

Why Be RITZY When It's NOT FASHIONABLE?

Asks B. R. LEACH

THE favorite indoor sport of the Board of Governors of the average club today is a game known as "frenzied finance." The necessary paraphernalia and rules for the playing of this game are simple. All you need is a pencil and paper. Then you sit down and figure the club's gross income and outgo for 1930. So far it isn't such a bad game. Then you figure how much less the 1931 income is going to be as compared to the 1930 total. Then you figure how much the club will have to spend on the course and the house in order to keep the club in first class shape. At this point the Board sends out for a bottle of red ink, some ice, and a supply of ginger ale and White Rock.

The next move in this game of frenzied finance consists in figuring how and where to cut down expenses so they will jibe with the income. At this point the Board runs smack up against the good old items of expense known as *fixed charges* such as interest, taxes, insurance, etc., etc., *ad nauseum*. No use trying to economize there because it can't be done. Then the Board looks over the House Committee's budget. They blue pencil the estimate for new wallpaper for the dining room, tell the steward to buy the new dishes at the ten cent store and pass on to the big event of the game. There is a tense silence in the arena. His face an ashen white, the chairman of the green-committee places his 1931 budget estimate on the table before the Board of Governors in solemn conclave assembled.

Robbing Peter to Pay Paul

It is the historic and epoch-making moment in the annals of the Wappydinka Country Club. Even the wolves roaming the snow-clad hills outside are stilled and draw closer to the lighted windows of the clubhouse where the board sits sharpening the paring knives. The wolves know that blood is about to be spilled. They know that the room will float in crimson gore when the board gets through the

sweet job of emasculating that green-committee budget.

"Humm," says the president of the board as he examines the budget, "I see you have an item here asking for \$1,400 for a new fairway tractor and 5 unit mower. How dare you! You know the club is flat on its back! Have the old tractor and mowers repaired and make them do another year.

"Here," continues the exultant president, "you have an item asking for \$700 for the purchase of fertilizer for the fairways. Have you lost your mind? Don't you realize that we must economize? And look at this item calling for \$300 for mercury compound for the greens. You're crazy! Cut it to \$75."

And so on, far, far into the night. When the board calls it a day and goes home to bed they have cut the green-committee's original estimate of \$21,000 down to \$14,000. The board goes home with a smug, warm and comfortable feeling in its heart. They seen their duty and they done it. They have economized. They have balanced income and outgo. They have saved the day for Wappydinka.

What Shall the Harvest Be?

If you think that the above is greatly exaggerated, take another think. I talked with at least 75 greenkeepers at their annual convention in Columbus last month and practically all of them told me the same story.

These greenkeepers know what they are up against and they know what is going to happen as a result of cutting down the spending of money on golf course maintenance. They know that if you don't fertilize fairways you have weeds instead of grass, if you don't topdress and weed greens you soon have thin lousy turf.

And that isn't the worst of it by a long shot. This depression won't last forever. One of these days the clubs will again have a waiting list and plenty of money to spend on course maintenance and then the members will raise their voices and

howl to heaven because the turf, that has been all shot to hell by insufficient care during the depression, cannot be brought back into number one condition overnight. Greenkeepers know that they are going to be in hot water up to their necks for the next few years.

An Interesting Alternative

No one is more willing than myself to grant and concede the innate cussedness and short-sightedness of the human animal, including those who inhabit country clubs. One can naturally expect that boards of governors will just naturally experience this weakening of the intestinal region and cut and slash the budget where the cutting and slashing is easiest, regardless of ultimate consequences.

Nevertheless there is another and more intelligent method of meeting a possible decrease in income from regular membership dues; a method which will keep up the club's annual gross income to normal, enable it to carry on as usual and to keep the club property up to snuff from cellar to the farthest corner of the course. It is an application of the well known principle that there are more people in this grand and glorious country who have \$20.00 to spend than there are who have \$200. That is the reason that Henry Ford maybe sells only a thousand or two Lincoln cars a year at \$4,000 per each whereas he sells hundreds of thousands of Ford cars at \$600 a crack. It is well to remember always that the market for high priced goods is always more or less limited and especially so in times of tight money and depression.

The same thing applies to country club memberships. There are a certain number of citizens in your vicinity who are able to buy a membership in your club at a cost of \$150, \$200, \$400 or what not per annum. And, under the present snooty system, if there ain't enough of these plutes in the neighborhood then the club has to go on short rations. The club with insufficient members can take its stand at the last ditch of exclusiveness, it can hold its nose so high in the air that it gets a crick in the neck, but that pose of supercilious exclusiveness won't hide from the mob the picture of a shabby clubhouse and a down-at-the-heel golf course.

The only bozo that has any right to be exclusive in this dollar-measured country of social standards is the guy with well-lined pockets and the capacity to pay.

Any lad that keeps his nose too high in the air when he has only sixty-three cents in his pocket and a hole in the seat of his pants, is a fit subject for the raucous howl of the proletarian mob, and this holds just as truly for country clubs.

Guest Fees the Answer

Therefore, assuming that there are insufficient individuals in your neck of the woods capable of supporting a membership in your club, it is nevertheless well to remember that there are plenty of individuals, male and female in your community who are able and willing to spend \$100, \$75, \$50, \$20 or even a lowly \$10 for the purpose of playing a certain number of rounds of golf on your course during a season.

Accepting the truth of this statement, let us assume that your club decides to bury its pose of exclusiveness temporarily and to deliberately adopt the policy of selling the club to these non-members with a certain capacity to pay.

Under these circumstances there will be no necessity for a full page advertisement in the local paper, while the tooting of trumpets and the clash of cymbals are best evidenced by their absence. No necessity of telling the world how damnably poor you are.

The only necessary step is the printing of a thousand or two "Guest cards" with a blank line in which is to be written the name of the recipient, thereby making these cards non-transferable. The card to also state that the holder thereof is entitled to a round of golf at the Wappydinka Country Club on payment of a certain number of dollars, to locker room service on payment of a certain fee and to restaurant service at prices listed on the *carte du jour*.

It only remains to give so many of these cards to each club member with instructions to pass them out to their non-member friends who can or would play golf if the opportunity was afforded. Members should use a certain amount of discrimination in the selection of those to whom the cards are to be given. As a general rule it is an entirely safe procedure to give one of these cards to any male or female not addicted to the use of the knife in the consumption of peas and potatoes.

In handling this sort of "guest card" system one obvious point is essential if the game is to be made a profitable one. Have everything arranged so that the

guest can pay for his round of golf *in cash*, can pay for his ginger ale in the locker room *in cash*, can pay for his meal, his tobacco and everything else he gets at the club *in cash*. The member's responsibility for the guest should automatically cease with the giving of the card. If there is any possibility of any comeback on the member the cash guest system will flop and flop hard.

Another thing: before you institute this system, line up the steward and the waiters, the locker room attendants, the caddy-master, and any other club employee with whom the cash guest is likely to come in contact while playing the role of a cash customer at the club. Tell all these employees, and indelibly impress it on their minds, that times are hard just now and that it's going to be just too bad for any one of them caught in the act of being indifferent to any man, woman or child who comes to Wappydinka with cash in his or her hand for a round of golf.

The Clubhouse White Elephant

This broad country is splattered with golf clubhouses which never met expenses with a full membership when money was plentiful. It's just going to be too bad for the house with a slim membership leaving finger-nail imprints on every nickel it tosses across the bar. The cash guest system will aid greatly in making up this loss of house-income from the regular membership.

Take a cash guest who comes to your club, finds a well-kept course and plays a satisfactory 18 holes. This bozo feels good when he steps off the 18th green. If things are properly arranged he is a likely prospect for the *nineteenth hole*. It's a three out of five chance that he has a few drops of pre-war stuff in one of his hip pockets. Who has a better right than the club to sell him some ice, ginger ale or White Rock at a profit of 300 per cent. This "set up" racket is a gold mine. An appetizer puts the cash guest in line for luncheon or dinner at the club restaurant and again the house increases its income. The pro shop comes in for the sale of golf balls, clubs and what not, the pro gets more business in giving lessons while the caddies have more opportunity to make some honest jack. You can't get away from the absolute fact that the cash guest helps to carry the load for every department of the club's activities.

But, never forget that the cash guest

comes to your club primarily for the purpose of playing a round of golf. The ginger ale, the luncheon or dinner, and all of the money spending around the clubhouse are all secondary to the actual play. Consequently, if you want the cash guest, you've got to have a well-kept course or he and his friends won't come back, and this means an adequate budget for the material and labor necessary to keep the 18 holes in a properly groomed condition.

IDEAL HAS NEW ROUGH MOWER AND IMPROVED 7-BLADE FAIRWAY MOWER

Lansing, Mich.—Ideal Power Lawn Mower Co. has introduced a new rough mower and is equipping Bulldog fairway mowers with seven-blade cutting units.

Last year a number of the new Ideal rough mowers were used all season in the east and central west, and proved an economy. As high as 50 per cent saving in labor costs were effected through the use of the new rough mower, its makers state. Built on the principle of the Bulldog fairway mower, it has a special adjustment to allow a cutting height for any length of rough preferred. Its superiority over the ordinary sickle bar hay type mower for rough cutting is easily understood.

In addition, to provide the closer, smoother cutting necessary for the greatly improved fairways—many of them now of bent—found in the majority of clubs, Ideal Bulldog fairway mowers have as standard equipment a new, improved cutting unit of seven blades. The new seven-blade reel greatly increases the frequency of cut. The bottom knife and blades are now manufactured of a new special formula steel that is of absolutely uniform hardness throughout.

PRACTICE GREEN MARKER IS NEW CONVENIENCE

CHICAGO, Ill.—J. Oliver Johnson, Inc., Morgan, Huron and Superior sts., is distributor for the new Wyco practice green marker. This device is aluminum with a red background target and grip at the top. The base is a metal weight concaved toward the rod. This holds the marker in an upright position when out of the cup and enables the player to pick the ball out of the cup without stooping. The device sits upright on the practice green when out of the cup.

The Wyco marker stands 24 ins. high and sells for \$1.50.