



## Sion, 25.000 inhabitants. Capital of the Canton of the Valais

### Switzerland

#### THE TOWN

Situated in the heart of Upper Rhône valley, the town is dominated by two mountain ranges, which saw the beginnings of winter sports almost a century ago: in the north, the Bernese Oberland and in the south the Pennine Alps. The city of Sion is not itself strictly speaking a mountain resort but rather the hub of a whole network of traditional and modern winter sports resorts: Crans-Montana, Sierre, Anzere, Thyon and Nendaz.

The general climatic conditions of Sion and the Central Valais in winter can be summed up by an exceptional number of hours of sunshine, a permanent covering of snow above 4,000 feet, mist and fog being practically non-existent.

At one time subject to Rome, then a mediaeval city nestling between its two hills, and finally promoted to the rank of episcopal see, Sion is an old city, richly steeped in history and the past. It is also the capital of a thriving agricultural, commercial and tourist canton in full development.

Its Mayor is Mr. Emile IMESCH.

#### SPORT

The first big Alpine race was held at Montana in 1911, at which Lord Roberts of Kandahar offered a cup for the winner. The Kandahar has since become one of the most famous races in Alpine skiing.

At the foot of extensive ski slopes, Sion sees many sports events each year. The Mont-Lachaux Trophy is a race of international importance. The national ski races, with all their events, have been organized in the region on three separate occasions. In 1960, the Central Valais organized the 4th International Deaf and Dumb Games and, in 1967, the Kurrikala international cross-country ski race. Bobsleighting in an old tradition at Montana.

#### THE 1976 GAMES

The events will be organized partly at Sion and partly

in the immediate vicinity of the town, in particular at Montana-Crans, a resort situated less than half an hour away from Sion at a mean altitude of just under 5,000 feet.

In Sion, it is planned to hold the ice sports, and to the south of the town, at the foot of the hill, the special ski-jumping.

At Montana-Crans, it is planned to hold the Alpine events, the Nordic events, the biathlon, bobsleigh and toboggan as well as the combined ski-jumping.

\* The present installations:

- At Sion: an artificial skating rink.
- At Montana-Crans:
  - . the cross-country track
  - . the men's downhill track
  - . the women's downhill track
  - . the women's giant slalom track
- At Sierre (10 miles from Sion): an artificial skating rink
- At Viège (28 miles from Sion): an artificial skating rink.

\* The installations planned:

- At Sion: an ice stadium, comprising:
  - . an ice palace for ice-hockey and figure skating, 8,000 seats
  - . a speed-skating circuit, seating 5,000
  - . an artificial training rink, 3,000 seats.
  - . a ski-jump for the special jumping events, 50,000 people.
- At Montana-Crans:
  - . the men's giant slalom track
  - . the men's and women's slalom track
  - . the bob and toboggan runs
  - . the ski-jump for the combined jumping event.

\* Olympic Village:

The Olympic Village will be built on the outskirts of Sion. It will consist of two parts, one of which will be able to accommodate 1,200 people, while the other will comprise about 400 2- to 4-room apartments. Several restaur-

rants, one with seating for 1,200, will be built within the precincts of the Village. In addition, each delegation will be able to have its own premises according to needs.

\* Press Centre:

To be fitted up in the buildings of the Professional Centre, a very modern building with all the necessary technical equipment.

\* Visitors' accomodation:

Being the centre of a vast hotel and tourist network, Sion - with the help of the surrounding towns and resorts - can accomodate over 25,000 visitors. Within a radius of 12  $\frac{1}{2}$  miles, it can count on 48,000 beds. The bigger this radius the bigger the possibilities of accomodation, and if Montreux is included (which will be only  $\frac{3}{4}$  of an hour from Sion by motorway), the available accomodation is far in excess of needs. An Olympic Hotel will be built to receive members of the IOC.

\* Cultural programme and demonstration sports:

Being the capital of the canton of the Valais, where folklore has remained very much alive, Sion will organize a big programme of artistic events, ranging from plays to concerts, from exhibitions of painting to festivals, not to mention its museums and its "Son et Lumière" show "Sion by Starlight".

As demonstration sports, Sion proposes demonstrations of equestrian sports or of mountain rescue.

\* Financing the Games:

- by the Confederation, the Canton of the Valais, the Commune of Sion, from the proceeds of the Games.

\* Organizing Committee:

Formed in April 1969, it comprises members of the Municipal Council of Sion, a member of the Administrative Commission of the Grand Council of the Valais, representatives of circles of the economy, technology, sport, tourism and the press. This Committee is presided over by Colonel Philippe HENCHOZ.

\* Dates planned:

1st to 10th February, 1976.