

Legislators Dun Firms for Prizes

By Jack Anderson

Rep. Burt Talcott (R-Calif.), the dapper sportsman from Salinas, is fond of lecturing his fellow Congressmen on the rules of dress and decorum he thinks should be observed on the House floor.

Yet he didn't mind violating the rules of decorum to wangle prizes and trophies for the First Annual Congressional Golf Tournament last September. As chairman of the outdoor frolic, he helped put the squeeze on Washington's lobbyists for a cornucopia of valuable gifts.

Talcott wasn't deterred at first by warnings that we might find out about the flood of sports equipment, TV sets, windbreakers, gift certificates and shiny merchandise that the lobbyists were donating. Rep. John Hunt (R-N.J.), even warned in a personal memo to Talcott that playing the tournament in Washington might be "too risky. Remember Anderson."

We apologize for taking so long to dig out the details. We have now learned, however, that gifts poured in for the congressional golfers from the industries they are supposed to oversee — Abbott Labs, American Can, Celanese, Fairchild Industries, General Tire, Goodrich, Goodyear, Gulf Oil, Humble Oil, Japan Air Lines, Lockheed, Magnavox, Marriott Hotels, Northrop, Northwest Orient, Olin, Ralston Purina, Raytheon, Squibb and Uniproyal.

Generous gifts were also donated by trade organizations representing the textile makers, chicken raisers, cattlemen and broadcasters. Even American-Standard in New York provided two gaily decorated toilet seats for some deserving Congressman.

Couldn't Refuse

Talcott left it largely to his prize chairman, Rep. Roger Zion (R-Ind.), to collect the boodle. The amiable Zion mailed out a letter to some 200 lobbyists, soliciting prizes in language they couldn't refuse.

"You have a great opportunity to promote your product (or industry) to your elected representatives," wrote Zion on official House stationery. He told the lobbyists that he hoped each of the 80 or 90 congressional duffers would "come home with a prize or two. . . . Would you please find some suitable prize (or prizes) . . . and send same to me at the above address"

Zion's office filled up with so many fancy prizes that Talcott began to get uneasy. Quietly, he called potential donors to urge them not to give any more and apologized to more scrupulous Congressmen about the Zion letter.

Still, the gifts gushed in. Rep. William Dickinson (R-Ala.), wrung 11 windbreakers from the Russell Company. Sen. Paul Fannin (R-Ariz.), notified Talcott he had come up with a set of woods from Ping Manufacturing.

Rep. Wiley Mayne (R-Iowa), reported he could wangle five golf bags from Wilson Sporting Goods if Talcott wanted them, although Mayne advised cautiously that "I personally don't think (it) would be a good idea?" to let Wilson handle all sports prizes as Wilson had offered.

The hole-in-one chairman, Rep. John Rousselot (R-Calif.), after failing to get Ford to "volunteer" a one-year free lease on a Pinto, approached the National Auto Dealers Association. He was referred to a car rental firm where he got the promise of a free three-month lease. But none of the Congressmen got a hole-in-one.

Rep. Harold Collier (R-Ill.), arranged the tournament at famed Burning Tree, a private golf course. But he became so aghast over the solicitation of gifts that he cancelled it. The tournament wound up instead on the golf course at nearby Andrews Air Force Base, since the brass hats like the lobbyists were in no position to refuse.

After chewing up the fairways at Andrews, the Congressmen made one last assault on the lobbyists' pocketbooks. They were invited to attend a gala cocktail party at the expense of the U.S. Independent Telephone Association.

Footnote: Talcott is again heading up the annual Congressional Golf Tournament, but he assured us there'll be

no more "general solicitation." Said the rueful Talcott: "We've all learned something."

Washington Whirl

Million-Dollar Bribe?

Rep. Charles Rangel (D-N.Y.), claims ITT's million-dollar offer to help finance a CIA sabotage operation against Chile's President Salvador Allende was a bribe. In a letter to departing Attorney General Richard Kleindienst, Rangel, an attorney, wrote: "In my opinion, this offer of money to the CIA was a violation of the federal bribery statute. It is difficult for me to see how an offer of one million dollars to the government could be construed in any other way than as an inducement meant to influence a certain policy decision. I am quite puzzled by the lack of action on the part of federal prosecutors."

Watergate Friendship — At least one long-standing friendship has withstood the test of Watergate. Spencer Oliver, the Democratic official whose phone was tapped by the Watergate bugging crew, remains on close personal terms with President Nixon's speech writer, Pat Buchanan. The two grew up together in Washington. Although they wound up at opposite political poles, they still meet at night and argue their political differences over drinks. Incidentally, Buchanan has told Oliver he's convinced the President had no prior knowledge of the tap on Oliver's phone.