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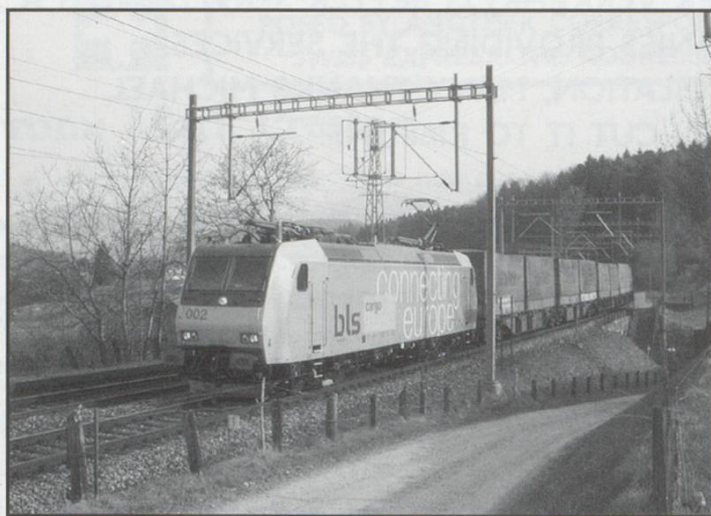
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BLS cargo AG POSTS SOME IMPRESSIVE RESULTS FOR 2003



BLS cargo AG continued its impressive growth strategy during 2003. Capacity was increased by 50% to 1309 million ton-kms and all market segments showed positive growth. The full year 2003 yielded a profit of SFr3.9 million on a turnover of SFr112 million. The healthy finances and forward looking business model together with strong partners bodes well for the challenges of the liberalised rail markets. In comparison to the previous year the Swiss market rose 126% to 157 million net ton-kms and the international market was upped by 44% to 1152 million ton-kms, very impressive.

Unaccompanied general traffic proved to be a powerful area of development. Good customer service allied to targeted offers within the freight sector generated strong growth, particularly from North West European ports. Trans-national traffic on the Lötschberg-Simplon route was, for the first time, consolidated on a route from Mannheim in Germany to Alessandria in Italy in conjunction with Railion and Trenitalia in their respective countries. Cross-border traction was achieved with the introduction on the 485 and 185 series locomotives allowing journeys from Domodossola to Mannheim without a traction change, resulting in a huge improvement in productivity. The rolling motorway between Freiburg im Breisgau and Novara increased by 26% with 8 daily pairs of trains, after only two and a half years of operation in the trans-alpine freight market.

National traffic was strengthened by the introduction of several new oil and mineral flows to new destinations in Central and Eastern Switzerland. The new Base Tunnel project traffic reached a high point in 2003 with the associated removal of aggregate and the delivery of construction materials. An important step in the promotion of the BLS as a carrier for the whole of Switzerland was achieved by the development of traffic on the Gotthard route in conjunction with Railion. The BLS now has a crew depot in Erstfeld operating carload trains carrying timber, wood pulp, paper, steel and finished cars. This is planned to increase to around 85 trains per week during the coming years.

Operating profit for the year 2003 (2002 in brackets) was SFr11 million (SFr6.7 million), profit after interest and tax was SFr47

3.9 million (SFr3.1 Million). A very satisfactory result bearing in mind the investment required. Over the past few years BLS cargo has developed into a multi-national carrier with a lean management and balanced portfolio of products within its specialised field. It has consolidated its position within Switzerland as a whole by increasing capacity on both main trans-alpine axis and now represents 12% of the total Swiss Rail goods market. Finally it has, with its products, aligned itself with the aims of the Federation both politically and environmentally.

All in all a very good year!

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International

The locomotive pool for the Zürich – Lindau section of the Zürich – München EC services now comprises Re4/4II 11191, 11192, Re421 374 and 421 397. The last two locomotives are on hire from SBB Cargo as the Re 421 type has yet to be approved for full operation in Germany.

From December 14th, both bores of the Simplon Tunnel can accept 4m high lorries on RoLa wagons, making the Simplon – Lötschberg route the first transalpine rail route passed for such vehicles.

SBB CFF FFS

St Léonard station reopened on 13th December. Located between Sion and Sierre, the station, originally closed under the Taktfahrplan in May 1982, is served by Rhône valley Regional services.

Lancy-Pont Rouge station in Geneva now has an all day service, by extending the existing hourly Regional service between Nyon and Geneva.

The use of a prototype RBe4/4 railcar on the school train diagram between La Chaux-de-Fonds and St-Imier is expected to cease at the end of April.

On the night of 31st December, Train 3957, 22:08 Lausanne-Palézieux, caught fire on arrival at Palézieux. The centre coach of the three-car Kolibri was completely burnt out, with significant damage to the driving trailer but little effect on motor-car RBD 560 132. The following train, D 2045 (22:08 Geneva – Bern), was held outside the station for about 2 hours.

Further trials of extra long freight trains took place on the Laufenburg – Koblenz line between 11th and 16th January. The 90-wagon train, 1450m long and a tare weight of 3550 tonnes, was top and tailed by Re460 locomotives with a third Re460 in the middle. Test runs of Re485, Re482 and DB Dr 185 locomotives were undertaken for the Swiss Rail Authority (BAV) in December, to prove the multiple-capability of the three classes.

Platform reconstruction is currently being carried out at Aigle; unusually, this has affected the timetable as one of the tracks through the station has been taken out of use, with any overtaking now taking place at Bex rather than Aigle.

Brünig

The old workshops at Meiringen are being demolished, to be replaced by a new depot for servicing the EMU fleet currently on order.

Meiringen pilot Te^{III} 203 now carries a 'Meiringen' crest, previously carried by HGe4/4 1991.



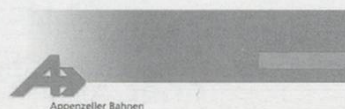
The head of the LSE, Christoph Tanner has recently joined the SBB as its head of Business in Germany. His post has been taken over by the Managing Director of SBB Brünig in addition to his current duties.

There have been intensive discussions on increasing the co-operation and productivity between the two companies over the last year and a proposed merger is being discussed at present.

bls NPZ units are now appearing in the light grey and green livery already applied to the 'NINA' units. The first unit in the new livery was RBD 565 728 / ABt 985, running with the first 'Jumbo' articulated coach. From December, BLS and Railion Deutschland are

jointly operating 80 freights weekly over the Gotthard route. The normal motive power for these services are DB BR 185 locomotives equipped with the 'Swiss Packet' for through operation, as the BLS Re 465 / 485 fleet is fully required on Lötschberg route freights. Manning is provided from new BLS crew depots at Haltingen (Germany), Erstfeld and Chiasso.

Canton Bern wants the RM and BLS companies to merge, to reduce overheads for the two companies.



The first low floor driving trailer for the SGA section, which is partially rack equipped, ABt 121, was delivered to Gais on 4th December.



A 'Cargodome' terminal is being established at Wiler as a road / rail interchange. A second terminal has been established at Domodossola. Services from these terminals are being marketed as "Crossrail". Wiler – Domodossola services, currently running five times weekly, are powered by two RM Re436 in multiple, the leasing of that fleet to SBB Cargo having ceased. An overnight service between Duisberg (Germany) and Wiler is operated five times a week by RM partners Ruhrkohle AG and Hafenbetrieb using Re 482 002 / 003 hired from the SBB.

With the new GTW 2/6 units in service, the three BDe4/4^{II} Pendelzug sets 201, 251 and 252 have been put into store. However, to replace a collision-damaged unit, unit 251 has been hired to the SOB and was transferred to Samstagern on 30th December. The first 'stretched' GTW 2/8 unit, RABe 526 280, was delivered to Oberburg on 6th January.



HGe4/4 31 and 34 (ex FO) have been broken up.



Approval has been granted for alterations at Chur Bahnhofplatz, which involve the partial pedestrianisation of the area and relocating the Chur-Arosa tracks closer to the main station building. Landquart Works is to refurbish 60 EW^{II} coaches over the next 4 years. For those members suffering from withdrawal symp-

For those members suffering from withdrawal symptoms and with internet access, the Hotel Grischuna at Filisur has a webcam facing the station. It can be reached from the RhB website at www.rhb.ch/bilder or via the link under the General heading on the Society website.

SBB CFF FFS and

SOB SÜDOSTBAHN

SBB and the SOB recently announced a simplification in the historic infrastructure split between the two networks.

The SOB are to withdraw from their share in St. Gallen HBhf and in return SBB are to hand over to the SOB the SBB part of Lichtensteig Bhf, relinquish their share in the joint operation of Wattwil, Ebnat-Kappel Bhf, the whole stretch between Lichtensteig and Wattwil and the joint operation between Wattwil and Ebnat-Kappel.

The boards of both companies will also discuss over the summer the settlement together with the precise split of staff as well financing of future joint projects.



The BAV have withdrawn the operating licence for BVB section HG4/4 31 and 32 following a runaway and derailment after a brake failure on 32.

THURBO

The new fleet on order from Stadler, RABe 526 701 – 780, is branded GTW AK (Automatic Coupling). The first units have taken over from RBe 540 units on the St Gallen area S5 service between St Gallen and Weinfelden. Platform heights along the line are being raised to 55 cm to match the step height of the new stock.

Trams



Transports publics genevois The extension of Line 13 from Cornavin to Place des Nations was inaugurated with the national timetable change on 13th December. As the additional trams on order won't be delivered until Summer 2004, the TPG have hired two 'Cityrunner' trams from Lodz (Poland). These five section trams of 2002 / 2003 are unusual for Switzerland in being double ended.

A concession has been granted to convert trolleybus route 9 between Cornavin and Maisonnex to tram operation, with a planned completion date of 2009.

Shipping

VIER WALDSTÄTTERSEE

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The SGV became the second company in 2003 to run a substitute ship service after a landslide swept away the lakeside road near Vitznau at the end of November. Until the road reopened in February, a roughly two hourly service was provided between Vitznau and Gersau, calling on request at the piers at Floralpina, Rotschluo and the Beckenreid ferry terminal.

PS Gallia is due to re-enter service on May 1st, with a parade featuring all five paddle steamers being planned.



PS Simplon has been out of service since suffering an explosion while leaving Geneva on 18th August 2003. Finance has been found for her reconstruction, with an expected return to service in 2005.

The former PS Valais, for the past 40 years a restaurant and landing stage at Geneva Jardin Anglais, has been broken up.

Brian Hemming

STOCK CHANGES

SBB CFF FFS

November 2003

New: Re – 482 029-32 RABDe ICN – 500 028
Withdrawn: Tm¹ – 490 Tm¹¹ – 757, 836/52
Brünig: Deh – 120 012 (to historic fleet), Te¹ – 198/9

December 2003

New: Re – 482 033/4 RABDe ICN – 500 029 Am - 842 101/2 & 843 001
Withdrawn: Tm¹¹ – 755 Ee3/3 – 16400
Brünig: Deh – 120 006
Renumbered: Re4/4¹¹ 11384 to Re 421 384

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is compiled by Nick Freezer. He is aided and abetted by contributions from: Brian Hemming, David Stevenson, Rupert Chambers, Duncan McKay, Malcolm Hardy-Randall and many others. If you have a contribution send it to the Editor and he will pass it on. Email is convenient but any method, including stone tablets if essential, is welcome.