

# KEEP WITHIN TURF'S TOLERANCE

Minnesota  
Short Course  
Address

By L. S. DICKINSON

**T**OLERANCE by a person is commendable, and the practice of tolerance is universally preached—and sometimes practiced. However, the doctrine is good only because we control the limits of tolerance. By the term "limits of tolerance," I mean the limits to which any factor can be subjected without destroying that factor or seriously affecting its function.

Greenkeepers pride themselves on *making* the grass grow. It is false pride and misplaced ego. Greenkeepers don't *make* the grass grow. The only *making* they do is when they apply some push-em-up green fertilizer, and that act can often be considered analogous to getting a short burst of speed out of a tired horse by whipping. It hastens the end.

Greenkeepers should pride themselves for *letting* the grass grow.

The demands on all golfing areas, particularly on the grass, by high pressure golf and modern equipment are severe and exhausting. These requirements of golfing turf are not set by the grass, but by men chasing old man par. They either do not know or fail to realize that grass has a limit to its tolerance.

## Wise Greensmen Stay on Safe Side

Because Nature and not man has set the tolerance limits, these limits cannot be changed to suit man's convenience. Wise greenkeeping therefore recognizes the necessity of exercising only such cultural practices as will keep within the limits of tolerance set by Nature.

Such practices are not always carried out! Many greenkeepers get themselves in serious trouble by using a panacea or continuing one practice too long, as for example, sodding where fundamental correction is needed.

There are many factors involved in the management of a golf course—factors directly pertaining to play; those dealing with the cultural and physical condition of the golfing areas; those having to do with equipment; the ones that must be considered when new construction is being done, or alterations made; and personnel factors.

Each factor within each group has its

limit, of tolerance and each has a relative degree of importance to its group and to the maintenance problem as a whole. Therefore, each factor is important and to let or cause it to get beyond the tolerance limit is a serious offense to good maintenance.

In the playing group, the tolerance limits are variable because they are set by man. They differ at different clubs, and it will always eventually cost dearly those clubs whose members insist upon playing conditions requiring practices beyond cultural tolerance. I think it is the proper duty of greenkeepers to call the attention of club officials to the fact they are asking for things beyond the ranges of tolerance.

Keeping all the factors within the limits of tolerance sometimes will be like trying to fit rubber balls into a box that is just a bit too small to hold them. You press one ball into position and another jumps out, etc., until you correct the fundamental error of getting too small a box. Never let one factor jump out of range because of attention diverted to others. Never let one factor jump out of range to do extra good work on another. Abandon the factor first. To illustrate: spending \$500 for new tees when lime is needed to bring the soil pH within the range of tolerance.

The greater the importance of a factor, the greater is the influence of a slight change in condition. The causes of factors being out of the limits of tolerance may be classed as historical, construction, cumulative or immediate malpractices.

## What Golf Needs Most

I am firmly convinced that the three things golf needs most are:

1.—Less frantic chasing of par and more leisurely golf, along the English idea. Now that we soon won't be permitted to work more than 30 hours a week, there

will be no hurry to get through the game, anyway.

2.—More attention given to the use of the club as a family recreational center.

3.—Better greenkeepers! I sincerely mean it—better greenkeepers.

No I don't want you men fired and others substituted in your place—that would be suicidal for the clubs and certainly so for me. You men are good greenkeepers, surely the best in the districts you come from. But you are not good enough for yourselves, you haven't brought out your own full ability and you haven't yet convinced enough golfers that your work requires both business and professional ability.

One of your most important jobs is to convince yourselves that you have real ability—that the chances are very great your chairman and club members really prefer an independent thinking and acting man to a yes man. Be independent thinkers and doers; do not lean on research or be users of panaceas.

You may wonder why I did not place the need for research among the three greatest needs. It is not there, because I believe that research is for the research

worker and that it is for him to interpret the results and adapt them to general golf course management.

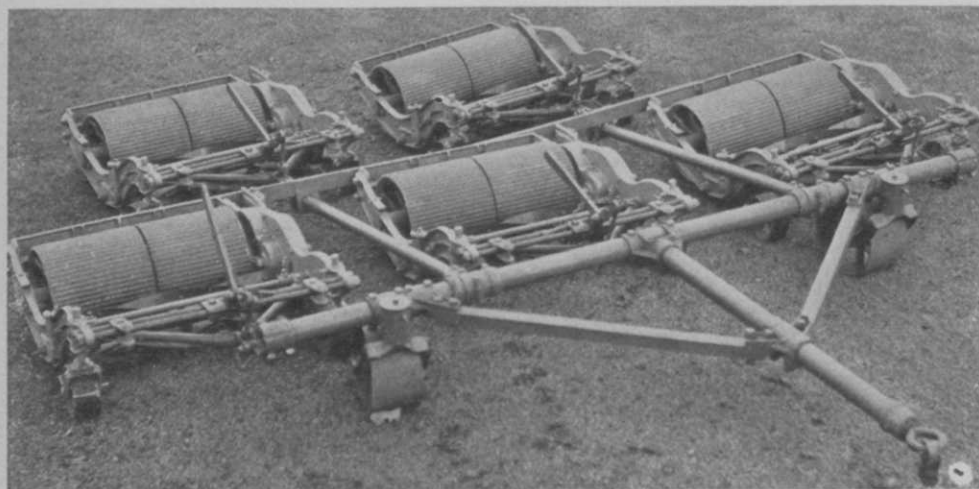
I do not say that further research is not desired. I do ask you to consider what the golfing conditions would be if further research should stop and you men should attack your problems with confidence, adopt the results of research already completed, and think through your troubles to their source instead of running for a panacea.

I'm telling you that with you men as greenkeepers, there would be better golfing, and more golfing and with no great cost, yet with higher salaries for you.

Well! perhaps I've spoken beyond the range of tolerance. I hope not, for I am sincerely anxious to do what I can to create better golfing conditions and to help particularly the greenkeeper.

**Cinci Gets '38 NAGA Meet**—Date for the 1938 annual convention of the National Association of Greenkeepers convention has been set as February 1 to 4, inclusive. Place of the convention will be the Netherland Plaza Hotel, Cincinnati.

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