

Epistle of the Chairman of

For years without number (10, anyway) Henry of Mackall hath been Chairman of the Grounds Committee at Minikahda where green pastures roll beneath the blue skies of Minnesota and the large, blond Viking hacketh the sod.

Sore of soul, but with hope everlasting, doth Henry of Mackall relate the troubles of the Grounds Chairman whose woes are as numerous as the briny drops of the seas and whose reward, if any, are in the Kingdom Beyond.

CONSIDER, my son, the life of the Chairman of the Grounds Committee, and follow not in his footsteps, for he, and his wife, and his children, and his children's children, unto the third and fourth generations, are without friends at the Club, and only the employees speak to them.

In the locker-room, he is as Roosevelt at a meeting of the United States Chamber of Commerce, and as welcome as Justice Black on the Supreme Court. His name is a climax for profanity, and his intelligence rated as that of a low grade moron. He is without virtue, and is as a pariah.

If the putting greens are not cut daily, they are too long, and if they are cut daily, they are too fast, and the fault is his in either case. He lacketh all comprehension of proper putting greens, for the greens of any other course are always superior to his, and he should see them.

To Cut or Not To Cut

If the fairways are mowed each day, and the sun burneth them, he is to blame, while if he putteth them not, to meet weather conditions, they give not a brassie lie, and he is censured.

If the rough is too long for the use of a driver, he has no understanding of a golf course and appreciates not the finesse of the game. If it is too short, so as not to constitute a penalty, the real golfers revile him and say all manner of things about him.

He assumeth that a putter is a club to be used on a putting green only; yet if the bunkers are not so built and kept that one may play out of them with a putter, he lacks knowledge of the game. Verily, the explosion shot is taboo and a thing

of the past! It is as the dodo bird or the carrier pigeon.

If he causeth the fairways to be watered in the daytime, the sprinklers are a curse and an abomination, and there is no health in them. Yet, if he watereth the fairways at night, when no one seeth them, he is accused of not watering at all, and neglecting the course. He is wrong in either case.

If he putteth the tee plates at the front of the tees, the low handicap players complain, while if he putteth them at the back, the high handicap men revile him roundly. If he putteth them in the middle, he satisfieth no one, and is accused by all.

If players cover not up their tracks in the bunkers, it is his fault. If the turf is not replaced, he is to blame, though the reason be beyond him. He should be required to follow each player and repair all damage.

Even Caddies Are His

Although the caddies are not under his jurisdiction, and he overseeth them not, nevertheless, he is blamed for all their derelictions and shortcomings, and that they stand not in the right place, nor follow the ball carefully.

The handicaps are likewise his fault, though they be determined solely by the Sports and Pastimes Committee. He hath influence, however, for his handicap is always high, and he maketh much money thereon, and never signeth the caddie tickets.

They build tennis courts, and he must take care of them, and when a swimming pool is constructed, the burden becomes his, and he is responsible therefore, including the temperature of the water and the conduct of the junior members therein.

When he sayeth unto the Board of Governors, "Of your many talents of gold, give unto me but one, that I may rebuild the fourth green," they say unto him, "Not so, oh, ye of little sense! After all these years on the Board of Governors, know ye not that this is a golf club, and at a golf club talents of gold are squandered only by the House Committee? We will, nevertheless, give unto you one hundred sestercei, that you may build unto yourself a stone altar at the second tee."

He raiseth all of the flowers for the house, to decorate the tables thereof, but

the Grounds Committee

By Henry C. Mackall

Green-Chmn., Minikahda Club

although the House Committee charges the members therefore, yet he receiveth no credit, although the gardener's salary is charged to his budget.

The driveways are put under his jurisdiction, and if the Board of Governors prohibit parking thereon, the fault is his, and he is to blame.

He erecteth signs, with the hope that the golfers will observe them and thus preserve the golf course, but the golfers do just the opposite, and glory therein.

And the Women!

And, with all of these, he must also deal as a gentleman with the women golfers. Verily, I say unto you, my son, that the afflictions of Job were as a sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal to the verbal assaults of the women golfers, for they, in golf, as in other things, wish all the benefits thereof, but will assume none of the burden. They desire all the rights of the men, but surrender none of their own. They play from early morning until late at night and permit the men only three and one-half hours in the afternoon, from Tuesdays to Saturdays, to themselves. On Sundays and holidays, they yield the morning, but with reluctance.

For them, the course is never right. The grass is too short, or too long. The greens are too fast, or too slow. The bunkers are never raked, and the dew is not wiped from the putting greens for the morning play. The traps are in the wrong places, and the tees are too something. The cups are badly placed, and the fairways are not wide enough.

He faceth death more gladly than deciding when to top-dress the greens, although it must be done. If they are top-dressed on Monday, the women complain. If on Tuesday, it should have been done on Monday, as this is the first game we have played since Sunday. If on Wednesday, it is ladies' day, and hell hath no fury equal thereto. If on Thursday, it is Club Day, and should not be. While Friday is the day before Saturday, when the course must be the best, and on Sunday, even the Grounds Crew must rest, though the Chairman laboreth and suffereth seven days a week.

The Treasurer is wont to charge to the Grounds Committee all kinds of expense,

regardless of the purpose thereof, but giveth the committee no credit, even for green-fees. For to the Treasurer, income is income, and is his, but expense is solely of the Grounds Committee.

And with all these things, my son, the Chairman of the Greens Committee, as a golf player, ranketh as a dub. He could not be otherwise. He driveth not, neither can he putt, while his iron shots are without virtue. He cannot approach, neither does he understand the use of a brassie. To him, golf becometh an anathema, and all golf players products of the lower regions.

And though he appeareth as a law unto himself, and seemeth not to consult even his own committee members, yet it is not so. Though the club president change from year to year, and even the chairman of the House Committee at intervals, nevertheless, he is an institution and cannot be over-ridden. Even the Board of Governors are helpless against him. He is as the NLRB, which knoweth no decisions other than its own, and only the law which itself has made. Mussolini and Hitler are as amateurs compared to him, while Stalin is but a beginner. Only Roosevelt is greater than he, and then only because his budget is without restriction. Though all these things so seem to the members, nevertheless, they are otherwise.

No Pariah

For, withal, my son, he craveth friendship and would be seen among golfers as a companion, or in the locker-room as the signer of drink tickets, for he is at heart human and of understanding, and it is but by reason of his striving to please all of the golfers, both male and female, that he has sunk to so low an estate.

Truly, my son, the Chairman of the Grounds Committee is to be praised, not censured; he is to be pitied, not scorned, for the prophet has truly written: "You can please some of the golfers some of the time, none of the golfers all of the time, and all of the golfers none of the time."

So saith the prophet!