

Mayfair, July

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WHAT PRICE GOLF?

BY RALPH H. REVILLE

THE assertion is made that three hundred golf clubs in the New York Metropolitan district today represent a \$1,000,000,000 investment. A lot of money, certainly . . . but has the compiler been "pulling the long bow?" Personally I do not think he has. For one thing, land values in the New York area are not rated at \$100 per acre. No, not by a long shot! There are golf properties within thirty miles of New York City valued at \$2,000,000 to \$3,000,000. Possibly more!

A conservative average for the Metropolitan club properties, with their equipment, would be \$300,000. With more than 300 clubs, you have your billion dollar estimate.

This New York statistician goes into figures in regard to playing the royal and ancient game . . . as viewed from the Wall Street angle. He figures that following an election to a super New York Golf Club—every year becoming increasingly difficult—with entrance fees, membership fees, and the necessary accessories in clubs and plus fours, a man about to take up with golf will be lucky to step out upon the first tee, for the first time, with an initial expenditure under \$2,200.

So much for Gotham. How about Canada?

CONDITIONS, here, are not to be compared with those in New York, Chicago, Philadelphia . . . and possibly Los Angeles and Detroit. But there is no question that, nowadays, in the larger Canadian centres golf has become the game for the well-to-do.

Montreal, Toronto and some of the larger cities, following the United States example have created expensive courses and expensive club houses. These involve a heavy annual outlay. Gone is the day of small fees, small entrance fees, or no entrance fee!

It is a fact—incredible, but no less true!—that thirty years ago the annual membership of golf clubs in Canada ranged from two to five dollars. Rarely more! Today all is changed. Fees in the larger clubs now range from \$75 to \$100.

But that is not all. A share of stock and an entrance fee are now generally required from a member-elect. These vary greatly in value and price. A share costs from \$100 to \$400 . . . even more. One Montreal club has an entrance fee of \$650. One club in Ontario, at Windsor, enacts a \$1,000 fee.

Generally speaking, shares of clubs are issued at \$100. Entrance fees are also \$100. These figures apply to 18-hole courses. Clubs with 9-hole courses do not charge such amounts either for shares or entrance fees nor do they require to impose annual fees exceeding \$30 or so. By experience, it has been found that it is impossible successfully to conduct an 18-hole

course in a city with less than a \$65 fee for men and a \$30 minimum fee for women. A 9-hole course cuts the figures in half. In smaller places, where land values are not high and labor cheaper, a club can be conducted successfully on more moderate figures. There are clubs in Canada still functioning on \$10 membership fees. But it is a struggle.

THERE is another phase of membership, which has only of recent years made its appearance in one or two of the larger cities in Canada. Granted that you are over 45 years of age, and granted, too, that you have the wherewithal and do not want to be bothered by paying your golf fees annually, then the opportunity is presented in a life membership. In one Montreal club this can be acquired by the payment of \$4,000; in a Toronto club for \$2,500.

An item of expense which has made its appearance only of recent years on Canadian courses is that money-making and money-taking device known as the green fee. It is not so long ago that a club member had the privilege of putting up a visitor at his club for two weeks without charge. Not so today. The smallest club now enacts a fee for the privilege of playing the course of one dollar per day, while the fees at the larger clubs have gone up to \$2.00 and \$3.00. The green charge has developed into an important source of revenue. One club in Victoria, B.C., annually collects from \$12,000 to \$13,000 in green fees. Green fees are "velvet"—they do not entail extra expenditure on the course. They are therefore, clear profit.

Following along the lines of the New York idea to some extent, in Toronto and vicinity there are listed in all twenty-eight golf clubs. There is no question that several of these clubs have properties which are worth \$500,000, or more. Shall we average them at \$200,000? Then we have a total of nearly \$6,000,000 invested in golf properties in Toronto alone. Montreal with nineteen clubs and with several magnificent club houses and courses can be put in the \$5,000,000 column and "then some." Winnipeg, the golfiest city in America, per caput, also claims nineteen clubs, many of them very fine properties. It is doubtful if a marked cheque for \$5,000,000 would tempt the golfers of the 'Peg to part with their properties.

VANCOUVER has eight golf clubs, Calgary 6, Ottawa 6, Victoria 5, Hamilton 5, Edmonton 4, Windsor 4 while several cities have three clubs—all boasting valuable 18-hole courses and club houses. In all from coast to coast in Canada there are more than six hundred clubs with yearly revenues ranging from a few hundred dollars to one hundred thousand dollars. It is a conservative estimate that [See also page 70]

With more than 600 golf clubs in Canada at the commencement of this year, new and ultra golf properties continue to be developed. At right: the new club house of the Royal York Golf Club, on the environs of Toronto, which was formally opened on May 19, by George S. Lyon, the grand old senior among Canadian golfers



Mrs. Howard handles her . . . the sensitive . . . inherited from . . . brated father . . . Hofmann, . . . pianist is . . . ous. His . . . Josefa . . . Howard . . . of King . . . Christmas . . . here . . . through the . . . sand . . . forest . . . drag . . . This . . . setting . . . Hofmann . . . bride . . . married . . .

EMANSHIL

