

QUESTIONS VITALLY AFFECTING HAWAII

What Should The Ad Club Do About Them?

By LORELN A. THURSTON

[On the 20th of November, Mr. Thurston addressed the Honolulu Ad Club on the above-named subject, and enumerated 22 items which he considered worthy of the consideration of the club during the coming year, giving reasons why. The portions of the address dealing with the several subjects will be printed serially in The Advertiser.]

14. THE PROMOTION AND DEVELOPMENT OF SWIMMING.

Since its discovery by Captain Cook in 1778, Hawaii has had the reputation of being the home of great swimmers.

Ellis' journal of a trip around Hawaii in 1823, says:

"There are few children who are not taken into the sea by their mothers the second or third day after their birth, and many who can swim as soon as they can walk. . . . it is scarcely possible to pass along the shore where there are many habitations near, and not see a number of children playing in the sea. . . .

"The most frequent game is swimming in the surf. . . .

"Sometimes the greater part of the inhabitants of a village go out to this sport . . . and spend the greater part of the day in the water. All ranks and ages appear equally fond of it. . . .

"Taumuarii, the late King of Kauai (the great-grandfather of Prince Kuhio), was celebrated as the most expert swimmer in the surf, known in the islands.

"The fondness of the natives for the water must strike any person visiting their islands; long before he goes on shore, he will see them swimming around his ship; and few ships leave without being accompanied part of the way out of the harbor by the natives, sporting in the water; but to see 50 or 100 persons riding on an immense billow, half immersed in spray and foam, for a distance of several hundred yards together, is one of the most novel and interesting sports a foreigner can witness in the islands."

Thanks to Alexander Hume Ford, who, through the medium of the Outrigger Club, rescued surf riding from extinction, the stranger can still see surf riding and swimming, within 30 minutes of the Honolulu postoffice; but swimming is no longer the universal all pervading sport.

Swimming ought still to be the leading item on our athletic calendar.

The climate is such that swimming can be indulged in for 365 days a year and 366 days in leap year.

We have the traditions of old to inspire us, and the swimming meets each year make and break world records.

Why Swimming Needs Promotion

Under these circumstances special promotion may seem unnecessary to stimulate swimming.

This sounds like a logical conclusion; but in fact it is an incorrect one.

Honolulu harbor, which formerly had a considerable beach front, has become so lined with wharves and walls that it is no longer practically available for swimming. Waikiki beach is too far away for the vast majority of the residents of the city; moreover the great number of children cannot afford to pay car fare to Waikiki.

The fresh water streams afford such meagre swimming facilities that they are scarce worth considering.

The population of Honolulu is now officially estimated at 75,000 (exclusive of the army) of whom approximately 15,000 are school children.

Present Swimming Facilities

With a few exceptions, the swimming facilities of this population are limited to three swimming tanks, viz: one at the Central Y. M. C. A., one at Palama Settlement and one at Oahu College.

The Y. M. C. A. tank is 60 feet long, 25 feet wide and eight feet deep. It is made of concrete, holds 50,000 gallons, cost \$8500 and is supplied with water from a flowing artesian well, which is 10 inches in diameter and 810 feet deep. The well cost \$4900.

The Palama Settlement tank is of concrete 50x25 feet, and from four to eight feet deep. It cost \$1200 and gets free water from an artesian well belonging to the Oahu Railroad.

The Punahou tank is of concrete, 48x32 feet and from five to eight feet deep. It cost \$700, and gets its water from the Punahou spring.

These few tanks constitute the main swimming pools of the city, and they are not open to the general public.

Majority Without Swimming Opportunities

Under these circumstances, the vast majority of our people have no opportunity to swim, or to learn to swim, unless they can afford time and money to go to Waikiki.

Swimming is one of the best and most healthful of exercises.

The time to learn to swim is when one is young.

Every Child Should Learn To Swim

Every child in this city should, as a sanitary and health measure, as a precaution against drowning and as a means of cultivating self reliance, be given the opportunity to learn to swim. This can only be done by constructing swimming tanks and to provide opportunity for all, there should be at least one at each of the principal schools in the city.

Tanks should also be provided for adults.

Standard Swimming Tanks

On the mainland swimming races have greatly stimulated the interest in the sport. A tank of standard size 75x30 feet and 8 feet deep has been evolved.

All of our tanks should be of these standard dimensions, as this will give the swimmer opportunity to learn to "turn" at the ends of the tank under the same conditions that attach to mainlanders. There is a knack in turning, and there is a heavy handicap on a man who is racing in a tank of strange dimensions.

Glazed White Tile Tanks

For sanitary reasons, I suggest that every tank be lined with glazed white tiles. This will cost a little more; but glazed tile can be kept absolutely clean, while concrete, no matter how smoothly finished, will eventually become grimy. Moreover a glazed tile tank looks so dainty and clean that it is a constant invitation to "come in, the swimming's fine".

I do not know what these tanks will cost; but they will be worth many times the cost, whatsoever it may be.

How To Raise the Money

Just how the money can be raised, I do not know. Having made up our minds that the tanks should be built, if an Ad Club committee has the proposition in charge, it will be their pleasure and privilege to devise ways and means to carry the project into effect.

I suggest, however, that the following procedure ought to win out:

Secure Standard Plans

First, let the committee secure complete plans and specifications for a standard tank, with adjacent shower baths and dressing rooms, and an estimate of cost of the same with a water supply. Place these plans and estimates at the free disposal of every one interested in building a tank.