The GOLF COURSE

The Importance of Good Seed

The suspension of field operations will provide an opportunity for looking closely into the question of the seed supply. Prominence has been given lately to the labor problem and the supply of manures, but little has been said about seed. Efficient labor and the use of suitable fertilizers will avail only so far as they are supported by a wise selection of seed. Unless this be pure, robust, and fertile, it does not matter much how much money is spent in labor and manures.

In the February Journal of the Board of Agriculture, Professor Biffen, of Cambridge, gives the results of a three years’ inquiry into grass, clover, and mangold seed, but the principles apply to all kinds of seeds. The verdict on 676 samples examined was that “though seeds of the highest quality can be purchased, much of the seed offered for sale is of indifferent quality, while some of it is excessively bad.” If the facts presented are typical, there is no need to look beyond the seed supply for an explanation of the poor returns yielded by large areas of both arable and grass land, and judging from the facts disclosed by Professor Biffen the supply of cheap seed is unlikely to diminish so long as farmers put price before merit.

The great defect of the seed trade is the method of distribution. Seed is sold in every market town in the country by tradesmen who have no special knowledge of the business and who probably know little concerning the origin or character of the seed they retail. The growing, harvesting and dressing of seed are skilled operations of the first importance; but if the buyer is to avail himself of the advantages offered by the exercise of such skill, he must procure his seed from trustworthy sources and have some sort of guarantee that the ar-
article is of the quality represented. The question of price should hold a secondary position. Guaranteed seeds of high germination are the best investment of the kind that farmers can make. Mr. Biffen tells of a sample of red clover seed which had so low a percentage of real value that a seed-rate amounting to over a ton per acre would have been necessary to secure sufficient clover seeds to provide a full plant—2,340 lb., as compared with the normal 10 lb. to 20 lb.

Deficiency in yield is not the only consequence of indifference as to the character of the seed sown. Foreign admixtures are not always harmless; weed seeds are often plentiful, and by introducing the seeds of docks, plantains, and such like—not to mention the parasitical dodder and other pests in imported seeds—the farmer nullifies the results of his weeding operations as effectively as he discounts the advantages of efficient tillage and judicious manuring by sowing seed of poor quality.

EDITOR'S NOTE.—The above article from the "London Times" contains much food for thought and should be carefully digested by Green Committeemen and others who have the responsibility of purchasing seed for Golf Courses, private estates, etc. It is a fact that seed purchased from a concern of known experience and reputation is actually cheaper than a poor grade which is much cheaper per bushel. High-grade seed contains practically no chaff and its cost represents actual seed. There is a great deal of fraud in the seed business, and it behooves one to go carefully and be sure what one is buying. The very best is by far the cheapest in the long run.

Public Courses

THERE is scarcely a city of any consequence which has not provided a municipal golf course for the public or given the matter serious consideration.

Wherever these courses have been built the people have shown their appreciation by taxing the courses to capacity.

The absolute necessity of a municipal golf course is recognized by cities which are particularly desirous of the patronage of tourists. The majority of those who travel for pleasure play golf and though they may visit a city which does not provide golf for them, they will not tarry there long.

Then arises the question of whether an absolutely free course be built for the residents, or a semi-public course, operated by a city, over which visitors may play upon payment of a fee.

In some sections where the visitations of tourists are frequent, the latter development would seem to have first consideration, but in view of the unmistakably healthy growth of golf, the eventual solution carries with it the answer of "Both."

As it costs no more to construct any course along modern lines, there is no reason why public links should not be quite as up-to-date as any other, yet it must be remembered that those who frequent free courses are not so prone to observe the strict ethics of the game as others, and consequently in planning free courses, dangerous parallel fairways and blind shots of every description should be avoided. Such features should not exist on any course, but particularly on one given over to the public.

Generous Teeing Grounds

LARGE teeing-grounds are constructed not only to fit the play to the wind or general conditions, but to save the turf as well. If the plates are moved frequently, back and forward and from side to side, the badly worn spots which we see only too often would not be made. Move the plates every day, and the turf will not suffer in the least. It is not to the liking of everyone to have to play from a skinned teeing ground; indeed, comparatively few like it, and usually these are the poor players. The man who hits correctly wants to feel the club bite the turf a bit, and when he is forced to pick his ball cleanly, his stroke has lost its sting.