

Responsibility Develops Executives

By JOHN MORLEY

President, National Association of Greenkeepers of America

THE responsibilities of a greenkeeper are many, and if I should be asked during the playing season, "How many are there?" I would state that they are of 57 varieties.

There are a good many responsibilities that are often thrown upon the shoulders of the greenkeeper which do not really apply to his calling in life.

Whenever anything goes wrong with the water system in the clubhouse, the first thing done is to send for the greenkeeper to see what is wrong in the pump-house. Let the chairman of the House committee visit the basement and find it to be full of barrels of ashes, tin cans, etc., and again the responsibility is placed upon the greenkeeper for not having a truck to haul it away. Let the shrubbery grow high enough to obstruct a good view of the golf course, so that members and their guests cannot see the course while sitting on the veranda, and the greenkeeper is again held responsible for not keeping the shrubbery trimmed.

Should he fail to keep the ground, drives, garages and sheds in good condition, he is liable to receive complaints from the president of the club.

Green Keeper Has Many Duties

The greenkeeper is usually held responsible for the tennis courts. It often happens that after working hours we get a heavy rain. After the rain has ceased, but before the courts are dry, several players will go on them and fill them full of small holes while playing. The next morning when the younger tennis players go out on the courts they find them in a deplorable condition. As usual, they blame the greenkeeper.

Where the club does not employ a competent man to take care of the flowers around the clubhouse, it generally falls to the lot of the greenkeeper to care for them, and no matter how carefully he selects appropriate flowers, there is always someone blaming him for using poor judgment in his selection.

While it is true that the greenkeeper is under the supervision of the chairman of the Green committee, who has the power to hire and discharge him, yet he often has to take instructions from others, from the president to the humblest member of the club.

Diplomacy With Club Members

A greenkeeper must at all times use diplomacy. He should realize that the club is the second home for most of the members; that financially all have an equal interest, and that all feel they have a right to some consideration. But under all circumstances the greenkeeper must

bear in mind in accepting orders or suggestions from anyone other than the chairman of the Green committee, if in his judgment they are of sufficient importance they should be taken up with his chairman.

A greenkeeper should as far as possible endeavor to lighten the burden of his superior officers, especially when he comes to the club to play golf. He should be able to solve the little petty problems and grievances that daily occur.

Relieve Chairman All Possible

If a greenkeeper is indifferent to his responsibilities, they often form a heavy burden upon the chairman of the Green committee, for then the chairman has to shoulder all cares and complaints. Here is a sample of what was received in a letter from the president of one of the western clubs, "Our green committee has been looking after our grounds and greens for two or three years, but it is too much to ask for anyone to do the work indefinitely, so I thought if we could get a good first class man that understands the care of a golf course in all its ramifications we would be pleased to hire such a man." This is only one of many clubs that are looking for greenkeepers who will assume practically all responsibilities outside of the club house.

Arouse Interest Among Workmen

The greenkeeper must know how to hire men and secure a fair return in labor from them. He should know how to select men of various callings, as far as possible, some with mechanical training, some who have had experience in farming and gardening, and a few who enjoy digging ditches. He must have the ability to get the most out of these talents, and have them work together in harmony.

The rush of work on a golf course should be accomplished in the forenoon. I never expect my men to keep up this gait all day, but I encourage them to hustle in the morning hours, so that the course is in good shape for the members in the afternoon. After noon I generally find some lighter work for the balance of the day and try to impress upon the men never to give any of the members while playing an opportunity to report them loafing.

I try to teach them to take an interest in their work, so that in time they may be capable to take charge of another course. I try to show them my appreciation by enlightening them on all angles of greenkeeping, and no matter what my loss may be in giving up a good man, when I am convinced he is fully able to take a position

in greenkeeping, I have no difficulty in securing one for him.

I believe my methods pay well, for I realize they help reduce my responsibilities so far as labor is concerned.

In dealing with the responsibilities of the greenkeeper, so far as services are concerned he is expected to be very liberal, but when it comes to financial return for those responsibilities, he is expected to be very conservative. This also shows up in his responsibility in expending the appropriation allowed for the maintenance of the course. The financial responsibility of a golf course used to rest chiefly with the Green committee, but now the greenkeeper is held partly responsible.

The modern method is for the greenkeeper to work under a budget system, allowing so much per year for maintaining the course, and fixing separately each item of expense. I believe this is a good system for a greenkeeper to work under, providing he does not try to use too much false economy in order to show how much less he has spent than the budget calls for.

Service is the main thing, and should be the chief aim of the greenkeeper. If he keeps as closely as possible to the budget allowance, he will eventually find that it pays.

Before and After War Maintenance Costs

Of late there has been a great amount of discussion

regarding the heavy cost of running an eighteen-hole golf course, but you do not find anyone giving the real facts, which show that wages, machinery and costs of all upkeep have advanced over 70% since the World War. Still the cost of maintaining a course today is very little more than it was before the war. Greenkeepers, especially those who have the confidence of the officials of the club, have been able to cut many rough corners. They are making their own humus; they are not wasting grass seed, in fact I know of many greenkeepers on well established courses who do not use any seed; they are motorizing their courses, and are using hand labor to better advantage.

Conditions for the players are 100% better than they were a few years ago. This demonstrates that greenkeepers are keeping step with the times. While I regret that there has been a tendency to take away from the greenkeepers their responsibilities as to finance, I am of the opinion that this is only temporary. Instead of taking responsibilities from him, give him more. Show him that he has the confidence of the club officials. One of the most tangible assets an official can give to his club is to create conditions that will make the greenkeeper more of an executive.

Look Before You Seed!

(Continued from page 10)

in appearance and usually much cheaper. If the Kentucky blue grass should be adulterated with Canada blue grass and is not guaranteed or tested, there will be more breakers ahead for the unwise from a maintenance standpoint.

Red Top and Mixed Bent

Most of the red top used commercially is grown in Southern Illinois, and if bought with a purity of 90% or better, good results will be sure to follow.

The South German mixed bent presents a more difficult problem however. It is a first cousin of red top and usually rather expensive. Most of the South German mixed bent imported into this country has a purity of 70 or 75%. The major part of the impurities is chaff. After the Red Top is cleaned to grade 90% or better, there is a quantity of screenings containing some red top and these screenings are sometimes used to adulterate the bents. None but a highly trained seed analyst can detect such an adulteration.

Bermuda Grass

In the old south and as far north as the southern half of Pennsylvania, Bermuda grass is the most common grass used for fairways and greens. As this grass does not seed to any great extent in a moist climate it can be planted vegetatively. There are a number

of strains, but the one best suited for putting green surfaces is called the Atlanta strain. In the Imperial Valley, California, and in the irrigated sections of Arizona, Bermuda grass is a very bad weed. The climate in this section is very dry and the grass seeds readily. The seed gets into the irrigation water and spreads over the farming area. Unless kept under control, it causes serious loss to the farmers. The seed resembles timothy seed and is often adulterated with that seed, as timothy is commercially much lower in value. Bermuda grass also seeds in Australia and the seed is imported into this country from there.

Do You Know Kikuyua?

Kikuyua grass (*pennisetum clandestinum*) is also another stoloniferous grass that can be vegetatively planted and, although still in the experimental stage, it has been found to do well as a fairway grass in California and Florida. So far, there is little or none of this seed produced commercially.

Have Seed Analyzed

Most of the states maintain very efficient seed testing laboratories and are always glad to aid the people in their state. If the seed dealer knows that you demand seed true to name and high in germination, with