

WAGES NEXT MAJOR CLUB PROBLEM

WAGE increases, inevitable as prosperity returns, were brought sharply to focus in the northern sector of the Chicago district when course employees of several prominent clubs went out on a strike for higher wages.

"Strike" is only a word of convenience in this instance. The majority of the employees were intimidated by picketing of their homes and courses at which they were employed. The action was engineered by the business agent of a hod-carriers union who, together with muscular and threatening emissaries, attempted to form a golf course employees' union.

Although the walk-out occurred when opening play impended at the courses and there was urgent necessity for work, there was less than a week during which work at the effected courses was practically suspended.

Strike plans died abortively because there is not enough money in course employees' wages to support a union business agent in the style to which he is accustomed; hence ultimate acquaintance with this unhappy fact was not without its effect in discontinuing organizing efforts. Furthermore, golf clubs countered with the statement that they had a fixed amount for the maintenance budget and would operate with fewer men and more machinery to keep the wage item in balance.

Relief Scale Is

No Help to Clubs

The situation was complicated by the public works hourly scale being higher than that paid at golf clubs, and by men on relief not being willing to take golf course employment when offered because of interfering with their chances of getting back on relief when the golf season was over and their income cut off.

Men who returned to work were given approximately a 15% increase in hourly wages against the approximate 58% increase demanded by the strike organizer. An increase was contemplated when budgets for this year were prepared at several clubs so the net result of the walk-out was to bring into public view a matter that has been discussed at many club directors meetings.

Highspot of the aftermath of the news-

paper publicity on the course workers "strike" in the Chicago district include:

Increases in fees at a few daily-fee courses to care for slightly higher wage scale.

Extension of the monthly instead of hourly pay basis.

A back-of-the-barn strike meeting by one club's course workers which was promptly settled by greenkeeper putting into effect a 10% pay increase on his own initiative.

Serious study of the labor problem by club officials and department heads.

Fortunately, the affair comes up when golf club condition is improving. The golf clubs, as well as the club employees, have had a tough time of it during the depression. Before a club can pay any wages it must have members and it was only last year that a definite, national upturn in the memberships took place.

It Is About Time to Restore Pay Cuts

Club officials who look at the club labor situation in a calm, informed manner admit that the loyal and specialized skill of the majority of club employees calls for making good on the promises of compensation for pay-cuts made when times got tough. Administrations that made those promises long since have left office and the promises have been forgotten; but not by the employees. Financial operations of clubs are modestly but solidly improving, and with this improvement, maintain officials who have closely studied the situation, there should be voluntary wage increases on the part of the club, if merely to show the clubs' attitude of sportsmanship and recognition of employees' loyal interest.

Obviously the course maintenance employees are by far the most seriously affected class of club employees under the prevailing conditions of increasing costs of living.

When the golf season is over, the course employees have no other source of income. They're not like house employees to whom restaurant, hotel and tavern jobs may be available. Generally, too, the course employees are the lowest paid of all club help.

Considerable improvement would result in the golf club employment situation were

members to take an interest in winter jobs for the club workers. At some of the best operated golf clubs officials and members make earnest, successful efforts to see that their club employees are given off-season jobs.

Greenkeepers who know the difficulty of recruiting and training a crew of expert workmen who know every blade of grass on the course, are so keenly conscious of their employees' living problem that in numerous instances they have voluntarily cut their own salaries in order to keep men at a labor cost within the barest budget required for good maintenance.

But the greenkeeper is faced by realities, not theories or philosophies, the survival of the fittest, or law of the jungle doctrines mournfully accepted as final by directors who conscientiously cope with the wage problem. The greenkeeper has to get the work done by good men.

As a matter of cold, accurate reporting GOLFDOM sets forth that the wage problem is one that is causing some drastic revisions of golf club operating and financing policies now.

Foresighted, competent greenkeepers who already have done much with the labor management and utilizations problems, figure that they still have plenty to worry about in progressing in this phase of course maintenance. Most of them believe that the monthly basis of pay is bound to come and a revision of labor management plans, to make use of rainy day hours, is going to have a decided effect in course maintenance of the future. The hour wage basis, they state, keeps men at home on rainy mornings and when the sun comes out around 10 A.M. with lots of rush work to be done, no one is on the job.

More extensive use of existing types of machinery, new inventions to displace manual labor, and more careful consideration of long-term equipment buying and amortizing practices are going to play a big part in the happy solution of a labor problem now disturbing club officials, greenkeepers and course employees.

Kirtland Upkeep Show Draws Big Cleveland Attendance

UNDER sponsorship of the Cleveland District Assn. of Greenkeepers, a most successful and well attended golf course maintenance demonstration was held May 4 at Kirtland CC, Willoughby,

O. Ben Zink, president of the local greenkeepers and superintendent at Kirtland, acted as host.

All makes of tractors and mowers were on display and were given a working test while the assembled greensmen, augmented by a number of green-chairmen and estate superintendents, looked on. Highlight was the introduction of rubber tires on fairway mowers.

Zink, in addition to his duties as host, had several examples of his own handiwork on display, including a power green mower with a third wheel to take the weight off the operator's hands and arms, and a vacuum-cleaner device, still under construction, for removing bugs from greens.

Greenkeeper team matches are scheduled for June 1 at Portage CC, Akron, in which teams from Cleveland, Columbus, Akron, Cincinnati, Toledo and Pittsburgh districts are expected to compete.

St. Paul Legion 40&8-ers All Set for Sixth Annual Junior Meet

SIXTH annual Junior Golf tournament of the American Legion 40-and-8 outfit will be played at Highland Park, St. Paul, June 29, 30 and July 1. Voiture 39 of St. Paul originated the event and Kief Vaux of that outfit has religiously ballyhooed it as a premier golf tournament for kids, until this year the tournament is taking the aspect of a national boys' championship.

Several voitures in Eastern states have signified their intention of sending kids to the tourney. Many pros with likely boy champions are 40-and-8ers and are grooming their charges for the St. Paul engagement.

Legionnaire George Jacobus has given the kid event the paternal benediction of the PGA.

The boys are handled on an army camp basis while in St. Paul with all regulations, including medical inspection, being followed just like the kid tournament sponsors had to do themselves some years back, whether they liked it or not.

This event is conducted and supervised in a way that has won the enthusiastic endorsement of the juvenile contestants' parents.

All pros who are legionnaires are requested to get the dope on this tournament from A. J. Fandel, Hamm Bldg., St. Paul, and co-operate in making this golf event one of the same class as the Legion's national junior baseball championship.