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# Charges Cities Unfair As Fee Golf Competitors

**I**S PATERNALISM in government going too far when the municipalities engage in competition with owners of fee courses and take an "edge" by subsidies out of taxes paid in part by the fee course owner to his municipal competitor?

The question is brought up by Max Ludwig, Pennsylvania fee course owner, who charges that waste of public funds is covered by bookkeeping sleight of hand and that heavy play is attracted by unwarranted reductions in rates made at the expense of the fee course business conducted as a tax-paying private enterprise. Ludwig's challenge for a show-down undoubtedly will bring out some lively debate, since the golf course as a municipal recreation feature is firmly established. According to GOLFDOM's investigation, the majority of municipal golf courses are operated on a basis that shows a profit due to heavy play and a rather general divorce from the chiseling management frequently connected with any phase of politics.

The golfer, being an exacting creature, usually exercises enough supervision and complaint to keep public course operation free from the nefarious activities customarily discovered in anything where politics dips in a hand, but whether or not the player will judge the public course guilty of unfair competition we leave up to you.

Mr. Ludwig's statement follows:

"Waste in government today is discussed on every street corner, where it seems almost anyone has time for the discussion of almost anything. The seriousness of excessive spending and often waste of public funds, and its attendant reaction upon the people in these troubled times is attested by the efforts of our leading economists and well organized public groups to forestall any further waste of tax money. The press, always quick to sense the feeling on current subjects, has "spotted" all such news, and Page One is hardly complete these days unless the public is appropriately horrified with some new exposé of higher assessments, increased millage, operating inefficiency, and some times even waste and graft of the taxpayers' hard-earned cash.

## Government and Golf

"Government, necessarily static and bound with countless miles of red tape, is always the last to economize and retrench in a period of depression and consequently in such unpleasant periods as the present we are interested to know where all this money goes. Tax authorities amaze us with the facts. Especially do they amaze us when they show the trend of government to engage and indulge in what heretofore has been the sole realm of private business enterprise. This trend is of par-

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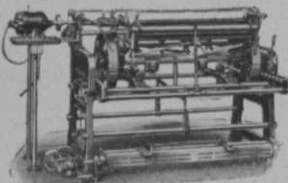
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ticular importance to the golf industry, and something, heretofore a far cry to the greenkeeper suddenly hits home. For the golf industry discover local governments constructing golf courses, maintaining them at a loss, and nonchalantly extracting the difference out of the hides of the genial but long suffering taxpayer. Particularly has this problem confronted the owner or manager of 'fee courses' in the 'provinces' away from the thickly populated metropolitan areas. With the rising popularity of golf several years ago many such cities built and now maintain fine courses for their people. In a great many cases these courses were built at the organized insistence of golfers who had not the facilities to enjoy fully this newly found sport at prices they could afford to pay. Needless to say, all this support has had an important influence on golf, generally speaking, and more specifically in the health building and recreational advantages it provided for thousands of people who a few years ago, thought a driver was the boss, and a mashie had something to do with potatoes.

"This entrance of government into golf was a fine thing for the golfer, especially if he wasn't a taxpayer of consequence, but it was a bitter pill for the public golf course owner. How does he fit into this picture? And particularly, how does he fit into the picture, if the city-owned course operates at a deficit and he then contributes a share of his tax money to foster golf at less than cost and at the expense of his own business? Unfortunately for him, lower prices means more votes to his competitor, and he is interested in profits, not votes.

"Competing against this obstacle means nothing but red ink and probably insolvency. And to further aggravate the situation, he doesn't even get credit for his passive and genial resignation to the wolf at his own door."

## LYMAN CARRIER NOW OFFERS SEASIDE BENT SEED

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