

# Chicago Managers and Officers Hear Their Problems Discussed

By JACK FULTON, JR.

**M**ORE than one hundred club managers, club presidents and house-committee chairmen met for dinner at the Palmer House, Chicago, on March 30, to participate in a special meeting of the Chicago District Club Managers association. F. Harold Van Orman, president of the Van Orman hotels and former lieutenant-governor of Indiana, served as toastmaster and steered those present through a program of speeches of real interest and educational value.

The purpose of the special meeting was explained by Bernard E. O'Grady, president of the association and manager of the Hamilton Club, Chicago.

"This organization," said O'Grady, "was holding one of its regular business meetings about three weeks ago. We had an attendance of about 40 members. There was the usual general discussion on various subjects, common to all of us and at the same time rather irritable to most of us. Everyone aired his viewpoints and still we were not making any headway—why? Because we were not sure that our recommendations, if any were made, would be welcomed by our club officers.

"Therefore, this meeting was planned in an effort to bring our organization into closer contact with the various club officials and to foster a better understanding between those two bodies."

## Manager More Than Listener.

O'Grady went on to point out how confused is the conception held by the average club member of a club manager's responsibilities. Most of them believe the manager's main job is to be available to receive complaints. Excerpts of O'Grady's talk, outlining what a manager's responsibilities really are, will be found on another page of this issue.

Representing the other side of the club picture, George A. Blair, president of Olympia Fields C. C., followed O'Grady to

tell how misunderstood were the duties of a club president.

"Nearly everyone who belongs to a club," he said, "has some ideas about how it should be run. And nearly everyone thinks the Board of Governors isn't running it right!

"We club officers and club managers must stand together in keeping up the standards of our clubs in the face of continued business depression. It is going to be a serious problem maintaining our membership rosters and furnishing the members with facilities and attractions they feel justified in paying for.

"We must co-operate with every other club; this year is going to be crucial so far as club management is concerned. I am not implying the year is going to be a fatal one for clubs; I simply want to point out the great good that will inevitably result from intelligent co-operation between club officials and club managers." President Blair's friendly warning was endorsed warmly by his hearers, judging by the applause following his address.

## What Organization Set-Up?

The principal speaker of the meeting, Dr. Arthur E. Swanson, formerly dean of the School of Commerce of Northwestern University and at present head of Swanson-Ogilvie Co., management engineers and public accountants, Chicago, next addressed the audience on the subject of "Business Organization as Applied to Clubs." He pointed out that running a club was no different in its broader aspects than running a corner butcher shop on the one hand, or running the U. S. Steel Corporation. There were the same problems to be met, the same duties to be performed by the management, the same responsibilities to the owners. Therefore, there is no reason why a club should be organized differently from other businesses.



More than fifty of Chicago's leading golf and city clubs are represented by their officers and managers at this "harmony" meeting of the managers' organization.

Going a step further, Dr. Swanson pointed out that one particular type of organization, known as the "functional plan," dominates modern successful businesses today. This plan, little known only a few years ago, has so convincingly set sick industries on their feet and carried healthy ones to new heights that there is little doubt it should be universally adopted. Clubs are no exception to this; on the contrary, they are a glaring example of an industry in which the individual members are organized as blind luck and circumstances have happened to direct.

The doctor didn't say it in so many words, but it was evident he thought it high time the clubs of this country learned that efficiency can only be secured by keeping "everybody's fingers" out of the pie—in other words, by proper organization. How to do this, and the benefits which could reasonably be expected to result, made up the balance of this fine address.

Readers of GOLFDOM will find Dr. Swanson's lucid and extremely valuable message reprinted in full elsewhere in this issue.

### Beware of Bloated Budget.

The final speaker of the evening was Harry Dougherty, well-known manager of the Union League Club of Chicago, who cautioned his listeners not to make too optimistic forecasts of 1931 club income.

"We have heard a great deal," he said,

"about the advantages of a budget system; but you all know that in anticipating the budget last year, you did not anticipate that your receipts were going to shrink from ten to twenty per cent. I believe the same is true of the present year; managers in most of the clubs of the United States believe their 1931 receipts are still going to drop below average, although they will probably not drop more than half what they did in 1930."

Today's biggest managerial problem, then, according to Dougherty, is to realize this possibility of reduced income and to so plan the year's activities and departmental operations that expenses will not exceed receipts. This should not prove difficult if managers and officials approach the task with wide-open eyes.

In the opinion of this reporter, the meeting was unusually successful in accomplishing its objective. Club officials who attended could hardly help taking away with them not only an appreciation of the many problems a manager must face and overcome in the course of his daily duties, but an understanding as well of the benefits proper officer-manager co-operation can bring about.

ONE of the most successful ways of preventing petty pilfering of club linens, silverware and similar equipment is to make a practice of regular monthly inventories.