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NEWS FROM SWITZERLAND



AVERAGE LIFESPAN EXCEEDED 70 IN 1962

According to the recently published medical statistics for 1962, the average lifespan of the Swiss for the period 1960 to 1962 increased from 69.5 to 70.3 years for men and from 74.8 to 75.2 for women.

In 1962 the overall death rate amounted to 9.7 deaths per thousand inhabitants. Deaths of those under 50 represented 14 per cent of the total deaths. In regard to the death rate of mothers during childbirth, it is encouraging to note that for a thousand births, there were only 0.6 deaths. As for infant mortality in the first year, 21.2 deaths per thousand were recorded.

THE TOTAL LANDSCAPE

The press was recently asked to attend the showing near Zurich of the "total" camera, the first of its kind in the world. With its 57 objectives, this new device looks like an oversized porcupine. Affixed to a special pylon, the camera shoots not only the entire surrounding scenery but also the sky above. This panorama or ball camera was developed and put to action upon the initiative of the Swiss National Tourist Office for the purpose of taking "total" photographs of Swiss landscapes famed for their scenic beauties.

The true-to-life colour reproductions are to be shown at the forthcoming Swiss National Exhibition in Lausanne (April 30 to October 31, 1964). They will be projected from outside on a hemispheric structure of 60 feet in diameter above a special podium for the spectators. In this novel Holiday Pavilion which promises to be a major attraction at the "Expo 64" visitors will be entertained by a rich programme of panoramic views and appropriate artistic sketches.

SKILIFT 30 YEARS OLD

There are some 125 winter resorts in Switzerland offering the skier a wide variety of slopes and runs, and today there is hardly a ski region access to which has not been facilitated by one or even several skilifts; the same is true of the nursery slopes. Such facilities do not strike the modern skier as being anything out of the ordinary, and yet their conception is not so very old.

The first skilift in the world was built at the Bolgen in Davos in 1934, exactly 30 years ago. The originator, the Zurich engineer Ernst Constam, had the idea while on a ski excursion in the Bernese Oberland. As he was climbing up from Grindelwald to the Kleine Scheidegg inspiration came to him from the contact line of the electric railway. "How wonderful it would be, if one could get hold of that wire and be pulled uphill!"