

Forecasts Warn on Effect of Forced Greens Budget Cuts

By HERB GRAFFIS

MISGIVINGS mingle with pride as greenkeepers review their operations for 1933 and endeavor to sift out the definite lessons of this strenuous season.

John MacGregor, superintendent at Chicago Golf club and president of the National Association of Greenkeepers, expresses the general view when he says that instead of being mortally afraid of budget cuts greenkeepers were spurred to economies unthought-of in normal times. The depression, in MacGregor's opinion, kept greenkeeping from getting into a rut.

He expresses fear that some of the economies effected under the strict economy regimes dictated by men who know nothing of course conditioning will require such expensive and prolonged correction that the clubs may never recover. However he does not believe that such cases have been unduly frequent up to this time. MacGregor's hope is that an upturn in general business conditions next year will be reflected in enlargement of budgets during the playing season, consequently an opportunity to do some of the work neglected this and previous years.

Save Now, Pay More Later.

At Mac's club, two means of effecting budget economies were to neglect the usual warfare on crabgrass invasion of greens and tees, and to cease all dandelion eradication work. Both details of fine greenkeeping, when resumed on a normal basis, will call for extra expense to make up for the lost year. The rest of the course he does not believe has suffered. He fertilized just as much and by the foresight of his chairman and himself outsmarted the depression by buying modern power equipment for greens and fairway maintenance. This purchase was responsible for a big saving in time out of service usually charged against worn equipment. Material in today's equipment is better, design is simpler and operation more economical, related MacGregor in telling of the budget reduction brought about by modern equipment.

Weeding necessarily was neglected un-

der a reduced budget. At Chicago Golf the expense of maintaining a 115,000 sq. ft. nursery of Cocos bent for greens rebuilding and the cost of fairway watering almost constantly from June 9 in September gave MacGregor tough problems to keep within his budget.

He sizes up the greenkeepers' successful battle with the budget as a job compelling the utmost use of sound new scientific developments and expert labor selection and management, so men won't be using merely energy but will be employing effective energy.

If the president's re-employment campaign works out it will be hard to get men to come back to their course jobs in 1934. This will bring to greenkeepers in 1934 a serious problem, seldom appreciated by members—the problem of training new men.

Shave Finds Ways to Save.

Herb Shave, superintendent at Oakland Hills C. C. (Detroit district) has done one of the outstanding jobs of the year in maintaining the two 18-hole Oakland Hills courses on a sharply reduced budget. During the height of the season ten men took care of Herb's championship 18, which covers about 160 acres. There are 18 regular and 2 practice greens on this course, 36 tees and 3 practice tees. The course has fairway watering. Five men looked after the 20 greens, 39 tees and the clubhouse lawn.

One man cared for the 107 sand traps instead of the four formerly used on this job. To effect this economy, Shave took two pieces of 2x8, 2½ ft. long, drove them full of spikes, hinged the two pieces together and fastened a rope to each. The man used this equipment for dragging the traps, instead of raking them.

The fairway mowing problem Shave solved on his hilly course with a 9-unit gang mower bought early this year. Shave, one of the noted veterans who keeps up-to-the-instant on maintenance developments, also expresses the fear that further false economy in course maintenance is going to make terrific demands for restoration

funds if the courses are to regain their former standards of which greenkeepers and members were so proud.

He believes that when the message of sound savings with modern equipment gets around to club officials there will be a demand for equipment that will keep many clubs waiting.

Shave also makes an earnest plea for living wages for the greens force, many of whom can scarcely support their families during the summer when they have work and exist only in some mysterious manner during the off-season.

Courses fortunately are aware of the seriousness of neglecting fertilizer programs, so reports come in. Jerome MacDonald, greenkeeper of the noted Palmetto G. C. (Aiken, S. C.) in advising of his budget struggles remarks that a reduction in fertilizer use for the last two years has had such noticeable effect that the club is compelled to make up with a vigorous fertilizing campaign during the coming months.

Bought Machines at Market's Low.

Some of the clubs, of which the Beverly C. C. (Chicago district) was one, took advantage of low equipment prices (which incidentally are vanishing) to replace dilapidated equipment. How well this worked out is told by Beverly's George Roloff who said: "The thriftiest method we employed in 1933 to bring our course condition up to standard was the buying of almost all new equipment, including new tractors, 7-gang fairway mowers, power greens-mowers and new hose for fairway watering. We also took advantage of low fertilizer and seed prices.

"Beverly's maintenance has cost less this year because of these economies and in spite of the dry summer which meant a lot of extra work in watering fairways, trees and shrubs."

Taylor Boyd, superintendent at Kenwood C. C. (Cincinnati) whose work in getting a new course in condition for a National Amateur championship entitles him to prominent standing in golf course maintenance, believes that the great lesson of depression years in maintenance was that of impressing the wisdom of remodeling courses so work could be done by machinery instead of by hand.

"Banks of Kenwood's greens and tees and some of our traps have always been cut with fairway mowers. The green and tee watering is planned so the 36 holes are watered by one man. In course design

you have the main secret of economical maintenance and it's utterly folly to condemn a superintendent for high maintenance costs when the design of his course is such that it compels expensive and slow manual maintenance.

Remodel for Machine Upkeep.

"Even though many clubs have let the time pass by, when low labor costs could be utilized for remodeling for machine maintenance, I still believe that most of these courses could be remodeled so their playing architecture not only would be as good (or probably better) but so the reduction in maintenance costs would pay the remodeling expense in two years.

"Fairway watering is essential to a course that wants good turf. Without it, expense of seed and fertilizer frequently will be extravagant because it does not produce results.

"Needless to say, alteration in course design permitting lower maintenance costs will many times add new interest and membership attraction to the course."

Robert Duguid, able superintendent for Evanston (Ill.) G. C., points out that much of the budget economies this year resulted from sharp cuts in wages. He pays tribute to the greens forces, saying that in every case he has observed the men have voluntarily increased their share of work and worked overtime without pay. When better times return, these men who never have been overpaid, deserve a prompt readjustment of wages as a recognition of their loyalty.

In Duguid's judgment, the greenkeeper's test this year was to determine what work could be minimized without involving costly rehabilitation expense. Some work, such as tree and shrub watering during the long drought of the summer, was necessarily neglected and repair of this enforced neglect may be impossible. Other work like that on tennis courts, passed by lightly this summer, can be put back on regular schedule and condition restored without great expense unless the 1934 budget compels continued neglect.

Chemicals Always on Hand.

What continues to give greenkeepers grey hairs is the sudden attacks of disease, and insects for which no adequate provision has been made in the budget. It would be agonizing to add up—if it were possible—the damage which is done to greens because of the absence of fungicides when they are needed. Stocks of fungicides and fall and spring work in

correcting bad drainage responsible for turf distress are two items for which many greenkeepers will make desperate pleas while budgeting is being done.

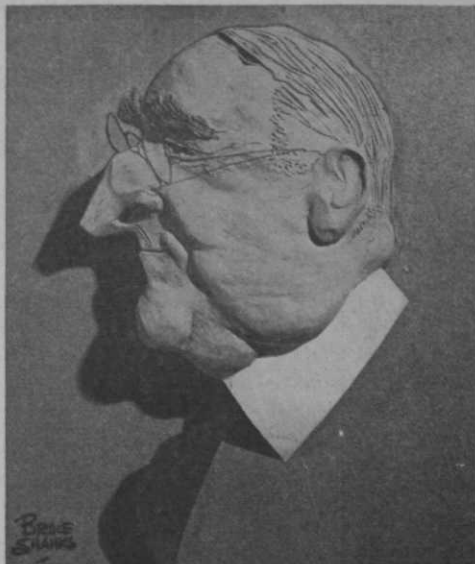
Confronted by the lack of preventives due to curtailed budgets, greenkeepers have been thinking more than ever about brown-patch this year. William Mayne, at the Park Shore G. C. (Cassopolis, Mich.) recalling that some of the finest greens he ever saw were near Dunbar, Scotland, where high water and winds often covered the greens with sea water, tried applying 3 lbs. of common salt to every yard of his compost. He disclaims any intention of attributing to the salt application the first freedom from brown-patch the course has enjoyed in 5 years, merely mentioning this fact as noteworthy.

Some ingenious methods were employed to get work done under reduced budgets this past season. George P. Knox, pro-supt. at Calumet C. C. (Chicago district) kept his course in fine shape. He had some of the work done by about a dozen husky caddies who worked on the course for about an hour each morning and were rewarded by being sent out to caddie first each day. This meant that the kids stood a chance of carrying two, and possibly three rounds during days of daylight saving time.

Greens Force Has Monthly Dinner.

Labor relations have played a most important part in 1933 operations. One interesting item in this connection comes from the Fox Hill C. C. (Pittston, Pa.) where C. M. Melville is superintendent. The club allows Melville \$10 a month for a dinner for the greens force. Over the corn beef and cabbage and brew the fellows discuss their work, settle their grievances and listen to Melville outline and explain the next month's work as well as comment on the work done the previous month. This course has a misery that most courses don't suffer. It is built over coal mines and part of the course caved in. There was a repair job never contemplated in the budget!

The club bought a power greens mower and a 7-unit fairway mower. Melville estimates these purchases cut the cost of greens mowing 25 per cent and fairway mowing approximately 33½ per cent. He employs his power greens mower with a home-made spiked roller in topdressing his greens and instead of requiring two men all day by the old method now uses one man only 6 hours for a better job. Melville has had plenty to contend with



GANSON DEPEW

The distinguished chairman of the USGA Green Section and Public Links Section committees is subject of a "claycature" done by Bruce Shanks for the Times of Buffalo, "Marse Ganse's" home town.

in reconditioning and seeding expense and with turf diseases and pests, but with it all tells that he has spent the most enjoyable season of his life because he has operated \$1,000 under his budget and put his course in condition to brag about.

He, like many other greenkeepers, makes the most out of tough times by concluding, "We were spoiled a few years ago getting everything too easily and we didn't learn the meaning of true economy. We've been forced to teach it to ourselves the last few years and we, as well as golf, have gained."

SIGNIFICANT experiments in weed control are being conducted by the USGA Green Section in the Chicago District at the Midwest Turf Garden, Old Elm club, Olympia Fields CC. and Sunset Ridge GC., under the direction of Fred Grau of the Section's staff.

Although it is too early to announce any definite conclusions in accord with the Green Section's cautious, sound policy, present indications point to the success of the experiments. Results at Sunset Ridge are slower than at other experiment plots, it is believed because of lack of water.