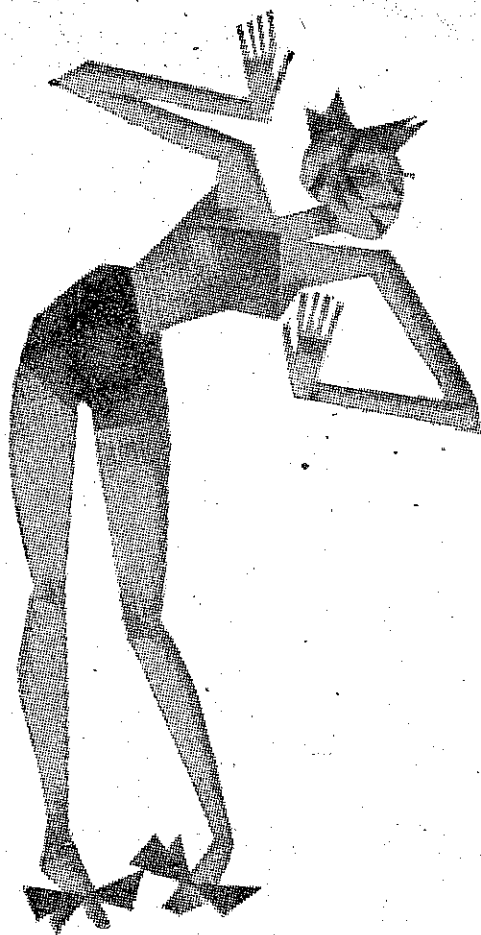


Are Policemen Modern?

Guardians of the Law Order "Indecently" Clad Bathers from Wellington's Beaches



DON'T they have modern policemen around the Wellington beaches?" I asked the Superintendent of Parks and Reserves last week when I heard that some girls were told to leave the beach at Day's Bay the other day because they were apparently unsuitably clad. "And don't they like those snappy little swim-suits which are being sold by the city stores at a great old rate?"

The Superintendent, who, incidentally, admitted that he himself liked these suits, said that it wasn't the costumes that were objected to so much as the way some sunbathers undid them and displayed themselves to the public gaze. If the public does not come before the sun in the matter of health, it certainly does in the matter of distance. The public assuredly gets a much closer view of the "indecent" sights provided by the sunbathers than the sun, and although in many instances the public gaze is curious and admiring, oftener than not it is critical and shows annoyance.

"No! It's certainly not healthy for people's morals," mutter the police in indignant but soothing tones to the furious onlookers, who also write menacing letters about what they sometimes see.

And who are these people who complain? Old women dressed in hot grey or black dresses and carrying ferocious-looking umbrellas like Mrs. Grundy's? Occasionally it is. Oftener than not the complaints come from mothers and fathers who dislike having their children playing about amidst such demoralising surroundings. Even young men and women have been known to complain.

Numbers of letters have been received at Police Headquarters and by the City Council complaining of the state of undress in which bathers parade the streets and public thoroughfares. There is no by-law in Wellington which compels bathers to wear wraps

over their costumes, but this subject has periodically cropped up in various New Zealand cities and towns, especially Christchurch, where at Sumner and New Brighton, a year or so ago, feeling was very strong on the matter. As far as the by-laws concerning bathing costumes go, it is stated that "No person . . . while bathing and while proceeding to and from the water, shall be so clad in bathing attire that any part of the body of such person shall be indecently or offensively exposed."

The next by-law, number 26, runs: "No person shall dress or undress or remove or unfasten any part of his bathing costume in any place open to public view."

So that is how the matter stands, the public and the police being the judges. Seldom is a case of offence in these matters taken to court, as it is not considered worth the time and expense. A warning to the offender is generally sufficient.

After all is said and done, it is up to every citizen to conform to general standards when sharing and enjoying the use of public ground. There are some ignorant people who think it is daring to over-ride the common bounds of decency, and do not stop to think of other people's possibly delicate feelings on the matter. There are very few people on the beaches who are looking for faults, and happily there are very few who want to go in for the nudist cult in public. Even on the Continent the nudists do not thrust themselves in the view of the general public, but go away amongst themselves where they do not offend those who do not share their views.

As far as the swim-suits go this year, not a fault can be found with them, that is, to the average modern person.

The backless costumes have come to stay, and this season the brassiere and pantie outfit is very popular. On the more exclusive models there is a little sliding gadget at the front bottom of the brassiere which enables this garment to be adjusted lengthwise to the wearer's height. A necklace tie takes the places of straps. Skirtless suits are also on the scene. Some costumes have skirts which are attached by a plaited girdle threaded around the waist.

Backs vary from cleverly-cut designs to criss-cross straps piped with contrasting colours, which give a gay touch. Halters of dressing-gown cord are the newest, and on some of the more expensive suits this cord is carried right around the armholes with a "spinal-cord" over a strip of the costume material. Tassels give a really swish effect to a costume.

Next year I predict that the basque 'kerchief effect, which is so becoming to a wearer with a well-proportioned figure, will advance one or two paces and come along in all kinds of delightfully patterned materials, with skirts of the same material which can be used as accessories for beach wear and discarded when entering the sea for a dip. Maybe sunshades to match will be included in the outfit.

There are many popular colours, red, blue, green and yellow being well to the fore. Bright spotted sashes and 'kerchiefs tied around the neck and waist add variety to a costume, and dry quickly in the sun.

Caps with wavy-hair effects are novel, and diving caps are gradually taking the place of the flower-bedecked variety, which made us look so alluring a few years ago.

Bathing shoes are very comfy, and it is surprising that more of them are not worn. I saw some very attractive ones recently in rubber, sponge in pinks, mauves, pale yellows and greens.

Rubber animals are not such familiar sights on the beaches this year as last. Most people seem to be saving up their pennies for air-beds, which, apart from being amusing novelties, are ideal for camping and frolics in the water. The latest ones have an improvement in the form of a pillow. These are very inexpensive, and, although they are easier to inflate with a

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