

KEEP YOUR GREENSMEN

By KARL SUTPHIN

*There Is Plenty of Work Around a Club
to Keep Crew Profitably Busy All Winter*

"NOW is the time for all good men to come to the aid of their party." And this line speaks no lie, because now is the time most greenkeepers and their crews of workers are attacked by what is commonly called 'job palsy.' September brings Labor Day, the day laborers throughout the country get 24 hours of rest by decree. But to the greenkeeper's crew, Labor Day is merely a very effective way of saying that the start of their annual layoff is not far in the future.

One of the biggest problems the greenkeeper must face for his men is how to keep them from being out of work for at least a third of the year, even when there is plenty of work to be done around the club. Right here and now is the time for the greenkeeper to do a little missionary work by showing his green-chairman and the other club officials just why at least the best of his

workers should be kept on the staff throughout the winter months.

The principal argument the greenkeeper can advance is the fact that it will save the club money in the long run to employ a grounds crew throughout the season. Cumulative neglect of many items, which can be easily and cheaply repaired during the months of slack play may run into major costs if allowed to hang over until the start of the new season. Attention in summer to the many details of routine work leaves little time for special tasks; also, special jobs done during the playing season are likely to

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inconvenience the golfers and disrupt maintenance schedules. Also, clubs keeping their course workers are able to start the year with a seasoned staff and do not have to lose time and money locating capable, new groundsmen.

Many smaller clubs give the greenkeeper as well as his grounds crew a several months' layoff at the advent of cold weather in an effort to reduce expenses, but careful analysis will disprove this policy as effecting any real economy. Repair bills, needless damage done to greens by neglect during the winter, and the poor condition of many courses at the start of the season, can be largely eliminated if the maintenance head is continued on the payroll throughout the winter.

S. W. Beasson (Beasson being the nom de plume of a prominent greenkeeper) sends in some interesting comment on work around golf courses during the winter months. Writes Beasson:

"One result of the depression was that many golf courses acquired greensmen who were experienced in the mechanical and building trades, which made the composite crew an efficient, self-contained unit, able to tackle practically every job needed around a golf club. The golf course superintendent is generally a 'jack of all trades' (and master of several). Now with men who can efficiently carry out work assigned them, golf clubs can capitalize on this by employing all, or nearly all, of the men during the slack season.

Here's Check List of Winter Jobs

"Weather conditions will not greatly affect the working program if it is planned and classified along the following lines:

Stormy weather or snow on ground—Indoor work. Overhaul all equipment; attend to apparatus first that will be needed early in spring; paint equipment; stencil signs; sort and mark tools assigned to sections; screen topdressing; paint interior of clubhouse; repair lock-

ers and window screens; tighten joints of furniture; check plumbing; clean out sewage system; take inventory of all equipment; order repair parts and other needs to insure early delivery.

Cold days, ground frozen—Concentrate on hauling, such as sand to traps, and road fill; lime and lead turf; remove dead wood from trees, prune shrubbery; clean out woods along holes; burn stumps, brush and weeds in rough; repair banks of waterways.

Frost on turf, ground only slightly frozen — Keep wheeled machinery off turf; rake up leaves; repair fences, bridges, outbuildings; dig and pry out stones from rough and fairways; sub-grade course alteration jobs; start tile ditch excavations.

Warm days, ground thawing and soft—Pluck loose tap-rooted weeds; rake out thickly matted weeds like clover and chickweed and reseed areas in frost-honey-combed soil; spread sand previously hauled to traps; surface grade grounds alterations; paint exterior of clubhouse and maintenance buildings, fences, rails, bridges and benches.

"These are just a few of the items that require attention out of the playing season. Your man-in-charge of the work is the best judge of what is to be done, when—where—why—and how. Club officials who either go away or who are tied up in the commercial rush of the holidays later on can at this time discuss to advantage the authorization of necessary work to be done during the winter months."

Beasson's words make clear the part the greenkeeper must play in this effort to provide year-round employment for golf course workers.

Another very important thing the greenkeeper should remember when talking over this matter of employment through the winter with the club officials is to suggest that either through bulletins or announcements, members be asked to keep the grounds crew in mind when work is to be done around the members' homes. There are odd jobs to be done around every member's home sometime during the winter, and by informing their greenkeeper when such work is needed members will bring just a little more sunshine into the already tough life of a course laborer and a little welcome dough into his pockets.

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