Golf courses: no burden on taxpayers

May I contribute my “two bits” worth of opinion relative to Ralph Nader’s reply to your April editorial, printed in your July issue?

Nader seems to insinuate that members of private golf courses are involved in some dark sinister plot against taxpayers simply because most municipalities have seen the justice in alleviating real estate taxes on these open spaces devoted to recreation. Nader may have had a point about a certain rear-engine automobile, but he is beyond his depth when he discusses taxation.

First, he claims that lower taxation on private golf courses is in effect a subsidy. He states that this land could be acquired and operated as a public municipally-owned golf course with the money private clubs “save” on taxes in one year. Nader should know that few, if any, municipally-owned golf courses break even when all operation costs are fairly stated.

When this land is devoted to a municipally-owned golf course, not a single penny of tax revenue is forthwith levied purely on that investment. Most private golf courses were originally established beyond the corporate limits of cities. Now the urban sprawl has engulfed many of these courses, and city fathers are looking hungrily at the “vacant” land as a source of additional taxes, purely on the assumption that the land has now increased in value and should be broken up for dwellings or shopping centers to justify “maximum taxable use.” This is similar to the homeowners who purchased or built homes adjacent to an existing airport and are now complaining about the noise.

Nader’s “real issue” is not his concern for overburdened taxpayers, because the existence of a private golf course is no burden on taxpayers. Nader, like most over-zealous crusaders, damn everyone and everything that does not conform to his sacred opinion and is not adverse to twisting the truth or logic to support his ideas.

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