

# Greens Boss "Tells All"

## Protects Course's Future

**M**EMBERS of the Board who do not use the course a great deal, and who are responsible for the financial condition of the club have (in a joking way) over a period of years, talked about the greens expenditure, and when any curtailment is to be made, apparently look at the expenditure of \$11,000 as the big item that could and should be cut. Each year when our budget has been made at the beginning of the year, I have made quite an extensive explanation in writing of the reason for the expenditures. The explanation has not been questioned, but the Board, in a very complimentary and liberal way, has left the matter to me, and followed my judgment. Under present conditions, I believe this write-up should be carefully studied by the Board, as I feel that once and for all time we must reconcile our minds to the fact that the present minimum budget cannot be substantially pared this year, or any other year, without seriously affecting the members of the club.

First must be considered the policy that is to be followed in the next few years. My personal feeling is that the object of the club, stated in the By-Laws, viz—to maintain suitable grounds and buildings for the playing of golf and other games—is important to remember; also that the maintenance of the golf course at a high standard serves as the best binder of social interests of the club. I believe it advisable to maintain the course in as near 100 per cent condition as possible. We want our

**T**HERE are many green-chairmen who are afraid that the axe is being wielded too brutally on budgets. They have learned enough about course maintenance to know that a slash in maintenance expense, resulting in lowered standard of the course and consequent loss of members this year or in the future, is not helping things at the club.

These men battle in board meetings, but often to no avail because the whole picture of turf maintenance is a mystery to their associates.

At one of the lively New England clubs the threat of a too rigorous cut was imminent. To fully acquaint his fellow club members and officials with the whole meaning of the proposed step, the green-chairman marshalled the facts in a way that will make interesting reading for other chairmen and for greenkeepers. The case presented prevented a maintenance reduction that threatened a sad harvest.

Here, somewhat condensed, is the chairman's report.

members to derive the satisfaction and the feeling of pride of having the word go out that our's is a splendid course, far better than the average. Compare this with other courses, where the members are constantly complaining about, and apologizing for the condition of the course.

### Course Is Club's Life Blood

I think you should also realize that the golf course alone attracts new members. You might get new members with a fine course and a poor clubhouse, but you will never do so with a poor course, regardless of the perfection of the clubhouse. If you analyze the present membership you will find that the golfers are far in the majority, and that every new application comes primarily from a desire to play golf. In saying this, I do not intend to minimize the desirability of promoting the social side or the appeal which our wonderful social spirit has, but in last analysis, if you took away the golf course, the club as a social organization, would soon disintegrate.

By our expenditures on course maintenance we have been increasing our green-

fee revenue, which really should be credited to the green-committee expenditures. (*Green-fee figures for 6 years followed.*)

We have about reached the peak. I doubt if more than 31,000 people can play golf on a 9-hole course in a season and keep the golfers satisfied. By having a perfect 9-hole course, you also stave off the calls for an 18-hole course, which you do not want.

You should also compare greens committee expense with total expenses—(*Greens and other dept. expenses followed.*)

Since the course is by far the major source of enjoyment and attraction to the club members, is it fair to say that \$10.00 out of every \$28.00 expense is too great a proportion to pay for maintaining it? (*Then follows an explanation of new construction work of previous years.*)

While the new construction was no mean accomplishment, it will be seen that it took us two years to accomplish construction or reconstruction jobs that should have been done in a short period, and it should be borne in mind that as we were playing these holes during the entire period, much of the construction work was really maintenance, which would have been necessary had no changes been made.

It should be understood that while these were real accomplishments, they were only incidental to the regular work of maintenance. Much of the work was done in the off season, and it was all spread over so long a period that it had little effect on expenses. However, there is no doubt that at times the maintenance suffered because at times construction was at a stage where it could not be dropped to perform necessary maintenance.

(*The chairman next went into considerable detail to point out that much of this new construction was modernizing and enlarging work that had unavoidably hiked maintenance costs; bigger tees to mow, more grass to cut, more sand for traps, etc. He followed this with a detailed tabulation of the various items which made up the greens expenses for the previous five years, in parallel columns for ready comparison.*)

### Lauds Greenkeeper

To analyze separate items in budget this year and for the future, first consider "Greenkeeper's Salary," our largest expense. The present salary was established by the Board of Governors because it was definitely known that he had an offer from another club, which he could not afford to refuse unless we could make it worth his

while to stay. It was also in recognition of the fact that he is unusually capable. He not only performs in a supervisory capacity, but actually does a man's physical work besides. He is a graduate of an agricultural college, and has knowledge of the theory as well as the practice of his job. The fact that he is on the Board of Governors of the N. E. Greenkeepers Association, and is frequently consulted by other greenkeepers testifies to his standing among his associates. He is an expert automobile mechanic as well as a general mechanic and carpenter. Without him our bill for automotive repairs, and repairs on mechanical equipment, sharpening mowers, etc., would be high. He is willing, and well liked by his men and by the members.

It is obvious that regardless of the amount of time that a green-committee gives to its job, the success or failure of the work depends on the intelligence with which its ideas are carried out, and on a supervision which uses the men, money and materials to the best possible advantage. He is on the job and working 52 weeks of every year. This is a job which will not run itself, and I believe that in him we have a man that it would be difficult to replace at any price.

"Pro. and Assistants"—The salary is set by the Board of Governors. The pay seems no more than adequate, considering the work. This should in no sense be considered a greens expense, and is left in only to facilitate comparing the budget with former years.

"Labor"—consists of items of maintenance and construction as follows:

**Greens**—Cut and pole, cut banks and approaches, water, fertilizing, top-dressing, spraying brown patch, weeding, changing cups.

**Tees**—Cut, water, sand, towels and markers, renovation.

**Fairways**—Cut fairways, cut rough, water, fertilizing, renovation, cleaning brooks, drainage.

**Bunkers**—Cut, rake, renovation.

**Compost**—No. 1, No. 2.

**Repairs**—Tractors, water system, equipment, paint.

**Construction**—(Rebuild, replace) tees, fairways, bunkers, greens.

**Miscellaneous Course**—Nursery (tree), nursery (greens).

**Landscape**—Mowing, trimming, roads, paths, trees and shrubs.

**Tennis**—Applying and maintaining tapes, watering, rolling courts, applying top sur-

face material, applying chemicals to surface, repairs to nets, repairs to settees.

#### Miscellaneous (Other than golf course)

—House repairs.

Much of this work is not actually greens expense, such as snow slide, winter pond maintenance, club repairs, winter driveway maintenance, etc.

*(Each expense item in the budget then was explained and detailed plans for 1932 work were set forth. The report concluded:)*

To get back to the original question; can savings be made from present budget of \$11,000.00 in future 4 years, for help toward payment on enlargement to clubhouse? My analysis of the figures would be "no," even with the strictest economy now practiced, and give a course in the condition that the Board and members want. If any definite helpful suggestions can be made I would like them. If you feel dissatisfied with this report, I would like to make the suggestion that you allow me to get Prof. Dickinson, of Amherst, the authority on golf course maintenance in this part of the country, to come here, examine our course, judge in comparison with the above figures what our maintenance should be, and make a report.

"You would then probably feel better satisfied with the conclusion reached by the greenkeeper and the green-committee, which is that in consideration of expenses to carry addition to clubhouse, no moneys can be derived in the future from the green-committee budget which is now as low as possible, giving consideration to the possibility of machinery purchases at no distant date."

#### Dickinson Advises

*(Prof. Dickinson was called in to make an inspection and submit a report. It contained several points of general and timely importance, and is printed, in part, below.)*

"The course is well groomed. This condition is undoubtedly due to splendid executive foresight, and the greenkeeper's untiring efforts. However, had you not told me that time and energy had been placed on alterations and in beautifying the course, the condition of the course would have caused me to inquire what the distracting influence was.

"When alteration or reconstruction is carried on by the maintenance crew, even without special funds for such purposes, it inevitably means a lowering of the standard of maintenance because of the use of

funds for such purposes. Superficially your standard of maintenance has remained high throughout your alterations and construction. Frankly, there is much evidence that the basic structure is weakening and that much attention must be given to strictly maintenance, to prevent a serious breaking down of the club's greatest asset, their golf factory.

"Usually construction and alterations leave the club with an added maintenance liability. Your club is no exception to this condition; furthermore, I note from your budget for 1931 that you intend to carry the added burdens with a decreased budget. You and the greenkeeper must make up the very obvious deficit by still more efficient management, otherwise the standard will remain the same or decrease. Can you improve on your already very efficient management enough to meet the deficit?"

#### Cost Per Round

An analysis of your 1930 expenditures reveals the fact that with 31,000 persons playing your course, the players were obtaining golf at a cost to the club of 33.94c per person per day. If each person averaged 2 rounds (18 holes) each day, the cost or *maintenance allowance* per 9 holes was 16.97c. The Board of Governors should realize that this maintenance allowance is a minimum allowance, in fact it is dangerously low. In 1931 the budget permits a maintenance allowance of only 15.76c per 9 holes of golf, if 31,000 persons again play the course.

"In my opinion your maintenance budget for 1931 is the absolute minimum budget advisable for the next three years, if play is over 70 per cent of the 1930 play. It should be understood that the budget is for maintenance only; if a part is used for alterations, the standard of maintenance must necessarily be lowered. Under your traffic conditions I believe a maintenance allowance of 20c per person per 9 holes to be a just budget. Such an allowance to be for a 3 year period and any balance occurring to be carried over to the following year's budget. Whatever the budget amount is, if it can be guaranteed for 3 successive years with the balances available at any time, greater greenkeeping efficiency will result."

**I**N YOUR membership campaigns don't forget to enlist services of wives of present members. Women's growing interest in golf is a big factor in getting new names on club roster.