

## "Course First, Then Add Other Features" Is Sound Policy

**WHENEVER** we hear some golf club weathered a severe financial storm or solved some difficulty facing it, we like to pass it on to other clubs who may be able to profit by the methods of those who have proved themselves good skippers. This is the letter from a California club:

"Our clubhouse, restaurant and beverage sales are leased to a concessionaire. We furnish most of the equipment and he purchases his own supplies and makes what profit he can through sales to members. Our house operations entail no profit to the club and likewise no loss other than the overhead of furnishing building, equipment and fuel for the concessionaire to operate.

"The many interesting, instructive articles in *GOLFDOM*, with reference to clubs which have successfully weathered the lean golf years, have been particularly interesting to us because ours was a real problem, too, when our membership dropped to 170. We organized in 1923 on the basis of furnishing real golf to the golfer of moderate circumstances and developed 18 holes with grass greens and fairways. Our membership built as high as 250 at one time, during which time our long term obligations reached \$35,000.

### Cut Debt More Than \$16,000

"We met our depression problem by curtailing capital expenditures, reducing our maintenance budget from \$19,000 to \$13,000 annually, and by first selling non-proprietary memberships and later, when golf was at low ebb, by giving away regular memberships. Between 1929 and the present date we have reduced our long term obligations from \$33,500 to \$17,000, kept our current bills paid; built a \$3,000 locker-room and \$4,000 swimming pool almost entirely from membership subscriptions and we still have a club where the average golfer can enjoy real golf 12 months of the year.

"Our motto has been to provide a *real* golf course first and add other conveniences as time will permit. We now have just that—a course we are proud to show anyone from anywhere, any time, without apologizing for the fact we have to pump for irrigation seven months of the

year in this dry climate. We are still looking forward to the addition of other conveniences and improvements which will parallel our course. We are sure our membership will continue to increase—termination and facilities will handle that—and then improvements will follow."

## Dues Collections Made Less Painful Through Proper Scheduling

Editor, *GOLFDOM*:

Do you have any information on the general practice regarding the collection of dues at country clubs? How successful is the monthly payment plan? Over how many months are dues usually collected?

● The general dues-collection practice at country clubs is to schedule payments on either a quarterly or monthly basis. The quarterly plan is most general in the East, the monthly plan elsewhere.

Neither of these is very smart from the psychological angle, since no golfer likes to pay dues during the inactive months of the year. It is something like the income tax—you can't see where you're getting anything for your money.

You have possibly noticed that many resignations occur in January and February. Nearly all of such withdrawals from the club can be laid to the January statement from the club, which arrives at the time of year when golf interest is lowest, holiday bills are pressing for payment, and the bankroll is thinnest.

Many progressive clubs have seen the light in this regard and have adopted a schedule of dues-payments that begins 30 or 60 days ahead of the active season and is completed by October 1st.

Payments may be spread evenly through the period, but many clubs prefer to collect greater amounts at the start of the season, when the club is buying supplies and incurring the greater part of its annual obligations. It provides the money to discount bills and a club discounting its bills is always in position to expect lowest prices on its purchases.

Admittedly, this plan makes each dues installment larger than would be true under a monthly plan, but it is easier to collect a sizeable amount while the golf bug is biting than a modest one during the dead months.