

Zeitschrift: Swiss express : the Swiss Railways Society journal
Herausgeber: Swiss Railways Society
Band: 6 (2000-2002)
Heft: 11

Rubrik: From our own correspondent

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FROM OUR OWN CORRESPONDENT

George M Hoekstra

SBB'S NEW CARGO LINE - UP



Line-up of the ten new Re 482 freight engines of SBB Cargo. Not a lot of change out of twenty million pounds; however, this is quite reasonable in today's market. Photo SBB.

“NOT JUST THE ROLL - OUT OF A NEW ENGINE, BUT THE ROLL - OUT OF A NEW SBB CARGO!”

It was Mr SBB Cargo himself, Daniel Nordmann who uttered these words. The pragmatic Mr Nordmann, who now leads SBB-Cargo, after two Scandinavian “Turbo” failed to get to grips with the mentality of FS Trenitalia, presented no less than ten new Re 482 locos to the press on the 14th of June. These dual current (15 kV, 16 2/3 Hz and 25 kV, 50 Hz) engines, built by the Bombardier factory in Kassel, Germany are certified to run both in Switzerland and Germany. They are based on the German BR 185 design, which itself is based on the BR 101 and BR 145 engines. These two types together have clocked up more than 235 million km (147 million miles) of running in service. The Re 482 has both the Swiss and German safety and detection systems built in: Signum and ZUB for Switzerland, as well as Indusi, LZB 80 and PZB 90 for Germany. Provision is also made

for installing the new European ETCS System. With their 5600 kW power, they are capable of hauling 1600 tons at 80 km/h (50 mph) on ramps of 12 per mille (1 in 83); this is what we call flat country. On the Gotthard and Lötschberg lines, with their 26-27 per mille (1 in 37) ramps, they are able to pull 650 tons at 80 km/h. Overall top speed is 140 km/h (87 mph). The Loco itself weighs 84 tons. Those of you, who take the *Eisenbahn Amateur*, will have seen an extensive article by Remo Cazzari in the June issue, with a scale drawing. The cost is 4.5 million Francs (1.85 million Pounds) each. The engines were delivered only 10 months after the order was signed, inclusive of obtaining certification from both the Swiss and German authorities, surely a record. This shows how much has changed in the world of locomotive manufacture. It used to take six to ten years, including the building of prototypes... Today's modular manufacture, with parts from proven designs, has introduced the flexibility,

savings and time scales demanded by today's markets.

At the end of June, SBB Cargo and the German firm of "Hafen und Güterbahn Köln" (HGK) will have established a new joint venture, the "Swiss Rail Cargo Köln". This will enable SBB Cargo to use their new engines to

for the continuation of freight operations straight into Italy. This will be with the cooperation of FS Trenitalia Cargo.

But SBB Cargo is not the only player: Germany's main freight operator, DB Cargo, is in Partnership with the BLS group and has just taken a 20 % stake in BLS Cargo. They have



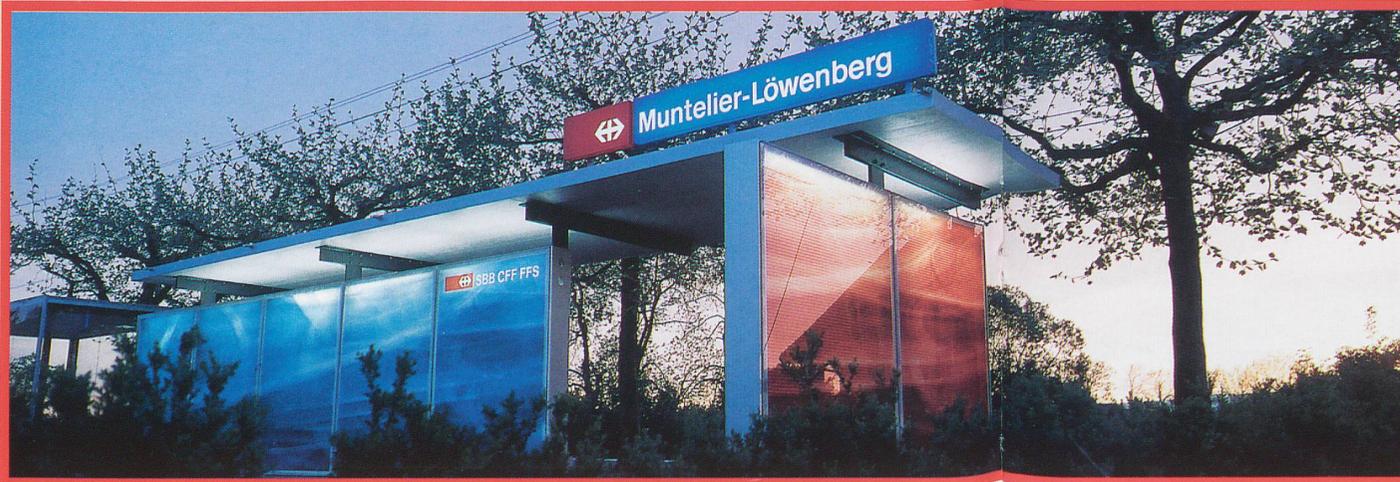
A dramatic impression of the new engine at nighttime.

Photo SBB.

run trains straight through from Köln, via Basel to Erstfeld and Chiasso, entirely under their own responsibility. This is a big plus for shippers: they have only got one transportation company to deal with. In addition to the ten new Re 482 locos, at least 20 of the fleet of existing Re 4/4^{II} engines will be fitted out for running on the German railway system. The first one so fitted out was successfully tested out in Germany in March and has received its licence to run in Germany from their "Eisenbahn Bundesamt". As a second phase, it is planned to buy multi-current locomotives

also indicated a willingness to augment their share. BLS CEO Mathias Tromp was quick to point out the BLS wants to keep the controlling share. Another, if much smaller, stakeholder in BLS Cargo is the Italian shipper Ambrogio, which runs Intermodal trains. Owner Mr Ambrogio told me "people at the BLS will listen to a small independent operator like myself and will try to help". BLS Cargo also plans to buy multi-current and multi-systems locomotives. It is all happening!

REGIONAL STATIONS MAKEOVER



The station - seen here from the street side - lights up in the evening twilight.
Photo SBB.

The small halt of Muntelier-Löwenberg, on the line from Murten to Kerzers and location of the SBB training centre, was chosen to start off a new programme of facelifts for what the SBB calls "stations with regional traffic". The presentation was made by Infrastructure Director Pierre-Alain Urech and Regional Traffic Manager Philippe Gauderon, they are both "romands" (= French speaking Swiss). In the SBB, top-level managers always present such an event of national importance. That both of them come from the French-speaking part of Switzerland is very rare indeed.

The stations and halts in question are very small and all unstaffed and, as you know, Switzerland with its very dense rail-network has quite a lot of them. Railway infrastructure is a long-term investment and should also be a long-term commitment. There is no quick response in infrastructure. In operation, you can provide an extra train in minutes - that is, if you have the stock! But tracks and structures take time - and a lot of money. Long term planning is essential. At the end of 2000, the board of SBB earmarked a massive 340 million francs (140 million Pounds) for the transfor-

mation of 619 of their regional stations. The target is 80 by the end of this year and for all of them to be finished by 2006.

The basis of the new philosophy is security, cleanliness, user-friendliness and general environment. The first two go hand in hand and have top priority. Extensive questioning of passengers sustained the general thesis that dark and dirty environment scares people away. The new stations thus have a lot of light. A six to eight metres (20 - 27 ft) high light-column makes the station visible a long way off and provides some light around it. Large glass boxes with warm-light fluorescent tubes have posters from the SBB as well as others inside them, to make the glass non-transparent. Glass is very easy to clean and observations have indicated that non-transparent glass is not often vandalized. Also, passengers waiting in the shelters do not get the feeling of being "exhibited" in a glass showcase. A team of 400 cleaners will ensure that each and every one of the stations is maintained and cleaned every day of the year!

All SBB platforms will be raised to a uniform height of 55 cm (22 inches) to facilitate getting on and off trains. Clear maps give infor-

mation about directions and connections. Timetables are not only available for the trains, but also, depending on connections, for buses, boats and cable cars. Electronic optical infor-

mation will provide passengers with up to the minute information about the arrival of the next trains and where they are going. In addition, all stations have two way verbal communications with the next traffic-control point. Tickets can be bought at a vending machine. Already today, of the total number of tickets sold, 60 % are distributed through vending machines! To facilitate access to the stations, more bike parking space is provided and the total number of "Park & Rail" spaces is to be doubled: 34.000 spaces should be available by 2005 - one space for every 200 inhabitants in the whole country! The rail-related short term car-rental schemes "RailLink" and "Mobility" further enhance the general user friendliness of our public transport.

The new-look Muntelier-Löwenberg halt in its full glory. From left to right: two-way communication point, electronic information table, ticket vending machine, map and timetables. And glass everywhere, but all non see-through. Also note: the trees have been left standing on the platform - greatly adds to the atmosphere!

Photo: George Hoekstra





**DIGITAL
IMAGING
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THIS PAGE

TOP: MIB Class Be 4/4 No. 8 on a very wet day at Innertkirchen. 2002

CENTRE: BAM Bt No. 52 and Be 4/4 No. 12 at Morges - 26th May 2002

BELOW: WB Class Bde 4/4 No. 17 outside the engine shed at Waldenburg-26th May 2002.





THIS PAGE:

ABOVE: Two very different WAB Class HGe 2/2s Nos. 32 and 54 at Lauterbrunnen - 7th March 2002.

CENTRE: BT Re 4/4 No. 456 094 in the truly horrible "cow" livery on a Voralpen Express at Luzern - 6th March 2002.

BOTTOM: BT RBDs 566 071 & 072 at St Gallen - 6th March 2002. Many of these now have Südostbahn vinyls on the side. As you can imagine the vinyls in grey and red match the green and cream superbly.

