

Zeitschrift: The Swiss observer : the journal of the Federation of Swiss Societies in the UK
Herausgeber: Federation of Swiss Societies in the United Kingdom
Band: - (1962)
Heft: 1401

Artikel: President Paul Chaudet as seen by an englishman
Autor: Jones, Peter
DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5169/seals-687444>

Nutzungsbedingungen

Die ETH-Bibliothek ist die Anbieterin der digitalisierten Zeitschriften auf E-Periodica. Sie besitzt keine Urheberrechte an den Zeitschriften und ist nicht verantwortlich für deren Inhalte. Die Rechte liegen in der Regel bei den Herausgebern beziehungsweise den externen Rechteinhabern. Das Veröffentlichen von Bildern in Print- und Online-Publikationen sowie auf Social Media-Kanälen oder Webseiten ist nur mit vorheriger Genehmigung der Rechteinhaber erlaubt. [Mehr erfahren](#)

Conditions d'utilisation

L'ETH Library est le fournisseur des revues numérisées. Elle ne détient aucun droit d'auteur sur les revues et n'est pas responsable de leur contenu. En règle générale, les droits sont détenus par les éditeurs ou les détenteurs de droits externes. La reproduction d'images dans des publications imprimées ou en ligne ainsi que sur des canaux de médias sociaux ou des sites web n'est autorisée qu'avec l'accord préalable des détenteurs des droits. [En savoir plus](#)

Terms of use

The ETH Library is the provider of the digitised journals. It does not own any copyrights to the journals and is not responsible for their content. The rights usually lie with the publishers or the external rights holders. Publishing images in print and online publications, as well as on social media channels or websites, is only permitted with the prior consent of the rights holders. [Find out more](#)

Download PDF: 09.07.2025

ETH-Bibliothek Zürich, E-Periodica, <https://www.e-periodica.ch>

President Paul Chaudet as seen by an Englishman

Switzerland's public officials are rarely flamboyant personalities. In general, the seven ministers who head the Federal Government Departments and who, collectively, are in charge of the state, are able but cautious public servants who can be relied upon to put their own personalities in the background.

Paul Chaudet, the new President of the Swiss Confederation, appears to be no exception to the rule.

Once before, in 1959, Mr. Chaudet was the President of Switzerland, for the country's Federal Councillors take the Presidency in one-year turns in rotation. In a recent interview, Mr. Chaudet recalled that his happiest memory of that year was of the number of people — not foreign statesmen but simple people — who came to him for help and advice.

"In some ways," he said, "the President is a sort of father of the Swiss family."

Although a slight man, with an expression that, particularly in photographs, appears dour, Mr. Chaudet is actually anything but dour. He sits straight and is dignified, but behind the dignity one is conscious of his profound good will and a quiet joy in getting to know people.

The Presidential task that he enjoys most, for example, besides receiving visitors, is taking part in the big manifestations of national life. This gives him an opportunity to become acquainted with the people, he maintains.

Paul Chaudet takes a modest view of the Swiss President's influence on national affairs. As he sees it, his task is to co-ordinate the efforts of the state's various departments; to arbitrate when necessary, and, at times, to speed up the rhythm of work.

Meanwhile, he continues as well in the post of Defence Minister, which he has held since 1954, when he first became a member of the Federal Council — the body of seven men who run the Federal Government Departments and form the Swiss Cabinet.

Mr. Chaudet is a Radical Democrat, but, as President, he is supposed to put Swiss interests above any party interests. He represents the country to the public and the world; serves as a representative of the Federal Council; presides over its meetings; and presents its views and proposals to Parliament.

Economic integration, Mr. Chaudet believes, is the most important issue that Switzerland faces in 1962. The year will see a profound and detailed study of problems

concerning finance, tariffs, the labour market, and political neutrality, he explains. After the study, Switzerland will be able to define her approach to the Common Market, and see about association with it, he says.

Paul Chaudet was born in 1904 in Rivaz, a village on the vine-clad hillside between Lausanne and Vevey. After finishing his general education, he went on to study agriculture, and at the age of 19 began working on his family's estate, growing grapes for wine. But before long, he also became interested in politics.

First, he was elected Mayor of his village, he recalls. Then, during World War II, he was elected a member of the Lower House of the Federal Parliament. In 1946, he was appointed Minister of Justice and Police for the canton of Vaud, and in 1948, he became Cantonal Minister of Agriculture, Industry and Commerce. Finally, in 1954, he became a member of the Federal Council.

Married, and the father of four children, Mr. Chaudet likes to spend his week-ends at the family property in Rivaz, above Lake Léman.

There, he reads — "especially history" — and listens to music. "Honegger, too, but I prefer Mozart and Beethoven." And from time to time he goes down to his *cave* to inspect and taste his wines. His eldest son now manages the family estate, however. The second son is studying law and the third is soon due to enter the *Gymnase* at Lausanne. The Chaudet daughter is married to an aeronautical engineer.

Mrs. Chaudet divides her time between the Rivaz estate and Berne. But in Berne, she sees very little of her hard-working husband, busy from before 8 a.m. until 10 or 11 p.m. with affairs of state.

Paul Chaudet is not a headline hunter. He is a reserved, single-minded, cautious public servant who commands the respect of the nation he serves. He has roots in the land, and has never betrayed his rural heritage by becoming urbanised or sophisticated. To watch over and nurture the slow growth of the vine is good training for a minister in a democracy. It is sure to serve President Chaudet in good stead.

PETER JONES.

Reproduced by courtesy of Weekly Tribune, Geneva.

THE PERSONAL TOUCH—that's what counts
For all travels—by land sea and air
let **A. GANDON** make your reservations

Tickets issued at Station Prices - no booking fee

HOWSHIP TRAVEL AGENCY

188, Uxbridge Road - Shepherd's Bush - W.12

Telephones: SHE 6268/9 and 1898

'YOUNG IDEA'
SHOES
by *Bally of Switzerland*
at **BALLY BOUTIQUE**
132 King's Road, Chelsea, S.W.3

