



# GREENKEEPING— TODAY *and* TOMORROW

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## CHAPTER IV.—THE GROWTH AND PROBABLE FUTURE DEVELOPMENT OF THE GOLF COURSE FACTORY

**I**N PREVIOUS articles of this series I have tried to establish the fact that golf courses are in many respects analogous to factories. The growth of these factories has been considered only as an enlargement from a nine-hole course to an eighteen-hole course, and the future development is considered in terms of a possible twenty-seven hole course.

With a great many golf course factories the enlargement has been premature, being brought about by a minority of the club members; their arguments having been based upon over-enthusiasm, and in some instances selfishness. Probably over-crowding is the most convincing argument used by the factory promoters, and the desire to "keep up with the Jones'" the real motive.

The doubling of the factory plant due to over-crowding almost always leads to years of low treasury accounts, or the doubling (or more) of membership to help pay the cost of construction and operating expense. Counts and observations in favor of plant enlargement are taken Sunday mornings and holidays, when one expects to be crowded anyway, and do not represent a true statement of the actual playing traffic. Course enlargement under such conditions should be made only after very thoughtful consideration of all factors. In good business, factory enlargement is never made until the demand is imperative.

This premature enlargement of the factory is a most expensive overhead cost of golf course maintenance, and is the cause of many of the grey hairs of the chairman and his greenkeeper. It is

the cause of much inefficient maintenance, not because of the lack of ability of the superintendent or greenkeeper, but because of the factory plant, or physical structure of the course.

### SHEEP MOWED THE COURSE

**T**WENTY-FIVE years ago sheep mowed the entire golf course (they do in some parts of England today). The greenkeeper was a first-class laborer and he had ordinary laborers for his assistants. The maintenance was apparently of very high quality as gauged by the standard that was demanded. Nature was not advised or hindered in her care of the turf.

Today the conditions are too well known to use space enumerating them. A fact that is frequently unconsidered is that the increase in the number of consumers (players) and the demand for a high grade product (playing conditions) has promoted the man who maintained the course from the grade of first-class laborer through the successive steps of craftsman, artisan, foreman to greenkeeper. His work has developed into a profession. With the promotion there has been the necessary requirement of increase in knowledge and ability, comparable to the promotion of a factory laborer to factory superintendent, such as technical and scientific ability with practical experience.

Many Green committee chairmen and a greater number of the influential players have passed through a similar experience of promotion in their chosen fields of endeavor. Do they appreciate or



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realize the same qualities in the greenkeeper or superintendent?

Golf courses have been developed to their present condition with the original factory, or factory alterations (usually an added maintenance cost) or a prematurely enlarged factory with the increased overhead costs. Many factories were poorly designed (for maintenance) and inferior in quality of construction, yet because of the greenkeeper and Green committee chairman the quality of the product is much improved.

### WHAT WILL THE FUTURE DEVELOP?

**W**HAT is to be the future development of the golf course factory and its management? Many forecasts do not materialize because they warn of dangers or cause a change in policy. The author does not attempt to forecast the future of golf any more than the honest stock broker does the future of any stock. This is his opinion.

The old original factories are breaking down under the strain of the present load and quality re-

quirements, and I venture to say that the next five years will see a steady increase in the number of golf courses requiring a new and better structure, built on the original factory site. This means a period of reconstruction work, much of which will be under the supervision of the greenkeeper. The reconstruction to bear the requirements of the next twenty years must recognize scientific principles.

On many of the younger courses (five to ten years old) the greens are failing physically because of hurried, careless and low price construction. These courses will have much reconstruction to do, and the cost will be greater than the reconstruction of the twenty-year greens.

### NEW GENERATION OF GREENKEEPERS

**T**HE profession of greenkeeping is entering the period of the end of the first generation of greenkeepers here in America, a most significant fact which clubs must be prepared to meet. The shrewdness and practical experiences of the passing generation must not be lost, but scientific and technical ability is almost a prerequisite for the replacing generation.

The golfer has set an ideal standard for the fac-



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tory product that is reasonable, and unless the external influences or professionalism (understand me correctly—not the professional) obtain a dictatorship, the standard will not change. There will be a more pressing demand by the players that their courses rapidly reach a condition nearer the standard, and then maintain it.

The business depression has already lowered the appropriations for maintenance, thus increasing the responsibilities of the greenkeeper, for a 10% reduction in budget means a 11% increase in efficiency and a 10% increase in loss by any error of judgement.

Undoubtedly golf course maintenance is entering a period in which more real value will be asked from each dollar invested. Sound economy will be necessary but I believe the days of stinginess in appropriations are past.

Thus for all connected with the golfing industry there appears to be ahead enjoyable times: Hard work, thrift, willingness to pay for real values, and golfing that will be fun. For all this, the golfing factory will be reconstructed, or newly built on scientific and technical lines, and should be maintained by skillful greenkeepers who have had prac-

tical experience and know the scientific fundamentals of turf culture.

*Next Month—Chapter V—The influence of labor-saving machinery on golf course maintenance.*

## Cleveland District News

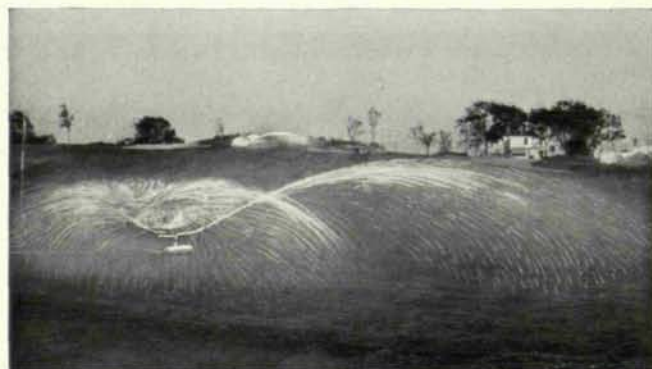
By WALTER E. KNOWLES, *Secretary*

THE first of the 1931 out-door meetings of the Cleveland District Association of Greenkeepers, was held at the Portage Country Club, Akron, Ohio, on the 11th day of May.

A very lively business session at which arrangements for future meetings and the formulation of arrangements for the annual tournament for greenkeepers were made, was followed by a delightful lunch.

President Ermer, greenkeeper of the Ridgewood Golf Links, had arranged for a putting green mower demonstration to follow the lunch. This demonstration was witnessed by some forty greenkeepers and Green chairmen.

Looks like a busy season for the Cleveland district boys. On May 25th the Association meets at Oberlin Golf Club, Oberlin, Ohio; on June 8th at Manakiki C. C., Willoughby, Ohio, and the meeting of July 13th at Westwood C. C.



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