

The future of SBB Cargo

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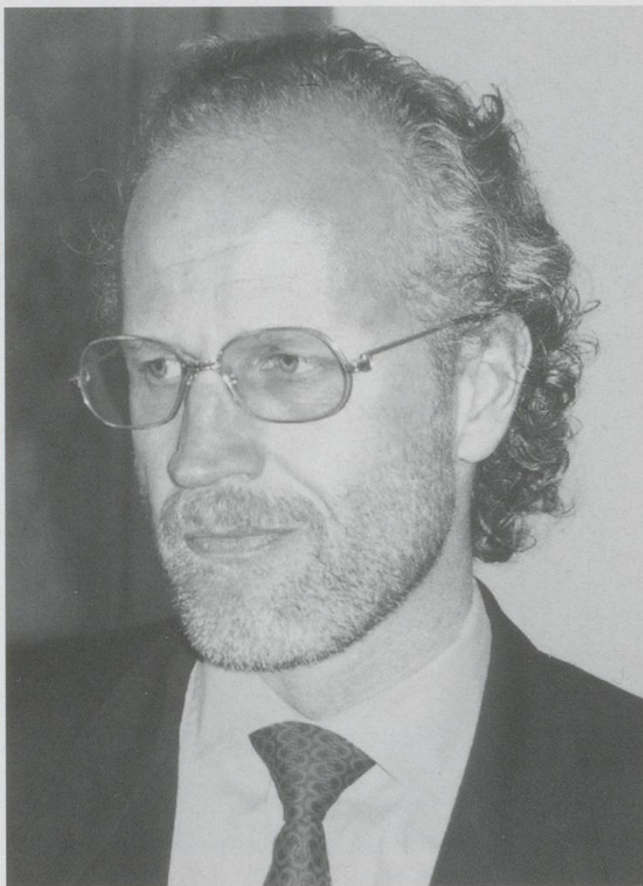
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The new head of SBB Cargo, Mr. Per Utnegaard, pictured on the right, is 40, married with two small children, has an MBA from Northern Michigan University and comes from Norway. The first six years of practical work, including consulting, were spent in Scandinavia. The next ten years were spent working all over the world in freight forwarding (logistics) and transport, as well as in mergers and acquisitions. He describes his management style as: listening, getting the full picture, making a decision and putting it into practice very quickly! On the 4th of April, in an informal discussion with selected journalists, he expressed his views on the future of freight traffic as far as the SBB are concerned.

He stated, that in a small country, where traffic on the North-South axis is 85 % of the total rail borne freight transit, the success of SBB's joint venture with FS of Italy is of the utmost importance for survival: a through railway from Basel to Palermo: the tracking of freight flows from end to end, no more duplication of technical checks at the border and a substantial reduction in paperwork should be amongst the first visible advantages. Both partners, regardless of the difference in their sizes, each hold 50 % of the new company based in Milano and called "cargoSI". The know-how and precision of the SBB should be integrated with the creativity of FS. It should become a European company, multinational as well as multicultural. There are now weekly management sessions and if the marketing strategy can be agreed upon by September, the new company could be operational by October. There are still some problems to be solved with the Italian unions. The SBB started their talks with the unions a lot earlier than FS did, so here most difficulties have been overcome.

The railways should make the changeover from their operationally oriented bodies, to the new client-orientated environments much quicker than they have been doing up to now. The client will no longer wait until the railway has decided what to do, if anything, about his problem. In finding solutions, speed is more important than endless discussions. It is even admissible to make small mistakes, as long as they are not due to negligence, are quickly corrected and the lessons from them are learned equally speedily.



Basel will become the main "hub" for freight traffic. All traffic from Holland, Belgium, France, the Scandinavian countries and Germany will be concentrated here, as it partly already is. The difference is that procedures will be streamlined and layovers kept to an absolute minimum. Through working of engines and crews across the national borders is one of the possibilities. The problem here is, that although the national companies are becoming more internationally orientated, it seems that the all powerful regulatory agencies are as entrenched as ever and remain firmly in control of their national territory.

The new Central Freight Service Centre in Fribourg will be fully operational in June. Clients will be able to get specific information by telephone, fax or e-mail for 24 hours a day, seven days a week. "Track & Trace" by internet is in preparation. The whole idea is to be able to spend more time to attend to the customers needs.

Special service centres have been installed to serve the seven main transport groups: wood and paper, construction, commerce, steel and metals, chemicals and mineral oil, agricultural produce and transport for the postal services and the military.

The new joint venture for the inner-swiss integrated transport, formed by SBB, BLS, MThB, Bertschi, Planzer and Migros should be able to start from May this year. The international venture, formed by SBB, BLS, HUPAC and Planzer, should

be able to send the first trains to Navarra in 2001.

Mr. Utnegaard's credo is: be close to the customer, be flexible, make good use of e-mail and the internet, react quickly and . . . make money!

George M. Hoekstra

The backs of tickets have been used for publicity before but now the SBB have gone one step further. Together with the Lever Fabergé group, they have created an advertisement for the detergent Radion that actually smells like the product! Most individual tickets in Switzerland are printed on a big roll of special paper with security features: trains, buses, ships and mountains. They are not only printed on the side, but others light up in ultra-violet light. The Radion advertisement, impregnated with the appropriate aroma, was printed on the back of some of these rolls. It is not necessary to scratch the ticket to set the aroma free. During January and February, these special rolls were tested in the stations of Geneva-Airport, Geneva, Nyon, Lausanne, Fribourg, Bern, Luzern, Zürich and Basel SBB. Customers could send in the tickets to obtain a free sample and a chance to win a disposable camera. Not everybody was happy with the new tickets: in the large stations, the smell from a dozen rolls in the ticket office could get a bit overpowering. It is no surprise most of them were moved into the automats outside! Also it would be impossible for the staff to write additional endorsements on the back of these tickets, like validity over a different route in case of blocked lines

VERY CLEAN TICKETS

during the violent storms we had at Christmas. Worries about possible allergies also have been voiced. The smell lasts a long time too, as I am writing this two months later it is still noticeable on this ticket, bought mid January. (*The editor can confirm this even in mid May, he is still sneezing*). The test results are now being evaluated and a decision will be taken at a later date as to the future, hopefully with a slightly less stronger aroma.

TICKET TEXT: The German text on the back of this ticket states: Have a sniff . . . your wash could smell as fresh as this too!

Ticket: Courtesy: George M Hoekstra

Senden Sie uns dieses Ticket zusammen mit einem frankierten Rückantwortcouvert, und Sie erhalten ein Radion-Muster. Wenn Sie uns dieses Ticket bis zum 31.1.2000 zurückschicken, erhalten Sie zudem eine Kodak-Einwegkamera.
Lever Fabergé, Team Radion, Grafenau 12, Postfach, 6301 Zug
www.radion.ch



Offerten für Billettwerbung: fachmedien@jean-frey.ch

Riechen Sie mal...
...so frisch kann auch
Ihre Wäsche duften!

Senden Sie uns dieses Ticket zusammen mit einem frankierten Rückantwortcouvert, und Sie erhalten ein Radion-Muster. Wenn Sie uns dieses Ticket bis zum 31.1.2000 zurückschicken, erhalten Sie zudem eine Kodak-Einwegkamera.
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The next page has two pictures by George Hoekstra. The subsequent text refers to them.

ABOVE - SCHNAAGI SCHAAGGI

Living in a country where railways have been electrified from a very early date, I do have a soft spot for steam engines. The impossible phrase above is actually the nickname (in the Zürich dialect) of this attractively colourful train's locomotive. As with many steam engines all over the world, after no longer being needed, and even though it escaped the cutting-torch, it was in danger of being forgotten or ending up on a plinth. The many celebrations and activities planned for the 1997 "150 years of Swiss Railways" festival changed its destiny and brought it back to life. Shame about the catenary, but apart from a few miles all of Switzerland is like that. Mind you, imagine the very dense traffic on Switzerland's rails being run by steam or diesel traction!... Sihlbrugg, May 1997.

BELOW - 150 Years of Swiss Railways. This shot of the "Spanisch Brötli" train headed by "Limmat" near Sursee in March 1997 must have been very close to how it was then. No catenary, no crowds and very rural. The Autumn colours enhance the rural idyll.