



Wilshire C. C., where the 1931 Los Angeles Open will be played.

Idea Exchange Paying Element in California Greens Progress

By ARTHUR LANGDON

IN southern California the tournament season this year will not be what it has been in the past. One or two clubs have cancelled their tournaments, thus relieving the feelings of at least two or three greenkeepers. However, the visits of professional golfers have been attended with many benefits to western greenkeepers in the past and the chances are that this will be true of future visits. This in spite of the fact that conditions have changed to a great degree within the last five years.

It may only be a remarkable coincidence, but it was five years ago that the first Los Angeles Open golf tournament was held, marking the opening of southern California's bid for famous figures in the golfing world, and since that time the greens of this district have taken long strides to the fore. Probably no greenkeeper will admit that a visiting golf player can tell him how to run his course, but there is something more intangible than this that must be reckoned with. Sociologists have been the first people to recognize that blessed isolation may be fraught with many perils for

the state, group, or individual who sits back in complacent calm and says, "I have all I want; I require no intercourse with others."

Exchange of ideas has been one of the prime movers in the march of civilization, even though the recipient of these ideas did not realize that he was benefiting at the time. When the Normans invaded England in 1066 they transported themselves and their customs across the channel as was their rights as conquerors. And yet there are more Saxon traits predominant in England today than there are Norman. English speaking people today have reached their status because of their willingness to exchange ideas. The Roman empire fell when it became so wrapped up in itself that it grew rotten at the core.

Suggests Greenkeepers' Tours

But it is a far cry from ancient and medieval history to greenkeeping in California, presumably. The parallel is that the local greenkeepers have benefited in

the past from ideas and methods imported from the east, and it is almost certain that they must continue to do so in the future in order to keep their courses up to the highest possible standard.

The idea has been suggested that greenkeepers be sent at clubs' expense to visit courses in the east periodically. A sort of sabbatical leave, as it were, in which the greenkeepers could garner sheaves of information from their contemporaries on the other side of the nation. Such an arrangement smacks of the millenium; nevertheless, its possibilities are exceedingly interesting to contemplate. In this way a first-hand exchange of ideas, sentiments, schemes, and feelings could be brought about which would be nationally beneficial to the golf courses of the country.

It has been said that more great movements in the history of the world have been fostered by men with their feet on a table-top than in all the formal conferences that were ever held. While this would be rather difficult for a greenkeeper to accomplish on a golf course, the principle involved remains unchanged. Anyone who has tried to interview a greenkeeper must know that they as a class are singularly uncommunicative in regard to their work when questioned by outsiders. Yet in California a spirit of fraternalism has grown out of the custom of greenkeepers of taking a day off every month or so and going to some neighboring contemporary to talk of many things, of fertilizers and brown-patch, and other kindred matters. There are no secrets because each man is anxious to demonstrate to his friend and fellow worker that he also knows something about how a golf course should be run. In turn each man has some problem with which he feels he is not coping as he should; so, he visits another greenkeeper whom he thinks will know and together they thrash the matter out.

This decidedly informal arrangement verges upon the ideal, being satisfactory to all concerned. The greenkeeper gets a holiday and his club reaps the benefit.

So excellent has this system been in southern California that it is too bad that the arrangement will be made national in its scope only in the millennium. The game of golf itself has reached a uniformly high standard throughout the world because famous players from all sections of the globe intermingle freely. Southern California is witnessing the invasion of a horde

of visiting golfers representing the peak of the game, and each one uses practically the same clubs and the same swing when playing the game because they have found the system that is productive of best results.

The same thing can not be said of the greenkeepers and their courses in different sections of the country because there is practically no intercourse between them. A few greensmen from some of the larger courses back east do manage a trip to the Pacific coast during the winter. While here they are suitably impressed by the climate, the movie studios, the orange groves with the snow-covered mountains in the background, the largest ocean in the world, the trimness of the golf courses and the fineness of their greens. Greatly edified, they return home with copious notes from which their courses derive the benefit.

Danger in Self-Sufficiency

It was not so many years ago that California golf courses had very little to recommend them except their environment, which hardly could be helped. When it became popular for business men to go west to pursue golf in a serious manner they brought many of their ideas of golf courses with them. When promoters with an eye to bringing more visitors hit upon the scheme of offering large money prizes to attract famous golfers and their attendant publicity, ideas began to pour in thick and fast. From the jumble some were accepted and others were rejected until today California greenkeepers need apologize for their courses to no one. The trouble now is that some of them are too conscious of this fact and are beginning to feel that they are omniscient and self-sufficient. True, conditions in California are vastly different from those in any other place, but to believe that no one elsewhere can tell local greenkeepers anything about their business is a pathetic fallacy.

Incidentally, in connection with what has been said above about visitors to California, conflicting elements lock horns on western golf courses. Many of the pillars of these courses are made up of what the low-brow element would call "old fogeys" whose one idea is to get in their daily round of golf and share of ultra-violet rays in spite of tournament committees and the weather. Therefore any person or thing which prevents them from the fullest enjoyment of the Royal and Ancient sport is regarded as an interloper and is

met with scowls of disapproval. For this reason tournaments are regarded by them as wholly useless. The publicity is regarded merely as a means of making their favorite courses too crowded to play on with accustomed leisure, and as for the benefits of constructive criticism coming from the visitors, the criticism is rarely heard and is almost never constructive.

It is easy to understand, then, how members of the old guard will come into violent conflict at times with enterprising officials who are desirous of scheduling tournaments.

Players' Ideas Help

Returning to the original idea, inasmuch as greenkeepers probably never will be able to visit other courses throughout the nation periodically, the best thing for them to do is to welcome the visits of traveled tournament players and obtain from them what particles of information are available. Such a suggestion will be the signal for a howl of derision to arise from the ranks of the greenkeepers, but there it is. One can almost hear the golf course superintendents saying, "What does Mac-Smith Horton know about conditions in California? He probably doesn't even know what kind of grass he has on his own course." Admitting the possibility that the ubiquitous pro knows not whereof he speaks in regard to grasses and their names, he does know something which no greenkeeper should be so foolish as to ignore; that is, the professional recognizes a good course when he plays upon it, and after all this is the final test of a greenkeeper's ability, to make a course enjoyable to play upon. A golf course superintendent may have an excellent irrigation system; he may handle his men well; he may save his club money; but if he cannot provide a course that is a joy to play upon, then he has failed in his duty.

The foregoing may seem elementary, but the fact remains that a number of greenkeepers in California as elsewhere can meet every argument as to why their courses are in bad shape with a splendid rebuttal, but the results which count are not forthcoming.

However, southern California greenkeepers as a group are exceedingly anxious to further their knowledge in regard to turf culture when and wherever possible. For some time they have had a tentative arrangement with the botany department of the University of Southern California

whereby a certain amount of research is being carried on in the field of grass diseases and ailments. Also a graduate student in the chemistry department of the same institution is attempting to find some chemical which will kill Bermuda grass and permit other grasses to grow. He is approaching the matter from the angle of Bermuda's inability to thrive in acid soil. However, the college scientist should take cognizance of the fact that a too strongly acid soil condition makes for susceptibility to turf and grass diseases. That is one of the reasons by lime had such a sudden return to popularity as a fertilizer. It was used to counteract the acid condition of the soil and prevent disease. All of which constitutes a vicious circle: Bermuda grass under normal soil conditions to fine grass with an acid soil and disease susceptibility, back to normal soil and Bermuda with the introduction of lime. However, scientists are not in the habit of being discouraged, and hundreds of greensmen are praying for their success.

Keyless Locks Now Available on New Lockers

DUDLEY LOCK CO., Chicago, announces recently completed arrangements whereby their self-closing, vault type, keyless locks, silent, quickly operated and pick-proof, can be specified by clubs when purchasing lockers from any locker manufacturer. There is no appreciable increase in cost over key-operated equipment.

Outstanding among the advantages of this combination lock for country club use, according to the Dudley people, are: complete elimination of the lost key nuisance and expense, prevention of locker pilferage, an easily changed combination, and a self-locking feature—when the locker door is closed, it is locked. Another feature is that members while on the course need not carry bulky key-rings in their knicker pockets.

For changing over existing key-locks, the Dudley people make a vault type lock similar to the above and a padlock type model, both easily attachable to locker doors by any club employe.

