

Check Up Before Checking Out

By C. Kent Bradley

OFFICIALS and committees who came into office at many clubs pledged themselves to save money in 1939. On this basis, they did not want, or hesitated, to allow for purchases that were necessary. As the season advances, all concerned find that top golf maintenance cannot be obtained with little funds, and while it need not call for exorbitant money, it does require sufficient expenditures.

Too often, the new officers consider the course superintendent's statement of requirements, as mere opinion. This man's job is to see that best playing conditions are obtained and upheld. It is the club's part to furnish proper means to achieve the desired ends. Right now, during September, while conditions are apparent, is the time to stop a habit that is running more clubs into jeopardy each year.

A retiring board member or green-committeeman turns in a report at the end of the season. Money was "saved" by cutting on seed, fertilizer, labor, and letting worn equipment "go another year." They may boast of "economy" during their term-in-office. The next set of officials get a score with a challenge to meet, which they try to beat.

Some business-minded committees are now asking, "Was money saved at the expense of the golf course, the playing conditions and our attractiveness to present and new members? Have we really saved, or just borrowed on the reserves of our course, and in the end, just passed the buck by "saving the bucks?"

Breakdown Is Climax of Neglect

This procedure may get by for awhile, but the show-down is inevitable. Many boards will find themselves on the spot for past follies. The fact that turf troubles are encountered, or machine breakdowns occur more this year, is not the fault of present regimes. It is a climax of neglect and lack of foresight, requiring a lot of undoing by this year's committeemen, in order to justify their occupancy of office.

The run-of-club members should realize that if they want to play, they have to pay. There are numerous advantages playing the home course, and if the present members go elsewhere, they have to pay just the same. Courses that draw

members to them do so because they have proper maintenance standards that appeal to players.

Fundamentally, proper maintenance is obtained with sufficient funds, material, men, equipment and supervision. The order of importance will vary with individual conditions, but each should be given due allowance. One of the best indications of what a club's maintenance facilities are, we find, is the course mechanical equipment. A sprinkler is worthless if it does not work. A putting green mower is junk if it is worn beyond accurate cutting adjustment; a tractor is costly to operate if the fuel consumption is getting too big—and so on down the line.

Inform Members of Conditions

Club members should be informed of conditions, in order to get their support. One way would be to put on a week-end show at a prominent spot around the clubhouse grounds. All the equipment on hand could be placed where it would be noticed.

The club newspaper and bulletin boards could give advance notice that a "show" would be held—but not say of what—on a certain Saturday and Sunday. The green-chairman and the course superintendent would be around to give out information. Placards telling the purpose and cost of an old machine, date bought, how much use it had had, the normal wear life, and its present condition, would be enlightening. New equipment might be borrowed from friendly neighbor-clubs, or exhibited by local golf course supply dealers. If neither of these is feasible, circulars and catalogs of new machines could be placed by the old ones. Seed and fertilizer samples, flat boxes of poor and good turf, would add interest, especially to those that have home lawns.

A newspaper editorial recently mentioned that the United States was letting its scrap-iron reserves run low by making large foreign shipments. In case of emer-

An excellent bulletin on velvet bent planting and maintenance is Circular 393 of the New Jersey Agricultural Experiment Station, and written by Howard B. Sprague. You probably can get a copy of it by sending Prof. Sprague a stamped return envelope.



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gency, so the editor said, we would have insufficient needs for our own use. Evidently the writer of that article has overlooked the junk piles at tool sheds and maintenance barnyards of golf courses.

Simply because a machine runs does not mean it will turn out right work. A new gear on a worn shaft, a sharp reel on a shaky frame, and similar exhibits are repairs. Repairs are made to tide over to replacement time, but don't produce the best results. At least one club in each district, and often several, are in run down condition, due to lack of proper upkeep and replacements, which reflect neglect of green-committees to note conditions while the playing season is on, and to make such notes matters of record for the guidance of ensuing committees. Better look now, and see if your club is one of these wherein your committee fails to handle this important job.

Test Green Planned to Benefit Iowa Greenkeepers

AUGUST meeting of the Iowa Greenkeepers' Assn. was held at the Newton CC, August 13, with 27 members of the association in attendance. Dr. S. W. Edgcombe, Iowa State College, told the group the college will soon put in an experimental green at its course at Ames; he also read the latest Horticultural Society news letter to the assembled greensmen.

A letter is being sent all Iowa clubs in regards to the work on the new turf garden and experimental green at ISC. The benefits of the plot were explained, emphasizing the fact that every golf club in the state will be helped considerably through this new undertaking. Donations were requested from all clubs: \$5 for 9-hole courses, and \$10 for 18-hole clubs.

Other business transacted at the meet-

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