

Outrigger, Cat Owners Liable Under Admiralty

By WES YOUNG

Waikiki's surfboards, outrigger canoes and catamarans are "vessels" and their owners can be sued for damages under Admiralty law, one of the country's foremost Admiralty attorneys said here yesterday.

S. Eldridge Sampliner, of Cleveland, O., "tipped" a group of some 30 local attorneys at a luncheon meeting at Ciro's that it is much easier to collect damages under Admiralty law than it is under the Territory's civil law. "Negligence isn't near so hard to prove under maritime law," he said.

MR. SAMPLINER likened beachboys to seamen; surfboard, outrigger and catamaran operators to ship owners, and thrill-seeking tourists to passengers. The beachboys, he said, as agents of the owners, "have a duty and an obligation to fully instruct" novices and tourists on the uses and dangers of the Waikiki attractions.

Few suits have arisen in local courts from Waikiki beach accidents. Attorneys said it was because "they are hard to win." Several attorneys at the luncheon saw "an uprise" of lawsuits in that field.

MR. SAMPLINER and his associate Victor J. Hanson, of Detroit, were guests of honor at the National Association of Claimant's Compensation Attorneys luncheon.

Both men are engaged in some \$50 million litigation stemming from the Andrea Doria-Stockholm collision off the East Coast

last year. Both were associated with the 1949 Noronic disaster in the Great Lakes in which 85 persons perished in a shipboard fire. They won judgments totaling \$2,150,000 for clients.

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MR. HANSON, in brief comments to the group, said the United States courts are "more and more recognizing" the plight of persons injured and emotionally damaged in disasters. "Emotional shock or disaster neurosis is hard to prove," he said, but in recent years the courts treat it more favorably.

Hyman M. Greenstein, vice president of NACCA, was host and master of ceremonies for the luncheon-meeting.

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