

FORD WOULD BRING INDIANS TO HAWAII

He Says Dr. Roller, the Famous Wrestler, Is in Favor of the Idea.

By A. H. Ford.

There are seven hundred Indians, representing a score of tribes from Alaska and Lower California, who hope that Hawaii will hold a Polynesian Olympia to which they may send their trained athletes to compete for the prizes.

And why not? Australia has promised to send her aboriginal teams; Japan has already sent a baseball team to Honolulu. And certainly a Pan-Pacific athletic and sportsmen meet on the Island of Oahu could be made to revive the old Polynesian games and pastimes in a manner that would compel the attention of the world and bring tourists a-plenty to the great event. I am certain that the Outrigger Club is now strong enough to handle the proposition.

At Chemawa, Oregon, there are 700 Indian youths and maidens. Many of the young men are sons of famous Indian chiefs and inherit the oldtime endurance and strength. It is an Indian youth of Chemawa who holds the Pacific Coast running record. It is the Chemawa relay team that has even held the relay race record on the Pacific Coast, and this team of ten will gladly come to a Polynesian Olympia to compete for the Pan-Pacific record in running events, baseball, basketball and canoeing—for some of them have traveled thousands of miles in Alaskan waters, both inland and on the ocean, in the frailest kinds of barks in the roughest sorts of seas. They will come with their tepees and native wigwags of skin huts and camp out while they adjust themselves to the climate and train for the great events. Some may even contest with Solomon Islanders and Fijians in spear-throwing, or with the famous archers of Japan. These boys think nothing of entering the bear-pit at Chemawa and wrestling with the big brown bears, so even in

this they may well meet the Japanese and others. Of course, Roller would be with us; he expects to come back to Hawaii, anyway, to live, and would gladly aid in engineering a Polynesian Olympia in Hawaii to success. So lets get together and see what can be done for, say, the summer of 1910, or even 1911. The Samoans are the most enthusiastic cricketers in the world, excepting only, perhaps, the Fijians. Both will come, as well as the Tongans, the Maoris and other South Sea Islanders, bringing their best canoes and their best men in all kinds of sports known to the Pacific.

But, to return to Chemawa. This training school for Indians is recruited from Alaska, Oregon, Washington, California; and even Idaho, Montana and Arizona contribute some of their best young Indian blood. Annually the Indians of Chemawa issue a challenge for any team to meet them in a relay race from Salem to Portland, a distance of fifty-one miles, or in single racing contest. The Governor of Oregon prepares a message to the Mayor of Portland, and on the auspicious day it is he who starts the race—it is a State affair and general holiday. The course is lined for many miles with cheering crowds. Last year and the year before it was the Portland Y. M. C. A. that provided the contesting team. Schools and colleges had promised to enter, but when the Indian boys began to go into training, they one by one dropped out.

The boys at Chemawa begin three months before the event. Seventy of the best runners are selected and put in training; then a month later there is a trial race, and the fifteen leaders are retained, these being thinned down to the ten best before the final contest. On the great day, the relay boys are placed five miles apart all along the route, a Y. M. C. A. and a Chemawa at each station. The Governor delivers the message at Salem, and the race begins. The boys at the second station run, perhaps, a hundred yards

to meet the bearers of the messages, and then run beside them, so that not a moment may be lost in the exchange. The Indian youth then settles down to the pace that never tires a redskin, and he never alters it for the full five miles of his run. Last year, at the end of the run, the Indian boy who bore the message for the last stage accepted the challenge of a fresh runner at the end of his station, for a mile sprint, and beat him.

The boys listened with glowing enthusiasm as I told them of the many kinds of trails we have in Hawaii, mountain and plain. They were keen to meet all-comers in Hawaii, both in a Marathon race and in relay work. How their eyes glistened as I spoke of the steep, sheer precipices down and up which the old trained messengers of the chiefs made their way with incredible speed! When I reached the climax of the story of a messenger who broke a record across the Island of Oahu, to fall dead at the feet of his chief with the fish he had been sent for, a Montana boy sprang up with a demand for the "time" and distance. He had me, so I invited him to come and set a pace over the self-same trail—if he can find it.

The boys of Chemawa look forward eagerly to a visit to Hawaii, where they hope and expect to cover themselves with glory. We must go on with that Polynesian Olympia now, and give the real "Young America" a chance to show the Pacific world at least that he can lead—but I have a dire suspicion that all the honors will not leave Hawaii.

The American Indians have a game of lacrosse, with small sticks and ball baskets that just fit a lacrosse ball. I have seen these play against the Canadian teams with their big net sticks, and often the Americans won. During my visit to Australia the Sydney boys learned lacrosse, got up a team and beat the visiting Canadians. Why can not the boys of Hawaii do as well?

Having made my round of the Pacific, I see how easy it will be to gather all the lovers of sport for a grand contest at the crossroads of the big pond. If the men who have made a success of baseball in Hawaii, the Outrigger boys, the Y. M. C. A. athletes and the natives who still remember the old games of their fathers—or who are willing to learn them—will give a hand, we'll give the world before long the most picturesque carnival that has been witnessed by man since the days when Athens was the center of all that was athletic. I am more strongly today than ever in favor of a Polynesian Olympia in Hawaii—and the thing can be done.