

"See All"
 "Hear All"
 "Say Nothing"
 "DO SOMETHING!"

POLICY PUTS CLUB OVER

By CHARLES P. BETSCHLER

THIS YEAR I haven't been able to get around much, being nailed right to the job by our own problems, but nevertheless I'll risk the guess that there's only one reason for 80 per cent of the country clubs that are in trouble being in that condition.

That reason is incompetent management. This starts right at the top. When it goes down the executive and operating roster it is the fault of the man at the top. I have yet to see a pro, greenkeeper or manager who was due for some rightful criticism of his shortcomings, who was altogether to blame. The fellow who gave the unsatisfactory man the job was the real cause of the trouble.

Many of the clubs that aren't in good shape are suffering from the evils of yesteryear, but it's not an unbeatable job to pull these clubs out of their uncomfortable



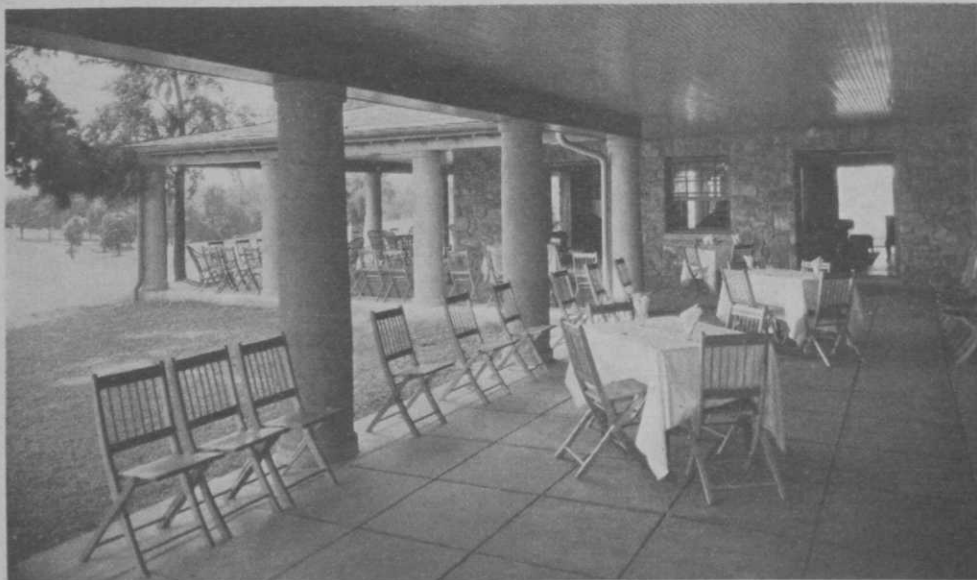
Charley Betschler, "the works" at Rodgers Forge.

position and put them back on a strong basis. That is, it isn't an unbeatable job if the man who is responsible for it knows the golf business and has the time to devote to the job. The mystifying part of the golf club picture is that a man who doesn't know much about that somewhat complicated job of running a golf club is elected to a position that requires so much of his time for handling club matters that he can learn only from painful and hasty experience while he's trying to keep his own private business affairs running.

I've seen enough of that to have a deep sympathy for the business man who is elected a golf club official and also seen enough of it to believe that the golf pro who is a real business man, experienced and gifted with the capacity for learning, can run a golf club so it will be handled right.



This clubhouse at Rodgers Forge calls for no red ink in the annual operating statement.



Inviting, simple and neat, the Rodgers Forge porch becomes a favorite spot for lunch and lounging.

Maybe because I play pretty fair golf I would come under suspicion as not being good for much else. I have won the professional championship of Maryland four times, the Maryland Open championship once and tied for it another time. I have six course records and have made five holes-in-one.

But playing golf is only one angle of the business I am in; the golf business. Inasmuch as I am in the golf business I made it my job to get my bearings on each department of the club. So, when the chance came to lease the Rodgers Forge club from the Roland Park Homeland Company last April, I went to it in confidence, notwithstanding the discouraging comments of some of my friends.

Rodgers Forge club came through 1933 in grand shape although the year was disastrous to many clubs and there may be something in our experience that will help other enterprises, so I'll hit our high spots.

I had to change from being only a pro into being a pro, all around business man, president of the club, and every other titled position in which there was plenty of work and worry. What saved me was getting around and keeping in close touch with all the members and prospective members and to give all the members what they wanted. What they thought they wanted wasn't the same as what they

really wanted until after I had talked things over with them.

Our policy was: "See All; Hear All; Say Nothing; and DO SOMETHING!" it worked out. Right now we have more than 300 members who are enthusiastic and interested in their club.

One of the first things we did was to put the club on a cash basis. We cut our overhead, took discounts, and eliminated loss on bad accounts.

Half of our battle was fought and won before the season started. I picked the right employees; instilled into them the idea and details of cooperation and interest in the members' enjoyment and value from the club.

Because we have operated at an extremely low membership fee, many thought we would be "hanging out a crepe" since it is the policy of the club that there will be no extra assessments to the members. Others thought that a club could be operated but that necessary improvements would be impossible.

Our club house stands today in the best condition it has been in for a great many years. Two new bars, equipment, furniture, drapes, new dance floor, and all the things necessary for rehabilitating a club house have been installed.

We stress our golf course and have improved, reconditioned and rebuilt greens. We spent thousands on the course alone

in the past nine months and much more will be spent within the next three months. We have accomplished much, by improving, beautifying and "satisfying." Two greens just completed were rebuilt from our own nursery. Looking ahead we saw the need of new greens, realized the cost of good sod, so immediately put our men to work on a bent nursery in the odd times when they are needed on the course but can't be used for a couple of hours. In that way, we had on hand enough greens materials at *no extra cost* with the exception of a little seed and fertilizers.

This is only one way of economizing. We wish that we could have done more. Our budget was necessarily small but I venture to say that few other clubs have done as well.

Food Concession to Chinese

The dining room has been given to a group of Chinese to run and manage. The Chinese are ideally suited for this purpose, giving good menus and splendid service and adding to the "local color." We will not know just how far ahead of the game they are until next June, the end of the fiscal year for the dining room, at which time we expect these Orientals will show a goodly profit.

Bars at clubs have been known to be losing propositions, but our bar, even before liquor sales began, showed a large profit. This was due to careful check and studying of overhead, and the buying. It is our policy to have the right price for everything; by that I mean, a price low enough to be enticing yet high enough to clear expenses with a small profit. We do not try to make large profits on one thing to offset the loss on another. We try to stay in the "black" and at the same time to satisfy the members. In this way we can operate in competition with large concerns and give value for value.

Next year we hope to perfect the things we lacked time to do this year, continue the improvements on course and clubhouse, and really stand out as the club that is operating at a small fee but a club that is an ideal one to which to belong. Naturally, the coming year will take more capital, but considering the fact that we had to start with a few members and work up, and that we will start out with our quota this coming year, we anticipate little difficulty. We have proved to ourselves that it "can be done."

Short Course for Pros Being Considered by PGA

VALUE OF greenkeepers' short courses as conducted at a number of universities is responsible for PGA officials considering the establishment of short courses in pro department operation.

Present plans contemplate the organization of a short course to be held in Chicago in late March or early April this year as an experimental effort. If it is successful, the work will be extended to other sections.

The PGA educational committee is studying the short course proposition and has tentative plans for a two-day session which will present authoritative treatment of instruction methods by several successful instructors, salesmanship lectures by nationally prominent sales authorities, studies and addresses on shop layout, decoration, advertising accounting and club relations.

It is planned to limit the attendance at the first pro department short course to 35 PGA members, inasmuch as the experience at greenkeeping short courses has shown that a limited membership permits personal attention to the problems of the individual pupil and assures the attendance of only those who are earnestly in the spirit of the session.

Professionals in midwestern territory who are interested in the proposed short course and desire to make early reservation for the available places are requested to apply promptly to the Educational Committee, Professional Golfers Assn., First National Bank Bldg., Chicago.

Rutgers Sixth Turf Short Course, Feb. 19-23

SIXTH ANNUAL short course in turf management at Rutgers University will be held February 19-23 inclusive. Residents of all states are eligible for course registration, which is limited to 60.

Program is given under the leadership of Dr. Howard B. Sprague, professor of agronomy, and presents a practical and broad range with several of the country's noted turf experts, members of Rutgers' faculty, handling the assignments.

A charge of \$10 is made for registration. A fee of \$1.00 is charged for outlines of lectures. Full details and application blanks for admission may be secured from F. G. Helyer, New Brunswick, N. J.