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DR. CONZETT'S N.S.H. LECTURE.

The new season of Open Meetings of the Nouvelle Société Helvétique started on October 17th with an interesting talk by Dr. Hans Conzett, National Councillor of Zürich and publisher of the well-known periodical "DU". Dr. Conzett, who spoke in English, presented his large audience with a *tour d'horizon* of present day Swiss problems. He advanced a curious new argument or excuse for Swiss hesitation in granting women equal political rights. When reproached on this point by foreign critics, he said, we could truthfully say that neither men nor women in any other country could exercise the voting rights as understood in Switzerland. Instead of merely electing members of parliament once every few years, the Swiss voter is called upon to give his verdict on major legislative changes on an average eight times a year, while he can also join in initiating new legal measures and has to vote even more frequently on cantonal and communal questions, apart from his electoral duties on the same three levels. So we might tell foreigners to extend their own political rights according to our democratic example first, before calling on us to follow their much more restricted lead regarding the women's vote.

The lecturer, who is a member of the Farmers' and Tradesmen's Party pleaded especially for increased Federal help to the mountain Cantons. Our policy of neutrality, he said, has often been misunderstood and sometimes sharply criticised. Mere written recognition of our neutrality is less important than active respect of it, reinforced by our well-known preparedness to take up arms for our defence. Not only Russia but also the United States had on occasions failed us in this respect. But while the latter accepted our refusal to let American units cross the Rhine for convenience during the war, the former created great difficulties when 15,000 Russian refugees refused to be repatriated. Switzerland's refusal to join the United Nations is based on the fact that without special reservations, which seem to be unacceptable to the U.N. full membership would be incompatible with Swiss neutrality. This does not prevent us from sharing actively in many practical international tasks and undertakings and from joining in the manifestations of popular outrage at the tragic events in Hungary. As a country of low tariffs and liberal policies Switzerland, declared Dr. Conzett, shared Great Britain's interest in a free trade zone, while not wishing to join the Common Market. A lively discussion concluded the meeting.

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CITY SWISS CLUB.

Annual Banquet and Ball at the Dorchester Hotel,
Park Lane, W.1, on Friday, November 15th, 1957.

We wish particularly to direct the attention of our readers to the Annual Banquet and Ball of the City Swiss Club, which will take place on Friday, November 15th, 1957, at the Dorchester Hotel, Park Lane, W.1.

Monsieur Armin Daeniker, the Swiss Ambassador and Honorary President of the Club, will be in the Chair.

The committee is anxious that this Banquet should be, in the real sense of the word, a "Swiss Evening", and they extend their invitation not only to their members and friends, but to all members of the Swiss Colonies in London and the Provinces.

Applications for tickets can now be sent to the editor of the "Swiss Observer", 23, Leonard Street, London E.C.2, or any member of the committee.

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