

New England Authority Says Budgets Must Be Upped

HERE'S a blunt and valuable close-up on conditions that prevail at many clubs, although the report was made especially on the New England sector and by a competent authority, Guy C. West, editor of the News Letter, excellent bulletin issued by the Greenkeepers Club of New England.

West pulls no punches. Golf club operation is a business with him and the men with whom he has discussed the situation before arriving at his conclusions.

I believe (says West) that golf is in far better position now than it was a year ago. Practically all courses around here are reporting more play this season. I have talked with at least a dozen public course owners and they all report much better business this year. I have noticed that comparatively few courses have not let down their former bars to attract new members. There still is some "small" stuff being pulled by various clubs to get members away from other clubs.

Bad effects that the depression budgets have left on many courses are both direct and indirect: direct in that there are still many courses which need new equipment, having used the old too long. (Much of the equipment in use is useable, but inefficient in the light of modern course equipment). The biggest indirect result of depression budgets is that it is going to be more than difficult to convince green-committees and club members that the old-time budgets weren't wasted money. I honestly think that greenkeepers have done too good a job with the little money they have had these past few years, and with the change in membership at many clubs now, a type that doesn't know the finer points of the best maintenance, greenkeepers are going to have a real task in getting increases in budgets and their salaries. This is a serious result of decreased budgets.

Not Many Budgets Are Adequately Large

I know of but few courses that have adequate budgets at present for first-class maintenance. Most course budgets are off at least a third, and many even more.

Perhaps the best work the greenkeepers of this section have done in the past year was in making their greens in general better than they were formerly, in spite of low budgets. This is largely due to the

increased use of velvet bent on many courses, notably the No. 14276 strain. We have had some fine greens around here this year. I think the best set of nine velvet bent greens that I ever saw were those at Oak Hill CC, Fitchburg, Mass., this year, and certainly as fine stolon greens were at Waterbury (Conn.) CC. Many other courses have had fine greens in spite of the depression.

We'll Have to Pay for Past Budget Paring

On some courses, budgets have been cut so far that new construction will be needed before fine maintenance will be possible. I know of one fine championship layout not far away that will almost need rebuilding, or at least resodding, so bad are the greens. The Newport CC is spending several thousand dollars on weed control of fairways fertilization (60 tons of Milorganite), and in changing their bunkers for cheaper maintenance in the future. There are a good many fairways that will need renovation because of scarcity of fertilizer these last few years.

The greenkeeper and green-committee can work better together for the good of the club by real cooperation. They should meet together often. The greenkeeper

Where Shortsight Defeats Sense In Budget Planning

Comparing the course maintenance budgets of 15 representative clubs over a five-year period, including two years prior to the depression, brings out the value of a several-year basis of budgeting rather than a year-to-year policy.

If a greenkeeper saves a thousand dollars because of favorable weather conditions one year, careful study probably will reveal that it is better to segregate this amount and credit the greenkeeper with it for use in next year's operations rather than cut the next year's budget by a thousand dollars.

The fact that chairmen and other officials seldom serve more than two-year terms stands in the way of a proper long-term determination of budget requirements.

Accurate weather reports, obtainable from the greenkeepers' log or from weather bureaus, are vital to correct determination of budget needs.

Too often, though, the procedure of the green-committee and the board of governors is to take figures for a season like this one when watering expense has been heavy and decide that next year won't be so dry and so excess of 1936 watering costs may be used for other expenses on 1937 budget. The powers-that-be fail to observe that in many cases increased watering costs are partially offset by lowered costs of mowing and fungicide treatment.

should really be a member of the committee. He should be ready at all times to talk and write his opinions upon any matter under discussion. He should be able to tell the committee why he differs with them, if he does, and not have the committee get sore. He should get his opinions down in writing as much as possible. The committee should ask the greenkeeper's opinion and respect it, as it is probably better than the committee's upon any detail of course maintenance.

The big problem for 1937 is to convince club officials that courses need more money, and that they must have more or they may need twice as much the following year. The big problem is to get out of the rut of low budgets. Real co-operation between greenkeepers and their committees goes quite a way towards solving this problem.

Along this line of co-operation, we of the Greenkeepers Club of New England have held two greenkeeper-club official tournaments at our summer meetings, and I believe that they have fostered a fine spirit of fellowship among those present, and have shown many club officials many of the problems of the greenkeeper that they did not appreciate before.

Just Because Machines Still Run Is No Sign They're Efficient

AT TIMES the thoughtful greenkeepers wonder if course maintenance equipment isn't built too sturdily and honestly. Much of the machinery has run too long and is not displaced because club officials can not realize that even though the equipment is running, it may be costing heavily in obsolescence and inefficiency.

This policy certainly does not adequately reward progressive manufacturers who have small enough market and low enough margin of profit in the golf maintenance equipment business. But the heaviest penalty is paid by any club that actually handicaps efforts to further perfect golf course equipment by failure to provide a prompt market for new developments.

KENT BRADLEY,
Greenkeeper, Passaic County GC.

FOR the first time broadcasting rights to a national golf championship were acquired by an advertiser when the USGA and the Garden City GC accepted the National Biscuit Co. offer to broadcast the

National Amateur over an NBC coast-to-coast hook-up.

The broadcast consisted of a daily resume at 5:45 E.D.T. with a stroke-by-stroke account in the concluding hour of the final on Saturday.

In Rhyme Mr. Will Advises You What Greenkeeper Has to Do

IT MUST be the influence of nature's beauty rather than burning passion that moves greenkeepers to composting some poetry, but the fellows do cut loose with verse fairly often. Here's one job from Rudy Will, Woodmont GC, Bethesda, Md.:

Listen, golfers, while I rant
And give you lads the proper slant
On what we don't and what we do
To please our merry golfing crew.
We don't leave tracks in all the traps
And don't leave divots on their backs.
We do cut greens and rough and tees
And trim the limbs from low-hung trees.
We do rake traps, and bunkers clip,
And from the hazards, water dip.
We neatly smooth that small landslide
Where you with spade and niblick tried
To dig a model of the Great Divide.
The emerald tees this spring our prides
Now look like mangey leopard hides.
This isn't all; it is just a start
To prove the greensman does his part.

Club-throwing Contest—Here is a new stunt that creates a lot of interest. Members are given a club (usually an old mid-iron) and throws are measured for distance; sometimes with clubs landing out of certain areas resulting in disqualification for lack of accuracy. Contest is an amusing event for men and women. Variation of this contest is to have player hit a ball and then promptly throw club with either distance of club, or distance of ball and club both, determining the winner.

Fee Course Has Boy's Club—Smart idea at the Parkland course, Tacoma, Wash., is the organization of a boys' golf club. Thirteen youngsters from 12 to 16 years old, comprise the charter membership. Three rounds must be played before handicaps are established. Club dues are 25 cents annually and a special daily rate of 25 cents for 18 holes is made the kids; Saturdays and Sundays excluded. A monthly rate of \$1, excluding Saturday and Sunday play, is made the boys.