

GREENKEEPERS Plan New Year PROGRESS

By JOHN MORLEY

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WITHOUT giving away to any unjustified optimism the observer of conditions in the greenkeeping field can risk a forecast of 1930 that should be cheering to the golfing public. Basing my statement on the foundation of scientific practice that we have been painstakingly establishing for some time, I believe it is not too much to say that the new year will witness notable advances in mechanization of maintenance methods, labor management, watering and drainage, and in fertilization.

As greenkeepers we are accustomed to having our fondest plans knocked galley-west by the weather, and even though we are agriculturists to the extent of producing one of the most intensive fine crops in the world, the government is not expected to control the weather for us or discount its effect by putting aside vast sums for golf course relief. Consequently, even though a greenkeeper be a genius of the first rank, his best work may be entirely offset by the weather. Mark Twain said it is strange that with so many complaints about the weather so little is done in the matter. With our watering systems to counteract prolonged droughts and our drainage systems to handle an excess of rainfall, we are hoping that we will be able

to do something on our own account in this matter of weather-making. The remaining important factor we have to contend with is that of sunshine, and with the constant pressure upon us to have our courses always to the finest point of perfection it may be that we will see the day when the ultra-violet lamps and other devices will have a place in turf development and maintenance. Today the notion may savor somewhat strongly of Jules Verne, but tomorrow, who knows?

With the advent of practical cost-keeping systems the green-

keepers have been brought face to face with the imposing element of labor costs and with the problem of their reduction. The national average probably would show somewhere between 60 and 70 per cent of all maintenance cost being that of labor. In the selection of this manpower, its training, supervision and effective utilization, I believe the greenkeepers have made an amazing advance during the past few years. Arrangement of our programs so we can keep the key men of our forces employed all year at economy to our clubs has enabled us to tremendously increase the standard of our staffs. Still there is a lot to be done in this direction and I suggest that each greenkeeper and greenchairman give the matter their combined, earnest study. The ideal situation would be mechanization of course work to the extent that a small, well-trained and conscientious staff could be employed the year around, with machinery helping them to do the summer work that now requires so much manual effort, and conditioning of the machinery, painting, landscaping work, etc., profitably employing the time when the course is out of play.

A Businesslike Setup

From California, where the fairway watering systems have been vital details of the pictures of some years, the course of virtually automatic watering is pushing its way eastward. Since the realization of the good done by these systems there has been provided the commercial spur to technical development. Conditions in California and those in the central states and east differ radically in a number of respects with regard to watering but nevertheless the basic work done by the Californians in course watering has been such that not much work will have to be done in perfectly adapting the Cali-



John Morley, greenkeeping genius, has been N. A. G. A. chief since the organization's start.

fornia systems to the requirements of courses farther east. With fairway watering, of course, comes the item of a big jump in annual maintenance expense, for golf course water does not fall "like the gentle rain from heaven" on the budget. It hits it with a jolt that makes the easterners, who are unaccustomed to big-volume water charges, wince. The demands of the players for perfectly conditioned courses, however, seem to very plainly point to a vast extension of watering systems.

When you get to the complicated problems of watering, drainage and fertilization, you are confronted with a necessity of guarding against expensive errors. When the clubs realize that these are factors that frequently wrap the specialists in these fields into serious tangles, the greenkeeper will not be begrudged the money it will cost to handle the situation properly. No one knows any better than the veteran expert greenkeeper what it costs to conduct work in an empirical manner. But we've had to do it so long that it seems to be in the order of things. That's not as it should be and I welcome the promise of 1930 in the extension of really qualified and sound service of experts. The cost of such service to a golf club will be an economy over a period and at least will represent a fee that will give clubs a proper idea of the value of the greenkeepers' services.

As it is, the greenkeeper is expected to be a specialist in fertilization, irrigation, plant diseases, labor management, construction methods, equipment care, landscaping and turf development for an establishment representing frequently an investment in excess of a million dollars, but one would never guess it, judging by the prevailing salary scale. However, we are a philosophical bunch and the happy and striving thralls of the great god Golf. It is a dangerous confession for a greenkeeper to make where it will come to the attention of green-chairman who set the figures on the pay-checks, but I believe most of us in the greenkeeping profession get as much thrill out of being able to say, "My course is the best kept in the country for the money," as we do out of drawing our salaries. It is not remotely possible, though, that our wives and children may think otherwise.

It is every greenkeeper's earnest intention to make 1930 the year of most decided advance not only in the condition of his

own course but of golf maintenance in general. This is the key-note of the convention the National Association of Greenkeepers of America will hold at Louisville, Feb. 4-7. Here we expect to marshal our men and methods for the 1930 campaign, and on behalf of the greenkeepers I cordially invite each green-chairman to attend this meeting. Come if you possibly can, and at least please use your influence on your directors to see that your greenkeeper is sent to this valuable and intensely practical conference.

Affeldt Heads Long Island Greenkeepers

ELMER F. AFFELDT of Glen Oaks G. & C. C., Great Neck, L. I., was elected president of the Long Island Greenkeepers' association at its organization meeting. Alfred E. Lundstrum, Crescent A. C., was elected first vice-president; Wm. Joy, Pomonok G. & C. C., Flushing, L. I., second vice-president, and Charles Walker, Maple street, Westbury, L. I., secretary-treasurer. Trustees elected: John Dishington, The Creek club, Loest Valley, L. I.; Capt. J. P. Truran, North Hills G. C., Douglaston, L. I., and Otto Sherzer, Lenox Hills G. C., Farmingdale, L. I.

The new organization plans to have one meeting a month during the winter and two a month during the summer months. Half of the bi-monthly summer meetings will be held outside at the courses of members.

WE know a player who for years has followed the practice of kicking or otherwise removing stones from the paths and fairways of his home course. This is done while walking between shots and between greens and tees. It does not interfere in the least with his game or the play of others. His course still has a good many stones on it in spots, so that the casual observer can not see much to our player friend's stone-removing activity. But there is something to his practice—a great deal, in fact. Through his influence and example other players have adopted it, and the clearing that has resulted is very noticeable to those who have their eyes open.—*From the Green Section Bulletin.*

CGRAB grass is an annual. Cut it off just below the crown. The roots can not grow another plant.