

# "LOW PAY IS THREAT TO GREENKEEPING'S FUTURE": SAYS SPRAGUE

**D**R. HOWARD B. SPRAGUE of the New Jersey State Agricultural station, speaking before the New Jersey Golf Course Supts.' Assn., at Twin Brooks CC, July 11, made a common-sense suggestion about greenkeepers. Qualified observers have noted that present generally low wages are not only discouraging many of today's good greenkeepers, who are unable to make ends meet, but risks the future of the profession and golf course maintenance standards.

Sprague advocated that the greenkeepers make a statistical survey of greenkeepers' salaries, so the findings of the survey would be guidance for club officials and greenkeepers. In discussing the situation Sprague said:

"Three things my fellow diners and I have talked over are in need of general consideration. "The first is, 'What does the profession of greenkeeping yield?' From the aesthetic side, we have a healthy occupation outdoors, and diversified so it does not become boresome. After your day's work is done, there is nothing to worry about except turf disease, insect invasion, drainage, drouth and budget, so you go to bed for a sound, untroubled sleep! ! ! (*Loud and long laughter.*)

## What Is Average?

Other than this mention "satisfaction," no one seems to know what the average salary yield is. Generally speaking, I do know it is small compared to other forms of specialization. If separate individuals were each paid for the many services one man, the greenkeeper, renders a golf club, the total cost would be very large.

"It would be well if you all got together, made a statistical survey of your incomes and make the findings known. I might ask, 'How can any of you place monetary value on your services if you have no basis for comparison?'

"Greenkeeping is a profession that is

bound to go ahead. By our living standards the rating of recreation is increasing.

"Another topic we have discussed was the enlistment of newcomers to continue the work of present greenkeepers. You in charge of courses today are certainly more qualified than others to select the right men, if you can locate them and 'sell' them on your profession. Agricultural colleges can handle the technical training, but you men alone can teach the art or practical side of greenkeeping.

"Boys who come from farm homes, we find, are the best material for agricultural training at college. Some greenkeepers claim their foremen (who are prospective greenkeepers) are better versed in golf maintenance than the superintendents themselves were at the same time of the career. This is a healthy indication, and leads to the professional becoming as respected as you, yourselves make it."

"The last subject we have talked about deals with the importance of what turf research work we can do for you. Your interest shows that it has value to your courses, your employer and yourselves. Research appropriations in times like these are the first to be cut, and last to be restored. Relief funds are more important, but research work continues in industry, even during times of retrenchment, so that when the time comes, slack can be quickly taken up.

"Research is a long and laborious assignment. We are nearing the time when you will want new information quickly, and we will not be able to furnish it. By reduction of funds the bank will fail. You know the results of turf starvation and neglect when required soil treatments are postponed too long."