

# Shawnee Trains Younger Men to be Club Officials

Two factors that are of deep concern to foresighted officials of golf clubs are inflation and the matter of getting younger members trained in contending with readjustment problems which inevitably will confront clubs.

In probably too many cases of established country clubs, especially in metropolitan districts, there prevails an unhealthy ratio of older to younger members, due to war, waiting lists and inflation which freezes out younger men of all highly desirable qualifications except that of money.

In looking ahead the present administration of the Shawnee CC of Topeka, Kan., headed by Pres. C. R. Holmes, has adopted policies and practices meriting attention of many other club officials.

Pres. Holmes, commenting on Shawnee's operations and policies, says:

"There are a number of golf problems that are common to all clubs. There are other problems that are not of a common nature because of the different setups in the various clubs. For instance, our golf club is primarily a golf club and not a social club. I doubt if any club, comparable in size in the country, has as many golf players in proportion to its membership as we have at Shawnee. Consequently our expenditure on the course is considerably more than it is on the clubhouse, in order to give our members what they want.

"We, like most clubs, have a waiting list and we are over our limit of 300 members because we are taking in members that will be a real asset to our club, and members that will, we think, be permanent.

"Our clubhouse is not sufficient to take care of the present membership.

"I have appointed a committee of 17, made up about equally between younger and older members and I have a majority of our 9 Board members on the committee as well as business men in the club who have had building experience. This committee is working on a long-range program to be submitted to our stockholders at our next annual meeting in January. In appointing this committee I drew its attention to the fact that conditions were not normal; all the clubs were enjoying a full membership and the free spending of

money. A change will come some time, maybe in a year and maybe it will take 5 years, but certainly we have got to get back to normal. Therefore our plans should be conservative, based on sound financing, and I felt we should not plan for more than the maximum of 300 members.

## Reduce Indebtedness Now

"The move we are taking against inflation is that while we are enjoying a good income we are fast reducing our indebtedness and hope to have it entirely done away with by next year.

"In interesting younger members, we have some of them on all committees and even on our Board of Directors. We appreciate that we have got to keep these young members interested, and to keep them interested we have got to have them actively participate in the running of the club.

"We do not have the crowd problem on week ends to the extent some clubs have. We use a starter on Saturdays, Sundays and holidays, permitting only foursomes to leave the tee.

"We have looked over the financial statements from other clubs but I do not believe they are of any particular help. It is not 'How much are you paying?' so much as it is 'What are you getting for what you are paying?' In other words, suppose you pay your greenkeeper \$50 more per month than some other club does; if he knows his business and can save you \$2000 or \$3000 expense on your course you have a good investment.

"So far as committees are concerned, they should not be too big. At the same time, by putting a member on a committee you have recognized him, and if you pick him for the right committee you secure his active interest in the operation of the club.

"We have one member of the Board of Directors in charge of 2 committees. The Board member is not Chairman of the committee but he is on the committee and has contact direct with the Board and is able to tell the Board at any meeting what that particular committee is doing. When any committee is not functioning as it should we put it up to the member to get hold of the chairman and find out what is wrong. The main thing, as I see it, is not to put too many on a committee but do not limit the



This view of a Shawnee CC green was taken during the 1946 Kansas state championship.

number of committees. In that way you are going to get a lot more of your members on a committee interested in some activity of the club.

#### Younger Men on Committees

"We believe each committee should have some of the younger men so that on the more important committees such as the grounds or greens they will gradually get the technical knowledge that will be of assistance to us when the older member has left.

"We have gone so far and I feel we get results having a committee on keeping the road in good shape leading to the club from the main highway. We have another com-

mittee on the parking of cars, one to work with the control and handling of caddies, and another committee in charge of supplies for the locker rooms, such as towels, soap, talcum powder, janitor supplies, etc. By placing the club work in the hands of a large number of committees you not only create the interest of more members in their club, but divide the work up so no one committee is overburdened with work.

"We hold our regular Board meetings once a month in the evening, followed by an hour of sociability, and the only time we do not have a full attendance is because some member is out of town or ill. Meetings are scheduled well in advance so that conflicting dates will not occur."

Here's the Palm Springs (Calif.) course where the movie and radio notables of Hollywood play on their holidays and the habitues of the sunshine colony between the mountain and the desert slap the ball around. The late Tom O'Donnell, pioneer oil magnate, had the course built and bequeathed it to the city. Genial George Howard is the club's perennial pro and has a lesson schedule that's packed tight from dawn until dusk.

