

PRO'S DREAM IS HEAVEN -- MAYBE?

LANSING McCURLEY, sports editor of the Philadelphia Record, in an interview with Ed Clarey, pro at Cobbs Creek, Philly's largest municipal course, quotes Clarey as saying: "If the golf professional was paid a decent wage by every golf club and the club took over the purchase and sale of every bit of equipment, the game would be a thousand times more popular, better off and cheaper."

"The pro would have a nice salary to look forward to every week. The members would take more lessons because they would be free. The pro would be able to get away from business worries. A pro can't collect bad debts at his club. If he duns a member, he is out with that member's whole foursome and all his friends. He has no regular hours and can live no regular life. If I could control the membership at my club I would make a nice profit on golf balls alone.

"Under my plan the pro would have regular hours, live and eat and sleep like a human being and be paid for his efforts."

There you have some high spots of an interview that probably made pros, club officials and members think.

Clarey has hopes of the millenium and an ambition to see qualified pros on a better working basis. What is more, Ed, having full faith in his idea and being an able and industrious fellow might be able to put across his version of the golden days. But there are only slim chances of the practical and widespread success of Ed's policy according to the majority of pros with whom we have discussed his interview.

What's Wrong with the Plan?

In the first place, when Ed speaks of member control of buying, the clubs don't have as good luck as the pros themselves in this matter. Clubs that operate their own pro shops generally find their members do more outside buying at "wholesale" or from the so-called bargain counters than is done at a club where a good pro who has to make a living sharply centers buying responsibility.

Pro shop operation by amateurs has not been a success. Accurate bookkeeping has shown the pros themselves that only by expert and persistent attention can a pro

shop be made to show a net profit. The average good businessman official of a club marvels that a pro can make any net profit out of a shop. The short season, limited membership, low pro mark-up on specialty, seasonable style items and the heavy credit risk when the club does not collect for the pro, offset the no-rent factor.

Consequently pro shop operation calls for an expert in complete command. Probably one of the reasons pros have been able to get by in shop profits is because they have not been governed by ineexpert committees of members. Leading clubs that have tried club operation of the shop have almost entirely abandoned the idea. They are willing to let a good pro make what he can out of the shop and add this item to the pro's salary in order to get the best available men.

Shop income isn't enough to pay the type of man a first class club needs. The salary guarantee is essential and now is becoming more general since the pros have given definite evidence of their value with group lessons for women and children, event schedules, membership solicitation and service and in co-operation on course maintenance.

Entire dependence on salary would be a great thing for pros, comment some on the Clarey statement, if a man who has devoted his entire career to golf could be sure of a fair salary and employment immune to the political disturbances that often throw pros out of jobs.

Critics of Ed's views point to the very low salaries paid for the essential work of the greenkeepers, in questioning the wisdom of pros depending entirely on salaries. As long as golf clubs are controlled by administrations that are liable to change every year and these administrations necessarily are not experienced in club operation, they always will be suckers for the fellows whose main qualification is that they will work for less money.

No doubt of it, admit those who have

considered the Clarey statement, the pro working and employment conditions can stand a lot of improving but whatever improvement is effected probably will come as the result of action taken by individual pros rather than action coming spontaneously from a large number of clubs.

Again the suggestion comes that a primary step in the education of club officials in providing merited and fair conditions of employment for pros would be the preparation of standard contract forms to be worked out by the PGA and organizations of club officials. The suggestion has been repeatedly advanced by thoughtful pros and endorsed by club officials and it is hoped in many sections that the PGA eventually will take action and follow through in thus attempting to clarify and correct pro employment conditions.

Portable Oil Torch Busy As Greenkeepers' Tool

By CLINTON K. BRADLEY

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MY experience with oil burning torches indicates that the torch is a valuable and frequently useable item of maintenance equipment. I have used successfully two sizes of Aeroil burners, both of which use kerosene as fuel on the plumbers' blowtorch principle and generate temperatures as high as 2,000 degrees F.

On heavy matted growths of weeds one cannot expect control by burning inasmuch as the soil acts as an insulator and prevents heat penetrating deep enough to destroy dense growths; however I have had splendid results on weed control by burning weeds in traps, walks and paths. Poison ivy on trees, walls, fences and at other places can be scorched one day and burned completely the next day. This work should be done by a man who is not susceptible readily to ivy poisoning as the oil vapor may cause a skin rash. The Aeroil burner I use for this is a single flame hand type.

I have found a burner a great help in screening compost with a fine screen while the compost is wet. I set the torch under the screen where the compost first enters from the hopper. Flame goes up through the mesh and the compost and scorches weed seeds so they don't germinate. The screen gets red hot but quite damp compost can be finely screened in this manner and no time is lost sweeping pebbles that

get on the green as in the case of use of coarser screen.

Apparently little detrimental effect come from application of the torch to the compost. I have had tested the compost air dried, slightly damp and torch dried, physically and chemically, and very little difference was revealed. Undoubtedly some soil bacteria are destroyed by heat application, but the bacteria in the green replenish whatever are lost by heating. Apparently, from results at my course, insect eggs and larvae are fairly well destroyed by putting the torch to the compost.

Torch Kills Clover in Hurry

When I came to this course we had on our greens more than 12,500 dense clover patches. This fall we have only about 500 small spots of clover on the greens. Proper fertilization and correction of physical soil conditions were major factors in the clover elimination and control. In this work I made effective use of the torch.

I submit data on the chemical and torch methods as I compared them on two of our greens. Work in both cases was done in the afternoon of bright, sunny days.

By the chemical method on Green No. 1, 9400 sq. ft. 310 matted clover patches:

Mist green with water (20 minutes). Dust sulphate of ammonia dry at rate of 10 lbs. per 1000 sq. ft. on clover patches only (2 hours, 10 minutes). Let burn 4 hours. Soak green (1 hour, 30 minutes). Wait one week, watering frequently to leach out sulphate of ammonia so it won't injure new grass seed. Rake and scarify patches. Seed and topdress entire green 2 days after applying superphosphate at rate of 10 pounds per 1,000 sq. ft.

By the torch method on Green No. 8, 10,300 sq. ft. 364 matted clover patches:

Scorch each patch a few seconds. Scarify patches next day. Apply superphosphate right after scarifying. Wait 2 days, seed and topdress entire green.

Work on No. 8 green required only 2 hours, 30 minutes, and only 2¼ gals. kerosene. Grass seed started to germinate on this green before No. 1 green was ready to seed.

I've also had success in eliminating yarrow from greens by the torch method.

Of course for repair shop work a torch is almost an essential. Around the course for stump burning, for repairs to macadam roads and miscellaneous work, the greenkeeper will find plenty of work to keep his torch busy and thrifty.