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# The Swiss Observer

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## NEWS AT RANDOM

### Federal

Former Federal Councillor Rudolf Minger died in a clinic at Berne on August 23rd after a long illness. He

was 74.

As a member of the Swiss Federal Council in charge of the military department for a decade before the Second World War, and as president in 1935, Minger was responsible for moulding the Swiss militia into a well equipped and efficient fighting force. Sceptical about the outcome of disarmament programmes in the 1930s he succeeded in winning over public opinion in his country, and particularly working-class opinion, to an appreciation of the necessity of taking effective measures for self defence. He secured supplies of money and equipment for the militia, and having provided the means of protecting Switzerland's frontiers, which was not to be underrated by its neighbours, he retired from public life soon after the outbreak of the last war.

Minger was the son of a farmer and was born near Berne in 1881. He was closely associated with the agricultural cooperative movement and the Swiss Peasants' Union. A member of Parliament since 1919, he was elected a grand councillor of the Berne canton, and then, in 1929, a federal councillor, and placed in charge of the military department. On his retirement in 1940 he returned to farming, though he continued to act behind the scenes and occasionally to smooth relations between the army command and the Federal Government.

Minger was an eloquent and witty speaker, and enjoyed wide popularity among all classes and in all parts of Switzerland.

Customs receipts for the month of July, 1955, amounted to 71.7 million francs or 4.5 million francs more than during July, 1954.

Receipts for the first seven months of the current year amounted to 335.6 million francs which is 39.6 million francs more than during the same period in 1954.

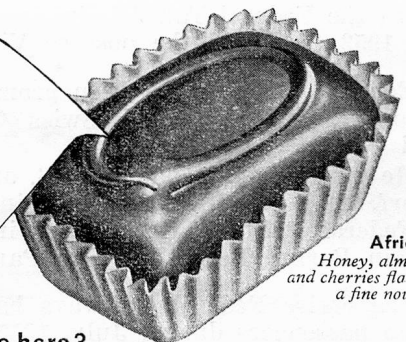
At its recent session the Federal Government examined the question of the proposed participation of Switzerland in a neutral commission entrusted with the task of supervising the elections in the Sudan. It finally approved the point of view of Mr. Petitpierre, President of the Swiss Confederation, who considers that Switzerland has no reason for not accepting membership in the commission.

Switzerland had a surplus of 42.4 million francs with the E.P.U. in August, compared with a deficit of 139 million francs in July.

The Federal Council has appointed Monsieur Pierre Aubaret, to the post of Swiss Consul General in Wellington (New Zealand) in succession to Consul Blanchard.

Consul General Aubaret was born in 1913 at Geneva. After having studied law at the University of Geneva, in 1940 he entered into the service of the Federal Political Department in Berne. Three

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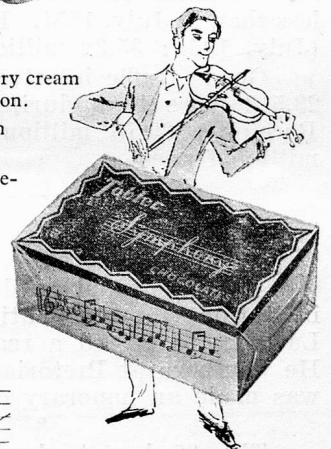
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