

GOLF NEEDS MEN—

By J. C. BRYDON

*... with vision
of 1910 variety*

GOLF, which helped to make the automobile business, today finds itself as a sports business about 25 years behind the automobile business.

When we learn why this is so and take action to make up for lost time, then we can be fairly certain that golf, which now has approximately 1,500,000 players, will increase to almost 15,000,000 players. The 15,000,000 figure is not an impossible one according to the current census divisions of people by ages, financial situations and locations.

Let us consider the automobile business in 1910. There were more than a hundred motor car makers, yet the total output of these factories was less than a half-million cars a year. Last year there were more than ten times that number of motor cars manufactured and fewer makers by far than were in business at the start of 1910. Many of the motor car makers, by the way, were wiped out in 1910 despite the country being in good times following the panic of 1907.

Those motor car manufacturers who were unable to survive 1910 decided that everyone who could afford a car had one. Their conclusion that the market was saturated was confirmed by some findings made by private and government investigators. All that could be hoped for from 1910 on was a replacement market for motor cars.

Then what happened? Men with vision and energy kept on the job. They pictured the market as it might be. They quit talking about gears and bearings and the primary mechanical aspects of the motor car. They began to advertise the pleasure, the vacation travel and the business value of the automobile. On that basis they built a market far, far larger than that considered possible by 1910's statisticians.

Golf's Problem Easier than Motor's

Golf now has a much easier development problem than that with which the automobile industry had to battle. It is estimated that the present golf courses in the United States could care for almost a million more golf players than now are active, and handle this extra million without any undue inconvenience upon the

present golfers. Golf courses are easier to build than the thousands of miles of good roads required by the auto industry's expansion.

What is holding golf back from its eventual progress seems to be a failure to use constructive imagination. We must realize that we need more golfers and not manufacturers, clubs and pros competing with each other for the business that now exists.

We have the selling organizations in the clubs, the pro associations and the manufacturing companies that can do a job of market enlargement like that done by the confident automobile men.

We need to realize first of all that there are millions who will take up golf when they are cordially invited, and made to realize that it's a great and inexpensive pleasure. Maybe we've been going at the market on the gear, valve and bearing technical basis, talking too much of the complex mechanical factors in the golf stroke; just as the car makers used to do until they found out it was not the way to increase a market.

Maybe we simply haven't been asking people, let alone not even telling them that golf is a lot of fun. At any rate, it is up to everyone connected with golf to question himself as to his policies in getting newcomers into the game.

In one respect, golf's market development today has an advantage over that of the motor car business back in 1910 when the surviving auto magnates had to go to work. Cars were expensive. Golf now can be had so inexpensively that it comes within the range of almost every pocketbook this side of the relief rolls. Municipal and fee course rates are low. New and reconditioned clubs are available at almost any price, and golf balls, considering the extra life and toughness that has been added to them during the last few years, now make the ball cost for a beginner a very low figure a round.

We need imagination to give us a bright and true picture of the future. When we develop imagination in that direction and follow-up with market-selling efforts, then we will see golf clubs, pros and golf manufacturers in a proper and happy position.