

FOREMEN OR SUPERINTENDENTS?

Massachusetts
Recr. Conference
Address

Jack Gormley, pro at Wolferts Roost CC, Albany, N. Y., reviews the past and forecasts the future of the greenkeeping profession

AN EXPERT is one who makes things look easy because he has perfected a plan by which he can accomplish much with minimum effort. He uses his gray matter to save himself physical exertion. He does not reach this stage without thinking and planning and plenty of hard work. He finds out that the right way is the easiest way, and because it is so easy, very few find it. The expert has done his hardest work when he has found the easiest way.

A man who is a recognized authority on any one subject or in any specific job, is the man whose ideas are in popular demand by those who are in need of his services or by those associated with him in the same line of endeavor. He holds a position of prestige and influence that is not accorded those of us who have not reached the point where "Recognition" for our efforts should be our reward. A recognized authority is not only respected, but due to the fact that he has "risen from the ranks," he has gained a fair portion of financial success. This is what all greenkeepers have been striving for, "Recognition." Recognition of their chosen vocation as a *profession*, and adequate remuneration for the type of service they render.

Progress Has Not Been Too Satisfactory

We ask ourselves the question, "how far have greenkeepers progressed in attaining this aim?" and we answer reluctantly, "not very far." We ask ourselves the reason why, and we find it not too easy to answer.

A friend to whom I was speaking several weeks ago, told me a story that illustrates the professional status of a greenkeeper as compared with other professions. His name is Bob Scott, greenkeeper at the Baltimore Country Club. Bob has a son who is just over fifteen years of age, and who has advanced in his schooling to the point where serious consideration of his vocation should be determined. He pondered the future and what it held for him. At the suggestion

of his mother, to whom he turned for advice as to what he might make his life's work, he went to the government library in Washington, and borrowed a book which listed 45,000 jobs in the United States of America. He brought the book home and studied it industriously, and as future events proved, he derived from it a wealth of information.

Not Listed Among 45,000

That evening, when Bob came home from work, the boy immediately started popping questions at him. "What is a greenkeeper, Daddy?" "How much salary does a greenkeeper get?" "What does a greenkeeper do?" "Is greenkeeping a job?" The boy was confused and he evidently wanted an answer. Bob was surprised and asked him his reason for the sudden thirst for knowledge regarding greenkeeping. The youngster proceeded to explain that in the book listing so many thousands of jobs of all descriptions, that under the heading of "Golf Course Positions" he found that a golf course architect received from \$500.00 to \$5,000 for laying out a golf course. Caddie-masters were listed as receiving \$25 to \$40 per week. Laborers at 40 to 60 cents per hour. Caddies were paid 75 cents to a dollar per round and professionals received as high as \$5,000 per season. Greenkeepers??—Well, there wasn't any listing of that job at all. "Your job can't amount to much Daddy," he said.

When Bob looked at the book and found out how true were the words of his son, he realized as we all do, *how little* the greenkeeper is mentioned when credit is being passed out. Very little thought has been given to how much depends on this forgotten man of golf, when you find that in a book listing over 45,000 jobs that

"greenkeeper" is not even listed. It is further deplorable to note that the word "greenkeeper" has also been omitted from most dictionaries.

Greenkeeper More Than Just Laborer

We have often wondered why the greenkeeper has not been considered a leader—an authority—an expert. We have often wondered if golfers stop and realize, as they play over the course, that the man responsible for their golfing playground is given less thought, and greater condemnation than a grade-C caddie. Of course they don't. If they did, they would know that they are not qualified to be judges of golf course maintenance. We have wondered what we could do to change the general impression that the greenkeeper was just another laborer on the course. Up to the present time, we have done very little about it, except wish. We seem to have resigned ourselves to apparent facts, and consoled ourselves with the thought that, perhaps, some day our wish may come true, and that recognition would eventually be ours.

There's a whole lot in wishing; providing we work as hard as we wish.

Wishing perhaps is akin to faith. Wishing or faith is absolutely in vain, unless we work like the devil.

We have all wondered why the greenkeeper has been left in the cold—why he has been a forgotten man. Of all the people who have contributed to the well-being of the old Scottish game, the last to receive a word of praise or a word of commendation for work well done, is the greenkeeper. The professional receives acclaim because he plays the most difficult courses under par. He is recognized for his performances and made into a demi-god. He is feted and his praises are sung. But—it never occurs to anyone that one of the logical reasons for his par shattering success, is a direct result of the greenkeeper's unending search for ways and means to make the fairways and greens smoother, truer, and easier to play.

There is no comparison between the condition of golf courses today and those of fifteen or twenty years ago. Nor is there any comparison between the scores of yesterday and those of to-day. The suggestions of greenkeepers are responsible for the improvement of golf course machinery. The suggestions of greenkeepers are responsible for turf research work.

It is the experience of greenkeepers in conjunction with turf research organizations that have made it possible for the playing professional to play sub-par golf. But this is not generally known, because the greenkeepers' accomplishments have not been exploited. The good he has done lies buried beneath the compost pile. And why? Is there any real reason why he should not reap the benefits of the fact that he has been a major contributing factor to the long strides the game of golf has taken in the last decade or two? Our answer is "No." How are we going to receive this recognition? The following answer to this question is my own opinion and is perhaps, debatable.

Criticism from Experts Welcome

The approach to the requirements of any job in the greenkeeping profession must be analysis. In that analysis, the very first thing we should know is ourselves—our limitations, our capacities, our strength or weakness, our knowledge of our ability to do our jobs well. We must add to our moral strength and eliminate weakness by inviting with appreciative welcome all constructive criticism from our associates or those qualified to make such criticism. There are colleges with short courses in greenkeeping, experimental stations financed by federal and state funds and men like Dickinson, Noer, Monteth, and many others who have spent most of their lives in turf work. They are certainly deserving of being mentioned as those qualified. We must know our objective and our plans for realizing the fond hopes of every greenkeeper's ambition, which is success in our chosen field of endeavor. In this connection, we must realize that we are seeking permanent success.

In order to be successful, we must be leaders, and we must know that a leader is one who really leads, rather than one who drives. We must know that in order to be a leader, we must always keep ahead of the procession. That we must study in order to grow. It is wise to remember the saying, "if I rest, I rust." We must know the needs of our clubs' members and try to please them. We must learn how to get cooperation from them, from the green-committee, and from the men we employ on the course. We must know how to organize, how to choose assistants, and how and when to place responsibility. We must understand our men, their am-

SIXTEENTH AT CYPRESS POINT



Of all courses in the United States, few exceed the links of Cypress Point at Del Monte, Calif., in picturesque architecture or exacting shot requirements. This sixteenth hole is typical of the problems that face the golfer almost constantly.

bitions, their objectives, their faults and virtues, their families, and the things that will inspire them to do their best for our interests, as well as their own. We must develop them with a capacity for initiative, self-reliance and self-direction so that they will work with the least cost of supervision. We should develop them to the point where they will be capable of answering the knock of opportunity when it presents itself. We must realize that a good greenkeeper cannot succeed except as his men succeed. The majority of men are satisfied to follow, rather than to lead, and I firmly believe that more is to be gained for the cause of *individual* recognition of the greenkeeper if we handle men as human beings, rather than as a mass machine. We must know how to have a sympathetic understanding of all their problems and how to reward and compensate them for work well done.

At the same time, it is wise to know that, for our club's sake as well as our own, it is only kindness to get them to

seek other work, if by their actions they have demonstrated that they are not fitted to perform their duties satisfactorily. We all make mistakes in judgment, and the only proper thing to do for all concerned, is to correct them as soon as possible.

Watch for Unhappy Workers

Necessity once forced a greenkeeper who was doing some construction work to resort to the old-fashioned method of using wheelbarrows, to haul soil from one side of a green to the other. He had six men working. He noticed that one of the men always pulled his wheelbarrow behind him, while the other five men pushed theirs forward and seemed to accomplish a good deal more than this particular individual. So he asked him why he did not push like the others. The fellow looked up surlily and said, "I'm damned sick of the sight of it." That is an example of a mistake to be corrected.

A man who is not satisfied with his work is a detriment to its progress. As our men succeed, so will we.

Another point we should consider, and one of the most important is: when it is better for us to say "No," rather than "Yes," to suggestions that become an absolute obsession to the chairman of the green-committee. If these suggestions are contrary to the best interests of the club, and its members, and we are absolutely sure that we are right, our answer should be "No." If a boss will not listen to an intelligent "No," based on knowledge and careful thought, such a boss is not worth working for, and the job that we have, cannot hold much future for us. If saying "No" gets us fired, we are better off out of the job.

Being "No-man" Is Ability Test

Knowledge is the most component part of success, but it is not enough merely to have knowledge. Even if we are capable of the best construction and maintenance of golf courses, the world is not going to beat a path to our door to engage our services. We've got to tell the world that our work is the best. If we have the ability we can't wait for the people to discover it. We must let them know that we are capable and we must prove it. Being a "Yes-man" will never call attention to our abilities; but being a "No-man" will do the trick. Saying "No" to the chairman of the green-committee takes real courage, but it is often worth the risk and it is a real forerunner to being recognized as an expert, and when we have been so recognized, then can we say that "WISHES" that are horses will have been ridden to the individual success.

But individual success is not enough. Because one individual is recognized as an expert does not mean that 4,000 other greenkeepers have been so honored. We must go further. We must endeavor to perpetuate greenkeeping as a profession by taking advantage of all opportunities and by realizing that opportunity does not knock only once, but many times.

Chief among the opportunities offered a greenkeeper is the opportunity for recognition thru organized cooperation. Those of us who belong to greenkeeper organizations know how much good we have derived from our meetings. We know that collaboration has helped us become an asset in the operation of golf

clubs. We also know that before we had this method of distributing maintenance knowledge, that the greenkeeper was considered a much inferior figure than he is today in the eyes of nearly all who were connected with the game of golf. This opinion is gradually changing and is directly due to organization. Proof of this is seen in the interest green-chairman and other club executives are showing in the programs being sponsored by our greenkeeper groups.

In the November 1930 issue of GOLFDOM, an item appeared that is a little amusing to one who reads it today. It was titled "In Golf Club Circles," and reads as follows:

"A man who can supervise the routine work of a golf course is rated as a FOREMAN by those in authority.

"A foreman who knows the theory and practice of fine turf management, is a GREENKEEPER.

"A greenkeeper who can decisively demonstrate on paper what it will cost to maintain the course for the coming year, is a GOLF COURSE SUPERINTENDENT.

"At present there is a surplus of foremen, an adequate supply of greenkeepers, and a decided shortage of superintendents."

It would seem that in 1930 that writer in GOLFDOM did not think highly of a greenkeeper's ability. The item continues:

"Foremen are just four and one-half inches ahead of the sheriff; Greenkeepers have turkey for Thanksgiving, while Superintendents are worrying about their investments."

This item was boxed to lend emphasis to the considered fact that the "Foreman," the "Greenkeeper," and the "Golf Course Superintendent" were three separate and distinct individuals. I don't suppose Herb Graffis ever expected anyone to pop out and dig up the past, but there it is.

No More Foremen

Now, I am of the firm opinion that all of this might have been true in 1930, but that was over six years ago. Today, thru the efforts of greenkeeper organizations and the holding of monthly meetings, the foreman has dropped out of the picture. He has either been educated into a good greenkeeper or a golf course superintendent thru this organized cooperation, or else the sheriff has caught up

with him. He is either able to have turkey for Thanksgiving, or only what the sparse dole of the WPA worker will allow. He is either worrying about his investments or worrying without investments. If he is still a member of a greenkeeper organization in good standing, he does not have to worry at all. If he is still a member he is an outstanding example of what organized cooperation has done and can do.

But it is deplorable to note that only a small portion of greenkeepers belong to our organizations. Only 20% of the greenkeepers of this country are actively engaged in seeking a position of prominence for the profession of greenkeeping. There are over 4,000 greenkeepers in America, who can put their shoulder to the wheel and help batter down all obstacles in the pathway to the successful fulfillment of our ambitions, and those who have organized for that purpose are in the minority.

Our great need is to increase the number of members in all our organizations. We must go after the fellows who have been standing aloof. We must ask them why they are not among us, and their reasons for holding back. We must tell them what we are striving for—what our aims and objects are. We must show them that our organizations are represented by the cream of the greenkeeper crop and make them feel that they are the losers if they cannot see fit to be among us.

We must get them to join with their brothers of the greenkeeping profession, for its elevation, for fraternalism, for education, for success. We must impress upon them that 4,000 voices will be heard more easily than one. If we can accomplish this, we can safely say that recognition will be ours.

ALTHOUGH they say the Scots are the thrifty race, tops in a bargain-hunting story is an actual case at a midwestern golf club where an American member came into the pro-shop with a sadly hacked and well-worn golf ball.

Holding it up for the pro's inspection, the member asked:

"How much will you allow me on this if I buy a new ball from you?"

BOB RULE, golf editor of the Nashville (Tenn.) Banner, has worked out a golf box score that brings to golf reports the clear and thorough summary of



This poster, measuring 15" x 21", and printed in two colors, was mailed the latter part of May to 3,200 pros in as many golf clubs throughout the country. Designed to promote more play of golf by enabling youngsters to use old clubs passed on to the pros, the poster is the latest in a series of golf promotion activities sponsored by Pro-Promotion. Posters are intended to be displayed in pro-shops, on bulletin boards, and about the first tees. Manufacturers see in this promotion a direct means to enable many thousands of young golfers to take up the game for the first time.

play that is provided by the box score in baseball.

Rule's copyrighted system has hole-by-hole spaces for par, winner's and loser's card, birdies, eagles, putts, stymies, penalties, in sand, in rough from tee.

Population Increase — A young lady now is No. 1 in the household of Mr. and Mrs. Ross Sawtelle of Stroudsburg, Pa. The pappy is president of Worthington Mower Co. Miss Clounett Sawtelle arrived May 10 to contribute additional joy and excitement to the establishment where the first-born, a boy, had been in command.

In at Last!—"Greenkeeper," a word now missing from dictionaries, is to appear in the next edition of Funk & Wagnall's New Standard dictionary, according to assurance Harold Stodola, president of the Minnesota Greenkeepers association has received from Frank H. Vizetelly, editor of the book.