

Membership Slump Is Halted, Say Managers in Annual Meeting

By HERB GRAFFIS

SEVENTH ANNUAL CONVENTION of the Club Managers Assn., in session at Hotel Sherman, Chicago, February 27-March 2, drew an attendance almost 100 more than the 1932 national meeting.

Barring the matter of heavy fixed charges which have some clubs trying to wriggle out of a spot against the wall, the club managers were hopeful about the situation. City clubs, which are about 6 months ahead of the golf clubs in their ability to guess on the 1933 season, report membership slumps have slowed down. Only slightly more than the average turnover in membership has been experienced this winter by representative city clubs.

City club experience in operating on a cash basis has been so successful in instances mentioned by visiting managers that an extension of this plan is predicted for 1933. According to gossip at the convention, country clubs were planning house operation minus all show-off but with lively, simple entertainment during 1933.

It was brought out early in the meeting that one of the manager's most important present duties is connected with membership solicitation. In numerous cases managers spoke of "ghosting" by letter and telephone for their officials in going after candidates for membership. Club officials have enough to do in maintaining their own businesses so the all-important job of membership solicitation falls on the manager who has the initiative, ability and permission to take an active part in this work.

After some debate the dues in the national association were kept at \$10 a year. Manager O. F. Davenport of the Elks' club, Springfield, Ill., called attention to the need of a membership campaign by the Club Managers' Ass'n, citing that the organization had less than 10 per cent of the managers on its roster. This weakness of the organization reflected on the manager's individual situation, as many a manager needs support that national association could supply in situations that come up in almost every club, simply

because the member is rare who doesn't think he knows more about running a club than men who have spent 10 to 40 years in the business.

The load Davenport shot into the managers about the need of association strength would have been good medicine for the pros and greenkeepers.

Difficulty of fairly comparing figures on operations which already has cost many managers their jobs, in the absence of standardized accounting that would make comparisons clear and correct, still is agony to the managers. The country club managers in a conference took action on the adoption of a standardized accounting system with which they have been worrying for a couple of years.

Members of the association rolled out of the warm sheets at 5:30 a. m. Tuesday, to see the South Water street market in operation. The night before the managers compared notes on markets of the world. Thomas P. Jones, president of the association and manager of the Harvard Club, Boston, is an authority on world wholesale food markets. Jones, in the evening's informal discussion pointed out how careful buying of quality material has helped the clubs weather the storm to such a degree many of the managers made more money in their restaurants last year than they ever did before. Getting the old market basket over the arm, figuratively, and getting the members reconciled to the absence of big staffs of waiters and busboys, is the policy managers have adopted.

The association's official magazine featured in its convention issue an editorial on managers' graft on purchases, which stirred up some lively controversy. Graft as an issue became extinct some years ago and the depression completed the clean-up for the boys who held their hands out, leading managers stated. Seeing a large number of men crawl out in the cold grey dawn to study close-up the buying of better for less, as the managers saw during their inspection of the South Water market, indicates they are close buyers.