



GREENKEEPING— TODAY *and* TOMORROW

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CHAPTER IX—EFFICIENCY STUDIES

GOLF course management is not immune from the checking and criticism of efficiency experts. In fact, during these times of business depression many golf clubs are having their affairs very much disturbed by efficiency experts. Some are invited, but most of them come uninvited from the various businesses that are being curtailed.

The company efficiency expert, finds himself with free time and to keep his hand in, tackles the golf club. "I've always wanted to show the club what efficiency is," says the efficiency expert of the World's largest Dumb Bell factory.

EFFICIENCY EXPERTS ARE DANGEROUS

SUCH efficiency experts are dangerous to good golf course maintenance. They have been trained to consider efficiency as it concerns inanimate things. They fail to realize that there are such factors as life, health, recuperative ability and aggressiveness. All the controlling factors in their problems are tangible and a single standard of quality can be maintained by their product. Their aim is to turn out more finished pieces in a given time than has been previously turned out in the same time.

The above type of efficiency would criticize the present method of changing the directions of cutting each time the green is mowed. There is really only one way a putting green can be most efficiently mowed—"Figure it out for yourself." Given an oblong green 100x50 feet. Whether the greensman goes back and forth the long way, the short way, or diagonally, makes no difference as to the total area to be mowed. You say, "correct!"

Yet the efficiency expert will tell you that mowing the long way is fully 20%, yes, almost 25%

more efficient than mowing across the short way. He can convince the Green committee, and perhaps you, that by mowing the long way each time at least 15% can be saved over the present shifting method. He further argues that if all greens are mowed back and forth the long way, a total saving of approximately \$18.00 per green, per season, or a total saving of \$270.00 worth of time or 540 hours, or 90 days (what he should receive).

TOO MUCH EFFICIENCY—POOR GREENS

THE unfortunate part of it is that the efficiency expert is theoretically correct. Why is he dangerous then? Because if he wins his point, and the Green committee orders the greens mowed the long way each time, he has caused them to sacrifice *effectiveness* for *efficiency*. Few putting green turfs could stand daily mowing in the same direction, and fewer golfers would tolerate such mowed greens. *Effectiveness* must not be made secondary to *efficiency*.

In addition to the fact that turf has life with its attributes, the efficiency man must not lose sight of the fact that said turf is being maintained by *man* with the assistance of *nature*. Man is not a robot, an unfortunate fact for the efficiency fiend. However much increase in efficiency in golf course maintenance can be accomplished if turf life, and the human factor is considered.

Consider again the mowing of the putting green with the hand pushed mower. To maintain the health and quality of the turf, the mowing angle should be changed each time. (No efficiency, much effectiveness.) The good greensman stops to rest only a reasonable number of times, the poor one as

often as an opportunity presents itself. Few greensmen stop in the middle of the green; there is no cause or excuse. All stops are made at the turns, and all such stops are unproductive, other than to refresh the greensman. It has been proven several times that the greens are mowed just as quickly, and with no more fatigue to the men if they are *caused* to stop in the middle of the green.

GREENSMEN CAN WEED AND REST

WHY cause them to stop in the middle of the green, and what would they stop for? Well! Few greens are weedless. Direct your greensmen to stop and pull a few weeds other than clover, as they mow each day, and watch the results. You will observe that the men take their deserved rest from mowing while pulling weeds. They will *not* stop on the turn, for there will be no need to. You will also find that the men will *see* more weeds than they previously did and will take more pride in their greens. Effectiveness and efficiency have both increased.

In anticipation of the old, time-honored argument that the greensmen must be off as soon as possible to avoid interfering with play; I will say that on the courses where such efficiency has been tried, the greensmen have not been *one minute* behind their usual schedule, nor have they been any more fatigued. The time saved by efficiency was utilized.

What golf course maintenance needs most is to reduce the unproductive time, and not save time. To illustrate! Years of tolerance and habit dictate that a certain greensman finishes his morning mowing routine at 10:30. Figured efficiency orders a change of method that should save 15 minutes, and the man is expected to be in at 10:15. Under such circumstances the act of being efficient isn't completed until the 15 minutes saved is *utilized*. I question whether it will be. On a newly-opened course, and with a newly organized working crew, the 15 minutes might be productive, but not on a going course or with an old gang.

Definite efficiency can be figured and practiced when machinery, water systems, flow of water through drain tile and similar items are considered. In each case every saving is utilized.

Efficiency as considered by some persons would cause the purchasing of fertilizers on the price per unit of plant food basis. To these persons, nitrogen

is nitrogen only, phosphoric acid and potash are also mere terms. Fertilizers purchased entirely on the plant food unit cost very frequently cause increases in maintenance costs greater than the saving on the fertilizer, because effectiveness was lower than efficiency. No consideration is given to the form in which the various elements appear in the fertilizer or to the soil reaction. It can be readily seen that apparent efficiency could really be expensive.

GOLF COURSE MANAGEMENT CRITICIZED

IT is to be expected that during the present financial crisis golf course management will be scrutinized and criticized. Also it is to be expected that much of the criticism will be just and of a constructive nature. There will be, however, more unjust criticism and false efficiency. Real efficiency studies will consider every governing factor and make a comparison of the probable results. Particular stress should be given to the human factor, and to the fact that *grass lives*.

From my observations, I feel that the greatest cause of inefficiency on golf courses is *careless habits*. There is much routine work to do, and it is very easy to become careless in one's habits. Also I have observed that the greenkeeper is really responsible for the careless habits of his men. Planning to decrease the number of opportunities for unproductive time, and to utilize as much as possible of the unproductive time will be a real advancement in efficiency. In golf course management, I do not think efficiency methods that tend to drive the men, or unduly speed up operations, will be successful.

Let's not be so efficient that we lose effectiveness.

Next month—Chapter X—Greenkeeping 1931 and probably in 1932.

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