

WHAT RETURN?

By HERB GRAFFIS

ALWAYS a pertinent question, and being asked with increasing frequency by canny club officials in these times, is "What do we get for our association dues?" No golf association, district or larger, is immune to the appraisal of that query. Foresighted association officials encourage the asking of the question for in numerous instances there are specific services such as the Green Section work of the USGA that far exceed in direct value the annual dues paid into the USGA.

Primarily the functions of golf associations have been those of rule-making and supervision, tournament operation and handicapping, with intermittent attention to matters of legislation. As organizations concerned with business phases of golf club operation, the associations usually have performed only when some collective emergency has arisen. Generally the district association function has been predominantly social.

However, there is a sharply recognized need for an expansion of association activity on a regular program of business service and in near prospect is the probability that association officials will have to overhaul organization platforms to meet the current needs. The problem is difficult. Association officials under any circumstances have thankless jobs, unduly exacting and unpaid. Association revenues in most cases are low. There is a discouraging disregard shown by member clubs toward attempts to secure information and teamwork for the common good.

Weak on Collection of Valuable Data

Consequently such matters as taxes, insurance, legislation, caddie and course and clubhouse labor wages, charges, sudden epidemics of turf diseases or pest ravages find most associations unprepared for effective collective action. It is strange that among country clubs where concerted action and exchange of data might be so highly valuable because of the frequent turn-over of officials, data is so difficult to obtain. GOLFDOM knows this, because each year we have been compelled to spend heavily in money, time and effort to dig up information urgently needed by puzzled officials.

Some years past there was activity in district cooperative buying in the mistaken notion that worthwhile savings might be made. The experiment was conducted at a loss in money, purchasing satisfaction and service to the individual clubs although operated by conscientious and diligent theorists. Since that time there has been very little cooperative effort by member clubs of district organizations in the numerous matters requiring cooperation. The outstanding exceptions are in the cases of the Massachusetts, New York Metropolitan and Detroit District golf associations.

Massachusetts Section Functions Smoothly

The Service Section of the Massachusetts association consists of an active committee of club officials and greenkeepers who pool their experience for the prompt use of any club having unusual maintenance problems. Bulletins are issued as required and the work of the year summarized in a vest pocket diary that contains, in condensed form, much valuable reference data. The association maintains offices in charge of a paid executive secretary, John Corcoran, among whose duties is that of securing from member clubs operating data and information that can be used in solving the problems of perplexed club officials and department heads. The usual district championships are conducted by the Massachusetts organization.

The report of the Detroit District GA Board of Governors for 1937 exhibits a sectional organization answering to any questioner's satisfaction, "what do we get for our association dues?" Among jobs done by the Detroit association last year was the distribution of 10,000 caddie training rule booklets, the standardization of caddie rates and cooperation with the Apprentice Training course of the Detroit Employers assn. in securing technical education for caddies over 18 years of age. The Detroit Green-committee report contains information of great value to green-

keepers and green-chairmen and, in the case of electricity rates, has been responsible for savings to clubs far in excess of the cost of membership in the association.

High, low and average figures on course maintenance items are given. High annual maintenance cost for the year of reporting clubs was \$19,804, low was \$9,000 and average \$13,250. The Green-committee is careful to warn that costs are not given with the idea of being hard-and-fast standards but merely to allow the greenkeeper and chairman to check up and make such investigations as their judgment may dictate.

The Club Relations committee report on amount of play, membership costs and other operating details gives a helpful picture. Data on public golf also is given. Tournament data, of course, is included. The Detroit association's report is an outline of association activities that deserves study by other association officials. A copy of this report, while the supply of extras lasts, may be obtained from the Detroit District assn. sec. Edward L. Warner, National Bank Bldg., Detroit.

Caddies Status Studied by N. Y. Golf Body

In the N.Y. Metropolitan assn. annual report the status of caddies under the N.Y. state unemployment insurance law was subject of a special report by the association's general counsel. This detail of the association's work, alone, must represent in value an amount well in excess of annual dues paid to the association.

The Chicago District assn. report referred to the effort the organization is making to establish a credit bureau to protect clubs against members transferring to clubs within the association without having paid their obligations to clubs to which they formerly belonged. As did others, Chicago had its troubles with caddie strikes and keenly appreciated the need of concerted attention to caddie affairs.

Handicap card sales form a major item of several district associations' revenues. The lively competitive calendars of the district associations logically are important factors in promoting the sale of the handicap cards; however there does not seem to be the number of featured handicap events that might be expected in view of the importance of the handicap card income. League competitions within districts are increasing.

The Golf Association of Philadelphia is

especially active and apparently effective in acting as a clearing house for dates of invitational tournaments, thus avoiding conflicting dates at clubs.

Organizations of public course golfers are growing in number and in service. Competitive programs are interesting and well balanced. In several instances the public course players' organizations have financed their teams to the national public links championship.

R. W. Treacy, PGA ex-Official, Dies Following Operation

R. W. (DOC) TREACY, gen. mgr. of the Kent CC., Grand Rapids, Mich., died at the Blodgett Memorial hospital, Grand Rapids, Feb. 28, of complications following an appendicitis operation performed on Feb. 22.

Treacy was 42 years old. He was born at Aurora, Ill., and entered golf as a caddie at the Chicago GC, Wheaton, Ill. He served successively as pro at Indiana, Texas, Illinois and Wisconsin clubs prior to joining the Kent organization two years ago. He is survived by his widow, a son, his mother and a brother; the latter two residents of Texas.

Doc was one of the best known non-tournament pros. He was president of the Wisconsin PGA for several terms and served some years as secretary, vice pres. and member of the executive committee of the national pro association. During the last two years he had not played much competitive golf, although he retained an excellent game. He was a fine instructor, and as his Kent job of being pro, greenkeeper and house manager indicates, was a thorough and able golf businessman.

Pro golf has been benefitted greatly by Treacy's services. He was a fellow of keen, sound judgment, high courage and a philosophical sense of humor. His character commanded the respect of the thousands of amateurs and pros with whom he had come in contact.

To his family goes the deep sympathy of the many who considered Doc Treacy one of the finest of friends.

The WPA Score—Since the summer of 1935 when WPA projects began there have been 103 WPA golf course new construction projects; involving 1,143 holes on 7,265 acres; and 167 golf course repair and remodeling WPA projects. On the reconstruction jobs 2,232 holes on 16,899 acres were involved.