



WHAT'S AHEAD?

1941 demands astute planning
in all operating departments.

By **HERB GRAFFIS**

AS THIS spring brings another season's opening to the majority of the nation's golf clubs, officials and department heads of these clubs must be aware that they're confronted by an abnormal situation.

In very few clubs is this season one that can be expected to be just another period of the same old routine. There already is plainly evident greater interest in adult physical condition, which points to the possibility of this season's accent being primarily on the health phase of country club membership rather than on the roadhouse and party features. Not that the social factors can be neglected, for the American temperament cannot be changed overnight even by general recognition of the fact that national defense

is based on the health and strength of the individual.

However, club executives who have considered the season ahead believe that this year there will be more attention paid to checking up the use of the club by the members, and use of the physical conditioning value of the club in developing patronage.

This has meant, in several significant cases, that systems have been devised to make it easy and plain for the manager and pro to be reminded of inactivity of members at the club, and to solicit the patronage of inactive members by such means as good judgment dictates.

Perhaps solicitation of the inactive member may best be done by a personal telephone call by the manager or pro.

Every member of the Tam O'Shanter CC (Chicago district) contributed toward a collection of gifts which was presented February 26 to patients at the Edward Hines Jr. hospital. Among the things supplied to the ex-soldiers at Hines were radio head sets, books, playing cards and games. The presentation was made on behalf of the club by P. F. Lowder, member of the Tam O'Shanter's club relations committee, who stated that similar gifts were to be presented annually.

Perhaps the member's absence from the club is because of lack of appeal of the club's program of competitive or social affairs, or because of his displeasure at some failure or mishap in service at the club. At any rate the reason for the inactivity of the member must be investigated and removed, if correction of the situation lies within the province of club department heads.

GOLFDOM's interviews during the past months with club officials and managers, particularly, have revealed that more planning to assure attention to each member, instead of concentrating service on the big spenders, is going to be this year's innovation at many clubs.

Member Won't Stand Neglect

The president of a golf club in Connecticut told GOLFDOM's editor recently:

"I've been a member of our club for 18 years, and on its board for a third of that time. This past winter I've gone over our old year books and studied the membership change from year to year. I came to the conclusion that quite a percent of the annual turnover in club membership is caused by the resignees not having received the personal attention they feel they're entitled to. The club has been run too much for the conspicuous spenders and not enough to give an even break to the member who believes his payment of initiation fees and dues entitle him to something more than the mere privilege of being allowed on the property."

The same point, but from a different angle, was brought up at the recent national convention of the Club Managers' Assn. during one of the breakfast round-table discussions. The manager of a mid-western golf club said, "I doubt that any of us studies his members' accounts enough. We can tell from the accounts and what we know about our members when there's something wrong and a member is not coming out to the club often enough. I'm making a point of do-

ing that this season to check-up on the appeal of our meals and entertainment program."

That's something for the pro to do, both for his own profit, and for that of the club. A pro who doesn't start this season with a detailed inventory of his members' bags and their contents in such shape that he can see what the member needs and govern his sales efforts accordingly, is omitting a primary step of business operation. He should have this inventory in such shape that he can check on it several times during the season to learn if, and where, he's been missing bets in his own merchandising.

The president of a club in New York state told GOLFDOM a few weeks ago.

"The first few weeks of the season may determine the success or failure of the club's entire year. After the winter lay-off the members come to the club enthusiastic. If they find things fresh and enough change in the club's facilities to indicate that people have been busy getting ready for them, and if they are personally welcomed with genuine personalized interest, they get off to a good start. It can be love at first sight if the club staff is smart and on the job, or there can be sudden death to a pent-up eagerness. Club officials who don't see that enough changing and freshing up is done during the winter to justify the renewal of members' interest when spring comes, can't expect to keep their clubs progressing."

Below are just a few of the fresh touches that might be presented in the spring to the member who comes out to his club wondering whether it's going to show progress or reveal that it's indifferent to his return:

On the Course

Newly painted benches, bridges, shelters; Resurfaced paths; New flags and poles; Traps in good condition; Equipment barns masked by landscaping; Woods and the rough cleaned; Fences repaired; Ditches cleaned; Tee markers repainted and in good condition; Ball washers painted and with new brushes; Ball locators or marks on trees freshly painted; Distance markers freshly painted; Maintenance equipment freshly painted; New rakes in traps.

In the Pro-Shop

New arrangement of display cases; Freshly painted walls, ceiling and floors; New, or cleaned and repaired carpeting; Handicap card rack in prominent spot;

New window curtains or venetian blinds; Feature display of new club models; Different bag display instead of the usual showing of bags hung high on the walls; Special attention to first club service treatment of the season; Neat signs, and only a few, advertising shop "special buys" or services; Chairs, if any in shop, repaired and repainted; A souvenir on the first visit, such as a practice ball bag, package of tees (if the club doesn't supply them free), or some other inexpensive gift to welcome the winter absentee "back home."

In the Clubhouse

New arrangement of furniture; Repainted locker-room; Repainted and replated showers; Full stock of toilet articles in washrooms; Lockers cleaned, repainted and repaired; Different menu sheets or covers; Veranda furniture and awnings rehabilitated; New uniforms for

the club's house staff.

Scores of details, many of which are inexpensively handled, will occur to the greenkeeper, pro, and manager and their chairmen, as affording opportunities for putting on the first act of the 1941 season at the club as a notably bright greeting.

And the new programs of club events—golf competitions and social affairs—must present novelties rather than the same old schedule with only the dates changed.

The club that doesn't make every effort to put its best foot forward when the member comes back after the dreary winter of his discontent, is taking a risk of having a member's best foot put into the backside of the department heads or the officials who were elected, because it was thought they'd put some new life into the place.

Variety Makes IBM Club Hum

By BART J. SCANLON

SIX years ago, in line with the policy outlined by its president, Thos. J. Watson, the International Business Machines Corporation opened its now famous country club to employees of the corporation in the Endicott area.

While this club is unusual in that its membership is limited to the employees of the IBM corporation and only a nominal fee of one dollar is required of its members, still the experience of the club in bringing an ever larger percentage of employees into active membership by a

varied program of activities, managed and directed by the members themselves, holds a lesson that could be studied with benefit by the management of any club.

The constant aim has been to make the club the hub around which social life and the recreational activities of the employees would center and to provide recreation for the entire family group.

The club is used by 4,300 Endicott employees and members of their families. In addition all employees of the company coming to Endicott from the far flung

The center of sport and social activities for IBM employees and their families is the club's large modern clubhouse, a two-story frame structure.

