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THE YEAR BOOK OF THE N.S.H.

The national year-book of the N.S.H. has become an institution. It brings us a perennial harvest of all that is finest in Swiss thought and intellect, and does much to stimulate our interest in the many problems with which our native land is confronted.

The 1953 issue, the 25th of its existence, in the familiar black-and-gold binding, is as good as ever. Edited by Dr. Prof. A. Lätt, it is obtainable at the price of 10 francs from the publishers, the Buchdruckerei Buri & Co., Berne.

As in previous years, the subjects dealt with extend over a wide field. There are twenty-one studies and two chronological tables. These studies, written in German, French and Italian, range from international politics to a variety of internal national problems, social economic and cultural. They include, to mention but a few, a report on the Swiss system of military instruction; considerations on army discipline as being in no way in conflict with democratic freedom; a review on trade unions and an opinion on the question of equal pay for men and women; a somewhat obtruse theological discussion on matters of closer contact between the creeds; dissertations on Switzerland's position as a maritime state, on her relations to the outside world and on the growing difficulty of maintaining her neutral status.

An extremely interesting contribution is a plea by Prof. D. Lasserre for a new orientation in the teaching of history in the Swiss schools. Too much stress, he argues, is being laid on battles and military

achievements and not enough on the non-military events to which so much of our historical development is due. He mentions a well-known popular primer in which, out of thirty episodes supposed to constitute the essential historical canvas of the cantons up to 1798, twenty are of a purely military character and only ten non-belligerent. In point of fact, he says, wars have occupied scarcely one-twelfth of the five centuries concerned and the numbers of battles even less. There is much more to be learned from the study of peaceful negotiations such as those which in 1450, after seven years of patient diplomatic efforts, ended the Zurich war. These negotiations could be looked upon as a lesson in federalism.

No less interesting is a survey of the Swiss Press by Jacques Bourquin. Owing to the diversity of language, the Swiss newspaper cannot nearly approach the large circulation of the Anglo-Saxon giants. The largest Swiss daily, a Zurich paper, runs to 127,000 copies and there are nine dailies with a circulation of over 50,000. Altogether, Switzerland has 400 newspapers with a total circulation of three million copies, double the number printed forty years ago.

Not only the members of the N.S.H. but every Swiss who has the welfare of his country at heart will find in these pages something that will arouse their interest and possibly provide an answer to their queries. In compiling this national yearbook, the N.S.H. have once more performed a useful task and done a fine piece of work on which the Editor and his contributors are to be congratulated.

J.J.F.S.

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