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THE YOUTH OF SWITZERLAND AND THE N.S.H.

The 1957 Yearbook of the N.S.H. reached us considerably later than usual; this is why the notice which it has been our practice to give it in these columns did not appear at the time of its publication.

This 1957 Yearbook is a remarkable and unusual production. The accent is on Youth. The Editor, Mr. Léo Chopard, has in effect introduced the novelty of inviting the younger generation of the Swiss intelligentsia, men and women belonging to the under-thirty age group, to contribute to its pages. As a result the reader is confronted with a collection of essays — 36 in all — representing a wide range of views bearing on most of Switzerland's national problems. These views are expressed freely with all the freshness and enthusiasm of the young.

Writing in German, French and Italian, these young people propound their ideas on the problems and their solution. They do so with much earnestness and at times in an unconventional and provocative manner. There may be a tendency to over-simplify the issues, to emphasize too much or to dwell on the unessential. "Youth rushes in where old age fears to tread" might well be a suitable paraphrase for their efforts.

How extensive is the field covered can be judged from a selection of the headings — freely translated — of the essays:—

Swiss Youth, its significance and mission.
How Youth regards the smallness of its country.
Do the young Swiss feel they belong to a nation?

Is Swiss neutrality justified?
The young Swiss and the national malaise.
Is federalism a conception of the past?
Youth and the welfare State.
Why I do not belong to a party.
Why I am a member of a party.
Has Youth the place to which it is entitled?
Are we still a Christian nation?
Why do so many young students sympathise with the East?

In addition there are studies on Industry, Architecture, Drama and Films, Literature and the Press, and an excellent paper on National Defence.

The reader may not agree with all that is being said but it is impossible not to recognise and be impressed by the sincerity and the intensity of feeling which the writers display. They are, after all, the men and women of to-morrow, and it is a comforting thought that so long as the country possesses such active and searching minds it is in no danger of sinking into a state of apathy, complacency or retrogression.

J.J.F.S.

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