

Greenkeeper's Executive Duties Are Vital to Course Success

By EDWARD B. DEARIE, Jr.

GREENKEEPERS are executives in an industry having a capital investment of almost three quarters of a billion dollars. Recent statistics show that over \$50,000,000 is invested in country club property in the Chicago area alone. In the smaller cities separate investments range from \$25,000 to \$100,000 and in the larger cities from \$150,000 to \$3,000,000.

The importance of greenkeepers to this enormous "industry" cannot be over-estimated. They are absolutely necessary for its continuance and for the preservation of the huge investment. Abolish the position of greenkeeper and see how quickly courses deteriorate and how quickly golf loses its popularity.

There is considerable opportunity for waste and inefficiency in golf course maintenance but it is gradually being eliminated. Competent greenkeepers all over United States are saving their clubs several times their salaries each season.

The cost of maintenance of golf courses in the smaller cities ranges from \$7,500 to about \$12,000 and in the larger cities from \$12,000 to about \$28,000, although in one case it is as high as \$80,000. With these figures in mind greenkeepers should get and should insist upon compensation in accordance with their value.

Executive ability is one of the qualifications of successful greenkeepers. The importance of this qualification is often overlooked for their is a tendency to regard greenkeepers merely as specialized agriculturists or agrostologists. However, the best executive in a group of equally competent turf culturists is likely to be the most successful.

Exacting Qualifications

The greenkeeping profession is peculiar in that it requires men who are able to take both broad and narrow views of their dominions. They must be workmen, skilled in the performing of a multitude of tasks, and at the same time trained executives. There are few professions in which

the contrast in the necessary qualifications is so marked.

Greenkeepers who do not thoroughly understand turf culture usually cannot keep golf courses in satisfactory condition; greenkeepers, who are poor executives cannot operate courses economically and satisfactorily. Results will speak for themselves. Lack of knowledge of agrostology will cause deterioration of courses; lack of executive ability will cause increased operating costs.

Many greenkeepers concentrate their attention upon the practical and theoretical aspects of turf culture when they might better concentrate upon development of executive ability. It is true that few greenkeepers have had the advantage of business training prior to entering their profession. While greenkeeping is being established on a firmer business basis, a minority of greenkeepers are proficient in such executive work as cost analysis, budget making, report making, and details of management. If they would realize that they are not merely workmen or supervisors but executives, they would improve their chances of success.

Courses should be operated on well-defined systems. After all, golf clubs are business enterprises. It is true that they are not operated for profit but they should pay dividends nevertheless. These dividends are presented to stockholders, or members, in the form of service.

Greenkeepers should be business men and should understand the fundamental principles of business. College educations are not necessary. The best educator is experience.

Greenkeepers who are only half familiar with their courses, are only half efficient. The more they know about their work, the more interesting it will become. Well-informed greenkeepers are always the most competent.

Records Are Important

The keeping of daily records by green-



A green at the new course at Lawsonia which was planned as a major item in making the Wisconsin resort a magnet for the mid-west elite

keepers is recommended, as they provide a basis for comparison and for a more complete understanding of maintenance problems. Such daily reports should contain all essential information regarding weather conditions, temperature, and work performed upon the course. The psychological reaction of report making upon greenkeepers is important. It accustoms greenkeepers to dealing with figures and leads them to pay more attention to costs and the details of operation.

Weekly reports should be compiled from the daily reports and submitted to the green-chairmen so that they can be made use of at the usual meetings of the green committees or boards of governors. These reports should be self-explanatory and should provide actual insight into the operations of the courses and should not be merely meaningless jumbles of figures. While lengthy reports are not desirable, they should be comprehensive enough to include all necessary explanations. False pictures are often presented through inadequate reports.

Annual reports should be carefully prepared by greenkeepers who will find them excellent means of informing officials of their clubs of their competency and efficiency.

Cost accounting is not a very complicated subject and greenkeepers, who care to do so, may easily learn its principles. Through its application they will be able to interpret the figures in their reports more intelligently. Statistics are worthless unless they are properly understood and cost accounting provides a ready means for their interpretation.

Annual budgets depend upon complete knowledge of maintenance costs such as

provided by cost analyses. If these costs are unknown budgets are merely guesses.

Explaining the Budget

Budgets should be self-explanatory and should be prepared in such form that they will be easy to interpret. Frequently budgets are trimmed not because of the impossibility of raising the money, but because the necessity of desirability of the work outlined is not understood thoroughly. If necessary, budgets should be explained item for item.

Extravagance has no place in golf course maintenance — and neither has penuriousness. There is no economy in letting courses deteriorate and greenkeepers should not be afraid to ask for sufficient appropriations to operate their courses properly. Golfers insist upon playable courses.

"Old Man Economy" should not be permitted to scare greenkeepers just because new budgets are in the offing. The fall is the time to do considerable conditioning work which is often postponed to the detriment of courses. Essential work should be done when most practical.

Greenkeepers should use sales ability to sell adequate budgets to their clubs. They should be able to explain thoroughly and convincingly why all items are necessary and important. Removal of one or two items as non-essential reduces confidence in budgets as a whole.

Purchasing of supplies and equipment is another executive responsibility of greenkeepers. They will find the use of requisition blanks more efficient than verbal orders. Copies of purchase orders should be sent to green-chairmen with notations as to arrival and price. Hasty

purchasing seldom secures low prices or satisfactory service.

Higher standards of golf course maintenance than ever before are insisted upon today by golfers. It costs real money to keep courses up to the required standards. In most cases the necessary funds are forthcoming when the possibilities of the courses are once realized. The ultimate goal is perfection.

Bright Future for Greenkeepers

The future of the greenkeeping profession is very promising. The golf industry is expanding rapidly and the popularity of the game is continually increasing. New courses are being laid out every season and there are thousands of undeveloped golf course sites beckoning. There is a wide field for competent, well-trained greenkeepers who are both experienced agronomists and business executives. Members of the profession are constantly growing into their full responsibilities.

At the present time there is a surplus of so-called greenkeepers who are merely caretakers. Real greenkeepers with heart and soul in their work have much with which to look forward.

In comparison with other executives, greenkeepers as a whole are underpaid. To a certain extent this condition is their own fault as they have not made proper efforts to secure the recognition to which they are entitled through their responsibilities. As knowledge of maintenance problems is attained by golfers they will become more and more appreciative of greenkeepers.

The importance of greenkeepers was not realized by club officials until recently. They were regarded as merely caretakers or labor foremen. However, it was soon found that courses would not run themselves and that the investments were too large to be left in incompetent hands. Greenkeepers today are important club executives and probably spend half the annual payments by golfers of United States.

Confidence is the keystone of greenkeeping efficiency. As executives, greenkeepers must always keep foremost in mind the best interests of their clubs. By this attitude they will best enhance their own personal fortunes. Golf clubs have most appreciation for greenkeepers who are alert in their interests. Clubs which put full confidence in their greenkeepers are likely to get the best services. Green-

keepers like to show appreciation by maintaining courses as economically and satisfactorily as possible. The desire of all greenkeepers worthy of the name is golf course perfection.

Illinois P. G. A. Plans Profitable Year

AT the best attended meeting in the history of the Illinois P. G. A., held April 21 at Chicago, plans were laid for a newspaper advertising campaign that will employ space in the Chicago and a few of the down-state newspapers over a period of 16 weeks. Small space with bold display of the high-spots of the pros' case for the players' business will be used. Radio broadcasting also is in prospect.

A tie-up with the newspaper advertising is to have display signs in the shops of the members. Changes of display cards to go in the frames will be furnished so new cards will bring the newspaper advertising's force up to the point of sale.

Although the greater part of the association's membership is in the Chicago district the association intends to devote quite a little attention to the interests of the other professionals in the state this year. Employment, club official education, protection and development of the pros' shop business and a varied tournament schedule comprise the major features of the Illinois P. G. A. 1930 program.

A lively drive for new members is in progress so any professional desirous of joining is invited to write Edward Gayer, Sec., Illinois P. G. A., at the association's city headquarters, room 604-236 N. Clark St., Chicago.

Jack Dillon Out of Boston Hospital

JACK DILLON, well known wholesale golf goods distributor of Chicago, has returned to his home after a long siege in a Boston hospital. During Jack's absence his business and office at 20 E. Jackson, Chicago, is in charge of P. Norman, a likeable and active kid. Norman's pro sales have been such that they have eased the stiff rap of the sick-bay for Jack. The Norman boy is adding items for sale to managers so the selling costs and waste time per club will be cut down.