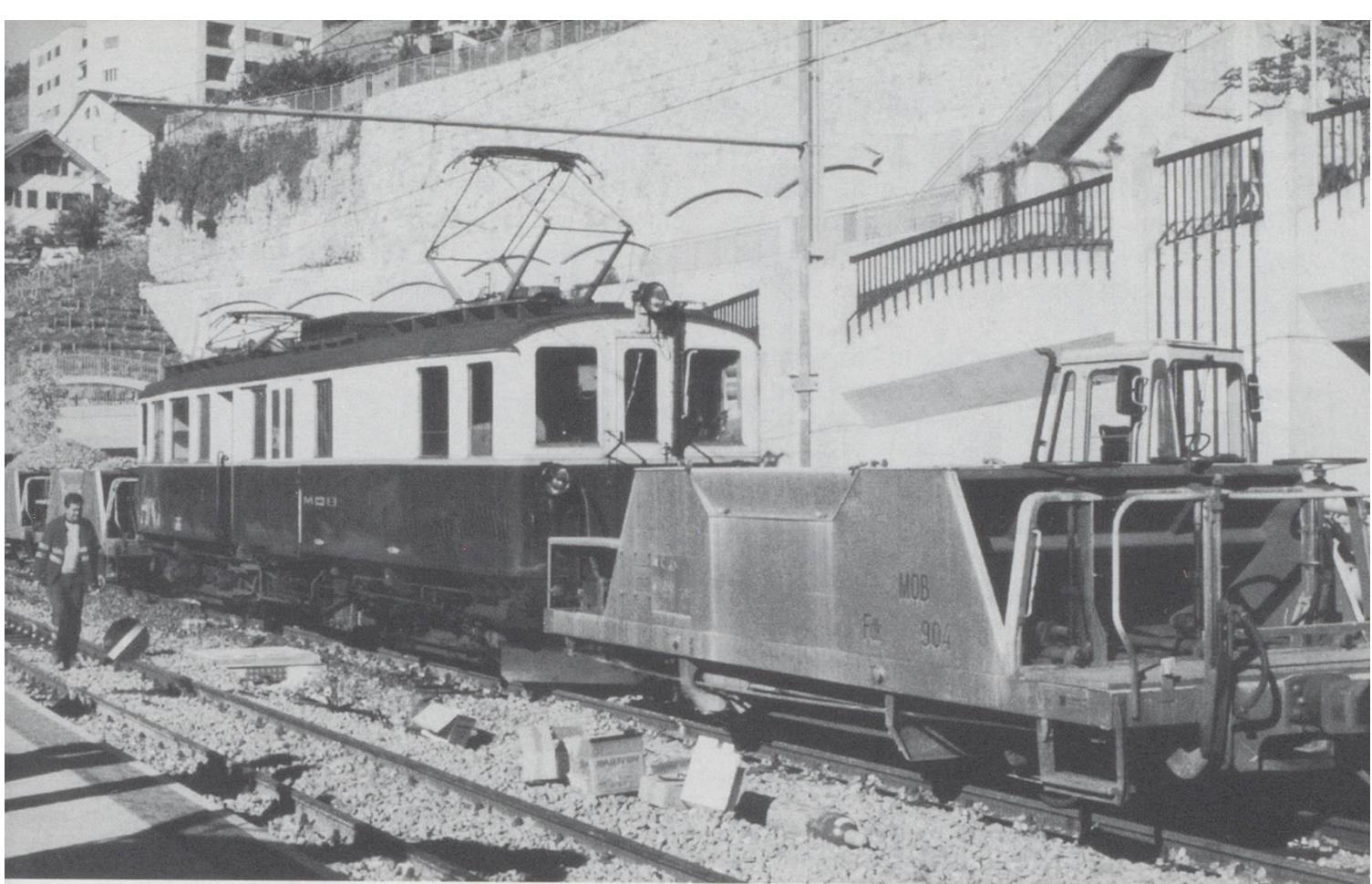
A programme of stock replacement was implemented starting in 1944 with the arrival of

Previous page: The power unit of 7002 at Montreux showing a scene of Les Pléiades.

Above: BDe4/4 74 of the Vevey - Les Pléiades, part of the MOB Group.

new railcars (BDe4/4 3xxx series). Further new railcars (ABDe8/8 4xxx series) arrived in 1968, followed in 1976 and 1978 by new one man operated railcars and driving trailers (Be4/4 5xxx series). New locomotives were acquired in 1968 (GDe4/4 4xxx series) and 1995 (Ge4/4 8xxx series). The latest stock is the GTW railcars (Be2/6 7xxx series) which were placed in service in 1997-8.

The MOB has always been a pioneer in the development of railway services, and in 1906 it was the first narrow gauge railway in Switzerland to put restaurant cars in service. Three cars built in Prague, followed in 1912 by a further vehicle were operated by the Swiss Dining Car Company. Services were further enhanced in 1914 by the purchase from SWS of a drawing room car for the "Golden Pass" route. This was the precursor for four Pullman coaches built by SIG in 1931 for the "Golden Mountain Pullman Express". The world economic situation at the time resulted in this ill fated initiative lasting only one season. The coaches were put in store and sold to the Rhätische Bahn (RhB) in 1939. The 1914 drawing room car was rebuilt to Pullman standards in 1931 and remains in service today



for special use as As102.

To celebrate its 75th anniversary in 1975 the MOB introduced in 1976 a panoramic 1st class air conditioned saloon coach built partly in its own workshops using bogies from withdrawn stock. This was received very favourably and resulted in a further 1st class and two 2nd class panoramic saloons being built for the introduction of the "Panoramic-Express" in 1979. Further panoramic stock, including two driving trailers, was introduced between 1982 and 1985 which enabled a second luxury train to be introduced in 1985, the all 1st class "Super Panoramic-Express" (to become the "Golden Panoramic-Express in 1995). There was a period of stability until 1993 when a completely new train, the "Crystal Panoramic-Express" was introduced using a GDe4/4 locomotive as the central power unit for a new 1st class panoramic four coach set consisting of two driving trailers and two saloons. This service was run in addition to the existing panoramic services. In the 1998 summer timetable the panoramic service consisted of two "Crystal Panoramic-Express", two "Golden Panoramic-Express and a single "Regional Panoramic-Express" in each direction between Montreux and Zweisimmen with some trains extended to Lenk. Booking is obligatory on all Panoramic trains except the "Regional

Above: De4/4 28 still working, seen here in October 98, a works train of ballast being laid at Montreux station.

Panoramic-Express".

During the day an approximately two hourly all stations through service taking two hours is operated between Montreux and Zweisimmen. At each end of the line there are local services. An approximately hourly service operates to Chamby which is extended either two hourly to Les Avants or four times daily (Mondays to Fridays) to Blonay or Vevey. Previously in the hands of the Be4/4 railcars in the 5xxx series, the Les Avants service is now mainly operated by the new Be2/6 units as is that to Blonay or Vevey. At the Zweisimmen end of the line the service on the Lenk branch is approximately every 45 minutes, and there is a two hourly local service to Gstaad.

Freight traffic on the MOB was never heavy, but until the 1980's remained at a steady level with one through train running daily in each direction between Montreux and Zweisimmen. The traffic declined dramatically in the early 1990's to such an extent that the cargo domicile service was discontinued in favour of road haulage at the commencement of the 1994/5 timetable. With this there disappeared the last regular goods train which operated between

Zweisimmen and Saanen. Freight is still carried, and rollbocken transfer facilities still exist and are used at Zweisimmen for traffic to the Lenk branch and the oil storage depot at Oey between Saanen and Rougemont.

The two hour run from Montreux to Zweisimmen is one of the most scenic and demanding in Switzerland. The journey starts in Montreux station which has recently been refurbished. Almost immediately after leaving the station the line climbs up past the depot and continues an almost relentless climb for 18 km to the eastern portal of the Jaman Tunnel at Les Casses. In this distance the line has climbed 717 metres, having passed at Chamby the junction for the line to Blonay and at Chernex the main workshops of the MOB. This stretch of line is characterised by sharp curves, and an incline as steep as 73‰ (1 in 13.7). Above Montreux there are magnificent views of Lac Leman as well as the snow clad high French Alps. The line descends from Les Casses through steeply sided wooded countryside before entering the station at Montbovon. Despite the station and the nearby workshops being owned by the GFM, the MOB uses a small two road shed on the site for stock storage. Beyond Montbovon the railway climbs steadily running mostly parallel to the road in the Sarine valley before reaching the delightful village of Château d'Oex and continuing to Rougemont. Here the local language is French but in the 4km to the next station, Saanen, it changes to German and will remain so for the rest of the journey. Continuing to climb the line heads in a southerly direction towards Gstaad before continuing northwards over a fine lattice work viaduct and reaching the summit of the line at 1278m above sea level between Schönried and Saanenmöser. A steady drop of nearly 10km follows to Simmental, with fine birds-eye view of Zweisimmen being a highlight. The MOB trains from Montreux terminate in one of the bay platforms at Zweisimmen, and with only a short walk the train for Lenk waiting in another bay platform can be reached. The station at Zweisimmen is also served by the BLS Lötschbergbahn (BLS) whose trains to Spiez and Interlaken connect with those of the MOB.

The MOB branch to Lenk climbs steadily for most of its journey up the Simmental. Passenger traffic is sparse, particularly out of the winter

sports season, and the only significant evidence of freight is a large timber yard at St. Stephan.

Eagerly awaited is the promised third rail between Zweisimmen and Interlaken, the coming of which will add another chapter to the MOB story.

Length: 75.2 km

Gauge: 1000 mm

Voltage: 900v DC

Maximum gradient: 73‰

Depots: Montreux, Zweisimmen

Works: Chernex

Nearest main line stations: Montreux (SBB), Zweisimmen SEZ) (both adjacent)

Kursbuch tables: 120, 120.1, 120.2

Powered Stock (livery: locomotives: dark blue & cream, railcars: light blue & cream or dark blue & cream, shunters & diesel locomotives: dark blue & yellow)

Class	Numbers	Built
Tm2/2	1	1938
Tm2/2	2	1953
Tm2/2	3	1954
Tm	4	1934
ABDe4/4	11	1904
BDe4/4	20	1906
BDe4/4	27, 28	1924
BDe4/4	36, 37	1913
Be4/4	1001, 1002	1955, 1951
Be4/4	1003	1958
DZe6/6	2001	1932
Gm4/4	2003, 2004	1976, 1982
BDe4/4	3001 - 3004	1944
BDe4/4	3005, 3006	1946
ABDe8/8	4001 - 4004	1968
BDe4/4	5001 - 5002	1976
BDe4/4	5003 - 5004	1979
GDe4/4	6001 - 6004	1983
Be2/6	7001 - 7004	1997-98
Ge4/4	8001 - 8004	1995

Notes:

2 ex Inselbahn Juist, Germany in 1993

3 ex Graftschaft Hoye, Germany in 1984

4 ex RhB Xm2/2 9913 in 1995

35, 37 ex VBW 36, 37 in 1988

1001 ex LCD 9 in 1972

1002 ex BA 4 in 1973

1003 ex FLP 5 in 1981

11, 2001 are historic vehicles



VCh La Compagnie du Chemin de fer Vevey-Chexbres

Following the opening of the line from Bern to Fribourg and Lausanne, which approached Lausanne from the east, thought was given to providing a direct connection from this line to Vevey, Montreux and beyond. Although a concession was granted in 1898 for a line linking Vevey with main Lausanne to Bern line at Puidoux-Chexbres, it was not until 1900 that construction commenced. The line opened in 1904 using steam traction and had one intermediate stop at Chexbres-Village. This unique railway, La Compagnie du Chemin de fer Vevey-Chexbres (VCh), was promoted by Canton Vaud and the communities of Vevey, La Tour-de-Peilz, Chexbres and Puidoux. Support was also gained from private sources. From the outset the total operation and maintenance of the line has been the responsibility of the Federal Railways who retain all receipts and pay the Company an annual fee. From the opening of the line the Company has declared a dividend of between 1% and 3%.

The route was electrified in 1940, but the steepness of the gradients and the limited load capacity of the catenary combined to exclude the passage of heavy trains. The passenger service was operated by De4/4 locomotives hauling up to three coaches. Of particular interest is that between 1954 and 1963 the pair of experimental pneumatic tyred coaches with 10 wheel bogies were allocated to the line. On withdrawal of the De4/4 locomotives in the early 1970's, the service was operated by a single BDe4/4 railcars usually hauling one or two coaches.

When modernisation of the route took place in 1995, the opportunity was taken to install higher capacity catenary. While this work was being

done and the track being renewed the line was closed completely for three weeks. During the modernisation of the line the opportunity was taken to open new halts at Vevey-Funi and Corseaux-Cornalles. The former is close to the MOB owned funicular to Mont-Pèlerin, whilst the latter serves a local school. A new dedicated railcar was also provided by the Federal Railways.

The journey on the VCh starts from the main line station at Vevey and runs on a single line in a westerly direction parallel to the main line before turning away to the north west to begin its unbroken climb to Puidoux-Chexbres. The line is single throughout with passing facilities at Chexbres-Village and during the course of its 7.8 km route climbs some 232 metres through the vineyards above Lac Leman. The hourly service is now operated by a specially liveried SBB "Colibri" railcar, which is allocated and maintained at Lausanne. Although the original intention of the promoters of the line was to provide a connection from the easterly direction to the Lausanne - Bern line, the steep gradient means that it has little extra use other than as a diversionary route or for special trains. For the same reasons freight traffic is negligible.

Length: 7.8 km

Gauge: 1435 mm

Voltage: 15kv 16.7Hz AC

Maximum gradient: 40%

Nearest SBB stations: Vevey, Puidoux-Chexbres

Kursbuch table: 111

Powered Stock (livery: yellow/blue)

Class	Number	Built
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RBDe 560	560.131	1995
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(This unit is provided and operated by SBB/CFF)