

Swiss postal, telegraph and telephone services [continued]

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On completion of the flight simulator training, the prospective DC-9 captain undertakes a series of practice and training flights in and out of several airports in Switzerland and elsewhere. Among the final touches to the new plane before introducing it into service, is the installation of the galley and the initiation of stewards and hostesses into service on the new type of aircraft.

Looking ahead

By the end of 1968, Swissair will have changed completely to jet aircraft. Piston-engined planes in passenger service will be discontinued by then, and Swissair will be one of the first European airlines to use jets only. This means great advantages from the point of view of rationalisation and an increase in the airline's competitive strength. By the time the Metropolitans will be sold and the entire European short range network will be served by DC-9's, the seat capacity will be practically doubled.

Swissair also intends — at long sight — to replace its Caravelles by the long-body version of the DC-9 which will have about 100 seats and increased cargo carrying capacity. The eight Coronados, too, will gradually be replaced by additional DC-8's, and this streamlining of the whole air fleet will enable Swissair to keep up with increased competition and to satisfy the growing demand for business and pleasure travel all over the world.

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SWISS POSTAL, TELEGRAPH AND TELEPHONE SERVICES

(Continued)

"And now a word about the question of financing out of PTT's own resources: Up to now the PTT have been privileged in being able to finance their plant with their own capital — which is small — and substantial outside funds (mostly money from the PTT remittance and banking services). Unfortunately, the flow of these funds is becoming thinner and fails to keep pace with increasing demand. Moreover, the prevailing capital shortage, which will probably continue for some time yet, compels us to have more liquid funds on hand than previously. Several times this year we have had to parry fluctuations in our liquidity reserves in the order of a quarter milliard francs and more. Therefore the time is drawing near when we shall be forced for this reason as well, either to reduce our investments or to apply to the Federal Exchequer for

investment loans, which will surely not be granted without charging of interest.

"All Swiss circles of sound judgment agree that the only way out of this bottleneck is to be found in the adjustment of certain rates and fees. Accordingly, in the message accompanying the budget for 1966, the Federal Council asked for a further **increase of postal rates.**

"All major PTT rates are laid down in the Federal laws concerning the postal traffic and the telephone and telegraph traffic. Consequently, they can only be raised by an act of legislation. This cumbersome procedure is little suited to adjust PTT rates to changing conditions. As our efforts to run the PTT services in accordance with business management principles are increased, the need for a more flexible rate fixing policy is felt more and more. There is hardly a cogent reason why the PTT should not be on an equal footing with the Federal Railways in this respect. Serious thought was therefore given to the problem of linking the rate revision under way at present with a modification in the rate fixing powers, to the effect that the Federal Assembly would have exclusive jurisdiction in the fixing of PTT rates.

"However, this plan was abandoned in consideration of the urgency of the PTT rate revision. For if the two issues had been coupled, the new rates would have become effective at the beginning of 1968 at the earliest. By then considerable PTT deficits would have accumulated. Moreover it should be borne in mind that the Swiss people would show particular distrust to a modification in the rate fixing powers at the precise moment when rate increases are imminent. Therefore, the Federal Council will take up this issue again at a later time when no concrete rate adjusting measures are under consideration.

"Besides, the anticipation of the rate raising bill in the form of an amendment to the Postal Traffic Act will permit us to regulate, in the most appropriate form, the problems of exemption from postage and of liability.

"It is quite clear that the present rate revision cannot be undertaken along the lines of the revision of 1961, when the additional receipts of the postal service were offset by a decrease in the earnings of the telephone service, so that no surplus resulted for the PTT Enterprises as a whole. But at that time, the reserves were still intact and it was still possible to deliver the traditional 70 mio francs to the Federal Exchequer. Today we must face the unpleasant fact that the PTT have become an

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enterprise operating at a loss; and unless energetic steps are taken to remedy this situation, the deficit will increase from year to year. Estimates made in connection with our financial planning for the next ten years anticipate a presumable net loss of about 170 mio francs for the year 1974.

"Taking these legal and financial considerations into account, the right course would be to increase the PTT rates sufficiently to ensure yearly contributions to the Federal Exchequer of at least 70 mio francs for several years. This would presuppose a rate bill providing for surplus receipts of approximately 140 mio francs. From 1967 onwards the surplus would decrease to about 100 mio francs and drop to zero by 1974. However, a rate increase of this magnitude raises serious doubts. When the rate bill was discussed by the Consultative PTT Conference, in which large business and consumer circles are represented, it was held that rate increases resulting in additional receipts of around 100 mio francs would be at the upper limit of what could be borne by the economy. If this amount was not sufficient to ensure a sound financial position of the PTT over the long term, it was preferable to raise charges to the requisite level by steps; private industry would thus be better able to adopt its cost calculation to the new rates. Accordingly, the present rate raising bill makes provision for rate increases yielding additional earnings in the order of 100 mio francs. Thus, while the bill does justice to the cost payment principle, the secondary purpose of the PTT, which is to be a source of revenue for the Federal Exchequer, is not fully met."

During the discussion following the talk by Dr. Morant, Secretary General of the Swiss PTT, some more information was given, and various items of news have since been received from Switzerland.

Postal Cheques in Switzerland in 1965

At the end of last year, there were 340,983 postal cheque account holders in Switzerland, i.e. 2.68% more than the previous year. On the same date, the assets of account holders totalled Fr.3,809.93 million, i.e. Fr.297.2 million more than the previous year. The number of transactions handled in 1965 was 350,142,750 and the total turnover reached the all-time record of Fr.331,664.96 million, i.e. Fr.19,349.22 million more than the previous year.

A new arrangement has been in force for the past twelve months, whereby cheques may now be cashed also at post offices which have no postal cheque service. This is done by a special *Anmeldekarte*. Some changes have been made in the working of some of the *Postscheckämter*. The new regulations which boil down to a five-day week of accountancy allow a considerable saving in staff.

Telegraph and Telex

In 1965, PTT dealt with 6 million telegrams, 1.1m. of which were sent to addresses inside Switzerland.

16.2 million Telex connections were made last year, 41.9% more than in 1964. Of these, 4.7m. were installed with addresses in Switzerland, 8.7m. in Europe, 0.5m. overseas and 2.3m. transit service.

Telephone Services

According to American telephone statistics, 1964 saw an increase of 11.5 million to 182.5m. telephones in the world. Thus, Switzerland with 35.97 'phones per hundred inhabitants is still in fifth place. 1965 brought another increase in subscribers (6.4%), and 1692.4 million telephone conversations were registered, 90m. more than in 1964. At the end of December, 45,000 people were still waiting to have the telephone installed. At the end of May this year,

the 1.5 millionth subscriber was connected. In 1948 (after 68 years) there were 500,000 subscribers and in 1959 one million.

At the beginning of the year, there were 420,000 subscribers to *Telephonrundspruch*, radio connected to the telephone. This service has been further improved and is gaining in popularity. In the thirty-four years of its existence, over 42 million francs have been invested, and recently, more programmes from abroad, transmitted by cable, have been added to the service.

Postal Motor Coach Services

In 1965, postal motor coaches transported over 36m. passengers, nearly 2m. more than in the previous year. There are 7,000 km. in the whole net, and 2,000 places are connected. Comparative figures show, that the network of the Swiss Federal Railways cover 2,943 km. and that of private lines 2,590km. There are 495 postal coaches (16,000 seats) each of which travels an average of nearly 21,000 km. p.a. A saving in cost was effected recently (a quarter of a million francs) by ordering twenty Alpine coaches of a simpler construction.

Postal Code Figures

About 3.9m. francs were spent on the introduction of postal code figures (*Postleitzahlen*). The real advantage will be seen only once full automation has been reached, but already at Christmas, faster sorting was possible due to coding. By the end of 1965, already four-fifths of all mail carried the code numbers. The postal code figure register has recently been issued also in braille.

(To be continued.)

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