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Mind those cows!

take coal, so we have an uninterrupted arrival, creeping down the length of the platform to stop just short of the buffer.

Once the passengers have alighted No.15 propels its coach up the line to leave it on a siding before moving to the only level section of line on the whole railway – the engine shed. Disposal does not take long and it soon moves via the traverser to a stabling track. Opening the smokebox door reveals a totally clean interior for oil produces no cinders and no ash! Yet throughout the journeys the boiler pressure had been close to the red line



Michael Ellis looks on while No. 12 is watered at Planalp.

maximum of 16 bar; I had experienced the fascination and vicarious satisfaction of watching a small locomotive that is clearly the master of its work.

I am sincerely grateful to Michael Ellis, who was most patient answering my questions, both drivers, and the management of the BRB for granting me such a wonderful day. There remained another, rather different, steam adventure which the Editor has agreed can form the subject of another article. ☞

## **Over-The-Mountain' after 2016** Ernst Leutwiler

**O**n Friday July 4th SBB arranged a demonstration trip from Bellinzona to Erstfeld over the Gotthard line to unveil its operating strategy for the historic route, apparently to be referred-to as the Mountain Line, once the Gotthard Base Tunnel opens in 2016. Some 70 people representing tourism interests, regional and local government, and public transport operators were invited along to be informed about the new services, planned marketing action for the route, as well as the future role of SBB Historic.

SBB clearly intend to maintain an attractive and sustainable service on the old route after 2016. The Director of SBB Regional Services, made it clear that the Mountain Line and the Base Tunnel services cannot be regarded independently, and on June 30th the Federal Transport Office (BAV) published its decision that SBB would operate services *'over-the-mountain'* as well as on the new high-speed base line. The concession foresees an hourly service on the Mountain Line. In 2017 the BAV will decide if this service should be regarded as a regional service that would attract subsidy from both the Cantons it served and the Confederation.

The SBB currently plans a Regio-Express(RE) between Erstfeld and Lugano, that will be integrated into the TiLo S-Bahn services that operate in the Ticino (Ti), with some links into the Lombardy Region (Lo) of Italy. Since most passengers will obviously use the trains through the new tunnel, the Mountain Line must be specifically and specially marketed. Some packages are already being offered by the RailAway organisation, whilst SBB Historic also has a role. From the *'opening'* of the Mountain Line they will offer trips with historic rolling stock; footplate trips on historic power units; plus activities around its depot in Erstfeld. From Easter 2017, the Bahnerlebniswelt Gotthard (the Railway Experience Gotthard) will help to re-invigorate the mountain section with historic trains, and organize exhibitions in Erstfeld. ☞