

# Machine Maintenance Has Its Architectural Limitations

By WILLIAM B. LANGFORD

Golf course architecture is primarily the science and art of arranging a closed circuit of 18 holes: First, to bring out the most interesting and testing combinations of terrain and length from a playing standpoint; and, second, to produce a layout which can be economically built and maintained.

Considerations besides interest and economy, such as clubhouse location, beauty, flexibility, balance, congestion, soil, etc., are important, but no one factor can dominate the development. Above all, the course must be as fine a test as natural conditions plus artificial creations permit, even economy playing second fiddle to character.

Some features which add immeasurably to playing excellence are greenkeepers' headaches, yet if our enjoyment is sufficiently enhanced by them and our game so tested that we acquire new strokes or greater proficiency in the old ones, the extra cost and greenkeeping annoyance of these bugaboos is justified.

Certainly economy and operational ease must always be carefully considered, but if we are to get any kick out of the game and if we wish to improve, we must occasionally, especially around and on the green, tolerate features which are expensive and comparatively difficult to construct and keep up.

The unexpected is always happening in golf, and the course should not monotonously repeat humdrum mediocrity; it must augment the life and variety of the game it fosters to be right.

## What Limit to Economy?

Increased labor costs and frozen budgets have put the accent on machine maintenance

of golf courses for the past several years. From this trend one might imagine that the ideal course would be that on which no hand maintenance would be required. Further along that line of thought the ideal course for maintenance might be a park that could be mowed quickly, and with greens, traps and tees that would be easily handled by motorized equipment.

Nature doesn't do that, and nature is the governing power in golf course architecture. The architect always is looking for opportunities to provide tests of golf that appear to have been made by nature. The magnificent tests of the Scotch links are mainly natural, with man's work being at its best when it deftly accents the natural features.

The talk about having a course completely machine maintained definitely has a tendency toward nullifying part of the genius of the greenkeeper. Astute training and management of labor is a quality which identifies a master of the greenkeeping profession. If golf architecture's ideal is to be made something on the park order then a distinguishing quality of the expert greenkeeper is going to be lost.

## Psychology An Essential

This year with golf balls again available the rough has returned and with fewer complaints, apparently, from private club members than from the tournament pros. Rough is a hazard and one of the best and most testing of hazards if properly located. The main argument against rough is one that applies to public and daily fee courses; that of possibly delaying play. As the pay-as-you play courses try to approach the private



This group at the Tifton, Ga., turf conference gave the unique problems of southern course maintenance and turf research an intensive going-over.

Noer photo