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BODENSEE-TOGGENBURG AND SÜDOSTBAHN TO MERGE

On the 26th March 2001 the boards of directors of the BT and SOB announced their intention to seek shareholder (primarily local cantons) approval to merge. The SOB's holding in Lokoop would be included in the merged company.

The thinking behind the move is the need to compete in an ever-changing market with a combined strength greater than the railways would have had individually. The Swiss railway scene is altering and a broader competitive front is required. The HQ of the new compa-

opportunities for women. The Unions would be fully involved during negotiations although at the date of the announcement that had not actually given their formal approval.

The boards and management intended to prepare for the merger subject to formal shareholder approval since they considered it important to immediately strengthen the business base and development potential.

A subsequent announcement was made on the 14th May 2001 that general approval had been given to the merger. The new company is to



Admit it. You all thought "Oh no he's found yet another excuse to print a BT picture", well you were wrong. The SOB have recently taken over half of the Zug-Erstfeld regional service, SBB operating the other half. 05/05/2001 Arth Goldau.

ny is to be in St Gallen and both Samstagern and Herisau works will be retained. The core business is seen as regional services and these together with the Voralpen are to be maintained intact. Greater marketing strength would be brought to the latter in particular.

No job losses are envisaged other than through natural wastage. The railways believe that they will be able to offer more jobs in the future through a better competitive position. Some workplace flexibility would be required and encouraged and the new joint enterprise would be placing considerable emphasis on

use the well known name of the 'Schweizerische Südostbahn' and using the current acronym 'SOB'. This was intended to reflect the nature of the network in spanning the country between the Bodensee and Lake Luzern.

The head of the new company is to be Dr Guido Schoch, currently head of the BT. The Chair and Vice-Chair are to be members of the Canton Schwyz and Canton St Gallen legislatures respectively.

Those of you who, like me, love the BT's superb green and cream livery have only until the end of the year to guarantee pictures.