

Greenkeepers In Big Meet Prepare for Year's Work

By HERB GRAFFIS

AT THE SEVENTH ANNUAL educational conference and equipment show of the National Association of Greenkeepers there was an unexpectedly large registration of more than 600, which showed that the greenkeepers, with all their troubles, have a stubborn courage and faith that is inspiring.

Delegations came by busses, excursion tickets and the family flivver, all of them anxious to learn something that would help them maintain their golf courses in good shape on depression budgets. In two addresses, those of Ganson Depew and C. Wallace Johnson, regret was expressed that green-chairmen were not present to get a close-up of the way in which the greenkeepers went after their problems.

Reference was made to the greenkeeper as the "forgotten man" in golf. In the departed days of loose spending there were no fancy salaries for the men who had full responsibility for heavy investments in courses, and now that the years of the locust are on us, the salary situation of good greenkeepers for the most part is brutal. Low ebb of some club finances has made pro-greenkeeping a necessity at spots and this further penalizes greenkeepers, often at pronounced ultimate expense to the clubs where courses must be maintained in good condition or the members will leave for greener playing pastures.

Some of the criticism for the plight of the greenkeepers as the under-dogs has to be placed directly on them. D. W. Danley, manager of Glen Oak C. C., who arose from position as the club's greenkeeper to general management of the plant, brought out in his thoughtful address that greenkeepers were frequently victims of inferiority complexes. Danley added that the opposite often was true of managers who, though they might have started peeling spuds in some restaurant kitchen, took pride in their climbs. Too many greenkeepers, Danley said, seemed to think that because they might have begun weeding greens, they were doomed to rate with officials as greens weeders forever.

The Boys Grow Up

Very pleasant evidence of the fact that the greenkeepers have recognized some of their handicaps was seen in the annual business meeting and election. There was none of the petty politics and personalities that have made certain previous conventions discouraging to those who hoped that the greenkeepers would manifest the sound, broad judgment that is a vital qualification for the greenkeeping job. John MacGregor was re-elected president and with him the entire ticket rode to additional terms except for the election of Jack Pirie as director to replace Joe Williamson, whose other duties precluded acceptance.

In the attitude of the greenkeepers toward the strictly scientific guys there continued to be a growing mutual confidence and appreciation. Dr. E. J. Kraus of the University of Chicago in speaking on "Possible Botanical Aids to the Greenkeeper," gave the greenkeepers an insight into the scientists' problems, ambitions and temperaments that was long overdue. Kraus, an internationally noted botanist with wide experience in industrial botany, gave the greenkeepers many examples from without their field, showing why the scientists couldn't hop right to it and accomplish the miracles the "practical" men wanted. He frankly admitted that the botanists had arrived at plenty of wrong conclusions after some earnest thinking. They were led astray by wrong interpretations of conditions and reactions, and having discovered their errors later, found in them other reasons for a slow, safe and sure policy.

What's going on inside the plant, Kraus reminded the greenkeepers, is something for the laboratory authority to learn for the good of the greenkeeper who has no laboratory in which to learn the details of growing process, even if the greenkeeper had the time and technical qualifications.

As if the old problems weren't enough, Kraus said he expected there would be a whole new crop of problems come from fairway watering.

Closely tied up with the tenor of Kraus' remarks was the address on recent technical developments in turf maintenance, prepared by Dr. John Monteith, Jr., of the Green Section. Monteith was stricken ill suddenly and could not appear. His address was read by his associate, Kenneth Welton. In his address, which will appear in a later issue of GOLFDOM, the Green Section authority mentioned the unfortunate fact that some of the work of the section is minimized because of the practical man's suspicion of the theorist scientist.

He spoke of the modification of the "acid for bent" theory due to later discovered factors, in showing that the cry for miracles and speed in greenkeeping science was just as impossible to answer as it was for the automobile engineers 15 years ago to bring out 1933 models at that past date.

Monteith high-lighted the work the Section is doing on physical condition of soil, cutting grass length, weeds, watering, turf diseases and pests and machinery.

The problem of grass cutting length, to which Monteith referred, was covered in an address by that very able young scientist, Dr. C. M. Harrison of the University of Chicago, which appears in this issue. Harrison's research already has thrown overboard some of the pet old notions about cutting lengths. His work has considerable bearing on playing conditions as well as maintenance methods, especially with fairway watering becoming so general. Study of the Harrison findings is going to help many a greenkeeper to avoid trouble.

Fairway Watering Big Feature

That capital account work is not dead in the golf business was evident from the amount of interest shown in the addresses on fairway watering by Messers Dearie, Green and Worthington, the latter address being read by Ross Sawtelle in the absence of his associate. Rehabilitation policies and work as covered by Grange Alves also rated high as a timely subject handled in a practical manner. Alves pointed out the folly of having the work done in any other than expert fashion despite the temptation of low cost. He touched on the pressure of high taxes forcing golf clubs farther out in metropolitan districts when an opportunity to sell the present close-in real estate was presented. Alves mentioned this factor as warranting entire new plants rather than rehabilitation, but gave in detail sound methods of such reconstruction work as may be found advisable in present

times of low labor costs and keen competition for members. His paper appears on another page of this issue.

Dearie's remarks on the effect fairway watering has on maintenance practices gave details from his extensive observation of operation of fairway systems, fertilizing and cutting. Paul Green's paper on fairway watering from the members' viewpoint went into considerable detail regarding costs and gave figures of from \$2.50 to \$7.50 per member per year as the additional cost of fairway watering, exclusive of investment charges. Edward Worthington's presentation of fairway watering's effect as the mower manufacturers contemplate it, hazarded the opinion that the better character of ground and turf being worked on would keep mowers from faster depreciation despite the necessity of more frequent and heavier service. All three addresses will appear in GOLFDOM. Ralph Johnson, in his talk on machinery maintenance, reminded the greenkeepers that the most important machine they had to maintain was their brains, although in not those blunt words. Ralph, as superintendent at Medinah C. C., has machinery for 54 holes to maintain and operation of his equipment barn, with its repair facilities and close check on tools, so simplifies maintenance of machinery that the system outlined should make this matter easy for others with less extensive layouts.

Budgeting from the standpoints of greenkeeper and chairmen, was handled by Robt. Farmer, greenkeeper at Brynwood C. C., and C. Wallace Johnson, green chairman of Sunset Ridge, respectively. Farmer's address set forth plainly the mechanics of budget-making, based on past records and money available for the current year. Johnson went into the policy side of the affair. He gave the greenkeepers a tip-off as to what the chairmen were up against by being unable to appear on scheduled time because of having to sit in at a corporation board meeting. Dashing into the convention hall, Johnson gave them an earful about chairman and greenkeeper relations and records that would assure a fair and workable budget. He recommended that the chairman advise only in an executive capacity and not meddle in the actual running of the greenkeeper's job. He said it was imperative that the greenkeeper be kept acquainted with the club's financial status and that use be made of a good financial statement and cash position in buying right.

He passed on word to chairmen that the greenkeeper's salary not be cut too low. Giving the man money in keeping with the responsibility of his position, and paying working wages enough to keep good men in charge and on the course, entitled the club to hold the men strictly accountable for their work and got men who were expert and dependable.

Johnson cited the experience at Sunset Ridge C. C., where he is chairman and Byron Boyd is greenkeeper, to show that a workable budget could be kept closely on a monthly basis, even with allowances made for weather and disease attacks. Farmer's talk is printed in this issue; Johnson's will appear in March.

The program for the 1933 conference was featured by a very practical treatment of the scientists' slants on green-keeping. Prof. Musser of Penn State college, told in detail of that institution's search for the perfect turf grass which was the subject of an article in GOLFDOM some months ago. A helpful address, illustrated with slides, was given by Dr. W. P. Hayes, University of Illinois, his subject being "*Insects, Their Habits and Control.*" This paper, together with its illustrations, is to appear in GOLFDOM.

O. J. Noer, the roving reporter of turf culture, told what he had observed of maintenance practices in 1932 and warned that before long many clubs would pay dearly for unwise and unnecessary budget cuts last year. The cuts have brought about a host of new problems in the renovation of turf, Noer said. Among other details he mentioned was that of lime reducing the effectiveness of lead arsenate. Noer's report is scheduled for GOLFDOM publication in March.

Fundamentals of a management program for conditioning soil for good turf on greens and fairways were set forth by Prof. C. E. Millar, professor of soils at Michigan State College. He dealt with the chemical as well as structural problems of soil for golf turf and in demonstrating his points, cited analyses of topdressing soils used by Michigan greenkeepers. He went through these samples in detail and in comparing them with the ideal of soil from a scientific standpoint, concluded by wondering why there should be such wide differences of opinion between greenkeepers as to what constitutes good soil, in view of the definite functions good soil should have. Prof. Millar's valuable address will appear in full in GOLFDOM.

Harold Stodola, superintendent of the Keller municipal course at St. Paul, told of the maintenance practices at Keller, which in many respects are to be taken as standard practice for first class private courses. The PGA championship which was held at Keller in 1932, drew from the critical pros high tribute to the condition of the establishment for which Stodola is directly responsible.

Considerable attention is paid to soil analyses in conditioning the bent greens. He called attention to the public course players' liking for greens somewhat slower than the members of private clubs prefer. Tees constituted one of the major problems at Keller, as at every other municipal course. The narrative of Stodola's work and worries with grass tees, which he maintains in excellent shape, will be told in his complete address which will be run in an early issue of GOLFDOM. His method of preparing compost with extensive use of machinery and analytical check-ups also will appear in the complete publication of his helpful address.

The broad aspects of the greenkeeper's job which have become more prominent as the club general problems have increased, were treated by Ganson Depew, chairman of the USGA Green section; M. E. Farnham, superintendent, Philadelphia C. C., and Prof. J. G. Moore, University of Wisconsin.

Depew labeled the greenkeeper the keystone of today's golf and from his long experience as a green chairman and association official gave the laddies some of his sunshine treatment that was good for their hearts. Marse Ganse, beloved by thousands in golf, showed that he meant what he said about the greenkeepers' importance by taking a sleeper out of Buffalo, making his address at the conference, talking at the banquet, and then grabbing a night train back home. A thousand miles of travel, two nights on a Pullman, and eight crowded hours of addressing, visiting and getting the low-down on the greenkeepers' problems, showed the gang that Ganse is their pal and that the Green section is genuinely interested in the greenkeeper.

Farnham, an outstanding executive, counseled the greenkeepers that if they didn't work together with other department heads for the good of the club first, they couldn't expect much in the way of advancement. Prof. Moore gave the men an outline of a self-instruction policy that would prepare them for the opportunities

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that begin to appear for the greenkeepers
even in these tough times, because of the
growing recognition of the vital character
of their work.

The exhibitors found hope of sales in
the situation, as buying interest was lively
although actual sales were not much be-
cause of the absence of green-chairmen.
The association got better than an even
break on the show.

At the annual banquet a number of local
and national notables in golf spoke. A
merry floor show concluded the banquet
festivities.

Pacific NW PGA Votes on Secession

PACIFIC NORTHWEST PGA members
in a special meeting, Jan. 30, voted to
secede from the national organization
April 1. None of the Pacific PGA Oregon
members, including the president, Neil
Christian, was present.

Principal reason for the withdrawal is
stated to be elimination of PGA brands
by the national body. Many pros in Pacific
northwest had only concessions for PGA
merchandise at their clubs and with PGA
brand disappearance the objecting mem-
bers figure they can't make enough to get
by, let alone pay PGA dues.

Action may be reconsidered prior to
April 1. National body points out that
PGA and other pro brands of balls and
clubs are available this year and is con-
fident situation can be ironed out.

Central New York PGA withdrew from
national body when no action was taken
on its proposal for lower dues for 9-hole
club members. According to PGA officials
the Central New York group soon may be
back in the fold. Texas group, which with-
drew at one time, later came back into
the national organization and now is one
of the most active sections, remind PGA
national officers, in expressing hope for
early settlement of disagreements with the
seceding sectional bodies.

ONE OF THE bright spots about the
depression to the mower manufactur-
ers is that reduction of maintenance
forces is eliminating the man who had full
and sole responsibility for adjusting mow-
ers. This year, with over-burdened help
doing their own adjusting, the mowers
will be on the junk pile quicker. The
same thing will hold good with sprinklers
and other equipment, say superintendents,
who see no answer in view of enforced
curtailment of labor.