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PRESS REVIEW.

by THÉO CHOPARD.

Every time that there is an aggravation in international tension, Swiss public opinion proceeds to interrogate itself on the question of neutrality and to ask itself whether neutrality is compatible with the solidarity that should unite Switzerland with the free world. The "Basler Nachrichten", which has instituted a debate on neutrality, replies in the affirmative. The paper observes that, in a Europe which is still disintegrated and disunited through the fault of the Europeans themselves, Swiss neutrality is one of the last European notions and values which does not lend itself to any confusion. We know what it is, and what it is worth. No valid compensation is offered us in exchange for giving it up. However, if the events in Hungary have done nothing to change this reality, they, nevertheless, remind us that, if neutrality is a practical maxim for the foreign policy of a small country — and this all the more so if it is based on a strong army — it is not an idea. In the last analysis, the existence of Switzerland rests on such values as liberty and justice. For the moment, however, placed in the heart of Europe regarding which no one can affirm with any certainty whether it is really determined to defend itself, there is no reason why the Confederation should conclude, with the countries of this continent, alliances which would have the effect of weakening far more than of strengthening her capacity of resistance.

A few days after this article had appeared, Mr. Petitpierre, the Head of the Federal Political Department, made a statement on the international situation, and drew some lessons from the said article. He concluded in favour of the maintenance of our traditional neutrality and of a reinforcement of our national defence. The "National Zeitung" and a number of other newspapers which analysed this speech noted that Mr. Petitpierre had confirmed, with the unanimous approval of Parliament — if one excepts the opposition of three Communists — the idea of neutrality and of solidarity.

OPENING OF SWISS HOSTEL FOR GIRLS ANNUAL DINNER AND DANCE SWISS MERCANTILE SOCIETY.

Reports of these functions will appear in our issue of February 22nd, 1957.

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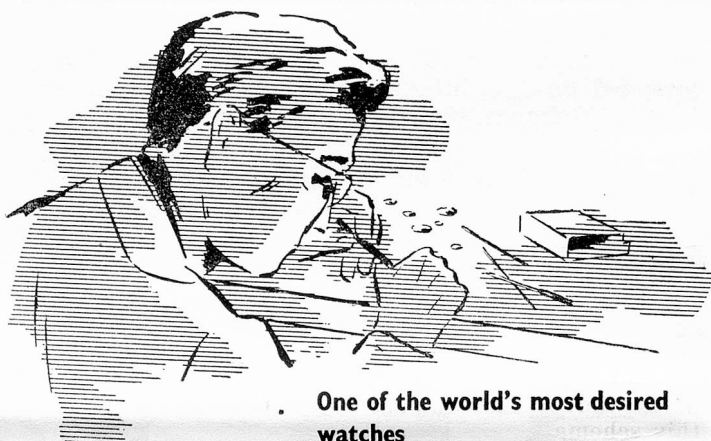
SWISS MEMORIES.

Lake Wallensee.

One afternoon, in late September, 1936, I came unexpectedly upon Lake Wallensee. I had wandered on foot from the neighbourhood of Montreux, over the Jaun, Scheidegg, Susten and Klausen Passes — a gallery of stupendous views, which shakes me periodically out of English slumber.

But none left behind such a radiant memory as the vision of this lake, with its clear, blue-green waters shining through bright autumn foliage, on that brilliant afternoon. It was, for me, the climax of natural beauty, as well as of my trip, for, a few days later, a drop in temperature turned the Oberalp Pass white, and drove me back from Andermatt by train.

Elsa Irvine.



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