

Science . . . and sweat

THE following was submitted by one of the Section Secretaries and is reprinted from the Newsletter of the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America.

THERE appears to be a growing feeling among veteran golf course superintendents that they are caught in a spiralling upheaval of sorts which threatens their very own physical being.

Frankly, the burdens of the profession have reached the point where certain superintendents are beginning to ask themselves . . . "are the returns worth the investment?"

This has nothing to do with the stock market or the race track. It concerns the job outlook of dignified men who must reevaluate their present positions because of a slow but sure tipping of the scales in regard to the "compensation vs. responsibility" syndrome.

It has reached the point where superintendents are leaving the responsibility-choked atmosphere of the big country club for less of same . . . and less money. Examples of pay cuts in the thousands have come to this desk's attention. And with them, complementary comments that the reductions are worth it.

Fortunately, the job structure of the superintendent is arranged so that he often is able to pick his spot on the success ladder. He has the option to shoot for a position bathed in responsibility which will reward him accordingly or he can level off at an assignment where he has the luxury of choosing how much of himself he will pour into the job.

The gradual recognition of the superintendent as a most integral part of the country club operation has brought his job into focus as far as the membership goes. It has come to realize that conditioning of the course is something

more than running amok with a lawn mower and tossing grass seed in the air like so much confetti. The superintendent's job is a science. Therefore, he is expected to turn miracles with the turf where once it was thought to be a hit-or-miss operation.

Whether you like it or not . . . whether you choose to recognize it or not, the job of the superintendent has become one of increasing pressures. And it follows a realistic pattern. The man in charge of a 36-hole course where national championships are contested is like the executive vice-president of a large corporation, the make or break aspects of business resting on his shoulders. The man putting the green touch to the little nine-hole layout down the street doesn't come close to such

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The Greenkeepers No. 2

Ernest Brown

HEAD GREENKEEPER at Bramshott Golf Club at Dibden in Hampshire is **Ernest C. M. Brown**, who was previously 10 years at Beaconsfield Golf Course and seven years as a First Assistant.

He joined Bramshott when it was opened in June 1974. The course is 18 holes, two-tier, and although some tree planting has already been done, more is to take place. Already the club boasts over 500 members plus ladies and juniors, and there is additional play by members of the public, giving the greenkeeping staff plenty of work keeping the course in good order. Mr. Brown has a First Assistant Keeper and two other assistants, one with a Bingley certificate.

To help him maintain the course there are two tractors, a Hahn Triplex, one Marquis 20 in. set of fairway gangs, three semi-rough magnas, one Certes 20 in., one Auto Turfman, one motorised soil sifter, a trailer front loader bucket link box fertiliser spreaders, one fairways and one greens drag harrow, a 14 cwt roller, a power

take-off, a 66-gallon sprayer, Push Mystifier, Fairway Spiker HJ6, spike roller for greens, two drag mats, one Flymo plus the usual tools.

Mr. Brown uses Parker's F2 and F22 fertiliser but will try other types to obtain the best results. One of his major problems is compaction, and some of his greens are badly drained. Tees have become very compacted and spiking and hollow tining has not solved the problem, which Mr. Brown thinks will be a long term job.

The course is new and has many faults to be cured over the years to come. Tees have taken a very heavy wearing and are now out of use, greens which were, and still are over compacted caused by the use of heavy machines in construction. Sandy clay soil was used for top soil and is not very porous, causing some greens to stay very wet. The course is built on the edge of the New Forest, suffers from some bog areas and is very hard to drain. The bottom of the course is a heavy clay area and more drainage is now being planned to help ease this problem.

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responsibility . . . nor is he affected as much.

One superintendent claims that a man in the profession must find his own niche. "Often this isn't easy", he tells. "For example, what once was a job with little pressure can change over the years. That little nine-hole layout could become ambitious and transform itself into an 18-hole championship course. And all of a sudden, pressures appear that weren't supposed to."

It's only natural that every once in a while a superintendent will take himself into a little room and have a heart to heart talk with himself. In that session he has to ask himself . . . "is it worth it?" Then, he puts the reassessment

measuring stick to work and decides which road he'll travel . . . easy, medium, difficult.

The demands of the recreational and sports participation field are on a tremendous upswing. The family has come to realize that the best vacation buy is the country club. It can gather there and find all of its recreational needs for the asking. There is golf, tennis, swimming, skating, bowling, bridge . . . even curling if you require it. And in the centre of it all stands the superintendent whose job it is to provide the playing grounds.

It boils down to one question: as to how far a super goes: "To sweat or not to sweat." "Only he can answer it.