

MANAGERS SEEK DATA EXCHANGE

By HERB GRAFFIS

THERE is bright promise that the 10% tax on club initiation fees and dues will be repealed this year, according to the report made by Darwin Meisnest at the twelfth annual convention of the Club Managers Association of America, held Jan. 18-20, at Hotel Peabody, Memphis, Tenn.

Meisnest, head of the managers' committee engaged in seeking relief from the nuisance tax, said that the tax had accounted for about \$6,000,000 paid annually during 1935, 1936 and 1937 by approximately 750,000 members of country and city clubs. This tiny splash in the \$3,500,000,000 annual internal national government taxes costs more to collect and handle than its gross represents. It has not proved to be a luxury tax; instead, brought before club members monthly, the tax merely serves as a reminder of political mismanagement and extravagance.

The national association's first convention visit to the south achieved the desired effect of stirring up lively cooperative interest of the southern managers. In addition to increased association activity of southern managers, new chapters of the National organization were formed in Denver, New Jersey and in western New York during the year.

Routine reports revealed the association is in substantial condition.

Crawford Elected President

Fred Crawford, manager of the Pendenis club, Louisville, was elected president of the CMAA; Wayne Miller, manager of the Cincinnati (O.) CC was elected sec. and Wm. Roulo, manager of the University Club of Detroit, treas. New directors elected were: Elmer Ries, Colonial CC, Memphis; Wm. Norcross, Essex County CC, West Orange, N. J.; Charles Bangs, Oak Park (Ill.) CC; and Darwin Meisnest, Washington AC, Seattle.

The new administration received two assignments at the Memphis convention. One was to arrange for 100% membership in the national organization by members of local chapters. The other was to pattern general activities of the organization somewhat on the order of the work done by the Washington State Federation of City and Country Clubs. The Washington organi-

zation, among other performances, publishes a loose-leaf notebook which is supplied to managers, officers and directors of member clubs. Among the data supplied is information concerning liquor legislation, industrial insurance, unionization of employees, minutes of managers' meeting, and other material of educational and operating value. During 1937 the Washington association sent 28 form letters to member clubs posting them on matters of importance to club officials.

To Serve as Clearing House

The national managers' group was urged to supply its member managers with data, statistics and information that would make each member more efficient in his job. It also was asked to function more actively as a clearing house for "inside" information concerning club operations, market trends, unionizing effects, financial data, etc., which now must be secured by individual effort.

Chief advocate of speedily adopting a policy to make the association more active in the collection, coordination and proper dissemination of operating data was the same Darwin Meisnest who has been doing the association's research and leg work on the tax subject.

Informal discussions between the association members at Memphis echoed the plea for setting up data-collecting machinery. At present the country and city clubs both suffer from an almost complete inability to secure comparative operating data, as progress in this direction seems to have been stubbornly blocked by the traditional suspicion that "all clubs are different."

Chapter reports received by President MacGoogan, who presided at the Memphis meeting, indicated a strong development in the educational phases of chapter activities. The Chicago, Boston, Detroit, Ohio Val-

ley, and Philadelphia chapters reported educational sessions were main features of their meetings.

Club Pays 36 Different Taxes

The Meisnest address on taxes was the high spot of the educational program. He pointed out that at his clubs there were 11 different kinds of federal taxes, 21 different taxes to the state of Washington, 2 to the county government and 2 to the city of Seattle. In addition the club had to pay several license fees. He expressed grave alarm not only at the club peril from excessive taxation, but in the national danger. He recommended that clubs engage tax experts capable of interpreting tax laws, and that managers pass along taxes in their charges rather than try to absorb the taxes and end up in trouble.

Dr. L. M. Graves, supt. of the Memphis Health Dept., talked on the cleanliness and health of club employees, a subject of concern to club managers because of the lack of proper accommodations for employees at many clubs, and because of the high turnover in clubhouse labor during recent years. Dr. Graves passed out impressive bacteriological data that recommended steam dishwashing. He stressed the personal equation rather than inspection formalities in maintaining first class sanitary conditions in food preparation and service.

Tom Jones, veteran manager of the Harvard Club, Boston, spoke on the practical value of inspiration and cited specific instances where managers' hunches had been profitable to clubs and their employees.

"What does the club member get for his dues?" was outlined by Charles Bangs of the Oak Park (Ill.) CC. Bangs named anticipation of each detail of the members' desire for excellent personal service, as the basic value of club membership so far as the managers' responsibility is concerned. This subject brought forth brisk discussion. Fred Wood, manager of the Denver AC, remarked that one thing the new member ought to get, but generally doesn't, is more personal attention in making him acquainted with the facilities of the club. Wood also chipped in an answer to critics who ask what they get out of association membership by telling how prompt responses from fellow members of the Managers' association had helped him and his board with a problem of menu charges.

The boys all reported having trouble

with members who complain that club prices are higher than they are charged at the Acropolis No. 1 restaurant. Bill Norcross, Essex County manager takes such complainants through a tour of the stockroom and kitchen and explains comparative costs and qualities of foods. The complainers become missionaries for the club after he has given them their education. Jack Febel, manager of Northmoor CC, brought out that the wholesome contacts and supervision children are given around a top-grade country club makes membership in such a club a profitable investment for the member.

Norman Ready of the Denver Club detailed why there is no first class club that has all departments that can break even or operate profitably. This subject was argued smartly, the concensus being that no effort should be spared to make departments operate at individual profits, although the job was virtually hopeless. Repeatedly it was brought out that the bar has been the life-saver for club financial operation.

Let Contractor Build Pool

Frank Murray, Ravisloe CC, spoke on swimming pools and strongly advised any club building a new pool to begin with total drainage, or construction work probably would be seriously delayed because of the hole filling up with seepage water. He also advised that the club not build the pool itself but pay a competent, responsible contractor his profit and save expensive headaches. Murray gave considerable information on operating pools. Among other things he said to serve drinks at pools in paper or composition cups because breakage of glass is dangerous and expensive in the vicinity of pools. Murray said the Ravisloe pool brought increased restaurant and buffet business to an extent that justified its expense.

Frank G. Laird, membership chairman of the Columbia Club, Indianapolis, spoke on the value of a permanent membership committee and on selling memberships. Laird pointed out the success of employing a permanent membership chairman who was virtually sales manager on memberships at larger clubs where extent of operations would permit such hiring. Laird said that most clubs are negligent in welcoming possible new members to town. He also remarked that clubs have a serious flaw in membership solicitations in their failure to keep after former members who had resigned for various reasons.

A prospect list that is worked steadily and with dignity is the basis of any good campaign for members, Laird mentioned.

Considerable discussion followed the Laird address, inasmuch as the duties of managers in numerous instances have been expanded to take in membership chairman work. F. E. Burton, St. Louis, club membership campaign director, commented on the dangers of high-pressure solicitation. Burton said he wouldn't handle a membership campaign that didn't have an initiation fee. It's better to have the hard selling on desirable prospects who will stick, he remarked.

Dr. Frank Shipman of Brown-Forman distilleries presented an educational movie on whisky, a talkie that was followed by questioning about whisky price prospects. Shipman forecast that there would be more lower-proof whisky consumed in the U.S., with the domestic production coming closer to the Scotch proof.

Harry Fawcett, Lake Shore CC, Glencoe, Ill., gave an intensely interesting address on food. He set forth policies and practices for restoring the old top reputation to club food service. Fawcett, a genius in food preparation and service, gave pointers on how to present distinguished cuisine without running the club deeply into the red. He stressed the importance of food education and maintained that a lapse in the managers' study of foods during the depression, when they had a million other worries, was accountable partially for the decline in club food standards. Fawcett strongly urged managers who recognized the need of dusting off their food education to attend the Cornell university hotel course, if possible, and named Cornell as the source of many great club managers of the future.

Says Best Foods Are Cheapest

The Lake Shore master of cuisine said that the cardinal principle in food cost accounting is to buy only the best for club service. He went into considerable detail to explain how the best in foods was cheapest in dollars and cents.

Fawcett admitted that a manager was stymied in trying to educate members to better food than they are accustomed to, but said that the objective should be to give the member absolutely the best according to the members' standards. Fawcett discussed the educational problem at length, from the days when he and other veterans got their education at the range and behind the bar. He says that the

CLUB OFFICERS!

Charge up as a legitimate course maintenance expense the cost of sending your greenkeeper to the annual convention of the NAGA, to be held Feb. 15-18 at the Hotel Netherland Plaza, Cincinnati.

The information your men can pick up at this important event will enable him to return to the club better equipped to maintain your course in the latest and most economical fashion.

unions will have to establish educational courses for food service employees or the immigration bars should be let down to admit culinary experts. One of the two, or the country will pay by its belly, so said the sage of Glencoe.

Clubs Begin Where Hotels Leave Off

Phil Cannon of the Tulsa Club, in commenting on the outstanding differences between clubs and hotels, remarked that the club started where the hotel left off. The value of the club social contacts, Cannon commented, usually is overlooked as a club advantage over hotel service. The personal service of the club manager also is something that has no parallel in hotel operation.

Peter Hausen, Edgewater GC, Chicago, stirred the convention with a plea for more team-work between association members in handling problems of general importance to clubs and which now have no organized attention from any of the golf or amateur athletic organizations.

Fred Wood, in speaking on cooperation between town and country club managers, counseled the boys to discuss their competitive problems locally or they would fall into battles that would cost both types of clubs plenty of money and trouble. Wm. Norcross, on the same topic, referred to discretion in extension of reciprocal privileges as a happy means of cooperation.

Miss Landrey Hill, manager of the Women's City Club, Detroit, told of ingenuity in club programs and the unbeatable element of steady hard work in making the public more club-conscious. Fred Crawford went on a shopping and interior decorating expedition in describing to the convention "furnishing a club from roof to cellar." The theme of his remarks was a judicious combination of utility with "class" and low depreciation and maintenance charges.