

# Victory Gardens Show Clubs Wisdom of Thrift Policy

By DON YOUNG

IT BY NO MEANS requires a philosopher or an authoritative commentator to prove that the world and its affairs are conducted on a continuous 24-hour swing shift of direct opposites. History bears us out in this by recording the facts that extremely dry weather is usually followed by extremely wet weather, cool weather by warm, feast by famine, and prosperity by depression. Just why this has to be remains one of the mysteries of life. At any rate, we mortals to date have failed dismally at combining the two as a steady diet and prospering on it.

This touch-and-go fact of life has long been recognized by big business and suitable financial arrangements generally are made to meet it. Golf, being still in its swaddling clothes in a business sense, has taken neither time nor trouble to do likewise, having devoted its efforts through good times and bad times to the matter of expansion. Happily the results have been good, but whether they can continue on the same basis through the next decade is questionable.

Unfortunately from a business standpoint, golf is a business at which people enjoy themselves, and as a result a quite pleasantly distorted view of the future is very likely to be seen through the frame of the present. Failure to study this picture more closely and make preparations to meet it can conceivably prove a serious mistake.

Contrary to our original calculations, the war has been a good thing for golf. To a percentage of fortunately-located clubs it has proved a financial boon. This in itself is of no great consequence, but when one finds that the majority of these clubs financially favored by war conditions are draining off a generous percentage of this landfall for future bulwarking, it becomes of great consequence. Such clubs have graduated to the class of sound business institutions.

To other clubs, and in addition to producing thousands upon thousands of new golfers, the war has taught the valuable and to-be-hoped lasting lesson that the average golf plant can be capably as well as efficiently conducted on a much lower budget than has been heretofore deemed possible. In doing so it has been necessary of course to forego many refinements

of operation deemed almost indispensable in the past, and in some departments, particularly greenkeeping, has produced necessarily undesirable conditions that will cost real money to replace or correct. Nevertheless, valuable lessons have been learned in all departments of club operation that should provide a sound basis for post war budgeting.

Draining off of a certain percentage of income for future security is a plan the average golf club could well adopt. However, golf being the peculiar business it is, composed of a comparatively small percentage of large clubs, a comparatively small percentage of small clubs, and a very large percentage of medium-size clubs, and with very little apparent connection existing between any of the groups, this financial bulwarking should hardly prove as beneficial to golf clubs as to the average business.

The depression of the late '20s and early '30s was basically a financial one and through a manipulation of the basic cause was eventually broken. We have of course a number of economists who maintain that this same manipulation foreshadows the doom of all future depressions, but history fails to bear them out. More likely, the true economist, with a thorough knowledge of the past and a firm grasp on the pulse of the present, paints a truer picture. If we are to believe him we can expect a postwar period of prosperity followed by depression—a depression in fact that will sift through any tangible financial setup and get right down to bedrock essentials.

Assuming that these predicted events will eventually transpire, golf would do well to prepare itself to meet them. Most clubs have made, or are in the throes of making, plans for a period of post-war prosperity—but what of the forecasted following depression? Most fortunately, the golf field in general is in an enviable position to benefit immeasurably from preparations for this event even though it may never come to pass. This is due to the fact that during periods of depression there has always in the past been a more or less general migration toward the very basis of life—the land. Fortunately the heart of a golf club is in the land it owns or occupies.

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The Victory garden period might be termed the birth of a new era in golf club operation, if we care to look to the future. A great many clubs have put a spare unused acre or two to work and made it pay real dividends. There is no reason why the idea cannot be made a permanent one, and together with a fairly stable financial backlog present a bulwark to any depression that may envelop us within the next decade.

A number of clubs adopted the garden idea during the depression. In many cases it continued as a part of club operation and paid dividends, not only economically but gastronomically. One club carried the idea further by developing an acre to the establishing of an orchard. Apples, pears, peaches, plums, and cherries were included in the planting. In a few years the orchard was supplying the entire needs of the club's dining room throughout the winter. This was accomplished by a yearly three-day "canning spree" by the club's feminine membership, who never quit until the club's fruit cellar was stocked to the rafters.

It is human nature to disregard fundamentals of thrift to some extent during periods of prosperity, a fact that is especially true in golf club operation. This is not only true of the membership itself but of the management which can see very little sense in the extra work required in maintaining a club garden and orchard when both food and money are plentiful. During a period of depression, however, the mental attitude is entirely different. With club income lowered and course workers wages, never very high at the best, practically reduced by inflation, the club's garden and orchard suddenly becomes not only a source of economical supply for the club's dining room, but is the means of providing the employees' families with a goodly portion of the first requisite of life—food. During low wage periods this constitutes a very important item and quite often is the means of keeping competent help.

There are very few clubs that do not have somewhere on the layout small plots of land that are not in actual use.

Further, the question of postwar food rationing is an unsolved problem as yet. It is a foregone conclusion, however, that America will continue to contribute generously from her breadbasket to help feed the undernourished peoples of war-torn Europe. As a result we here at home will continue to be actually conscious of food supply problems, making everyone's Victory garden of tomorrow as important as their victory garden of today.

And at the same time making your club's garden and orchard one of the club's valuable assets.