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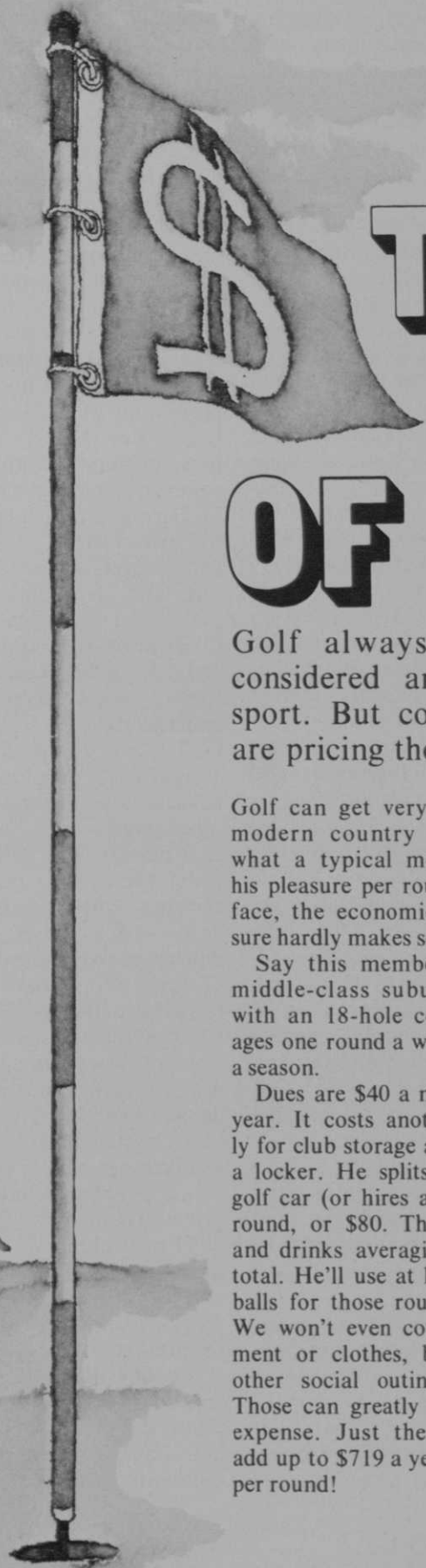


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THE HIGH COST OF GOLFING

by JERRY CLAUSSEN

Golf always has been considered an expensive sport. But country clubs are pricing their member-

ships out of reach of younger members, thereby creating a showdown in the near future

Golf can get very expensive at a modern country club. Look at what a typical member pays for his pleasure per round. On the surface, the economics of that pleasure hardly makes sense.

Say this member belongs to a middle-class suburban golf club with an 18-hole course. He averages one round a week for 20 weeks a season.

Dues are \$40 a month, or \$480 a year. It costs another \$24 annually for club storage and \$30 more for a locker. He splits the rental of a golf car (or hires a caddie) at \$4 a round, or \$80. Then there's lunch and drinks averaging \$3, or a \$60 total. He'll use at least three dozen balls for those rounds costing \$45. We won't even count other equipment or clothes, betting losses or other social outings at the club. Those can greatly raise the annual expense. Just the items outlined add up to \$719 a year, or nearly \$36 per round!

Those prices could only appeal to the upper 5 per cent or 10 per cent income group. Is it a surprise that daily fee and municipal golf are growing faster than private clubs?

The ideal club doesn't exist, of course. If it did, says Joseph C. Dey, commissioner of the Tournament Players Division of the Professional Golfers Assn., golf's Shangri-la would:

1. Represent an extension of a member's home in comfortable, pleasant surroundings;
2. Offer first-class facilities and atmosphere motivated by a respect and love for the game of golf;
3. Employ top-flight department heads—manager, professional and superintendent—who know their jobs and care about people in golf;
4. Maintain a clear-cut policy line between the staff's work and the member's play.

Most clubs in financial difficulty have violated one or more of

continued

HIGH COST

continued

these commandments, especially number four. As one country club superintendent from Denver comments, "Our club needs to attract 100 or more members to even keep the golf course and clubhouse busy. But no one cares. Our manager is nothing but a food and drink man. The club has had 20 managers in 20 years. The board doesn't plan ahead and they won't give anyone authority to run it as a business."

Sound familiar? Such reports, plus surveys, point out too many clubs with just these problems. The financial problems seem to be getting worse, but then everything is measured in inflated dollars these days. Yes, initiation fees, dues, assessments, menu prices and costs of labor have gone up.

For 75 of the "best" American country clubs, the 1970 to 1971 fiscal year was bad news, according to the accounting firm of Harris, Kerr, Forster & Company. Averages showed:

- A 1 per cent loss in average membership per club, the first drop in 18 years.

- Expenses up 6.2 per cent, compared with a 4.4 per cent growth in income, averaging almost \$1 million per club or \$1,579 per member.

- Food and beverage service operating at a loss, and over-all clubhouse expenses and overhead averaging 61 per cent over income. This had to be made up by increasing dues and assessments.

- Golf course maintenance costs up 8.9 per cent to \$5,364 per hole (69 per cent labor), nearly double what it was 15 years ago.

- Operating margin left for debt service and capital improvements down 50 per cent to just 2.7 per cent of dues income.

Numerous boards and managers trying to balance budgets tell the story in other ways: unfilled membership rosters, fewer catered private and business parties, more past due accounts, delays in buying new equipment or renovating the clubhouse, and so on. The above clubs represent the nation's elite,

with the richest memberships, finest golf courses and highest paid staffs. But they aren't necessarily typical. It is hard to define the typical or average club today.

For example, of 4,719 private clubs listed at the end of 1971, only 2,585 had 18 holes or more. The remaining 2,134 were nine-hole clubs, mostly with memberships from 100 to 250, in small towns. Many have problems, but rarely the same type or magnitude as their big city cousins. From this broad-based industry it is easy to find isolated cases and statistics to build a negative case. Such an example was a recent article in a national business weekly. It recited the familiar list of problems that supposedly will push country clubs out of business: skyrocketing property taxes, special excise taxes, loss of non-profit status, discrimination against women and minorities, loss of members from local economic problems, lack of interest in clubs among junior adults, resistance to increased dues and fees, shortage of good managers and personnel, and higher labor costs.

The National Golf Foundation, keeping watch on the statistics and industry trends, sees only a temporary crisis within the larger future of golf. "It has often been said that from things evil there always comes some good," Don Rossi, NGF executive director says. "All around the country, people are beginning to talk about the ecological importance of a golf course. People are becoming aware that a golf course has an economic impact on the community.

"Clubs pay taxes, employ a number of people, buy goods and services from their community and by their very existence enhance the property values of the area. No one can deny that when we lose a golf course to a real estate development, the community suffers.

"Clubs are now looking more closely at their operational costs and programs with a view of bringing their costs into proper focus,"

Rossi says. "These problems have united many organizations to work for their mutual benefit in meeting this crisis."

Through NGF, Club Managers Assn. of America and the National Club Assn., there is no lack of knowledge to help clubs do better. Some popular solutions to common problems have included:

- An annual membership drive, with a temporary low cost initiation fee, and/or a contest among regular members to find new ones;

- Improved communications and promotion of club activities via a lively newsletter, special mailings, posters and an active social committee for people who care;

- Hiring a manager experienced in promotion, administration and budget abilities, not just cuisine, and giving him the authority to be a real executive;

- Simplifying food, beverage and indoor services, which means fresher foods served buffet style with less staff;

- Taking competitive bids, or cooperative purchasing of clubhouse and golf course supplies with other clubs;

- Encouraging full use of the clubhouse during slack periods by seeking outside parties, weddings, style shows, service club luncheons and political dinners;

- Expanding the membership base by offering lower cost, restrictive memberships, such as social only, swimming, tennis, weekday golf only, junior families under age 30 or 35.

Every club could be a better club. It takes perception of what people want, and better management to give it to them.

Three clubs in the Denver area—each different yet modern and family oriented—are examples of matching programs to meet the market.

Meadow Hills CC's membership peaked at 345, but ran out of prospects, despite an excellent 18-hole golf course, adequate clubhouse, swimming pool and good location.

continued on page 56

THE SNOW COMPANY announces the addition of an eight hp Power-Kart, for grounds maintenance and a multitude of other utility uses, to its line of three-wheeled pleasure vehicles. Equipped with a unique variable speed, torque amplifier drive, the Power-Kart has seating for two people; hauls up to 350 pounds in its all-steel 23 inch by 46 inch by 8 inch box with tail gate; and can be used for towing. The unit is ruggedly built with a spring-loaded front fork suspension and a seat spring to take the shocks of rough terrain.

Circle No. 101 on reader service card



RAM GOLF CORP. has a big 11-inch round golf bag. It is the same type of bag used by their touring golf professionals and features a sturdy double steel ring construction at the top plus a steel cuff ring at the bottom. Four full-length steel upright stays give this golf bag body shape retention.

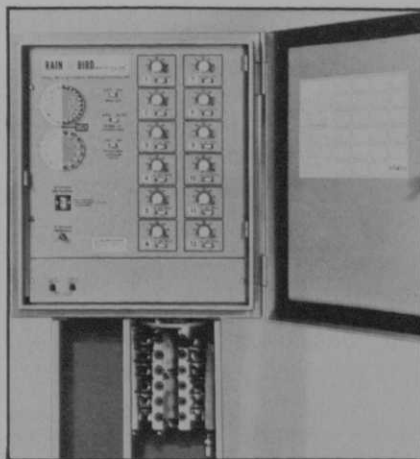


RAIN BIRD SPRINKLER MFG. CORP. presents new Hydraulic Control



Modules to operate normally open hydraulic control valves. They are designed to be used in conjunction with Rain Bird Models RC-12, RC-18, RC-23, controllers or SC-12, SC-18 satellite controls units. Mounted directly into standard turf pedestal, they can be removed easily for maintenance. Special feature allows individual operation of hydraulic remote control valves. Three-way electric solenoid actuators eliminate moving rotary valve parts, which are subject to wear and leakage. All major parts are made of brass and stainless steel construction.

Circle No. 103 on reader service card



TURF-VAC announces a new tractor-drawn turf and pavement sweeper, designed for maximum sweeping efficiency and fast unloading. The Model FM-5 Lift Dump, the new sweeper, provides a full five-foot sweep and can dump directly into trash bins, trucks, over retaining walls or on top of compost heaps. The hydraulic lift system raises the entire hopper, tilts the hopper for maximum dumping efficiency, and opens and closes the hopper door. It operates without brushes, rakes or other mechanical pick-up devices to efficiently pick up grass clippings, leaves, verti-cut debris,

papers, cans and litter. This all vacuum feature eliminates brush and bearing replacement costs and allows the machine to be used effectively on turf and paved, wet and dry surfaces.

Circle No. 104 on reader service card



DIGMOR EQUIPMENT AND ENGINEERING COMPANY, INC., introduces a new belly-mounted grader blade that has full hydraulic control for raising, lowering, tilting and angling. Designed to fit most wheel-type tractors, the Deeco grade blade is practical for grading, snow removal, land leveling, terracing and maintenance work. The blade mounts on tractors with loaders and will not conflict with a three-point hitch. The blade and carriage provide enough clearance for normal tractor and loader operations and can be removed by pulling six pins.

Circle No. 105 on reader service card



ROYER FOUNDRY & MACHINE COMPANY announces the development of a new chipper for small commercial operations, which disposes of brush, limbs, branches and trimmings and features a new design concept that makes for a quieter operation. It is available in both powered and power take-off models and is recommended for use by golf courses. It utilizes a design that incorporates a rotating anvil with a disk-type chipping rotor and blower.

Circle No. 106 on reader service card

HIGH COST *from page 54*

Too small a membership and a big debt were the cause of increased assessments in the early 1960s. Many members wouldn't pay and dropped out. By 1964, faced with disaster, the board decided to try a semi-private operation. They offered associate playing memberships at \$25 annually plus green fees to the general public. Denver area golfers, short of public courses, gobbled it up.

In short, the new concept saved the club. By the late 1960s, up to 2,000 associate memberships per season were being sold. Course play reached 60,000 rounds annually, with green fee income over \$100,000. Finally a limit of 800 memberships at \$50 was set in 1971, and play dropped to about 50,000 rounds.

The 107 proprietary members keep the privilege of favorite week-end starting times. But only 20 are regular golfers. Associate members may play any day, reserve almost any starting time, rent lockers, eat and drink in the clubhouse and buy from the pro shop.

Women may buy separate \$50 associate memberships, or pay just \$15 plus green fees if their husbands belong. About 75 associate women members have the golf course to themselves Tuesday mornings.

Separate single or family swimming memberships are available, too, for one annual fee. The ownership is now considering adding tennis courts for that interest group.

A board of 15 proprietary members with staggered terms makes the policy. A club manager-controller, golf professional and superintendent form the operating team. The dining room and bar operation is leased out, paying back 12 per cent of the gross to the club.

At Heather Ridge, a 27-hole golf course is flanked by 135 apartment houses on 320 acres. This total recreational community has indoor and outdoor tennis and swimming and a 25,000-square-foot clubhouse opened last summer. The first nine holes opened last year, and the second nine are slated to open this season. An executive nine

also will open in 1973. Right now a variety of annual memberships—\$300 per couple for golf, tennis, clubhouse, social—are open to anyone. But, as the 4,000 apartments rise and fill, non-residents will be dropped based on least seniority. By 1978 or earlier, only residents will be members.

A proven formula in non-equity clubs has been demonstrated by Pinehurst CC in Denver (See *GOLFDOM*, September, 1971.) A family-based corporation developed and owns the land and the clubhouse facility. For about 1,800 members there is a 27-hole golf course, 60,000-square-foot clubhouse, pool and tennis courts and a diversified activity schedule. Initiation fee (\$1,200 for golf, \$300 social) and dues (\$38.50 per month golf, \$16 social) are the lowest among Denver's eight major clubs.

The "secret" of Pinehurst's success is simple: First-class facilities, activities for everyone and professional management for, not by, the membership.

Pinehurst CC general manager L.T. Hall is a former national

continued on page 60



Certain-teed makes the 2nd best irrigation system you can get.

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MANAGERS SHOULD PREPARE FOR MORE NATION-WIDE BOYCOTTS

NEW YORK—Club managers should prepare for repeats of the April 1st consumer boycott of meats.

Many consumers, according to the New York Times and NBC Nightly news are adamant in their intention to continue to boycott meat.

And organizers of the nationwide boycott are urging shoppers to avoid eating meat twice a week—on Tuesdays and Thursdays—until prices come down.

Club managers should include attractive alternatives to these costly items in their menu planning and buying policies.

The initial boycott was a consumer reaction to sharply higher food prices that drove the February Consumer Price Index to the highest one-month increase in 22 years.

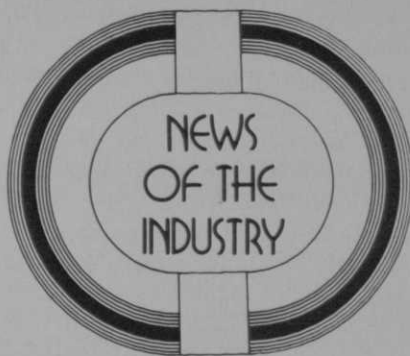
The .8 percent over-all February increase, which represented the largest one month hike since the Korean War inflation of February, 1951, include restaurant prices.

The increase for meat, poultry, and fish was up 5 per cent; meat alone was up 5.4 per cent.

Congress and organized labor reacted angrily to this recent report of further inflation, particularly to the higher food prices. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, one third of the February consumer price index increase was due to soaring meat, poultry and fish prices.

Combined statistics for the last two months were even more dramatic than February alone, showing the sharpest 60-day rise on record.

The New York Times stated that all indications show that the likelihood of further Federal price controls is remote. Suggestions are emanating from many Government officials for consumers to substitute cheaper protein dishes for meat in order to cope with the food price spiral, and consumers seem to have taken the lead, despite the Nixon Administration's ceiling on meat prices, which tended to outrage consumers, because they viewed it as a tacit approval of the inflationary trends of most foods.



NGF ANNOUNCES TWO BOOKS

CHICAGO—The National Golf Foundation announces the availability of two publications.

"Planning and Conducting Competitive Golf Events" is a revised edition, expanded to offer specific procedures for organizing and conducting all types of golf competition for all ages. Sections include basic information, major to tournament procedure, club level tournament planning, information all tournament chairmen should know, and types of tournaments, tournament golf for business meetings or conventions and suggested references.

"Planning and Conducting Junior Golf Programs" is designed to motivate and guide golf courses, recreation departments and schools to action. It first answers: "How can we get a junior program started in our community, at our club, or in our schools?"; then, "How can we build upon this program to satisfy the needs of all our juniors?" The book is authored by the PGA's education director Gary Wiren. Sections include the concept of junior golf, school and recreation programs, a junior program at an individual course, a junior program at area or district junior golf associations.

NEW MAILING ADDRESS OF GCSAA

The new mailing address of the Golf Course Superintendents Assn. of America is 1617 St. Andrew Drive, Lawrence, Kan. 66044. Any subscriptions for Nick Geanopulos or "The Golf Superintendent" will remain at the old address, 3158 Des Plaines Ave., Des Plaines, Ill. 60018, until further notice from the association.

46 PER CENT PROFIT JUMP FOR VICTOR COMPTOMETER

CHICAGO—Sales of Victor Comptometer Corp. reached a record high in 1972, and earnings were markedly improved over 1971, according to the company.

Sales for the year amounted to \$205,927,713 compared with last year's \$165,931,387. Profits before an extraordinary charge were \$5,167,516 or 89 cents versus \$2,937,384 or 48 cents a share before a special charge in 1971. Results for both years include the operations of the Nissen Corp., which was acquired in October, 1972.

Last November, Victor announced the sale of its Computer division and had stated that the sale of the division would result in a non-recurring loss of 35 cents per share in addition to the operating losses of the Division.

RAIN BIRD CATALOG TELLS ALL

GLENDORA, CALIF.—The 1973 catalog of irrigation equipment has just been released by Rain Bird. This fully illustrated product catalog presents a complete and comprehensive description of the entire Rain Bird line of controllers, valves, sprinklers, accessories and hoses. The appendix provides a ready source of wire sizing procedures and reference charts. Copies are available by writing Rain Bird at 7045 North Grand Avenue.

AQUA PIPE TO DISTRIBUTE AQUA-DIAL

NEWPORT BEACH, CALIF.—Aqua-Dial announces the appointment of Aqua Pipe and Supply, Inc., as the exclusive distributor for its turf irrigation products in the counties of Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside and San Bernadino. According to an Aqua-Dial spokesman, "This new company's president, Al Lastuck, offers more than 26 years of turf irrigation systems expertise. The application of this technical knowledge, combined with a comprehensive inventory of Aqua-Dial and other related sprinkler products, will prove to be an asset to all phases of the sprinkler industry."

GRAU from page 15

In our spray tank we mix these three materials and make five applications a year. We have a long growing season.

Rates to 1,000 square feet)

Each application Total for year
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(1.52 pounds N) 7.6 pounds N

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(1 pound K)

5.0 pounds K

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hydrated lime

This program is flexible to meeting changing conditions. Results

are excellent. Note that we use no phosphorus. We are holding down Poa annua. Now for the questions. How soon do you think we will be able to apply phosphorus. How can we tell when we need it? Maryland)

A—Your best friend is the Maryland Soil Testing Service. Take samples annually, preferably at the same time of the year (such as Labor Day). When P levels drop to a V low point, run a few test strips using 20 per cent superphosphate and observe the results. If P is limiting, there will be a marked response. The rate? Five pounds to 1,000 square feet. □

EMERSON from page 11

OSHA regulations on the subject currently under study by various *ad hoc* committees of Government and industry. Some would require new testing procedures for all new chemicals and pesticides, others establish standards for the mixing and application of pesticides, and still others would outlaw the use of all residual pesticides and fungicides and insecticides.

ECONOMIC STABILIZATION: Clubs are, of course, still covered under Phase II of the Cost of Living Council regulations as far as their food and beverage operations are concerned. Some changes, however, could be brought about by any of several bills designed to amend the act. Of those bills that call for amending the act, HR 6168 (Patman, D-Tex.) is the most controversial. An already emotional issue was further aggravated when the Annunzio amendment to roll back prices to May 1, 1972, was made—and passed—only to be replaced by an roll back to January 10, 1973, the next day.

LAND USE POLICY: An area that originally appeared to have little impact on golf clubs now has begun to sprout both possibilities and dangers. S 296 (Jackson, D-Wash.) calls for Federal funding to states to develop plans for private land use. Favorable aspects of the bill are the prospects of securing a special tax classification for environmentally advantageous recreational land (golf courses). The dangers lie in the possibility of the seizure of golf courses by the state through eminent domain.

METRIC SYSTEM: Another area that seemingly had little impact on the golf course, until one considers the problems of converting the distances on thousands of golf courses from yards to meters, cup cutters from inches to centimeters, steaks and clubheads from ounces to grams, to say nothing of the measurements of liquids, alcoholic and otherwise by the bottle and by the glass.

These are only six of the 20-odd pieces of legislation that are likely to have at least some impact on golf clubs during the current session of Congress. Have you checked on your state legislature recently? □

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**PREVENTION
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Best results have been obtained with CLEARY'S 3336 when it has been applied as a fungistat - before disease occurs. Weekly sprays on greens through the disease incidence season has resulted in disease-free greens with superior color. Many golf course superintendents have reported excellent disease control on fairways with applications at 3 to 4 week intervals with as little as one ounce per 1,000 sq. feet.

Check with your distributor or write for the nearest available source from W. A. CLEARY CORPORATION, 1049 Somerset St., P.O. Box 10, Somerset, New Jersey 08873 or Telephone 201-247-8000.

Cleary's 3336 turf fungicide is a non-toxic, non-mercurial product.
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CLUB EXEMPT? *from page 50*

tion that most women are unable or unwilling to do a certain job; preferences of co-workers or customers; traditional restrictions for jobs involving heavy physical labor and the fact that physical facilities are not available for both sexes.

Although the above guidelines should forestall any potential problems under Title VII, the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission makes several other recommendations that they feel are implied in Title VII. Their basic premise is this: Because whites predominate in today's work force, they have an inherent advantage in learning about job openings. To equalize this advantage, the commission believes employers should take positive steps to establish contacts in the black community, which can be used to disseminate information about job openings, advertise job openings in minority news media and send information about job openings to schools with large minority group enrollment. In addition, the EEOC notes that some minority group persons have difficulty in adjusting to their jobs and that special efforts should be made to counsel them on their problems.

For the club today, the first consideration under Title VII requirements is to determine whether the club comes within the exemption. If it does not, then the club should review its hiring and employment practices to ensure that there are no procedures that could be pointed to as discriminatory. □



JACK JANETATOS is the legal counsel for the National Club Assn. and is a partner in the Washington, D.C., law firm of Baker & McKenzie.

ASSISTANT *from page 40*

to train men for this work. The Green Section wishes to start a movement to correct this condition."

Fifty years later those of us with practical and academic backgrounds continue to give these young men the opportunity to prepare for a sound future as golf course superintendents.

Such an attitude on our part is justified because, we, the practical men in turf management, believe as Dr. Troll and Dr. Duich do. Troll's expression on the seasoning of young men following two years in the classroom is very explicit. Again, from his presentation at the conference, "We do not claim to turn out experienced golf course superintendents, but we do graduate people who will be well qualified as superintendents after a period of seasoning in the field."

This is what it is all about, Mr. Sommers.

With costs increasing for just about everything, including the high cost of maintenance labor, materials and equipment, we can only hope that quality will remain our byword—even though we in the turf field have to adjust to the changes being thrust upon us in the name of economy, efficiency and environmental necessity.

Adequate provisions for an interested and reliable maintenance staff must remain a high priority if the quality of golf course maintenance is to survive the "change" decades. Proper encouragement to both turf management trainees and qualified assistant golf course superintendents are a necessary part of this picture, a mutual responsibility to be shared by progressive superintendents and clubs. To those club officials who are looking to apply Ben Franklin's adage, "A penny saved is a penny earned," there is this rejoinder: Penny-pinching has never proved to be the true road to turf quality. Quality is a highly desirable facet in all things in life. The satisfaction and justifiable pride of the golfer and the professional image of the superintendent is totally dependent on quality. Let us continue this quest together. □

HIGH COST *from page 56*

president of the CMAA. He views the current negative publicity about the club industry as unproductive. "Clubs have always faced problems," Hall says, "but there is no overwhelming problem we can't overcome with positive action. We have to look at the situation as a challenge and opportunity, not as the end."

"I think some clubs and managers are spending too much time reading adverse stories, instead of taking action to solve their problems. The successful clubs are those that keep up with the times. There is more to this business than just food and beverage."

Another leader among club managers is John Simmons, Tacoma (Wash.) G&CC and a secretary treasury of the CMAA.

"Clubs have much to offer in an increasingly complex and mobile society," Simmon says. "The potential demand is greater than ever before. 'There will be changes—some of them perhaps traumatic. We must seek to affect this change through conscious design rather than have it occur through the force of circumstances. It calls for exhaustive analysis, perceptive foresight and a determination to answer honestly the question, 'What business is our club in?'"

That is the key question that should be asked and answered within every club regularly. Because, after all, a club exists primarily to serve its members. It must also be a citizen of the community. Old ideas die hard, but those clubs with leadership willing to change will survive and prosper. □



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