

WHERE THRIFT STARTS

By ARTHUR LANGTON

WHILE avoiding rash predictions, it may be fairly safe to venture a thought or two on the possible recurrence in the golfing world of more affluent days than golfers have become accustomed to since the Big Bust. These thoughts have risen since 1930 while sympathizing with greenkeepers forced to endure pre-depression construction on post-depression budgets. The conclusion to be reached from this outburst of cogitation is that if this alphabetical prosperity lays a golden egg and any golf courses are built, old methods of construction should not be allowed to survive the economic ice age—to mix a few figures of speech.

We pray that golf courses in the future be constructed to suit rather than defy local conditions. Let us have golf courses that are built into surrounding topography instead of in spite of it. May each layout be more than a golf course just on the surface. And we humbly beseech that a few simple standardized rules be followed during the planning and construction period so that future generations of greenkeepers will lose that harassed and haunted air. Amen.



Surface drainage into trap needs correction to effect thrifty maintenance.

WITH the bashful appearance of good times again, clubs are beginning to think of reconstruction improvements. There continue to be new construction jobs on public courses and here and there some private club is building a course.

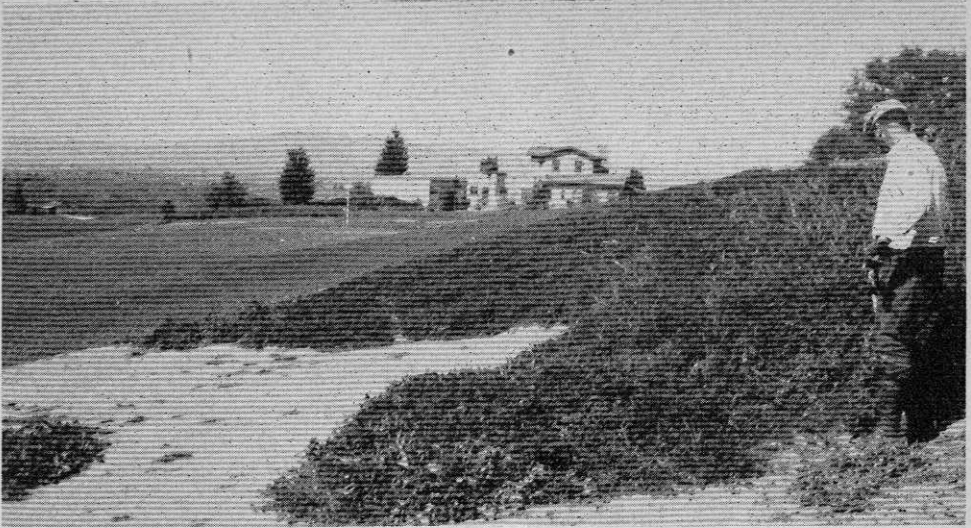
So, as an extremely timely warning against construction that means unduly high maintenance expense, GOLFDOM happily presents Mr. Langton as the voice of the greenkeeper crying out against course building sins for which he eventually has to pay.

Immediately the cynic will drop the magazine at this point, exclaiming profanely that propoganda for regimentation has at last reached the golf courses. But wait, Old Boy, it is not necessarily standardization to think a little about future expenditure when constructing a golf course, or even when rehabilitating an old one. This should be particularly significant to you with your traps having banks so steep that they have to be cut with a sickle instead of a mower. It is not sacrificing individuality to abide by a set of rules for the assurance of convenience and economy. Even the most modernistic home of a Hollywood movie baron has not sacrificed standardized sanitary plumbing on the altar of individuality.

Money Thrown to Traps

The subject of sand traps having been suggested, here is one sore spot around which hundreds of dollars could be saved by a little careful consideration while the layout still is in the form of a blue print. Remember, ye planners who favor bays, capes, points, peninsulas, gulfs, and other geographical phenomena about the bunkers, these frills must be planted to seed, watered and mowed; and while it may be artistic or unique to have traps shaped like something from the middle of a jigsaw puzzle, the upkeep on such frivolities is enormous. The morale of the greensman whose job it is to care for such stuff is in constant danger of being shattered as he tries to mow narrow ledges, keep tiny curves and corners trim and neat, and pretty up other architectural frills with a pair of hand shears.

It is conceivable that there are people who believe in the existence of better looking traps than the kind with bold sweeping outlines and smooth contours, but certainly no one can deny that the latter are



Banks that machines can't handle call for hand mowing that runs up costs and makes difficult the well-groomed appearance which is the objective of every greenkeeper.

cheaper and easier to keep looking neat and trim. No matter how it is decorated with frills and furbelows it is practically impossible on the average golf course to make a bunker look like anything but what it is, and a clumsy attempt at disguise makes it even more obvious. Some designers have gone so far as to shape their traps into stars, crescents, circles, triangles, and squares, but such geometric leanings should have been confined to the late and unlamented peewee putt courses. A trap at its best, and cheapest, is one whose curves harmonize and correspond with the general outline of the nearby fairway or green.

What has been said of the possibility of eliminating expense by ironing out the border of traps is just as applicable in regard to their banks. Fortunately the tendency in recent years has been to get away from banks of any kind and to have the sand itself graded to the level of the surrounding fairway. This is commendable because of the economy of construction and the ease of maintenance. By permitting a thin fringe of longer grass to grow around the edges they are as difficult to play from as a trap sunk a foot or two below the level of the ground. However, conditions do not always permit the former type of trap owing to the elevation of the green. But never is it advisable to have a precipice. A gradual slope is much easier on the eye as well as on the club's pocket book from year to year.

Distress with Drainage

Drainage is just as important in trap construction as it is in building greens. "Sure my traps have drainage," shouts one Southern California greenkeeper. "I have one in which all the water from three fairways drains into one side and out the other, taking most of the sand along with it. Drainage? Phooey!" An hour or two's work with the grader during the course of construction would have prevented this rainy weather difficulty permanently. Which is worse, the irrigation ditch type or the one that is a reservoir to catch all the water in seven counties and retain it until the advent of the pumping gang, it is difficult to say. Greenkeepers the world over already have damned each kind from here to perdition, which is the only place where they belong. If the master-minds who decide how a golf course must be built insist upon placing a hazard where drainage is impossible, they at least should listen to the growing chorus of advocates of the grassy hollow in lieu of the conventional sand trap. This chorus lately has grown so vociferous as to require no further swelling here.

A usually unconsidered feature in golf course creation is transportation facility. The booby prize in this regard goes to a golf course in central California. One of its nine holes is a healthy brassie shot away from the shop as the ball flies, yet in order to get there the greenkeeper's



Location of traps without thought of course surface drainage runs up sand costs and interferes with play.

truck has to travel no less than six miles. But still, as the greenkeeper philosophically remarks, "I can get competitive prices on fertilizer from the farmers on the way over, and on butter and eggs on the way back."

Roads never should be a conspicuous feature of a golf course landscape, yet definite routes must be provided so that every inch of the property can be reached by truck, tractor, or other heavy equipment. Bridges particularly should be built with the weight and width of the club's motive equipment in mind. The cost of the necessary extra material to accommodate such machinery will be saved many times over by the direct routing of equipment. Unless constant vigilance is exercised, a green which cannot be reached as easily as the others is going to suffer from lack of attention over a long period of time.

Pretty But Unsound Sites

Plenty has been said of how easy maintenance qualities should be built into a green, but the surroundings largely have been neglected. Many designers tuck a green away so that it is practically surrounded by trees or canyon walls. The idea might be okeydoke if such secluded greens were equipped with electric fans for creating a breeze to prevent brown-patch fungi from making a three point landing on the bent. Unfortunately such equipment never has been forthcoming and the greenkeeper has had to make expensive use of calomel and corrosive sublimate for the benefit of his suffocated greens.

Sprinkling systems suggest maps, and maps are something of which no golf courses ever had enough. Every golf shop should have at least one which shows every

pipe, hydrant, gate, valve, tee, green, fairway, trap, tree, path, and bridge on the place. Such a map is invaluable in distributing labor and plotting new work.

Beside the point is the matter of garbage disposal, but it usually falls to the lot of the greenkeeper to get rid of the debris as best he may. Some hallowed spot of ground should be chosen, before construction has gone too far, to be made sacred to the burning of refuse and the disposal of the conglomerate rubbish which can be gathered around any golf course by the truck load. Again remember the little winds: the odor of burning garbage penetrating the interstices of a clubhouse will neither add to its dignity nor popularity.

Hire Greenkeeper Ahead

The most revolutionary suggestion that might be made in regard to construction of a new golf course is to secure the services of a good greenkeeper while the proposed layout is still raw real estate. No matter how capable and efficient a golf architect may be, he is not the one who will have to worry about the course after the first divot is dug. An experienced guardian of the fairgreen, called into consultation before the course is built, will act as a sort of governor to modify and make practical some of the too visionary schemes which are frequently forthcoming from even the most noted designers. Not that an attempt is here being made to lay all the golf course woes on the doormat of the poor architect, but if conditions which make for expensive and cumbersome upkeep are eliminated before the course is completed, they can never weigh heavily on the sadder side of the club's balance sheet.