

From our own correspondent

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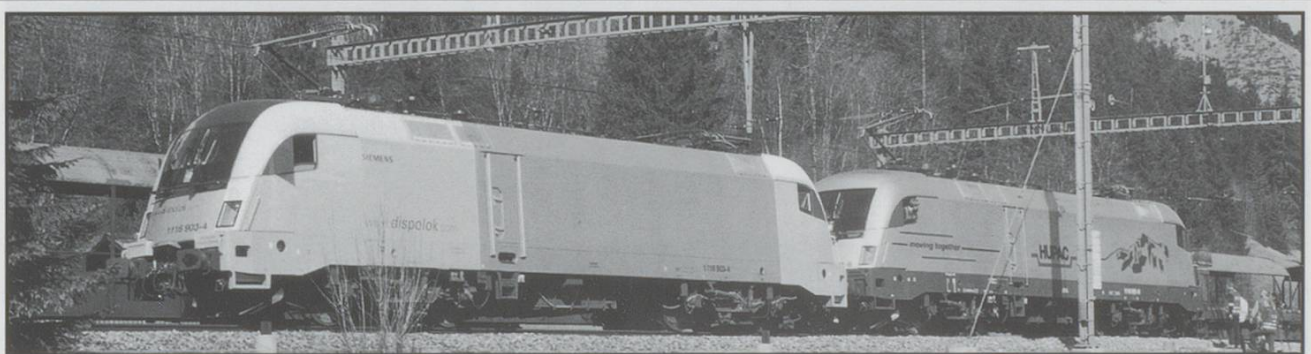
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DISCONTENT OVER DOUBLING OF SALARIES FOR SBB TOP MANAGEMENT

A leak to one of the newspapers has created quite a lot of discontent in the SBB, as well as astonishment in the population. The SBB Board has decided to bring the salaries of the CEO and his top managers into line with "international standards". This means salaries and bonus payments will almost double, to between a half and three quarters of a million Francs each. Top SBB managers will earn more than Government ministers! The argument behind it is that it is necessary to attract and retain top class people. The only snag is, almost all the people concerned were already happily working for the SBB for many years. To top it all, the leak came just a few weeks after most of the other personnel were asked to give up part of their bonus. This was as part of a contract agreed before these huge increases for the top management became known; perfect timing. As the Confederacy is the largest shareholder, the Swiss Transport Minister had to sanction the Board's move, Mr. Leuenberger, who himself is a member of the Swiss Socialist Party, that is to say to the right of the British Labour Party and

very much less dependent on spin, admitted to be unhappy about the whole affair. But, consensus in the Swiss Coalition Government means he has to go along with the majority of the other ministers. The persons concerned themselves are also not very happy about all the negative publicity they have received, especially about something they themselves did not initiate. CEO Weibel said he would have preferred better job security to the money and even voluntarily renounced a large part of the increase. Even this gesture turned sour though, as the 100,000 Francs he gave up is more than a lot of his workers earn in a year. A very sad situation indeed, which could have been handled a lot better. Some members of the Board would have done well to have read page one of the manual for personnel management and communication skills. In these difficult times, everybody in the SBB needs to be fully motivated to work together, in order to cope with the constant changes in job culture and description, as well as in the workplace, demanded by the harsh environment railways have to operate in today.



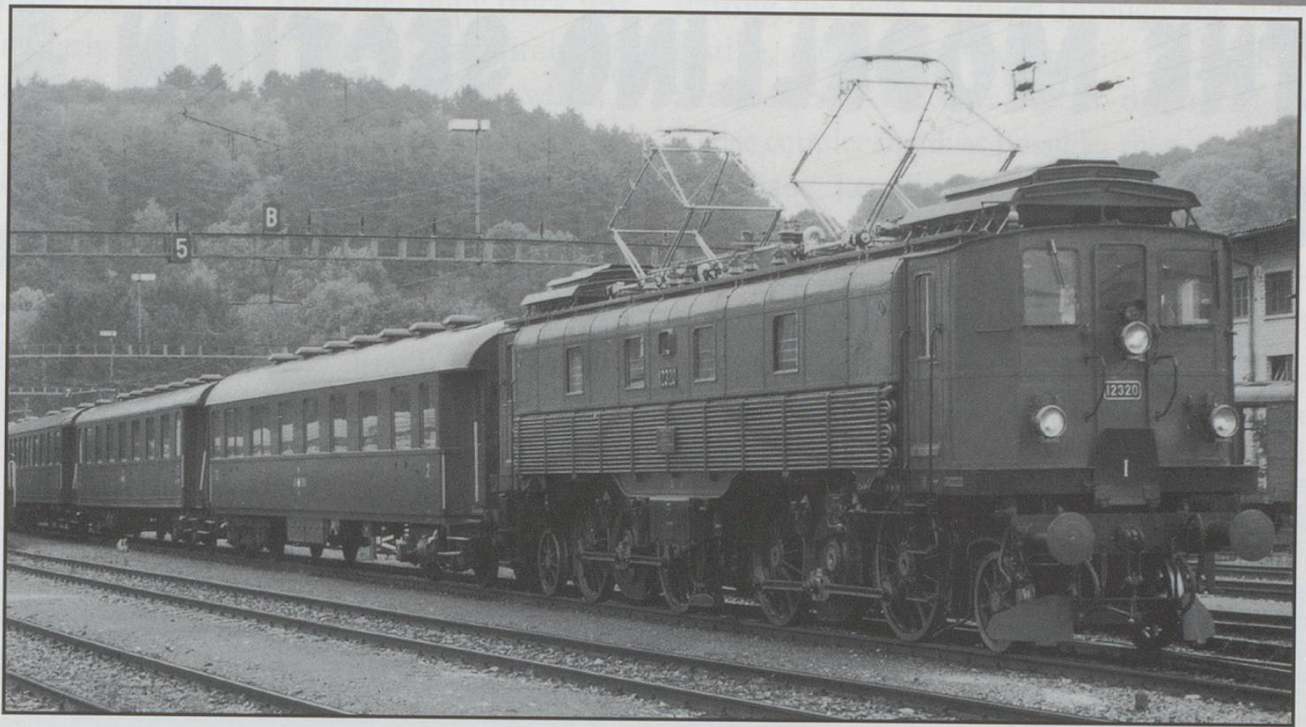
During March two Siemens ES 64 U2 'Taurus' (Latin: the Bull) dual current (15 kV and 25 kV) engines ran in Switzerland for tests prior to certification. They were originally built for Austrian Railways as series 1116. The HUPAC consortium also bought three and DB is having 25 engines of its series 152 upgraded to this type as series 182. One of Siemens' own rental engines (Dispolok) No. 1116 903-4 is seen here in Kandersteg on 16th of March with its sister 1116 901-8, owned by HUPAC. Tests on the 27 % gradient and the very sharp curve (300 m radius) near Blausee indicated adequate results on dry track. On wet rails, however, the software of the anti-slip regulator will still have to be adjusted.



The Bodensee Toggenburg Railway recently used their railcar, Be 3/4 No. 43 "TINO" (it is painted on the outside with red and blue stripes, the colours of the Canton of Ticino), for a presentation of their new service centre. This is for small groups who want to organise a day (or a few days) out and want to a one stop shop for all travel, accommodation and activities. The setup is in partnership with Aare Seeland Mobil, which covers the west of Switzerland, the BT obviously being best suited for the eastern part. The railcar ran with one of the "Amor Express" vintage wagons, made up inside like an alpine hut, complete with a huge cooking pot. It was a memorable presentation. As this is the editor's favourite railway, I know he will feel jealous....



On the 30th of April (just to show how incredibly topical we can be) locomotive No. 91 of the Bodensee Toggenburg Railway was sporting its attractive new white livery for the press. It will promote the St Gallen based "radio aktuell" for the next three years. The deal is 50% cash and 50% radio spots for the BT. This form of advertisement must work, as this is the second engine the local radio-station is using. The first one was No. 15 "Gais" of the Appenzeller Railways, also for three years.



After the AGM of the Swiss Railway Journalists, held this year in Winterthur, we were invited to see one of SBB's historical locomotives, Be 4/6 No.12320, built in 1921. A group of dedicated engine drivers takes very good care of it. They keep it in running order as well as in good repair. All historical engines are now owned by a trust, to ensure they cannot be suddenly scrapped by an over-zealous new manager.

In order to secure funds for the continuing upkeep of loco No.12320, a special trip will be made with this wonderful engine and a rake of six historic all first class coaches. It will take place on the 24th of November 2001. Travel is from Winterthur via Thalwil - Erstfeld - Gotthard to Bellinzona and back. Prices vary from 150 to 170 Francs. As the departure is at 6.44 in the morning and the return at 21.08 at night, overnight stay in Winterthur might be advisable. Quite near the station is the Banana City hotel (no joke) prices about 80 Francs triple room to 160 Francs single. Contact Hotels Direct. Information about the trip can be obtained from Heinz Russenberger (yes, the same name as our chairman!) Sonnenweg 2, CH8523, Hagenbuch ZH, Switzerland. Space is limited, so book early if you are interested. (Photo:12320-group)



As Geneva station is directly connected to one of the French electric current systems (the 1500 Volt DC one) the service to Paris is operated by the normal French 2-current TGV sets. Such a set is seen here in its new blue livery and with the new logo. Now turn the page upside down and look again at the logo: it looks like a SNAIL, with a house on its back....