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SBB News

The automatic train control between Bern and Thun was made operational in March 1992. It will operate on the Brunig from 1996. The PTT section at Luzern has been enlarged.

A new sub-station has been installed at Stein-Säckingen.

SBB is to join with the company Hotelzug AG to develop, in 1995, sleeping trains on the Hamburg - Zurich, Basel - Vienna and Vienna - Köln. Some 54 new two level sleeping cars are to be used.

Twelve additional Re4/4's are to be equipped with radio link for use over the Lotschberg route in addition to the dozen already so equipped in 1991.

The longest passenger train worked by an Ae4/7 is Regional train 8560, which regularly loads, Mondays to Fridays to ten vehicles.

An unusual working on 19 February 1992 was the use of RBe4/4 No. 1405 to haul a train of empty tankers from Rothenburg to Basel. The following day the same railcar saw service between Basel SBB and Basel Bad Bf. on instruction runs for DB drivers.

The SBB has placed an order with ABB Transportation Systems for 95 air-conditioned coaches for EC services.

An agreement has been reached for sharing the proceeds of international traffic over the Gotthard and Lotschberg routes. It makes the marketing of services more efficient and will lead to rationalisation of rolling stock. Freight revenue will be allocated on a tonne/km basis, passenger receipts will be apportioned on tachometer readings. Through services between Belfort and Delle have been replaced by buses with the change of timetable.

In the latest Kursbuch Table 600, Luzern - Chiasso, has been split. Table 600 now deals only with the express services, local services being split into four groups; 600.1 Luzern - Fluelen; 600.2 Fluelen - Airolo; 600.3 Airolo - Bellinzona and 600.4 Bellinzona - Chiasso. However 600.1 needed rapid amendment in the form of a supplement. An attempt to remove

an overhanging rock over the Axenstrasse was less than successful, it initiated a rockfall which totally destroyed a considerable stretch of the roadway alongside the Vierwaldstättersee and it was necessary to provide a substitute train service to replace the bus service that substituted for the train service. An optimistic note said the Axenstrasse would be reopened in September, but judging from the position in mid June, September 1993 would be a more realistic date.

BLS Developments

The BLS has ordered 5 locomotives classified 465, which are electrically similar to the SBB class 460. Eleven BLS drivers who tried out the SBB 460-000 over the BLS were impressed with what is known as the Horvath cab, praising its layout and visibility.

Four tractors are being ordered from Stadler AG, type Tea, battery/electric. Two are for the GBS section, and one each for the BN and SEZ.

The BLS has revamped its main line Regional service. Buses have replaced most trains between Reichenbach and Frutigen, with a Thun - Reichenbach service over the remainder of the line. The complete bus/train service between Spiez and Kandersteg is shown in a new Table 301 - Regionalverkehr Kanderstal.

Private Standard Gauge

Arth-Rigi Bahn (ARB) and Vitznau-Rigi Bahn (VRB)

The ARB and VRB were amalgamated on 27 May 1992. The new title is Rigi Bahnen AG.

Bodensee - Toggenburg (BT)

BDe4/4 No.52 went to SWP Pratteln for overhaul on 1 June.

A full list of names of units and locomotives has been published in *Eisenbahn Amateur* 7/92.

Martigny Orsieres (MO)

This line is studying the possibility of purchasing three Karlsruhe type trams. These sets have a top speed of 98 km/h, seat 100 passengers and only weigh 58 tonnes.

Regional Val du Travers (RVT)

Automotrice 105 has had its first class section downgraded to second class and reclassified RBDe4/4. It is used with BLS style B and ABt trailers.

Sihltal Zürich Uetliberg Bahn (SZU)

The SZU has ordered six double deck cars from Schindler, compatible with the SBB S-Bahn type.

In connection with the centenary, the Sihltalbahn is operating a week-end steam service on 5, 6, 12 and 13 September and 10, 11 October.

Sudöstbahn (SOB)

The Sudöstbahn opened the double track between Samstagern and Schindellegi at the end of April.

The two ex-DR locomotives have been renumbered as follows: 243-922 is now 143-922-3 and 250-252 is now 155-252-0. Driving trailer ABt 50 47 39 33 924 was transferred for overhaul to Oberburg (EBT) on 17 June. Its appearance an an out of service strengthening coach on the 16:58 Luzern - Langenthal caused some confusion to regular commuters.

Voralpen Express

This is the title now being used on the joint SBB/SOB/BT express service Luzern - Biberbrugg - Rapperswil - St.Gallen - Romanshorn. Stock for each set is provided indiscriminately by each company, a typical rake being SBB A, BT B, BT B, SOB B and BT BRD, all being MkIV air conditioned coaches with the exception of the BRD, which is a former centre entrance LS B, modified with baggage doors at one end and with the entrance plated over, being replaced by a Bistro area.

Metre Gauge Matters

Aigle - Leysin (AL)

The application for the concession to extend the line from Leysin and La Berneuse is being opposed by environmentalists. Surely rail is better for the environment than road!

Aigle-Seppey-Les Diablerets (ASD)

This line is still fighting hard for its existence. Copies of the petition form can be obtained from the Chairman (SAE, please).

One of the old railcars has been beautifully restored and with some vintage coaches it is running special services. Bookings are not necessary, but there is a small supplement. Forthcoming dates are 6 and 27 September, leaving Aigle for Les Diablerets at 09:28 and 14:00. Return journeys are at 10:56 and 16:51.

Appenzeller Bahnen (AB)

Ex SGA ABDeh4/4 No.6 is being overhauled at Ramsier and Jenzer works in Biel.

Biel Taufelen Ins (BTI)

Tractor Tm 542, ex-Brunig, built in 1929, has been rebuilt with closed bodywork.

Brienz Rothorn Bahn (BRB)

The BRB's centenary offering, giving travel during June at 1892 prices was an overwhelming success. Most trains ran fully loaded and long queues formed at Brienz for following services, particularly on fine days. As a result, the Editor's planned trip had to be aborted, he wanted to book in at the next hotel before midnight! Whether the project was a commercial success is another matter altogether.

The Luzern Transport Museum staged a centenary display in the Marine building, which has a large area on the ground floor set aside for special exhibits. The display included a mock-up cab numbered 13, and may foreshadow a further expansion of the stud. One of the older locomotives (No.4) was shown outside.

The new steam locomotive No.12, built by SLM, was seen on a works train on 12 June en route for Planalp, where construction is under way to improve the facilities on the line. The new locomotive entered service on 17 June. It is hoped to publish further details of this machine in our next issue.

Chemin de fer du Jura (CJ)

The referendum for the extension of the metre gauge line from Glovelier to Delemont has gone against the proposal - this time. It is to be hoped that enough land will be available alongside the new road to enable people to change their minds and extend the line at low cost. Alternatively, the proposal for Talgo type moveable wheelsets to enable through running (See The Talgo Solution, p 38) might solve the difficulty.

Chemin de fer des Montagnes Neuchatelois (CMN)

This little line has been provided with a large and well equipped workshop on the site of the old goods shed at Les Ponts de Martel, completely eliminating the vintage charm of this station. As the line has only 7 items of motive power it will, presumably, seek outside work.

Dampfbahn Furka Bergstrecke (DFB)

The reopening of this route between Realp and Tiefenbach was announced in our last issue. Until the locomotives from Vietnam can be restored (there is one at Samstagern), HG2/3 *Weisshorn*, No.6 of the Visp Zermatt Bahn has been borrowed. HG3/4 No.1 is to be sent to Meiningen works (DR) for restoration.

Gruyere - Fribourg - Morat (GFM)

BDe4/4 Nos.121 and 122 have become the first Swiss metre gauge units to operate with asynchronous motors.

The old Be4/4 No 121 has been renumbered 116.

Martigny Chatelard (MC) and St.Gervais Vallorcine (St.GV)

The grand design for through running under the banner Metro des Alpes has run into difficulties. The six new BDe4/8s have not yet been ordered because the financing of the package - two by the MC, two by the St.GV and two by the French Region Rhone-Alpes has not yet been settled. On top of this, the SNCF proposes to withdraw the eight existing ABDe4/4s in its 1996 programme, bringing into question just how they propose to run their services to Chamonix. Apparently the MC is capable of maintaining services from Martigny through to Chamonix.

Montreux - Glion - Rochers de Naye (MGN)

The new steam locomotive H2/3 No.1, for working Caux - Rochers de Naye was not expected to be in service until the end of July, causing a delay in the introduction of these week-end specials. A new spur, with basic servicing facilities, has been laid at Caux to enable the steam train to be stabled there during operation.

1991 built motorcoach Bhe4/8 No.304 carries a covered crest for *La Tour de Peilz*.

The original route was via the Territet - Glion funicular, which is also covered by the ubiquitous Swiss Pass. It makes for an interesting route to the summit, but it is necessary to rebook at Caux. It is advisable to ask the booking office at Glion to alert Caux, this smooths not only your path, but that of the railway as well. One of the old water balance cars is preserved at Territet, and the track is offset on its sleepers, having previously been a three rail system, with a centre rail common to both tracks.

Rhätische Bahn (RhB)

HGe4/4 No.37 of the FO has been regularly working freight trains between Landquart and Illanz since mid-May, providing HOm modellers with a valid excuse for adding one of these machines to their RhB stud - when Berno

produce them.

Ex-Berninabahn BDe4/4 No.38 has been transferred to service stock and renumbered 9922.

Ge2/4 No.213 (rebuilt in 1943 from a main line loco to a shunter) has been sent to Schwarzenbach SG for breaking up.

Ge2/4 No.205 was restored at Landquart works for display at the Technikum, Winterthur.

Solothurn Moutier Bahn (SMB)

Steam Ec4/5 No 11 (once plinthed at Oberdorf, has been sent to the ex-DR works at Meinigen for restoration.

Wengeneralpbahn (WAB)

The WAB plans to get a new He3/3 goods loco and a battery shunter (Tha) for use at Lauterbrunnen.

Tram Topics

Bern Tramways

There has been an 8.8% increase in passenger numbers since the low floor trams were introduced. The increase may not be due to the fact that passengers find it easier to get into the new vehicles, it is more likely that the modern vehicles are perceived as offering better value.

Lake Sailings

Vierwaldstättersee

The three new motor vessels, *Brunnen*, *Flüelen* and *Weggis*, have helped transform the services. One is on the Alpnachsee service, another on the Kussnachtsee run and the third on the Luzern - Flüelen route. The side thrusters have made it possible for a larger vessel to get into the cramped mooring at Kussnacht, and are extremely effective turning around at Alpnachstad. The first class accommodation is sumptuous, and includes not only a fine glazed look out area immediately below the bridge, but provides individual seats

on the tables under the canopy rather than slatted benches. The enclosed area is very comfortable, but practically deserted when the Editor travelled on them in June - it was much too fine to be inside. However, in winter the ample covered accommodation will be most welcome.

Paddle steamer *LH* is currently in the overhaul shed at Luzern, its extensive refit will take until 1994. Meantime the other four paddlers can easily handle the traffic, with three in service and the fourth laying over each day. It is clear that duties are being rotated.

Thunersee

The *Blumisaalp* is now in service and well patronised. The restoration has been sympathetically carried out but there is somewhat of a pinch point on the upper deck where a buffet counter has been installed which impinges on the main thoroughfare. The engines, thankfully, have not been enclosed in oil baths and one can enjoy the spectacle of whirling cranks whilst inhaling hot oil

General

The informative and well produced SBB/CFF magazine which provides up-to-date and concise information not only about the Federal railways, but also of private lines, is to cease publication at the end of this year, together with a newsheet, *Evasion* (French) and *Visit* (German). They will be replaced by another newsheet which will be distributed at stations aimed at the general public and less oriented towards the railway enthusiast.

ABB/SLM has won an order from Finland for 20 BoBo electric locomotives with an option for another 20 with asynchronous motors which will provide a maximum operating speed of 200 km/h.

A useful survey of current issues concerning Swiss railways by G.Freeman Allen, editor of *Janes World Railways*, appeared in the May and July issues of *Modern Transport*.

The referendum concerning AlpTransit has been set for 27 September 1992.