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To commemorate the start of the drilling of the actual Lötschberg base tunnel (up till now only access shafts have been excavated) the BLS have provided their 001 loco with a new livery: BLS Alptransit - Connecting Europe.

NEW LIVERY FOR BLS 465-001-6 "SIMPLON"

SBB LEADS THE BLS - QUITE A MYSTERY?

This opportunity was too good to miss: speculation about the SBB wanting to take a large stake in the BLS and take over its Intercity services in exchange for the BLS running all the Bern area S-Bahn services is still running high. However since the largest shareholder, Bern Canton will have to agree and possibly a referendum as well, this is all going to take some time.



PEACEFUL DEMONSTRATION AGAINST 23% LAYOFFS PLANNED IN SBB WORKSHOPS

On the 15th of September, in Bern, about 250 concerned demonstrators handed over a petition, signed by over 4000 workers, to SBB's CEO Benedikt Weibel, requesting a rethink of the large scale layoffs planned in the SBB workshops (newly renamed 'Industrial Workshops'). Arguments include loss of capacity and know how while rail traffic is increasing.

Together with the Swiss firm of Selecta (the "l" is missing in the interior picture), operator of vending machines all over Europe, the SBB is running a test on its S-Bahn Basel-Laufenburg. Part of the AB coach in the sets has been converted to a self service Bistro. Snacks and hot and cold drinks are sold from the machines. It has standing (and lean to) room only. Unfortunately some of these unstaffed Bistros in the equally unaccompanied trains have suffered from vandalism and sprayers.



BISTRO ON THE BASEL-LAUFENBURG LOCALS



TRAINS STILL "WAVED OFF" IN PRATTELN

Most staffed stations now use light signals (green/white diagonally) to signal departure to the drivers, but in Pratteln this is still done by waving the green/white disc staff, used for almost a century. As the member of staff has to cross the tracks to do it he has to wear a high visibility vest. From the state of the vehicle vandalism by spraying graffiti is a problem in this area.



Something for the editor as a Südstbahn fan: Re 446 (Ex SBB Re 4/4 IV 447-5) in the livery of Tesa, a maker of adhesive bandages, in the pouring rain, yet again, at Arth Goldau, 30th September.



SÜDOSTBAHN LOCO IN NEW "TESA" LIVERY

The picture of the Hotel Sonnenheim in their advertisement on the inside cover of the last issue of Swiss Express shows the hotel well, but I like this view much better! I stayed there and was made most welcome.



HOTEL SONNENHEIM-BERGÜN



FURKA IN THE SUNSHINE

The weather was not all gloomy this autumn: look at the view of the glacier and compare this with the picture on page 31 of the September issue of SE. This really is the most spectacular ride in Switzerland at the moment. Try to plan it in for next year!