

# News from Switzerland

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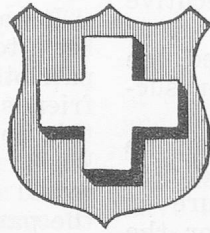
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# HELVETIA

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18th YEAR.

APRIL, 1954.

AUCKLAND.

## NEWS FROM SWITZERLAND

### Swiss Plastic Boats

Two Swiss firms have just manufactured and launched the first two boats to be made here in vitro-plastic. This is a plastic substance having for its basis a vitreous fibre manufactured in Switzerland, as well as divers synthetic resins, all of Swiss origin.

The results obtained are excellent; in fact, they are superior to anything which has been made up to now. The hulls of these boats, which are about three metres in length, hardly weigh thirty kilos. In addition to the advantage to be derived from this light weight, the principal merit of vitro-plastic is that it cannot rot, rust or corrode, and therefore does not require any upkeep; it does not dry up in the sun, and is more solid and durable than the hardest kinds of wood and, even, most metals.

## NEWS OF THE COLONY

### A Commendable Record

A man to whom various sports clubs and organisations owe a great deal is shortly to sever his connection with Pukekura Park, New Plymouth. He is Swiss-born Mr. L. Schonbachler, who, when he retires at the end of next month, will have spent some 25 years at the park—the last 15 or 16 years of which has seen him in charge of the sports ground.

Mr. Schonbachler, slightly built and always hurrying, has been a familiar sight to cricketers, athletes and other sportsmen and sportswomen for so long now that it will come as something of a surprise to see another man preparing cricket wickets, marking out the ground for winter sports, and generally performing the hundred and one tasks that fall to the lot of any groundsman. Sometimes there have been disagreements but whatever the rights or wrongs of the case there can be no doubting that Mr. Schonbachler invariably did his best.

He was not always a groundsman. When he

first came to New Zealand from Switzerland about 42 years ago he was tempted by prospects on the land. Cautiously, he learnt a thing or two in a dairy factory before going share-milking in the Cape Egmont district. But his expectations were not realised and farm life failed to hold him. He tried one or two other positions until, in 1927, he had an interview with the then curator, Mr. T. Horton, and joined the staff of Pukekura Park.

A native of Eisedeln, one of the original foundation canton towns formed in 1291, Mr. Schonbachler has watched the changing face of Pukekura Park with mixed feelings. He has seen a lot of planting and improvements—the Brooklands forest area, the Fillis Street plantation and other major works—but it is his considered opinion that the park has lost something of its naturalness, and almost imperceptibly is tending to become a trifle artificial.

But, he hastens to add, it is still Pukekura Park, one of the best anyone is likely to see anywhere.

### Swiss Social Club, Taranaki

About 60 members attended the Club's annual general meeting presided over by Mr. Walter Risi.

The good name of Switzerland as a peace-loving and democratic nation was fully upheld by those present, the rights and opinions of the individual were always respected; some expressed themselves in English, a few in "Schwyzer-dutsch," and a few interjections, with a touch of humour thrown in, had the gathering in a good mood.

In his presidential address, Mr. Risi referred to the vacancy caused in the committee by the death of its most respected member in the person of John Schupfer. Activities during the year included several card parties, the 1st of August celebration and the annual picnic. All were well attended and special thanks are due to the ladies for their generous help during the year.