

# GREEN SECTION IN

## Arlington session reveals financial needs of section

By B. R. LEACH

AUGUST 19th witnessed the gathering of the greenkeeping clan at Washington for the annual summer meeting of the United States Golf Association Green Section. A good crowd turned out for the occasion and was blessed by that rare event in Washington—a cool August day. The morning was spent in an intensive inspection of the green section experimental turf garden at Arlington Farms, the experimental grounds maintained by the government just on the edge of the city of Washington. Dr. Monteith and his associate, Mr. Welton did the honors and to those who knew the Doc in his more bashful days it is enough to say that the old boy has become very clever in piloting the crowd.

The experimental turf gardens at Arlington are intensely interesting to any one sufficiently familiar with the problems besetting those charged with the maintenance of fine turf in this country. In fact a visit to the gardens will net you information exactly in proportion to what you know about the fundamentals of turf management. If you don't know much you won't learn much, if you know your stuff you can learn a whole heap more.

The north end of the garden is laid

out in an extensive series of plats planted to practically every species and strain of grass which will do anything at all in the Washington climate. This layout came in for a great deal of inspection and comment.

### Putt Test Explodes Old Notion.

During the course of the morning Monteith gave a demonstration of the machine devised for testing any given turf for its putting qualities. It consists essentially of a pendulum which swings with mechanical precision and hits the golf ball as would be the case with a legitimate putt on a green. The mechanical swing of the pendulum being the same in all cases the trueness of direction taken by the ball in its passage across the turf together with the distance traveled by the ball as indicative of the resistance offered by the turf all combine to say whether a given turf area is fast or slow. Monteith drew attention to the fact that there was a general impression among golfers that stolon bent greens offered greater resistance to the ball and were harder to putt on but with the aid of this mechanical putter he showed that up or down hill the ball went

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Greenkeepers study the Arlington turf garden plats during the annual mid-summer meeting.

sufficiency of soil bacteria and other organisms. You can now plow the soil to a depth of 6 inches and repeat the top-dressing manufacturing process all over again. If, however, you take off six inches of top soil at one operation you strip the land of practically all its soil bacteria and life and it is one hell of a job to do anything with it from that time on. Now, inasmuch as there is unfortunately a certain percentage of human hogs among the polyglot population of this grand and glorious country it follows that some few will take 6 inches of soil and leave nothing. I sincerely trust that such individuals will receive their proper share of hellfire in the hereafter. The vast majority will however confine their operations to stripping off the top 3 inches and otherwise act as reasonable human beings.

### Should Have Soil Shed

I need hardly add that all soil operations such as plowing, disking, stripping of the soil, etc., should be done when the soil is in a friable, workable condition. This is especially important when you are taking off the top-soil preparatory to running it through a sieve for application to the green. Wet, sticky soil is very hard to handle. For this reason every golf club should have a suitable soil shed where soil can be stored and the screening and preparation carried out during periods of rainy weather, and where the finished product can be stored and maintained in shape for immediate application to the turf. A suitable soil shed will effect greater savings in the cost of top-dressing golf greens than any other single investment on a golf course.

From a cost angle the preparation of top-dressing material by the soiling method is infinitely cheaper and quicker than by the compost pile system. In the first place all the labor of preparing a plot of ground by the soiling method can be conducted by machine, including the plowing, disking, spreading of manure, etc., and I am not at all sure that it would be such a tremendous job to fashion a rig for scooping up the top 3 inches of soil. Composting, on the other hand, is practically all hand work, and decidedly hard work as any one who has forked over a compost pile is fully aware.

The speed of decomposition of the manure in the upper 3 inches of the soil is much greater than the same manure in a compost pile, at least 4 to 1. Furthermore, the decomposition product in the case of

the soiling method is much more desirable because the decomposing action has taken place in an atmosphere abounding in oxygen with the result that decomposition is natural, complete and the ultimate product is free from toxins.

So much for the preparation of top-dressing material under those propitious conditions embodying a plentiful supply of manure. The same general system can be followed for the preparation of top-dressing when animal manure is scarce or entirely unavailable and I propose to discuss the soiling method involving the plowing under of green crops in lieu of manure in a future article. The green crop method is sound, simple and cheap but not quite as rapid in action as is the case when manure is available.

## Hold Mid-Summer Meeting at Arlington

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as far with a given putt impetus on stolon bent as it did on other types of turf.

An extensive series of fertilizer test-plats lay alongside of the grass variety plats described above. The visitors were invited to gaze as long and ardently on these as they desired but it was noticeable that the Green Section technical staff did not go into any great length in discussing them or the results obtained to date. In fact the history of the ultimatums on fertilizers for turf reminds me of what Josh Billings said about the three stages of man, namely that an eighteen year old boy knows it all, at 25 he knows a hell of a lot less and at 35 he gets into the habit of going around to see his old man when he wants to get the low-down on anything in particular.

Next in order was the extensive area of plats devoted to experiments on control of brown-patch and other diseases. Monteith has been in tough luck this year in that there hasn't been nearly enough brown-patch infection at the station to make good experimental conditions. Never mind Doc, there's another year coming.

### Make Inspection Tour.

Shortly after noon the visitors began to drift back to Washington for luncheon and in the afternoon various groups embarked on visits to the leading golf clubs around Washington. The writer in company with three tried and trusted friends paid an extended visit to the Columbia C. C., one of

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the de-luxe clubs of the capitol. My three team-mates were—Oscar B. Fitts, superintendent of the Columbia Country club; George T. Cunningham, formerly of the Green Section staff, and now manager of 36 holes at the Country Club of Virginia, at Richmond, and Norman L. Mattice, superintendent of the Pine Valley G. C. at Clementon, N. J. I have always felt that these three boys deserve a great measure of credit in that despite the heavy handicap imposed by their respective college educations they have won through to a dignified success in the greenkeeping profession. Mattice says that it's a good idea

in the greenkeeping profession to knock on wood every morning before breakfast because nowadays the greens may look like a million dollars at 8 p. m. and a dime (Mex.) by 4 p. m.

In the evening we attended a healthy meeting of the Mid-Atlantic Greenkeepers' Association preceded by dinner. This is a young but enthusiastic organization and coming right along. The star performer of the evening was Mr. Hillman of the U. S. Department of Agriculture, who has spent many years in the study of the seeds of various bent grasses and in developing the technique of grass seed identification. He is now in a position to definitely distinguish between the seeds of these various bents and the information has been worked up into such form that it is available to seed analysts throughout the country.

### Clearing Bent Confusion.

Mr. Hillman's talk made it very clear that there was considerable of a mix-up in bent seed classification but that the mix-up was just about at that stage where it was ready to be cleared up as a result of technical study. A series of plats at the turf gardens labeled "grass sold as Washington bent" indicates that the mix-up in the various strains of stolon bent is equally as bad. In looking over these plats I confess that I had difficulty in selecting the plat planted to true Washington bent and could only be sure by inspecting the labels. No doubt the posted agrostologist or grass expert can tell the various strains but the average man is lost. Under the circumstances anyone contemplating the establishment of a stolon nursery will do well to use great care in securing his foundation stock of stolons otherwise he may wake up a year or two hence and find himself the possessor of a couple of carloads of Virginia bent or some other inferior strain when all the time he was kidding

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