Course Rehabilitation Needs Noted by Greenkeepers

By JOE GRAFFIS

CORRESPONDENCE and interviews with greenkeepers bring out the fact that greenkeeper records during these times are going to dictate a great part of postwar work at clubs.

A prominent eastern course supt. writes:

"Our club is one of the older and better clubs in this section and always has expected the best. Since we went into a slump of play during gasoline rationing and couldn't spend money for needed items of course maintenance if we wanted to, about the best I can do is to keep things going now and make notes of the work that will have to be begun the minute the war ends.

"Even fertilizing, seeding, weed treatment and other turf treatment for which we can get material has been neglected because of lack of labor. Some of the little labor that we do get is labor that is holding night-time war jobs and fatigue is bound to reduce its results on the course. However, I am not complaining. I think the outdoor work probably is a good change of pace for these factory workers even if they are rather old. I have been trying to get discharged veterans but as we have many factories around here offering more money I haven't had any luck in selling the health-resorting qualities of golf course work.

"We now are running the course with five men and myself, and I used to think that 12 men was the absolute minimum. I know I never was wasteful in handling labor. So it is a sure thing that with half the men on the job we are doing just half the work that should be done to maintain a course in the condition our members have been educated to expect. At present they are making no complaints, but right after the war's over I think they again will be asking for perfection on the greens, fairways and tees, and in the traps.

"That means I am going to have to jump from a course force of six men up to 18 or 20 men to put things back into pre-war shape, and that may mean an argument that can cost me my job.

"About the only thing I see that I can do now is to make notes of everything that has been neglected because of war conditions so I can put the entire record before the chairman and let him fight it out with the board."

Other letters and interviews express the same basic situation. Experienced greenkeepers believe that after the war there will be sharp competition for members and the club which gets its course in superb condition soon will be the one which will have the edge. But one thing they don't believe will change is the difficulty of selling a green-committee on the necessity of a decided increase in budget. That is the reason many of the smartest greenkeepers are keeping wartime journals of work done and work that had to be skipped, in as complete shape as possible. The record will have to speak for itself.

"What I think may make the job of reconditioning courses after the war a hard one for greenkeepers is the immediate demand for spending in replacement of equipment," the supt. of a southern California club comments. "Inability to get good mechanics and careful operators has quickened the depreciation of machinery. Now, with course labor hard to get it is ruinous to have machinery break down and hold up work. The first thing that postwar chairmen probably will want to do is to replace equipment, and the greenkeeper will be all for that except that he will have to make a delicate decision in determining just what percentages of machinery and labor expenses to set in his budget."

On this point there are varying opinions. Some greenkeepers believe that in a few years there may be drastic changes in course maintenance machinery design and construction. They are hoping that they'll be able to get by with repairs on major items until they see the new designs come in and prove themselves. Others think they'll be lucky to have machinery hold together until the war's end and that they'll be glad to get new equipment of prewar standard design and construction which demonstrated itself as eminently satisfactory.

Observation of numerous greenkeepers is that drainage systems will be among first items needing extensive overhauling. Roots have interfered with the performance of systems and drainage conditions.
that before the war showed need of re-
vision have been neglected to the extent
that course injury from that cause has
become increasingly serious.

Careful watch has been maintained over
watering systems. In cases where the
greenkeeper has been on the job during
the war the pumping and piping has been
vigilantly checked and such minor repairs
as have been needed have been made
promptly. Due to reduced wartime bud-
gets the watering systems haven't been
used except when the greenkeepers have
decided such use was urgently required.
That's meant a minimum of service
demanded from the installations. The ma-
ajority of the complete installations are
comparatively modern and trouble-proof,
therefore there's not much concern about
their need of costly repairs, extensions or
modernization after the war.

In many cases greenkeepers expressed
the belief that enforced reduction of
green mowing during the war was re-
sulting in nappiness and other defects of
greens surface that would not have been
countenanced on first class courses before
the war, and which probably will call for
complete correction after the war.

There is considerable indication from
greenkeepers, and chairmen too, that the
fairway weed percentage is getting far
too high. This, greenkeepers particularly
say, is the result of clubs having been too
quick in sacrificing fertilizing and weed
chemical control. The clubs will have to
pay for that in extensive work after the
war, greenkeepers believe, and add that
they have seen courses where practically
complete reconditioning and reseeding of
fairways will have to be done to reclaim
them from pasture status.

Great jobs have been done by green-
keepers in wartime maintenance. Despite
adverse weather added to the complica-
tions of wartime labor and material con-
ditions the courses are in better shape
than players probably expected, or have
reason for expecting. Nevertheless ex-
perienced greenkeepers who know the in-
finitesimal detail of first class course main-
tenance are keenly aware of many jobs
they have been compelled to sidetrack
during the war. They have seen that
nature, when it is allowed to get out of
control, can insidiously and seriously lower
course standard under the condition the
greenkeeper wants as evidence of his mas-
tery of his profession.

As the many little things that all to-
gether constitute perfection in golf course
maintenance may be forgotten in the work
and worry of wartime, foresighted course
superintendents are adding to their green-
keeping logs notes on jobs to be done at
the first possible postwar time.

Colorado Springs Golf Course
Has 25th Anniversary

★ In June Patty Jewett GC, Colorado
Springs, Colo., will observe its 25th an-
niversary as a municipal golf course. The
course was a gift to the city by K. K. Jewett
in memory of his wife.

Before the transfer to the city, the club
had operated for many years as a private
club. It was then known as the Colorado
Springs GC. It was preceded by the Town
and Gown GC which was opened in the
nineties.

Many improvements have been made to
the golf course in the quarter century of
city operation. All greens, fairways and
tees are of grass. Yardage is 6,995 for
regular play and nearly 7,000 for tourna-
ments. Many tournaments have been held
here. The first Pikes Peak Open, held
last year, will be an annual event at the
course, to follow the Broadmoor invitation
in early August.

The club is located less than three miles
from the center of the city and even in
wartime, with the gas restrictions, golfers
can get to it without trouble. In normal
years the Patty Jewett Club has 300 to
400 annual members, although the daily
green fee is the largest source of revenue.

Wartime maintenance problems, of
course, are severe, but the standard of
course conditions has been kept high.