

580

From Ka Nupepa
Kuokoa,
Dec. 18, 1869

3056

Hawaiian Sailors

From the last days of October to the first days of this month, a great number of whalers from the north have been seen entering here in Honolulu harbor reaching the total of forty-four.

Most of the ships were successful in obtaining hundreds and thousands of barrels of oil and whalebones, which they do season after season.

On these ships were hundreds of Hawaiian sailors shipped from this port, last season. When the fleet returned, they were allowed to leave the ship, four hundred eighty-eight Hawaiian sailors. They were paid as they were dismissed, forty seven thousand five hundred dollars for their labor, debts⁺ and other things.

It is understood that this is a season in which the sea-faring lads have been fortunate, more than in the seasons that have slipped into the past. This season has given hope to others.

At the time these sailors were being released others were being contracted to take their places. In this way over 450 were contracted for these whalers and these newly contracted ones have been paid twenty-seven thousand dollars. If the amount received from the office of the Harbor Master is added, it would reach seventy thousand dollars.

If we were to average the amount of money per person from this amount, it would be a little over a hundred and fifty dollars a year each.

On these ships, a Hawaiian is given a place to sleep and enough of everything he needs. There is nothing important to complain

about except, perhaps, some very small trifles.

This is a port that is very well liked by whaling ships and it seems that they will make this a regular place to gather, season after season. It is not because of the lack of other sailors that they get Hawaiians but because they like them for pursuing the whale, for working most patiently in the cold and because men are available here without much expense and trouble.

Because most of the men have gone whaling, for it seems that they comprise one third of all the sailors on whaling ships, some people are trying, through the government newspaper, to keep them on shore so that there will be workers to till the land. Who are these people who are trying to keep them back? Their names were not mentioned but they can be guessed. They are those who wish to work them like oxen. They receive their grass and water but poverty remains forever theirs, for the pay received is very small on sugar plantations.

How strange for the government newspaper to think of retaining those who receive larger pay for working on whalers. Perhaps they wish to keep them on sugar plantations, for a mere pittance of five, six, seven, up to ten dollars a month.

We think that an independant person should not be blamed for accepting work for wages suitable for the work done, instead of work for those who complain of the lack of laborers.

The sugar plantations deny that they are able to increase the pay of a laborer, because there is no money to do it with.

If the plantation would consider [the problem], the labor and effort put in by a person for a single month or year, for the exceedingly small pay they give, they would have flown away a long time ago. If they know it is a money-less project, why do they put all of their efforts in it; the plantation lets the sweat gather on the brows of others, while they gather the round fruits.