

The railways of Switzerland

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imperative for us to organise our country and our material possibilities in such a way that it would be necessary for the attacker to employ large numbers of troops if he wished to gain a speedy victory over us; and our infantry had to be trained in such a way that, in spite of our inferiority in the air and our entire lack of an armoured command, it would be able to inflict the maximum amount of damage to the invader. In other words - the plan for defensive measures against an enemy so greatly superior in force must be envisaged from the standpoint of how to make this attack as costly and as ineffective as possible. Such a defensive plan was elaborated and worked upon continually....The procedure for mobilisation was adapted to modern requirements and de-centralised. Battalions, and sometimes even individual companies, were often mobilised in the vicinity of that sector in which they would be called upon to fight should the invasion take place. The troops were continually reminded of the possibility of an attack in order to accustom them to the idea, and they were trained to be able to fight independently, in small, isolated groups, by night as well as by day. The training of the Infantry was carried out on a new basis, which provided for the instruction of the men in the technique of close combat and small engagements. From these few examples taken from the war period, we can see that the notion of a purely defensive army and that of the Militia system are quite compatible with the maintenance of an active and prepared Army. The determination to possess mental flexibility in this connection, may be considered to be a valuable asset inherited from active military service during the war.

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Wheels on rails means transportation. There is romance, history, progress and pleasure in the most popular and necessary form of transportation - the railroads. For all people live on the broad lands of five continents; they must be supplied with food and the necessities of life, and the people want to travel about for many reasons. Despite the ships and the air-planes, most people are dependent on the service of the railroads. This goes for all countries and for most parts of the world; in the great United States as well as in little Switzerland. The 19th century saw the establishment of railroads everywhere; their further expansion and development is still a great job for the present century.

To bring railway transportation to Switzerland has presented some of the biggest problems in railway construction. The mountainous character of the alpine country, the limitations in space, and other great and new difficulties have demanded from the Swiss railway builders much interprising courage, long studies and perseverance in constructing railway lines across the Alps, or through the Alps in long tunnels. Other lines had to be laid along lakes and narrow valleys, or even up steep mountain sides.

Thus, Switzerland, like few countries, presents to the traveller the greatest variety of all types of railway transportation, and all this in an alpine region of unmatched scenery. Several of these mountain railways were built in the late 1890s, and therefore are now half a century in operation. The Gornergrat, the Stansstad-Engelberg and other railways began operation in 1898, and the spectacular Jungfrau Railway opened up the first section, Scheid-egg-Eigerletscher, of its ascent to the Jungfraujoeh, the highest railway station in Europe (11,340 feet).

Most travel in Switzerland is still made by railroad, and as you get around the country you really find them everywhere; convenient, and most comfortable, with frequent schedules and courteous service. Best of all, practically all lines are now electrically operated, so the trains are fast, give smooth riding and the cars are clean. The Swiss are mighty proud of their railways, and with good reason. "ALL ABOARD!"
