President's report

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Winterthur

Can I suggest, to those about to visit Switzerland, that a visit to my home town, Winterthur would be worthwhile, if only because of the presence in the area of almost every type of SBB electric traction vehicle. Why is this so?

In the first place the introduction of S-Bahn services has brought about a considerable increase in the number of trains and since, at present, not all of the first batch of double-deck S-Bahn stock - let alone the second batch - have been delivered, any suitable stock that is available has been pressed into service. You will see shuttle trains of every conceivable type, ranging from the older BDe4/4 through RABDe12/12 and RABDe8/16 to the "Kolibri" sets, as well as formations with an Re4/4^{II} at each end, on top of the double deck stock headed by Re4/4 450s!

Then there are the Ae6/6 and Re6/6 locomotives hauling heavy freight and International trains, plus the former TEE quadricurrent train, now in grey livery, departing from Winterthur for Milan every day. If you are lucky you may even see one of the new class 2000 locomotives on a trial run with a braking locomotive and dynamometer car.

Winterthur is the nexus of seven routes, Zurich, Basel, Schaffhausen, Etzwilen, Fraunefeld, St.Gallen and Bauma, so the traffic is frequently extremely lively and, at times, the photographer will be at some loss to decide which to shoot. Traffic is further increased since all freight has to pass through the main station, the long awaited avoiding lines have not yet materialised.

Busy traffic can also be found on the double-track Eglisau-Zurich line, where one can see a mixture of international trains to and from Germany and S-Bahn stock, as well as freight and regional trains. From the road bridge into Eglisau you get a splendid view of the large masonry viaduct over the Rhine.

NEAT

On Monday 28 May 1990, the Federal Council published the long awaited report to Parliament concerning NEAT (see September *Swiss Express*). In their message, the Federal Council point to the 68 million tonnes of goods and the 70 millions of passengers that have crossed the borders of France, Austria and Switzerland to the south. Experts believe this volume will double by the year 2020. As the Swiss routes provide the shortest path to Italy from Germany, Scandinavia, France, the Benelux and Britain, Switzerland will be incorporated into the network of 15,500 km of new and upgraded lines which are being made ready for fast passenger and freight traffic by 2020. After carefully studying no less than seven different proposals, the Federal Council proposes to create two new routes through the Gotthard and Lotschberg.

As explained in the last issue, both lines will incorporate new base tunnels, from Erstfeld to Biasca (49.2km) and from Frutigen to near Brig (28.4 km). Approach routes will be part new construction, part upgraded tracks under Bahn 2000. A completely upgraded line will feed the Gotthard from Buchs and St.Margarethen via St.Gallen to Arth-Goldau to link western Austria and southern Germany with the main line. The line from Macon through

Bourg to Geneva, Lausanne and the Simplon will be upgraded for TGV speeds, probably with Swiss finance.

The estimated cost is SFr.10100 million, this with a tolerance of +30% in the worst case and -10% in the best. A quarter of the cost will be met by repayable credits from the gas tax, the balance by loans from the private sector. The Federal Council predicts that both routes will be highly profitable since they will offer better transit times for lorries than can be achieved by road. This also applies to passenger traffic, where better net travelling times than by air will be offered on middle distances.

The projects have still to be voted on by the Swiss people. A council of from seven to nine members, responsible to the Federal Council, is being formed and will consist of representatives of both the railway companies, well known managers and representatives of the construction industry. This council will have a high level of competence and be responsible for precise financial control.

Class 460 locomotives

The Board of the SBB has given an order for 75 new class 460 locomotives for piggyback services worth SFr.515 million to SLM/ABB. The order went to this consortium as the Board was of the opinion that several components of the rival Krauss Maffei/Siemens bid had not yet been fully tested. If the EC accepts the proposal of the Federal council for the upgrading of the existing Lotschberg route, a further 19 locomotives will be ordered. The SBB will use the new locomotives on other services as well.

The Bern-Lotschberg-Alpenbahn-Gesellschaft is currently evaluating the new type of locomotive for traffic in the nineties and possibly later. As these locomotives will perform much the same duties as the class 460 it would be logical to use this design, but the BLS management has always been good for a surprise and has introduced many innovations in the past. Rumour speaks of an initial batch of ten locomotives which should be in service by the end of 1992.

Schweizerische Industrie Gesellschaft (SIG)

SIG has recently developed a new bogie for passenger coaches which has been chosen by the UIC as their recommendation for low and high speeds. The bogie is essentially a kit and can be assembled from standard elements to meet the requirements of the railway company concerned. It can be easily mounted and has already passed running tests at speeds up to 280 km/h with complete satisfaction, and can be constructed, on request, to cope with even higher speeds.

SIG has also introduced a bogie which allows the coach body to tilt on curves, allowing higher speeds to be run. although there is nothing novel in this application in principle, the simplicity of the new design makes the bogie extremely attractive. It is now much easier to update older stock at a comparatively low cost to make it suitable for higher speed operation. For example, instead of replacing existing MkIII coaches by new construction, they can be upgraded as a cost of between a third and a half of the cost of a new vehicle to allow comfortable operation at high speeds over sinuous routes - of which Switzerland has its fair share and more! These bogies are of particular interest to the metre gauge lines such as the MOB and RhB.