

# Golf Looks to the New Frontier

*Building for more economical maintenance, automation, sensible clubhouses, etc. point to revolutionary changes*

BY HERB GRAFFIS

THE New Frontier is just ahead in the golf business.

Look at some of the signs that point to a change in the scenery. Then think and begin acting because very soon there will have to be adjustments made, probably by you, to fit into the golf business. A few of these signs are:

•Bob Dunning says that by adopting certain proved ideas, materials and methods, "nearly every golf course can reduce its overall maintenance costs by 30 to 40 per cent."

## No Wild Theorist

Dunning is no wild theorist. He has been around a long time and has seen many courses as an equipment and supply dealer. He knows supts., architects, turf scientists and engineers. He knows how many methods, materials, machines and grasses previously have been presented as the "big answers" to the problems and

costs of course maintenance.

With his background Dunning says the New Frontier of course maintenance will cut costs far beyond the figure that resourceful and experienced supts. have been able to reach by rigorous economy.

## Automation Makes Gains

•Harry J. Fawcett says that automation has made such great gains in the dining end of the business that many small clubs are going to have automatic food machine service that will provide a quality and variety of menu greatly superior to that now provided by most clubs. This will be at a profit to the clubs, too.

Fawcett is a veteran club mgr., acknowledged to be a top authority in his field, with a successful record of managing a number of the finest country and city clubs. For years he has had an international reputation for providing his members with the finest in food. Recently he told his hotel and restaurant management colleagues at one of their conven-

tions: "Nowadays I am astonished at nothing. I listen to the most extravagant promises with great respect."

So, with his wide and successful experience, Fawcett sees a New Frontier in the high standard of cuisine at all country clubs and without the high costs that bring assessments.

#### Smaller Clubhouses

•Country club mgrs. have begun to wonder if there will be many of the large and ornate clubhouses on the New Frontier. At several Florida and California clubs there already has been a revolution in clubhouse design. Smaller and adequate clubhouses are proving thoroughly pleasing to members and considerably less expensive than the traditional structures.

•Another indication that the New Frontier in golf business is close is the radical change in the caddy situation. The golf car and bag cart, electric or mechanical, has reduced the demand for caddies. At some clubs the availability of golf cars on days when caddies are in school has meant increases of from 40 to 100 in players.

The prejudice against pulling bag carts has practically disappeared at numerous "prestige" clubs. At clubs where they wouldn't have thought of pulling carts five years ago, women players now are hauling them even when caddies are available. This is further complicating the caddy problem.

#### More Emphasis on Juniors

•Foresighted professionals who are looking into the New Frontier of golf business say there must be a great deal more attention given to Junior golf programs at clubs since caddies won't continue to provide the advance guard of the next generation's golfers as they have in the past.

Club officials often discourage the juvenile class idea and play, saying that the kids clutter up the course. This attitude will have to be changed, say the professionals, and in general first class clubs have to look to memberships 10 years hence and not be complacent because of today's waiting lists.

Golf business won't be far into its New Frontier before there are as many women as men playing.

Patty Berg at her clinics for women golfers this year is planning an educational campaign on playing at a pace that doesn't waste time. With women, despite higher scores, playing faster than men (which isn't difficult in many instances) there will be more room for them on the

#### Raise Funds for Ed Oliver

James L. O'Keefe, Chicago attorney and Western Golf Assn. official, is general chmn. of a national committee to raise funds for Ed (Porky) Oliver, who is seriously ill. Oliver, who had a lung removed last summer, is living in Wilmington, Del. One of the jolliest fellows on the golf scene, Ed has finished as runnerup in the PGA Championship, All American, Western and National Opens and Masters at some time during his career. He has a wife and four children. Seventeen men are serving on the fund raising committee and Western Golf, Golf, Ill., is the clearinghouse for money received for Oliver. Feb. 5 has been set aside as Ed Oliver Day in the Palm Springs Desert Classic and Apr. 18 will be Ed Oliver Day in Houston.

courses and less opposition.

Faster play is part of golf's New Frontier that will increase course capacity, the attractiveness of the game and, consequently, business.

#### Club Dilemma

Possibly another vista of the New Frontier lies in the prospect of club sales. One trouble with golf business as a manufacturing and merchandising operation is that clubs last too long. However, at present costs, there aren't many golfers who are in a hurry to buy new clubs. Even with the help of trade-in allowances, professionals are finding it tough to compete even with pro-quality lines against the cheaper clubs.

Many persons in the golf business are afraid to speak up about what is often discussed about the economic wisdom of selling two 10-club top quality sets to only one 14-club quality set. This is suggested as a way to increase the market and protect the quality standard against being priced out of a big part of the picture.

Professionals, noting that far too much of women's club business is going to stores solely on basis of price, have started fitting women with what are properly fitted sets. These may be 9 or 10 clubs at a price that looks, and is, a wise buy in top quality. This is one part of the golf market's New Frontier where alert pros already are in.