

the effect undoubtedly will be to clear the way for the 18-hole course by making an impression upon the minds of the members of the Park Board.

It is my ambition to see the movement grow (and it is rapidly growing) to the end that every town of 2,500 or more population in the State of Illinois can boast of its municipal golf course.

Golf is unquestionably destined to be the national game of America, and if the friends of the movement will organize in their respective communities they can secure favorable action from park boards, city councils, and other governmental agencies.

ROBERT W. MCKINLAY,

President, Cook County Municipal Golf Association.

Much enthusiasm can always be aroused by exhibition matches, and leading players throughout the country are always glad to help along the growth of the game of golf by lending their services. Especially in smaller communities is this method of value in stimulating interest, and a large number of converts to the game generally results.

The United States Golf Association Executive Committee hopes that the organization of a national municipal association under its jurisdiction will not be long delayed, but until such time as smaller units are formed and functioning, it does not seem feasible to proceed with the project of an all-inclusive association. With municipal golf proceeding as rapidly as it is at present, however, the day of such a national organization does not seem far away.

The Emphatic Need of Public Golf ¹

SYLVANUS PIERSON JERMAIN

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Every city or community planning a movement for public golf should first make a comprehensive survey of all possible golf course sites in its public parks. If there be a Forest Preserve Commission, or if the county commissioners have under their control tracts of available and suitable land, these should be included in such survey and its specific report. Having determined these facts, a definite "starting base" and "talking point" is established. Generally speaking, any such movement will occur in a city district having a number of (or possibly many) country clubs. From these a local committee should be formed, of public-spirited men, to take the matter actively in hand. What golf has done for them it will do for "the other fellow."

If a district golf association exists, a public golf committee from its organization is very effective. These committees may find that none of the public officials ever played golf and hence it does not appeal to them. It may even have their active hostility. They need to be converted to the idea by being introduced to, and converted to the game itself. A visit to any of the country clubs and an afternoon or two upon the beautiful courses will prove a revelation and delight to them. It will open to them a new life of the best kind of happiness. It will bring a return of their boyhood days. To many it will be a genuine emancipation and rebirth of youth. In no other way can anyone really understand the appeal of golf, its real meaning and need in a mature man's life. This

¹ Reprinted from "Golf Illustrated."

“missionary work” is therefore very fruitful in results highly to the benefit of the public. It leads directly to official action. In many communities the commissioners referred to have all necessary legal powers to set aside such specific park sites or public lands for golf courses—also to supply the funds for construction and maintenance. Ordinarily no elaborate legislation or ordinances are necessary. The official approval of a brief resolution “to establish a public golf course” in any park designated, is sufficient. No matter where the public authority is vested, it is also necessary, early in the propaganda, to make clear to the public mind that the establishing of playgrounds of that character is one of the best expressions of democracy.

Many of our American cities are wisely giving heed to the demand for public golf. It makes a common privilege of an otherwise especial privilege. It is a wisely established “social safety valve” and reaches deep into fundamental things concerning equality of opportunity. It “gives the lie direct” to the demagogue when he yelps that “golf is a rich man’s game.” It absolutely removes one of the sharpest contrasts that create social discontent and turmoil.

In the local educational work the press is a powerful ally. All over the country, newspaper men are playing golf in ever increasing numbers. This is because of the golf courses in the parks. They are its ardent and able champions. The editorial rooms of all of our Toledo papers have their golf teams and annual team championships. A “call” to them at any time will bring convincing messages of help. As to the amount of money needed, that cannot be determined definitely at first. The beginning can be a modest one—a nine-hole course with very little bunkering. In most city parks considerable open spaces will be found. In others sparse growths of underbush can be cheaply cleared away. In these cases the cost of laying out the course will be comparatively small. Conditions vary so much in different locations that no “hard and fast rule” of either cost or maintenance can be laid down at first. Experience, however, has proven so many times that whatever a public golf course costs it is worth it many times over. That is the acid test of anything. To give public golf a first foothold in any community is therefore the thing of vital importance. All that depends upon the initial support won over to it. If such support justifies the building of an eighteen-hole course “right off the bat,” do it by all means. Each community can alone judge best the local situation. No community should begin with the policy of “revenue producing” or “profit earning” golf. It has led to even the existence of wringing a large profit from the public golfer. It has resulted in that being exploited by the authorities as an official achievement, whereas it was a conspicuous failure in the true science of government. It should always be borne in mind that “it is not how much a city expends upon its public works or its public service, but whether it is wisely spent and so as to produce continuously satisfactory results in the conditions of the people.” In this their health and happiness are major factors and public golf is one of the chief promoters of them both. Naturally enough, some of those who start a public golf course movement think it necessary to say to the authorities “if you will build the course it will be self-sustaining by means of the fees you can collect.” This has led in many quarters, to the idea that public golf cannot be in-

augurated in any other way. In the final analysis this is "getting away to the wrong kind of start."

Mature consideration and experience will therefore reveal that it is a fundamental error to make a charge for the playing of any game ordinarily suitable in a public park. If any one game is selected for such charge and the rest are free, that is discrimination. If they are all included the basic freedom of the parks, in their various recreational activities, is lost. They become places of special privileges as a fee is exacted for their use and enjoyment, and those who either cannot or do not pay are excluded from such use or enjoyment. Individual permits should be required and registration, but without charge. Thus the play can be systematically and strictly regulated and the rules more readily enforced. Properly handled this can always be done. It often happens where an individual has paid for such a privilege he selfishly takes more liberty with the rules and rights of others than if the permit were free. Paying for a permit does not necessarily make a player more orderly in his conduct. The governing of the game under a free permit can always be made thoroughly effective by the authorities. As a matter of fact, a public official has a far more drastic power in controlling the conduct of a player upon a public golf course by punishing him for wilful infraction of rules and the rights of others, than any official in a country club has or ever can have. He can arrest such an offender.

To thousands of people these games are the entire reason for going to the parks. The playground activities of our parks have a tremendous power for the health and happiness of the rank and file of the people. If the public golf courses or the tennis courts or the baseball diamonds are inadequate, then more should be provided. To any city with its accumulated wealth, both municipally and individually, adequate playground facilities, of all kinds, should be no problem at all.

Public golf is the pioneer publicly played game, from the free land or park standpoint. It had its birth upon the community lands of Scotland—the free lands along the ocean-side—and among the very first public parks. Its annals are replete with all that is best in the democratic and common fellowship of man. It appeals very powerfully to me that our American cities, and especially those in leadership, should see to it that they do not fall short. The absolutely free opportunity to play golf in our beautiful parks marshals the most inspiring pageant of public recreation. One afternoon at any tee upon a popular public course of any American city, "watching the parade go by," is a revelation. I sincerely hope that a nation-wide movement may be inaugurated for free public golf. It is the grand old game's time honored heritage which we are in honor bound to realize and to fulfill.

Professional Golfers' Register.—A register of professional golfers is maintained by the Professional Golfers' Association. Clubs desiring the services of a competent professional are invited to make their wants known to the Secretary, Professional Golfers' Association, 366 Fifth Avenue, New York, N. Y.

BACK NUMBERS OF THE BULLETIN

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