

priser is forced to pour more money into the coffers of a governmental unit that already has reduced his income by establishing a business that takes customers and revenue away from him.

"I suppose it is the old story of government vs. private ownership," says Rocco. "If you don't run into it on the federal or state level, the county or local government manages to trap you."

#### Expanded Too Soon

When Rocco learned that the Flanders course was going to be opened in 1964, he made plans to expand Musconetcony from nine to 18 holes. He felt that he would have to do this to compete with the publicly owned layout. Construction on the second nine, delayed because title to the 170 acres on which the entire course is located had to be clarified by the courts, was rushed after it got underway. The result was that the new nine was not quite ready when play was begun on it. This led to numerous complaints and a further drifting of players to either the public course in Flanders or to the other four semi-private layouts in the Hackettstown area.

"I guess," says Rocco, "I was going to show the county officials that private enterprise could beat the government at its own game, but the plan boomeranged. The new nine not only was damaged by being opened too soon, but I'm afraid I lost some of the old Musconetcony patrons. On top of this, my taxes probably will be increased in 1965. That's what happens when an individual has to compete with the government."

#### Has Big Plans

If taxes and competition don't knock the Hackettstown owner out of business before the Budd Lake area starts to build up and help arrives via the superhighway, he plans to build a lodge, 60-unit motel and swimming pool. The Musconetcony course is located in a beautiful, even primitive setting, and several of its uphill holes, plus two or three others with elevated tees and greens, are as interesting and picturesque as any to be seen in the East. In the last two years, Rocco has built a pro shop along with a large maintenance building.

The new nine, with fairways planted to Seaside and Astoria, and greens in Pennecross, was built under the direction of Leslie Carpenter, a onetime Hackettstown policeman. Carpenter originally started out to be a golfer, discovered that he was more interested in turf than balata, attended a course management school at Rutgers and then came back to Musconetcony to take over as supt.

### Range Raiders Well Organized, Says Illinois Operator

As a followup to the Range Theft article that appeared in May Golfdom (page 58), Jack Murray, who owns and operates a range in Lansing, Ill., says that ball thefts can be minimized if the operator establishes close liaison with the local police department. His losses have been restricted to less than 100 balls a year for several years simply because Lansing police respond quickly when a theft is reported, or investigate thoroughly when the thieves aren't immediately apprehended. Murray emphasizes that complete cleanup of the range after quitting time is necessary to keep down ball pilferage.

#### Had a Master Plan

Night raiders probably will always be a problem for range owners. Many of them operate as part of a ring. Two years ago, Ohio police apprehended a group of ball thieves who proceeded on a master plan. They wore camouflaged suits and rubber boots and carried specially designed shag bags in making their forays. The group operated across Iowa, Illinois, Indiana and Ohio and carried maps and notes that pinpointed practically every range in the four states. One of the raiders was carrying a pistol when the police nabbed him. This group is still out of circulation, but there isn't much doubt that it has successors.

Raiders steal balls from one range with the intention of selling them to others. About the only way range ball thievery can be made unprofitable, according to Murray, is for owners and operators to refuse to buy balls from other than recognized salesmen.