

DEMAND FOR COURSES EXCEEDS THE SUPPLY

*Construction
An Enormous
Project*

NEW golfers are pouring into golf, creating a constant demand for new courses which for years to come will far outweigh the supply.

Golf course architects and construction firms are assured of perpetual work in the immediate and even distant future, and they are working wholeheartedly to try and cope with the demand.

The Annual Report on Golf Course Development put out by National Golf Foundation, Inc., states that more new courses have been opened for play in 1956 than in any similar period since 1931.

If these completed courses are added to those currently under construction, the total of 612 reaches an all time high by as much as 100 over the previous figure.

Even the boom in short course development is being maintained, the number scheduled or under construction being half as many again as the 175 already in existence.

At the turn of the century there were only 982 courses in the United States. By 1923 that number had been doubled.

The steady increase reached its peak in 1934 when the total climbed to 5,727, but then the depression years took their toll of over 500, and just when the graph was beginning to climb once more, the war intervened.

When the country's golfers returned seriously to the game, 900 of its courses had gone by the board.

In the past decade more than half that number has been replaced. But it is a slow process.

A golf course from its actual conception to its opening day goes through approximately three years of incubation.

The average golfer is apt to take his course completely for granted. Only occasional founder members can remember what the terrain looked like before the course existed and appreciate the foresightedness and artistry of the architect in converting the raw material.

But before the architect is even called in it may take months before committees decide on which of alternative sites, if they are lucky enough to have a choice, provides the best value for money, and the land is acquired.

The architect has many headaches to overcome even on a relatively flat area.

Armed with maps of the property, topographical maps and aerial surveys, he has to try and incorporate as many of the accepted good features as is compatible with the material at his disposal.

If it is essential that the clubhouse be at one end of a long narrow rectangle, then it may not be possible to include two loops of nine.

The area may have one or two natural features which determine the layout of certain holes. The rest of the course may have to be juggled around these permanencies. It is a fascinating jig-saw that has many alternative routes to the final solution.

It is only when the construction work gets underway that the pioneers can really begin to feel that their venture has been worthwhile as the blueprint is slowly transformed into tangible and practical form.

The work of the construction firm varies according to the terrain. Land that needs heavy drainage and felling and cropping of many trees will naturally take longer to complete than the rolling, sandy linksland that is found around the shores of Britain.

The accompanying pictures of construc-

tion work on three different types of courses may convey a clearer idea of what an architect starts out to achieve.

Of the course at Gatlinburg, Tenn., the designer, William B. Langford, of Chicago, says:

"I have designed what I believe is the most unusual golf course in the world at the foot of the Great Smokies. It certainly is the strangest one I have had to create in my over forty years of golf course architecture.

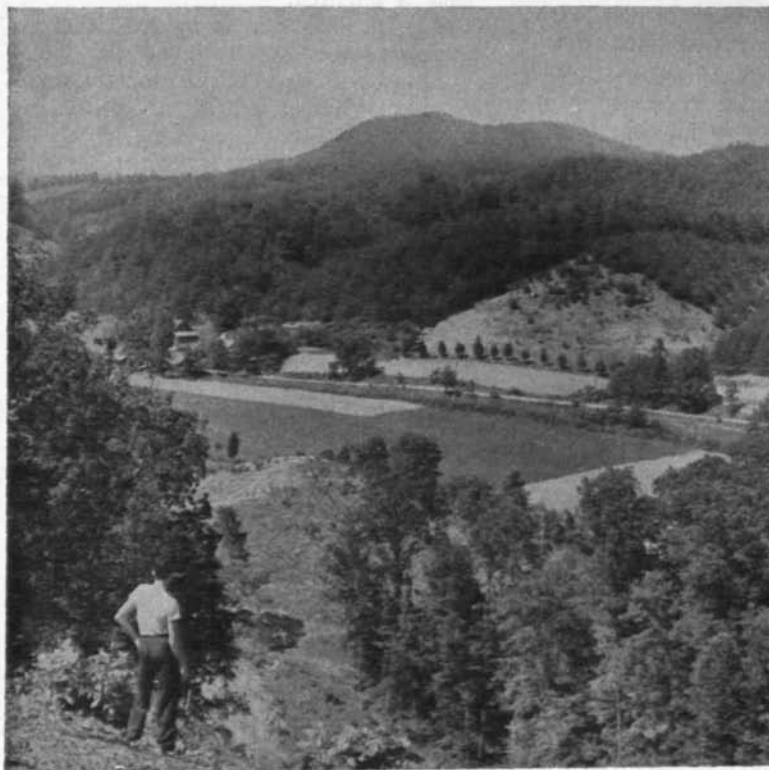
"The tee shot on the first hole drops 100 feet at the 240 yard mark. The tenth hole goes down hill 90 feet in 470 yards. An underpass was necessary between the ninth green and the tenth tee to avoid an irksome climb. The eleventh hole in 540 yards climbs 110 feet and the twelfth hole drops 170 yards in 150 yards.

"Fatigue in playing the course is occasioned principally by climbs from green to tee which can be ameliorated by ski lifts."

William F. Gordon of Bala-Cynwyd, Pa., was responsible for the 36-hole layout at the Dupont Country Club, Newark, Del. Here we show two excellent illustrations of the initial clearing through a forest which finally resulted in the 14th hole on the Louviers course. It seems beyond the comprehension of the layman that a particular hole—or indeed a course—could be envisaged from a forest of trees.

Robert Trent Jones of New York, occasioned work of a different nature when he decided to build a green jutting out into the ocean at the new Eleuthera course in the Bahamas and sent amphibious bulldozers into the Caribbean.

COURSES ARE CARVED FROM MOUNTAINS AND FORESTS



From twelfth tee to green at the Gatlinburg course, in Tennessee, at the foot of the Great Smoky Mountains. This hole has a drop of 170 feet in 150 yards.



The two pictures above show the initial clearing through a forest which finally resulted in the 14th hole on the Louviers Country Club, in Delaware.

CONSTRUCTION WORK IN THE CARIBBEAN



Bulldozers take to the water when it comes to grading a green in the ocean. The course in question is on Eleuthera, in the Bahamas, designed by Robert Trent Jones.

TREES



The fourteenth hole on the Louviers course, Dupont "before" and "after." A fine example of ingenuity.

In the picture above the bulldozers are shaping the beach to allow the water to engulf the green, the banks of which have already been graded.

The site was a natural, with a neck of land jutting out into the water and surrounded on three sides.

The hole which Jones has designed is a real tiger of 600 yards from the back tee, 480 yards from the women's tee. It is a dog-leg to the right with ample fairway for the faint-hearted to play safe but allowing the more ambitious player to carry across the water with his approach.

Typical of the master hand, it comes at a point, the sixth, where any self-respecting player should have played himself in and have run out of alibis.

Golf courses are one commodity which can not be mass produced. You would not like to play them if they were. So next time you have a slow round, or have to rise to get a round when the hands of the clock have not yet had time to stretch themselves, spare a thought for the tremendous project that made your round possible and count your blessings.