

Government Funds Aiding Municipal Course Building

LAST FALL AND this spring should be more active periods for new course construction than the golf field has seen in the last six years.

The answer so far as big money for golf course construction is concerned, is government funds. At Manchester, N. H., Royden H. Reed, chairman of the Board of Recreation told the local aldermen that after a brief survey of proposed local improvements for which federal financial assistance had been solicited federal officials said that a certain percentage of federal allotments to cities would have to be spent on recreational facilities.

Manchester contemplates increasing its 9-hole muni course to 18-holes and improvement of the clubhouse. Mr. Reed stated that the golf course enlargement would give 63,800 man-hours of work. Of the \$39,000 to be expended on this enlargement about \$26,000 is to be spent for labor.

At Greenwich, Conn., the Board of Selectmen has recommended a "self-sustaining golf course to round out a perfect park system." Cost of the proposed course is estimated at "about \$300,000."

Minneapolis (Minn.) Park Board has submitted a golf course improvement program involving expenditure of \$100,000 in its request for a share of the government money to be spent in local improvements. Columbia and Glenwood municipal courses would be changed from sand to grass greens, remodeled and lengthened, and have fairway watering. Theodore Wirth, general supt. of Minneapolis parks, commented on this request; "In normal times golf courses are not only self-sustaining but self-liquidating. Sand greens are antiquated and the public demands modern accommodations. The improvements will bring greater patronage and greater income. Each of the Minneapolis park course jobs calls for \$50,000, with the division of costs being 60 per cent labor and 40 per cent material and equipment.

State relief funds figure in the plans for a municipal course at Schenectady, N. Y., a project backed by the local Chamber of Commerce. Chairman E. W. Allen of the Schenectady work relief bureau estimates on the municipal golf course as follows:

"A liberal estimate of the cost of materials for the golf house is \$15,000. Allowing \$30,000 for pipe, hose, machinery, grass seed and so forth, \$6,000 for unforeseen expenses and \$10,000 more for street surfacing materials, brings the total expenses for land and material, for which a bond issue will be required, to \$150,000.

"Careful estimates show that week-end play will certainly average 200, and on Saturdays, Sundays and holidays over 300 rounds. At 50 cents a round, this gives an income of \$18,000. Concessions at the golf house and season tickets to persons who seldom play are estimated to bring \$7,000 more, giving an expected total income of \$25,000. (Records of 60 of the 18-hole municipal golf courses throughout the country have shown an average income of \$41,000 a year.)"

At Beverly, Mass., even the kids got the fever for municipal course construction as youngsters of the DeMolay order played at being city executives. The lads immediately passed an order authorizing the construction of a municipal golf course as an active part of their brief and unofficial tenure of office.

Modesto, Calif., is in an extensive recreation center building effort. By damming the Tuolumne river, Lake Modesto was formed. Adjacent to the river the city has begun construction of a public course under the direction of City Engineer Rossi, assisted by Ian Macdonald, course architect and pro.

As the present 9-hole muni course at Portland, Me., is paying 6 per cent interest on its capital investment, City Manager James E. Barlow has advocated increasing the plant to 18-hole and relieving congestion at the present course.

Mr. Barlow in making his recommendation said:

"One important reason for undertaking the construction of the golf course was to provide employment. Even the money spent for seed, fertilizer, equipment, etc., was indirectly for labor, although not necessarily local, but of course no community can live for itself alone.

"The gross revenue so far this year has been \$6,852.00, but will probably reach

\$10,000 with an estimated operating expense of \$6,000, leaving \$4,000 as interest on the capital invested, or about 6 per cent interest on the \$63,000 investment.

"Of all the work undertaken by the City to provide employment the golf course is the one project which will provide employment every season for a dozen people without additional cost to the taxpayers.

"The building of the golf course has been a direct benefit to the neighboring property."

Plans for a municipal course at Phoenix, Ariz., have been made public by A. C. Sipes, member of the city commission. The course is to be a feature of a sports center to enhance Phoenix as a winter resort.

Flushing, N. Y. is beginning construction of a 9-hole course as an extension of Kissena Park, according to plans laid before representatives of local civic organizations by Park Commissioner Albert C. Benninger.

At Canadian, Texas, and Salem Mass., excellent new municipal courses employing relief labor in their construction recently have been opened for play.

New work using government funds isn't all the golf course construction being done. Fairway watering experienced a big season last fall. Prospects of much higher prices later on influenced many clubs to install watering systems and make course alterations that had been under consideration for some time.

In the smaller towns there is a decided revival in establishing golf clubs. Typical instance is that at Scottsville, Ky., where Dr. H. H. Meredith and other golfers who have played in surrounding towns for several years, now have acted to build a local course. The spirit of the golf bugs has survived the depression. A municipal course at Mission, Texas, is being played although only 5 of its greens are completed. When the players get to approximately where the other greens will be located eventually, they count two strokes, pick up and go to the next tee.

Influence of women and children is noticed in expansion plans of several municipal courses. At Albany (N. Y.) the over-crowded municipal course is to be relieved by the construction of an additional 9 holes for women, beginners and youngsters. Mayor Thatcher, in endorsing the plans, said: "The larger course is already self-sustaining and there is no reason why a beginners' course should not be an equally good investment."

SCGA Ready to Fight Coast Price Cutters

MORE THAN three-quarters of the 100 men eligible for membership in the Southern California Golf Alliance already are in the file. Jack Malley is president of the new organization, which is associated with the PGA and which has for its main purpose the elimination of price cutting among pros, especially at driving ranges and outlying clubs. Due to tough times and murderous store competition the boys sold at any price enabling them to show a small gross profit which turned out to be less than nothing as a net profit.

Great progress was made by the organization in reducing this practice prior to the adoption of the athletic goods code which prohibits funny-work in pricing. The effect of the new organization, following its showing of strength in the price situation, now promises to be demonstrated in a broad improvement in pro merchandising vigor and practices.

Constitution and by-laws of the SCGA lead with this statement: "Desiring to foster and encourage a closer and more friendly relationship with our co-workers, business associates and public, founded on a strict code of ethics, we hereby pledge ourselves to abide by the following agreements and promise to assist to our full capacity to elevate the standard of our business practices. * * * Our object shall be to further the financial and educational advancement of our members."

Membership is limited to pros and recognized concessionaires at courses, driving ranges and schools where equipment is sold. Disciplinary action is taken by suspending members guilty of failure to abide by the rules and spirit of the organization. Seven directors constitute the board of the association. They are located in the various Southern California districts. Dues are \$1 a year. A wholesale buyers list (stores excepted) is compiled showing those entitled to buy at discount for resale.

Recommendations for correct business practices have been drafted by the organization. Among these is one asking that pros be given chance to buy "close out" merchandise at the same time as the stores.

In addition to Malley, other officers and directors of the SCG Alliance are: Larry Gleason, vice pres.; J. A. Patterson, sec-treas.; Willie Hunter, Al Baker, Johnny Kraus, Charles Dietrick.