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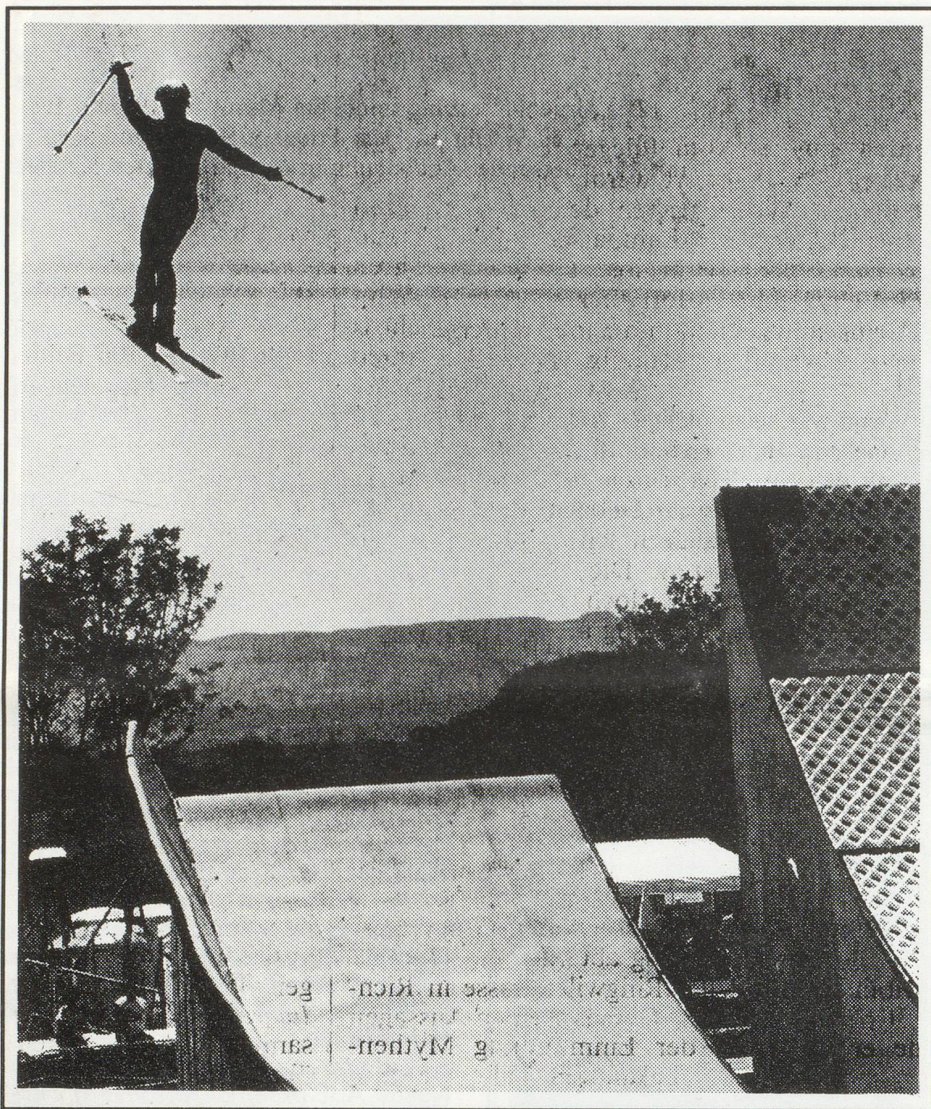
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From the five different spring boards, the acrobats can perfect their jumps into water at minimal risks.

WATER SKIING ?

Mettmenstetten (ZH) saw recently the opening of the first training centre in Switzerland for acrobatic ski jumping, another sport that is becoming increasingly popular amongst the thrill seeking skiers.

Five differently designed spring boards, all facing a 20 m by 25 m swimming pool, allow the skiers to train from the simplest salto to the most complicated triple salto with twists and pirouettes.

So, fully equipped with skis, sticks and helmet, the ski jumpers finish in a

big splash in the water at the end of each jump. Some of these skiers have even mastered the trick of swimming back to the edge of the pool with their skis still strapped to their feet.

Mettmenstetten has now become the summer training ground for the Swiss National acrobatic ski jumping and the snow boarding teams.

DEATH DUTY ABOLISHED

After Schwyz and Schaffhausen, St. Gallen is now also planning to abolish the death duty and a similar proposal is

before the Zurich authorities too. As per normal practice in Switzerland, such decisions will finally have to be submitted to the voters whose verdict will then be binding.

COST OF MANPOWER

How much does an hour of "hard work" cost in various countries? Here are some statistics:

Switzerland	NZ\$23.00
Germany	NZ\$20.00
Japan	NZ\$17.00
Austria	NZ\$15.00
Sweden	NZ\$15.00
USA	NZ\$14.00
France	NZ\$12.00
Great Britain	NZ\$12.00
Italy	NZ\$10.00
Portugal	NZ\$5.00

No doubt it is much cheaper to have some work done in Portugal rather than in Switzerland unless of course the Swiss worker works 5 times as fast as his Portuguese counterpart, in which case the job would cost you the same amount, but in Switzerland the job would be finished 5 times faster! Fine, but somehow we have the nagging feeling that it does not work out exactly that way!

YOUNG STAMP DESIGNERS

In order to produce a new set of postal stamps, the Swiss PTT recently launched a competition which resulted in 37,459 entries being sent in. From this huge number, the jury eventually selected the four designs the PTT needed.

One winner was a 24 year old designer who decided to enter the competition only 3 days before the deadline. His design was a golden cow with a huge cowbell and a crown on a blue background.

But the happiest winner amongst the four selected designers is by far the young 11 year old boy from Chur who never dreamed that his entry would ever get such a recognition as he had no experience whatsoever in this type of competitions. His winning entry was the design of a bird in vivid colours.

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