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Compare Course Costs With Extra Care

LIKE all Gaul, the greenkeeper's problem seems to be divided in three parts, money, methods and results. These pages have been packed with method and results articles but we plead guilty to having slighted the financial aspects of greenkeeping in the allotment of space. The reason for this omission is quite plain, but is losing its strength rapidly with the increase in the number of experienced green-chairmen.

We regarded loose publicity on greenkeeping costs and its loose interpretation and employment in the same manner as set forth in an issue of the *New England Greenkeepers Newsletter*. Mr. Guy C. West wrote what we reprint at length below.

Danger in Skimming

"It is unfair to say or publish that any course is costing more than another to maintain, without giving the greenkeeper and green chairman a hearing at least. It is possible that they may desire to spend more money, getting possibly a better degree of maintenance, and it is probable that they may be able to point out some factors which influence costs there which may not be apparent to the "discoverer of costs" who too often skims the surface.

"It is my personal opinion, and I have made a study of golf course costs for several years, that a search for costs may do some good, if it is complete and fair. What would do much more good would be a campaign to get every course to have and keep a cost analysis system of their own. A comparison of costs from year to year on any course will often do more good than a comparison with costs on another course.

"All the questionnaires ever sent out, and all the results obtained, will not alter the conditions now prevalent that courses spend far different amounts for maintenance. There might be mentioned the fact that different clubs have differing dues, differing memberships, hence different incomes. Expenditure must be governed by income. Then too, there is the range in courses from the "cow-pasture" variety, to one of championship calibre. Add to these differing factors, such as topography, soil, water supply, kinds of grass, yardage, etc., all influencing costs, and one can readily see that costs will al-

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ways differ. They will differ from year to year on the same course, and the cost system should show why and where they differ. Be prepared to explain these changes on your own course, and do not forget to watch out for unfair comparisons, and to condemn them!"

Where Greenkeeper Benefits

This statement sets forth the able greenkeeper's idea on maintenance cost study. He has nothing to conceal and eventually, we hope, club officials will give their greenkeepers full credit for the effort being made to cut maintenance costs. It must be appreciated that the greenkeepers' main hope of establishing a higher salary standard is in maintaining their courses in first class shape with such economy that the thrift will permit a more respectable portion of the budget for the greenkeeper's salary. You can see that legitimate and perfectly human impulse sticking out all over the studious interest and good attendance at the short courses in greenkeeping and at the greenkeepers' meetings.

These fellows are anxious to save money for their clubs but they also are excusably anxious to keep from being nailed to the cross by club officials who hear that a

neighboring course is costing a couple of thousand dollars less to maintain per year, and look no further into the matter.

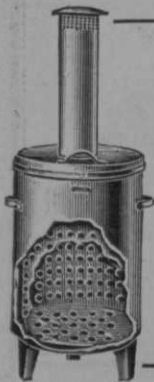
One of the well known greenkeepers, Fred Sherwood of the Birmingham G. C. (Detroit district) reveals the greenkeepers' attitude in the matter. Sherwood says:

What and How Spent?

"Why, once in a while, don't some of the first-class golf clubs that have such praiseworthy features reported of them in the magazines, give their greenkeeper permission to publish in detail the expense of his maintenance for the year?"

"It would make interesting reading not only for the Chairman of the Green-Committee but also for the greenkeeper if one could compare notes with some of the tip-top clubs on such items as labor, fertilizing, seed, equipment, etc., for one financial year. If conditions were all alike it would be a very simple manner to adjust a budget, but all things not being equal in golf courses it is a complex problem to arrive at a figure that would be a basis for an 18 hole golf course (in expenditure).

"Some of the leading American golf course sites were picked by expert golf architects regardless of expense in loca-



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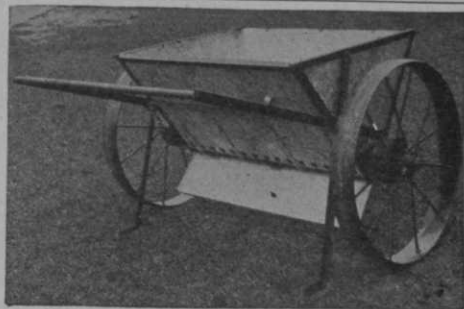
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tions where soil conditions were good in every way; fields which had probably been fertilized for a decade or two. It can readily be understood where this condition exists that the yearly expenditure is not nearly so high as a golf course that is laid out on hilly ground of baked clay or a site which is probably a composition of very poor sandy soil.

"It is a common remark of club members to say, 'I played so and so's course last week, the greens were excellent, fairways were perfect; why can't we have the same conditions here?' The greenkeeper will probably say, 'I hear they are good, but how much do they spend on them?' If budgets were published showing figures of expense so that comparisons could be made, it would be good arguments for many greenkeepers when talking to their chairman. To my mind it is far more important in greenkeeping to keep tab of all your expenditures than it is to say, 'I put on so many pounds of Mr. Black's mixture, per directions.'"

GOLFDOM welcomes pictures of your course, clubhouse exterior and interior, and of your pro shop. Send them to us, please.

Member Interest Sags, Club Offers Insurance

ONE of the clubs that was put on the bum by promoters who took their customary deadly percentage of the income during the formative stage, made use of an interesting life insurance plan in trying to revive the moribund enterprise.

The club's bulletin describing the idea read:

Last August the membership voted an assessment of \$250.00 and about four hundred members have met this assessment to date. If you pay this assessment you are insured under a 20-Year Endowment Policy for \$250.00 plus the amount you have already paid in for your membership. The Club pays the premiums on the Life Insurance Policy, which means that you or your beneficiary are assured of the money paid in and you have your membership equity without cost. The money so collected will remain in trust until there is sufficient amount to go ahead with the building. If sufficient money is not raised, the money less nominal expenses will be returned.



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