

must be found to make up the lost revenues, and the usual response is to assess those members who are not using the club.

The Oahu Country Club and the Pacific Club do this now — the OCC with a "mini surcharge" of \$12.50 a month, and the Pacific Club with a "house charge" of \$15. Oahu Country Club members receive a \$2.50 deduction for each \$30 they spend at the club each month. The manager says there's been no visible adverse reaction to the surcharge.

The Pacific Club's \$15 monthly assessment, though more than that of the Oahu Country Club, is much easier to eradicate. Members need only spend that amount at the club after 5 p.m. in a month's time to have the assessment eliminated entirely. Thus the total monthly charge to regular and intermediate Pacific Club members is between \$35 and \$50: \$28 for dues (which haven't changed since 1961), \$7 for building cost (mandatory for almost all members) and the erasable \$15 house charge. Beyond that, regular members pay a \$500 initiation fee to join the club.

(The monthly dues charge at the Oahu Country Club is \$43, which was raised from \$34 last February and from \$31 in June, 1968.)

The current recession has demonstrated how unpredictable private club dining rooms and bars are for providing revenues. Many club members

nowadays spend more time at the office and less at the club, and the idea of personal budgeting is more respected now than it was two or three years ago. Less affluent members are wondering whether they can afford the luxury of belonging at all.

Then there's the increasing threat of the restaurant. Why keep dining at a club over and over again when the number of fine restaurants in Honolulu increases, seemingly, by the week? When club members dine elsewhere, the club — being private — can't turn to sources beyond its own membership to make up the difference. Hence, the assessments.

Like anything else that might help paint a complete financial picture, substantive information about dining room patronization trends in Honolulu clubs is hard to come by. Richard Maynes of the Oahu Country Club says he can't compare his dining room and bar business fairly with any previous period because both of those activities were dormant during the construction of the new clubhouse between March, 1969 and August, 1970. "I can say, however, that the use of our dining room has been increasing since the new clubhouse opened last

summer," he added.

The Pacific Club's Vlasaty admits the recession is affecting private clubs but he says his club's gross sales have been increasing about 20% a year. He also points out that his club has not raised its dues in 10 years.

But both Vlasaty and Maynes feel the increasing number of fine restaurants in Honolulu is not cutting significantly into club dining room and bar business. Says Maynes: "A club is just that — a club, a home away from home, a place where people can meet with their friends. A restaurant doesn't offer those advantages." Adds Vlasaty: "We don't feel any competition for our facilities because there is no competition."

A somewhat different view of restaurant competition is taken by Peter Van Dorn, the Outrigger's manager. The financially healthy OCC has a whopping 3,000 members falling into no fewer than 12 membership classifications. The largest is the 1,000-member "regular" category; at the present time, some 200 applicants are waiting to join this group as openings arise.

"Yes, we've noticed a slight drop-off in the use of our dining facilities,"

says Van Dorn, noting that there has been about a 10% decrease in member use of the Outrigger Canoe Club's dining room in the last two years. But he adds that, although restaurants are diverting business away from clubs, the Outrigger "hasn't been hurt that much. We're still making a profit; in fact, we're one of the few clubs whose food and beverage business is self-sufficient — that is, it doesn't depend on support from club dues. I attribute part of this to the fact that our prices run about 20% lower than those of restaurants of comparable quality and atmosphere."

Although the private club is, to varying degrees, treading softly these days, the likelihood is that, with sound and enlightened management, it will survive with the times. Country clubs, for example, can't help but benefit from the fact that television has changed golf from a rich man's game to a billion dollar annual market. If the number of golfers in the U.S. has risen from 5 million in 1961 to 11 million in 1970, there must be a like number that want the identity, the privacy — indeed, the savage joys, coarse good-fellowship and noise — of the private club.