

Isle outriggers may race across English Channel

Hawaiian outrigger canoes racing across the English Channel?

Paddling down the Mississippi River? Tokyo Bay? Far-fetched? Maybe.

Thirty persons yesterday attended a meeting at the Princess Kaiulani Hotel called by the International Hawaiian Canoe Association to gauge public sentiment for an English Channel outrigger race between Islanders and members of elite shell boat racing clubs from England and Australia.

Another angle would be to arrange a Hawaiian entertainment program before Queen Elizabeth II.

The motivation is to bring "international attention to Hawaii."

The outrigger paddlers would exchange a Channel run for their competition in a traditional boat race on the Thames River with crews from Oxford and Cambridge.

The Mississippi River and Tokyo Bay ideas have less priority than the English races.

The project — suggested for August — is to tie in with the 190th anniversary of the discovery of Hawaii by English sea captain James Cook.

Another possibility is to wait until next year and make the outrigger races a highlight of Hawaii's celebration of 10 years of statehood.

A. E. Minvielle, president of the canoe association, estimated \$25,000 would be required to transport 12 men and two or three plastic outriggers to England.

The source of this money is the biggest problem and yesterday's meeting had no answers.

It was decided to meet again next month after an executive committee investigates possible University of Hawaii or State financial aid.

The Monash University in Australia has expressed interest.

And the University also has been in touch with Minvielle but so far has left the planning to him.

Oxford and Cambridge universities say they want to hear more about the scheme.

One thing is sure, says Minvielle.

"If we raced across the channel in outriggers, it would be the fastest crossing ever by man-powered boats."