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For more information circle number 122 on eard

UNFAIR TAX?

Continued from page 32

of bread. This cannot be said of the builder of a suburb. That land is gone, dead if you please. Yet why should my resource be taxed the same as his. I am preserving a resource for my country.

We need and must have privately owned tax-producing recreational areas in every state if the free enterprise system that made our country great is to survive. We cannot allow all these facilities and services to be taken over by local, state and federal governments. Nor should the people in these take the attitude that only they can provide such services. When government takes over outdoor recreation, and the trend is that way, then all the taxes that apply to a private enterprise of the same kind should apply to the state-owned facility. Otherwise, as is now being done, the patrons of privately owned ones are being taxed to support the patrons of the state-owned facility.

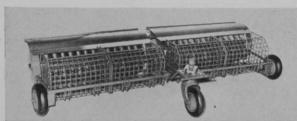
The city of Cleveland taxed all golf

courses to death inside of its corporate limit. Now in the name of a great municipality it has gone into neighboring communities, built several golf courses and thus denied the tax revenue from the land to the several local townships for their school districts and other functions. Yet it demands police, fire protection and highway maintenance of the township. This unfair system subsidizes golfers who do not even live in the community. This may be legal under existing laws, but is it morally right? Since when does a city charter give it the right to enter into private business?

How would you like to fill your car at the city gas pump? You would save 10c or more per gallon because it would be tax free. Let the guy who buys his gas from the private pump pay the taxes that keep up the roads and other services. When a city goes into the gasoline business you can bet that all oil companies will unite and fight back. They are not going to depend on a little guy like Bill Lyons who has only one Continued on page 74

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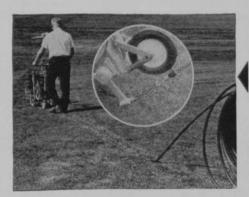
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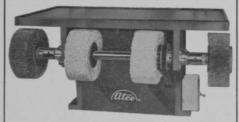
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UNFAIR TAX?

Continued from page 72

well and nine pumps to do their fighting. We golf course owners have just sat on our hands. Are we too weak to

fight back?

We believe that every golf course, municipal, institutional (such as college-owned), state-owned, private country clubs and public courses privately owned for profit—wherever a fee or membership is charged—should bear its own load of real estate taxes, equal to the highest rated agricultural lands within the county, for the acreage used exclusively for recreation. We have no objection to the present system of taxing our buildings commercial.

This system would then place an equal tax load on the users the same as the gasoline tax now places an equal

share on all who use it.

We need and must have legislation along this line so that all recreational lands are taxed equally regardless of ownership. Tax-exempt lands in Spain helped to bring about their present system of government.

Permit me to give you one example of how the state of Ohio is going into the private recreation business. They used the poor man's tax money to build an elaborate resort. With an income of \$14,000 annually this man could not afford to spend \$180 per week for his family of five to rent their rooms.

The picture I wish to show you is billboards put up by the state within 40 feet of the Lincoln highway, route 30, practically inside the village limits of Mifflin, Ohio. The same state is now ordering private business to remove billboards from highways. But here, in the name of the state (which can do no wrong), they take another man's tax dollars to advertise a tax free resort, for which they paid a half million of taxes from a lot of poor people, to be in competition with the resorts that are taxed "Commercial." This sort of thing may be all right for those running Russia but it certainly has no place in American society.

It was recently published in the Elyria, Ohio newspaper that in the name of the Great Society's Poverty program

Continued on page 76

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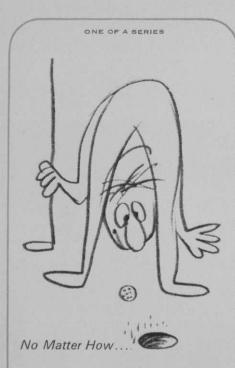
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For more information circle number 196 on card

UNFAIR TAX?

Continued from page 74

some commissar wanted to buy 350 acres near Avon Lake, Ohio, and build a golf course on it. How silly will we allow these people to become at our expense?

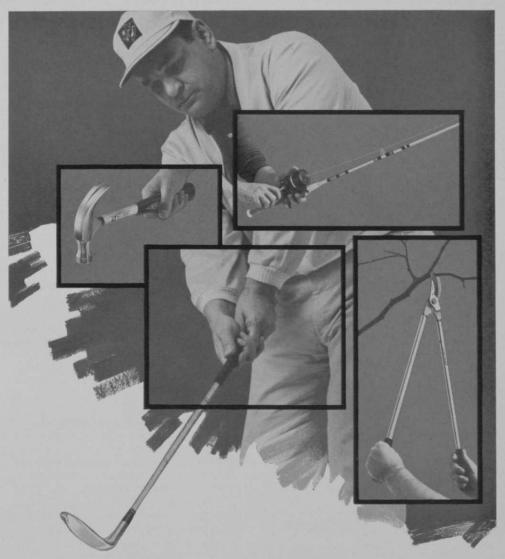
Many states are using tax money wisely to make it grow into more tax money by advertising their privately owned golf courses as prime tourist attractions. North Carolina has done an excellent job. Even Oregon, with just a handful of courses, is trying to use them to attract the tourist who brings new money into the community. In other states legislators have yet to learn not to bite off the hand that feeds them. Americans spend three-fifths as much for recreation as for food.

When an auditor exempts a government or institutional recreational facility from being taxed who is he subsidizing? Not the government, the participant, your customer. We must have laws putting all this property back on the same tax basis. In Cuyahoga county, (Cleveland) 17% of all lands are tax free. This only makes the taxes higher for the other 83% of the county. In another Ohio county 43% of their land is tax free. Is it any wonder that local governments have had to resort to laws giving them the right to levy amusement taxes on the participants? This is being done in the state of Pennsylvania as well as Ohio.

A golf course is an integral part of community life. A good real estate salesman told me that our little course added 5% to property valuations. They always remind the prospect how handy the course is to the property. Even those who don't play have a sense of pride in having the course nearby. All this tends to make a more desirable community. Thus we have increased community tax valuations. I regret to inform you that we received no tax credit for doing this. No, our taxes went up from farm to golf course 966%, just on the land.

In Ohio we have a law that can benefit those who devote acreage to development of a farm pond or lake. It is an antiquated law but it can be used as a start to getting better laws written.

Continued on page 78



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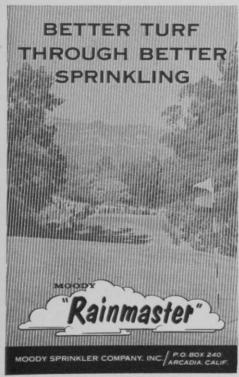


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UNFAIR TAX?

Continued from page 76

The law grants the owner a tax valuation reduction of \$40 for each acre foot of water stored. This law was written when corn land was selling for \$80 to \$100 per acre. The law should be revised with an escalator clause so that as the tax valuation rises so will the value placed on an acre foot of stored water. We now pay \$20 tax per acre annually.

Another law workable on Ohio recreational lands is the Forestry law. This old law needs our support to update it. As it now reads we are entitled to a tax valuation reduction of 50% on our wooded acreage. (This is 10% of the acreage on our course.) The Federal Government will pay 80% of the cost of cutting out the undesirable trees, if you want to accept-I don't. Forestry laws are good laws. They were passed to conserve land, to increase water percolation, to be used for recreation and to insure a future lumber supply for generations vet unborn. All these things are fine and all are for man's ultimate good. Cannot the same be said of our recreational lands?

We willfully took our lands out of corn, oats, wheat, etc. No one ever paid us a dime for so doing. Washington has a number of programs to aid land owners to retire their acreage to recreational use. They will even help finance them. Some of the golf courses they have helped finance in poor risk areas can be purchased rather cheaply. If you have 1,000 acres and you put 100 of them in a golf course, you are still a farmer and the golf course would only be a sideline. But if you have only 100 acres and you put it all into a golf course you are no longer a farmer, you are now a commercial operator. Don't bother to ask them for help. Isn't that strange? No, that is Washington.

In the name of conservation the horse farmer across the fence gets free lime applied to his land to make the soil a better place for him to ride his horses, and to raise more of them. He has a powerful lobby working for him in the name of Agriculture.

We in outdoor recreation can have Continued on page 80

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UNFAIR TAX?

Continued from page 78

a more powerful lobby than agriculture if we do a job of selling. There are more participants in outdoor sports than there are farmers. We would have more votes. Dollars don't count in the game of politics, just votes. I'll show you.

In Ohio we have the Outdoor Recreation Association. I think of it as a "too small organization" of golf course owners. Even though too small in numbers we beat down three "time" bills that were in the "hopper" to come before the legislature in 1965. These would have eliminated daylight saving time in N. E. Ohio. Our postcard campaign by golfers to the legislative authors of such junk legislation killed the bills in committee. The golfer thus had more playing time.

Golf needs a lobby

We convinced the golfer that the time bills would hurt him. We supplied him with addressed postal cards. Enough were mailed to get results. With a well planned program we think the golfers will cooperate to get new legislation written.

The more important legislative needs

are these:

1. A Recreational classification be written into the general code.

2. A Recreation Lands Dedication

law be enacted.

3. Equal taxes be levied for equal recreational facilities regardless of their ownership.

4. A fair share of soil conservation funds be allocated to outdoor recreation

lands.

5. Amend the laws on farm ponds.

6. Amend the forestry laws.

7. Enact legislation that will keep government out of recreation, wherever private enterprise could do the job.

If we wage as aggressive a campaign as the private clubs did in getting the federal excise tax removed we can get

these things put into law.

To do this costs money, big money. Unfortunately only a small percentage of owners will go along. With a strong forceful program of action where both they and the customer will benefit, Continued on page 82

GOLFDOM