

# Greenkeeper-Technician Hook-up Is Essential in Turf Research

BY B. R. LEACH

Leach pours on the old pepper again. Most of his dope GOLFDOM agrees with. In other spots we want it understood that Leach fires away as an individual and not as one expressing this journal's policy.

GOLFDOM was the factor in the golf field to persistently and successfully urge the recognition of practical greenkeepers by appointment to the advisory committee of the Green section.

The result of these appointments was to give all the greenkeepers authoritative representation in Green section activities. But how many of the greenkeepers took advantage of this representation by DEFINITELY suggesting research activities their members of the section's advisory committee could bring to the section's managing executives for action? Few . . . if any!

There never has been any indication that the Green section, even with its sharp limitations of finance and available staff, wouldn't have welcomed this co-operation from the battle-field.

So, in fairness and full acquaintance with the facts, we disagree with our teammate Leach's remarks about the greenkeeper having to howl for co-operation from the technical investigator and about the implied criticism of the research worker's attitude.

Greenkeepers' use of the existing machinery, the advisory board, would put them in the drivers' seat already provided for them.

The way things are now, it seems to many of the greenkeepers with whom we have talked, and to us, that internal co-operation and exercise of the advisory board representation is the first place for greenkeepers to show a capacity for the prominent place in organized research to which they logically are entitled.

THERE WAS a time when anyone handicapped with a weak heart just naturally had to take it on the nose and suffer. If a party with a weak heart went to a doctor in those days the Doc soaked him the usual two bucks but all he got from the Doc for the two bills was maybe some castor oil or epsom salts. In other words a weak heart had the Docs of those days up a tree. They had no remedy or palliative for a weak, broken or whisky-jaded heart. They probably blamed it all on the abnormal weather conditions just the same as the boys did in 1931 when most of the golf turf in the country went sour.

However, although the Docs had no remedy for heart trouble there was an old lady down in the South of England who was making a barrel of jack selling bottles of herb medicine at 60 cents per half-pint. It seems the word had sort of got around that this concoction was hot stuff for heart trouble. At any rate the old gal was brewing the dope in washtub lots and people came for miles around to buy it. More than one rich man's gilded coach halted at her humble door and bought a bottle because even a rich man will try anything when the orthodox Docs stall him along indefinitely.

Naturally all the medical school graduates called the old lady a quack and other harsh, unchristian names and talked heatedly about running her out of the country.

But there was an old Doc in the University of Edinburgh who was considerably more broadminded than the majority of his brother medicos. This Doc thought it might be worth while to investigate this herb medicine somewhat even though the stuff would in all probability be just another come-on.

So he sent his man Friday over to the old gal's house and bought a bottle of the

herb dope, took it into his laboratory, tried to analyze it and got nowhere. This naturally got the old Doc's goat. He determined to get to the bottom of this entire affair or know why.

He went down to the bank, opened up his safe deposit box and stuffed his pocket full of hoarded five dollar gold pieces.

We shortly find the old Doc sitting in the old dame's kitchen and feeding her a smooth line of conversation designed to make the old lady feel happy and important and to get her off her guard.

"Emma," says the Doc, "how come you discovered what to put in this herb medicine?"

"Oh, Doctor!" says the worthy dame, "I didn't discover it. It all came to me in a dream. Three years ago last Christmas I ate too much plum pudding and rum sauce and it gave me the belly ache and bad dreams all that night. I dreamed that if I went out in the garden and gathered the leaves of 7 different kinds of plants and boiled the leaves altogether and took a tablespoonful of the liquor every two hours it would cure my tummy ache, and it certainly did. Then I gave some to Farmer Smith and it helped his heart. He told a lot of the other people and now I'm selling a lot of it. It is good for bellyache and chills but best of all for weak heart."

### What Research Needs

"That certainly is interesting," says the Doc. "What's the names of the plants from which you gather the leaves?"

"Wouldn't you like to know," says Emma.

The Doc rattled the gold pieces in his trousers pocket and says, "How much?" but Emma just sort of acted as though unwilling to play ball.

But the Doc knew his women. He began to toss gold pieces onto the table and when he had tossed \$280 onto the red-checked table cloth Emma couldn't stand the pressure any longer. She told him the name of the 7 different herbs and gathered up the pile of jack.

So the Doc got a lot of leaves from each of these 7 different kinds of plants and boiled each lot separately. Then he went up to the hospital, corralled all the charity patients with weak hearts and began to dose them with the stewed herbs. After the Doc had monkeyed around awhile, during which process 3 charity patients died suddenly, he found out that 6 of the herbs were N. G. as far as any effect upon the heart was concerned. The liquid obtained

by stewing the seventh herb however, certainly packed enough wallop as regards its action upon the heart. This plant or herb was nothing in the world but the common or ordinary garden variety of Foxglove, known under the scientific or botanical name of *digitalis*.

Having eliminated the 6 valueless ingredients of the old dame's brew the Doc concentrated his efforts on the digitalis, worked out the method of extraction from the leaves, determined the best dosages for the patient and otherwise refined the method of using this drug as a heart stimulant. The Doc gave a paper on the subject of digitalis at the next meeting of the British Medical society and naturally became a famous personage. The drug is still the mainstay of the medical profession in the treatment of heart disease.

The above is a true, if somewhat sketchy, history of the steps leading to the discovery of digitalis, one of the outstanding events in medical history.

When the old lady threw those 7 herbs together and boiled them she had no conception of what she was doing. It was just an accident. When Farmer Jones noted that the concoction eased his heart trouble it was just an accident that the old bird had gumption enough to associate cause and effect. It was an accident when the Doc was broad-minded enough to investigate the herb medicine because most technical men are too damned swell-headed to think an ordinary guy knows anything. Science belatedly entered into the deal when the Doc eliminated the worthless ingredients of the mixture and narrowed down to the active ingredient.

### Investigating Accidents

In plain words most of the great so-called scientific discoveries straight down thru the ages *were accidents which some trained technical observer had brains and gumption enough to investigate*. Few of our outstanding scientific discoveries have been based on deliberate, premeditated research. What we need is more technical investigation of *accidental* discoveries in the turf racket.

Consequently, in every field of human activity, the most outstanding research and technical men, the most successful in the creation of new ideas and principles are those men who keep their ears to the ground, who can meet the practical, everyday worker on a common ground and can listen sympathetically while the worker

tells what he knows, or what he is thinking about.

In no other industry as in the turf maintenance business is it so vital that the trained technical investigator be brought into closer daily contact with the greenkeeper in this field of research. In fact our degree of progress in the elimination of our present-day turf troubles will hinge directly on the degree of intimacy of thought and action between the practical and theoretical personnels of the business.

### A Greenkeeper's Slant

As an elaboration of this contention and as an indication of what is going on in the minds of many clear thinking and sound members of the greenkeeping profession, let me quote the remarks of one of the country's leading greenkeepers as we chewed the rag at the Greenkeepers' convention in New York City.

"Greenkeepers," said he, "have had plenty of trouble in the past, by being compelled to adopt new methods of turf management as endorsed by the turf research organizations. The golf clubs had confidence in these research organizations and the greenkeepers had to fall in line with the new methods or quit.

"When the Green section came out with its acid-soil theory for turf and condemned the use of lime the greenkeeper had to fall in line. The fact that the greenkeeper was not consulted as regards this change in soil policy, the fact that the great bulk of greenkeepers did not believe in the wisdom of acid soil for turf was neither here nor there. A few years later the Green section reversed its policy as regards the use of lime, thereby indicating that the greenkeepers' stand on the lime question was far from being a lot of hooy. But this did not save the greenkeeper all the grief experienced during those years when soil was made so acid that the turf would not stand up. It is true that the extreme attitude toward soil acidity for turf costs the clubs a lot of money but it cost the greenkeeper a lot more grief and many times it cost him his job and reputation. Looking back on the turf research program over the last 10 years it is enough to say that the research lads went off half-cocked on the lime question. They didn't have enough data to make any such drastic change in fine turf maintenance policy.

"The Green section's stand on the lime question was its outstanding mistake. Its stand on the fertilizer question with over-

emphasis on ammonium sulfate was another bad proposition for the greenkeeper—and the turf. Incidentally, I'll be charitable and not say anything about some strains of creeping bent shoved down our throats before technical birds knew that the damned stuff was red meat for brown-patch.

"The point I'm aiming at is simply this—all the time these technical lads were running wild, recommending this and that and condemning that and this, with club officials patting the technical boys on the back, the greenkeepers were accused of bellyaching every time one of them rose to put up a mild protest.

"Well, we can look back on turf research from 1920 to 1926 or 1927 with what is known as a balanced perspective. Those days are history. You and I know as far as results are concerned it isn't the wisest thing to talk too much about that period. Forgive it, but don't forget it.

### Situation Improves

"Since Monteith took over the Green section the policy has changed considerably. The appointment of Ganson Depew to the chairmanship of the Green section has also helped to strengthen the organization because it is very obvious that Mr. Depew means business. That gentleman is certainly no standpatter. It is also true that 3 greenkeepers now sit on the advisory board of the Green section.

"I nevertheless maintain that the greenkeeper, individually and collectively, is not considered or sufficiently consulted as regards the turf research policy and program. I maintain that the technical research worker is not duly impressed with the importance of intensively close contact with the greenkeeper as well as the club official.

"In fact I have felt for many years that the greenkeepers will never be entirely safe from the effects of recommendations made by irresponsible technical men until the greenkeepers have their own research institution and their own research staff of technical investigators who can check up and prove or disprove the recommendations of those research organizations not controlled by the greenkeepers. As things now stand the greenkeepers are helpless."

### Research Finance Club's Job

It would be the finest thing in the world if the greenkeepers could have their own research organization but unfortunately such an organization costs a heap of

money to establish and maintain, and it is improbable that the greenkeepers can finance the proposition. Furthermore it is not the function of the greenkeeper to finance turf research. Financing turf research is the duty of the golf clubs rather than the greenkeepers.

Some day (and probably not so far off at that) we will all awake to the realization that it is up to the clubs to finance the research while the responsibility for shaping and administering the research policy and program will be shared by the club officials and the greenkeepers, with the latter *in the majority*.

Thinking golf club officials have realized for some time that the greenkeeper has too long been unemployed in the research councils. The educational programs put on at the annual conventions of the Greenkeepers' association opened the eyes of the club officials to the administrative abilities of the greenkeepers. So much so in fact that the Green section gave up the annual winter meeting as unnecessary in view of the greenkeeping convention program and the Green section's summer sessions.

We have seen turf research established at several of the state experiment stations as a result of funds obtained by the efforts of the greenkeepers and we see the greenkeepers cooperating with the research staffs of these experiment stations.

Now we can see that the thinking minds of the Green section personnel are beginning to realize that greenkeepers, representative of the *professional* side of the turf business, as contrasted with the club officials who at best are only amateurs at the business, are capable and worthy of being loaded down with a large slice of the work and responsibility which goes along with the honor of running an organization such as the Green section.

Let the greenkeeper put his shoulder to the wheel, cooperate in every way possible and it won't be long before the club officials will load the whole job of running the research end of the U. S. G. A. onto the broad back of the greenkeeper.

Club officials will gladly unload this job onto the greenkeeper as soon as they are satisfied that the greenkeeper will carry on properly. When this shift in administrative policy occurs you will find that there will be a decided change in the attitude of the turf research worker toward the greenkeeper. The greenkeeper won't have to howl for cooperation from the technical investigator.

## IOWA GREENSMEN ORGANIZE

### State Association Formed at Ames Short Course

**S**IXTY-TWO greenkeepers, pro-greenkeepers and chairmen, representing 25 Iowa clubs attended the first greenkeeping short course, held at Iowa State college, Ames, March 7. At this short course the Iowa Greenkeepers' ass'n was organized. Jack Welsh, greenkeeper-pro at Wakonda C. C., Des Moines, was elected president. The new association has a charter membership of 25. Members must have served 3 years as greenkeepers. Mike Shearman, Sioux City C. C. was elected v. p.; Clarence G. Yarn, Woodside, sec., and Ed. White, Woodside, treas. Leo J. Feser, v. p., of the Minnesota Greenkeepers' assn., and Prof. Vernon T. Stoutemyer of Iowa State college were made honorary members.

First meeting of the association will be held at Wakonda C. C., April 11. Monthly meetings will be held at various courses.

The short course was crowded with practical addresses. Prof. B. J. Firkins explained soil testing for acidity and fertility, O. J. Noer discussed fertilizers, Prof. H. D. Hughes dealt with grass seeds and Dr. C. J. Drake talked helpfully on golf course insect pests. Jack Welsh talked on bent grass greens maintenance. Other speakers were L. J. Feser, and Dr. R. H. Porter and Prof. V. T. Stoutemyer of the state college faculty.

### TOUGH TIMES TO QUITTERS BUT CATERPILLAR LADS FATTEN UP

Peoria, Ill.—“Men who would not be beaten by the price-cutters, hot air peddlers and purveyors of equipment ‘sold’ on price” is what the publicity department of the Caterpillar Tractor Co. calls the representatives of the 41 Caterpillar dealer organizations who won honors in the company's 1931 “Dotted Line” contest.

More than 600 Caterpillar dealers' men participated in the contest and by using legs, lips and skulls without reference to clock or calendars usually governing working time, hung up remarkable sales records.

Considering that the Caterpillar fellows' major markets are in fields where things are supposed to be dead, the record they made is inspiring.