

Workers Must Fit Their Jobs

By W. E. Langton
San Gabriel (Calif.) CC

IT is difficult to state definitely what work I has shown the most important contribution to the successful management of our golf course for 1940. Perhaps after all is said and done the management and placing of workers, so there are no round pegs in square holes, will always prove to be the most important function of any superintendent. It matters not what profound knowledge a man may have or however scientific his approach to problems that arise. He cannot possibly be successful unless he handles his men correctly.

It is not my intention nor could I, if I would, tell anybody how to run his business. So many factors enter into the situation that unless a man is on the spot and knows all the facts in the case, it is asinine to lay down rules governing a particular course. We know perfectly well how much work a machine will do under certain circumstances. We can always strike an average cost of repairs and fuel and general operating expenses with accuracy. But when it comes to the human element that is altogether different, for mankind is complex. Each individual is a problem, and the approach to each person can never be the same. I am reminded here of witnessing the starting of a new W. P. A. project. It is not my intention to be critical simply because it was a public undertaking. I have seen the same mistakes made in both public and private projects.

How Not To Do It

A young army engineer was given this job in the field of construction. This young engineer commenced the project without any organization whatever. He was given 300 unemployed men at seven o'clock in the morning.

The young man knew less than nothing of the men sent him. He knew nothing of their character or ability; some had been clerks in offices, most had done some kind of white collar job. Very few had been seasoned by hard work. Some were fat and lazy, others were weak and underfed, although willing to work.

I really felt sorry for this young en-

Are you sure you have no square pegs in round holes?

gineer. I had been placed in similar circumstances years ago. It was both fascinating and instructive to watch the proceedings for the first few hours. Things simply did not fit and dovetail into each other. The result was almost chaos.

One saw big strong men carrying a small cask of water trying to act the part of the water-boy, and undersized, weak individuals pushing overladen wheelbarrows. Some gangs so crowded around trucks that it was impossible to shovel properly and straggling units had no supervision whatever.

If the young engineer had been experienced, he would have spent a few hours looking into the record of each man. Then it would have been so much easier to direct the men in the channels for which they were fitted. Supervisors must rely entirely upon past experience and possess an uncanny method of reading character and ability in the handling of new men.

What of Older Men?

What makes greenkeepers retain the services of old reliable men is the fact that engaging new, untried men is somewhat of a lottery. Yet a problem faces every greenkeeper of just what to do with valuable has-beens, who are getting near 50 years of age. Most golf clubs have men between the age of 45 and 60 years who possess golf course wisdom in maintenance and yet are slipping in certain lines of work. Especially is this true in really hard work with hand machines.

If a greenkeeper were callous enough

Annual meeting of the PGA will be held November 11-14 at the Morrison hotel, Chicago. Tuesday, November 12, is to be devoted entirely to the PGA educational conference, a series of sessions to which all PGA members have been invited to attend. The educational conference, where matters of vital interest to every PGA member will be discussed, will be held in the Morrison's Casino room, beginning at 9:30 a. m. and continuing until 5:30 p. m.



Dr. C. Wernham is shown explaining tests conducted at the Penn State College experimental gardens, to greensmen who attended the annual Penn State field day program, held September 30.

to count the steps per minute of a man over 45 years of age while cutting a putting green and then count the steps of a young man whose age was between 20 and 30 years, the result would be illuminating, and I venture to say that a wise greenkeeper would retain the services of the younger man for pushing mowers and give the older man something more in line with his age and experience. Because, after all, it takes speed and strength to secure the necessary velocity of cutting blades to make a perfect putting surface, and when a greenkeeper has too many older men without a sufficient balance of younger men, that greenkeeper is riding for a fall.

One of the most difficult things a greenkeeper has to face is to determine past values in old employees in relation to what younger men can accomplish; after working side by side with men for over 20 years one hates to think his old standbys are slipping and will eventually have to give way to younger men. Perhaps sometime golf officials will look into this important problem and help the superintendent do something about it.

Where Older Men Fit

In the meantime, the law of age creeps in, which age stiffens muscles, hardens cartilage and arteries and slows up physical endeavor and by a cruel irony of fate breaks the back of the hardest worker first. But older men have their place in the scheme of things, usually they are steady and reliable and help to raise the morale of a younger group.

So when we look carefully into the management of a golf course, first and

foremost comes the devising of labor to obtain a maximum amount of work for a minimum of effort. It is secured only by planning and a knowledge of human nature. Without this thought in mind all our scientific knowledge of force and growth will avail but little.

To paraphrase an old saying, "A greenkeeper is known by the greens he keeps." For good or evil he is so judged. All through the year in Southern California the man in charge must never relax from the utmost vigilance.

Some Beefs on Bent

Some few years ago someone discovered bent grass for greens and while it is the best grass we greenkeepers know about at the present moment, it certainly is not a grass for those who love ease, comfort and relaxation.

Bent grass seems to have an affinity for every bug, germ, weed and other undesirable neighbors, especially *Poa annua*, crabgrass, Bermuda and brown-patch. Constant care is required to subdue these rapacious enemies. Our fairway problems in the southwest are simplified by the encroachment of Bermuda grass and the uncontrollable crabgrass in summer. In the winter there is a sprinkling of the finer grasses combined with *Poa annua* and the various varieties of clover which colors the whole surface a nice green; but no one would be so foolish as to attempt to rid the fairways of everything but the finer grasses. It would be too costly and useless. We let the power mowers level the surface twice a week, which gives the golfers a good surface to shoot from.

We have another substitute for grass coming along which, I believe, is destined to revolutionize the present varieties of grass on fairways. It is a weed called *Dia kondria repens*. We at San Gabriel have witnessed its growth for quite a few years and it perhaps would not be out of place here to give some of the highlights of this spreading weed.

Dense Growth Crowds Out Weeds

It is a close creeping plant of dark green foliage. The leaves are much smaller than clover leaves and much more compact in growth. The leaves resemble a miniature water lily. It has plenty of fine fibrous feeders which go about three inches deep. It requires very little cutting, in fact, although our cutting units have been running over it for quite a few years, I have never known the surface to be touched by the mowers. It grows so dense and compact that even Bermuda and crabgrass scarcely survive. I think in time all surface weeds and grasses will succumb to its squeezing tendencies. After it is once established it requires less water than the grasses. Even in the summer months with the thermometer registering around 90 degrees we only water it every ten days. It will stand hard usage and is practically fool-proof.

It grows equally as well in poor sandy soils as in rich compost soil, and it seems of a finer texture on the poorer soils. It does not like strong nitrogenous fertilizers. It seems content and thrives well with a dressing of mushroom soil. It seems to be having quite a boom here in Southern California for lawns. The nurserymen who have it for sale are asking as much as \$3.50 per flat of 16 in. by 16 in. for it. A flat will set out about 100 sq. ft. Some twelve months ago we inserted a plug 3½ inches on the edge of a turf nursery and today it has covered an area of 20 sq. ft. It seems to absorb the finer grasses as if they never existed. It does not like deep shade, but it revels in sunshine and does not object to heat.

We thought at first it would become a pest but it is much more easily controlled than either crab or Bermuda grass. It forms itself into a carpet of solid sod and lends itself to lifting without breaking. There is not enough in existence at present to affect golf courses, but if it proved successful, which I have no doubt at all, ways and means will be

Kildeer CC (Chicago district) in its club publication lists the qualifications of caddies who are looking for jobs. The club's caddie committee conducts an energetic campaign to place its boys who are not in school after the season passes its crest. The activity helps Kildeer to get as faithful, competent and select a group of caddies as you'll find anywhere.

found to insert it in fairways and tees, and propagation will be made on a more extensive scale for commercial purposes.

It will take quite a long time before anything is definitely known regarding *Dia kondria* for greens. There may be possibilities for such use, but it will have to be toned down on a starvation diet the same as we used to tone down Bermuda grass when we used it for greens, but that is another story. There is one remarkable thing about *Dia Kondria*; it does better in open ground with harsh treatment than if coddled and fussed with in flats. If the flats are placed in the shade of trees it becomes soft and succulent. It is then that the birds relish it as a salad. The towhees, thrashers and mocking birds come in troops to feed upon the dainty morsel and yet on the open fairways we have yet to find a bird feasting upon *Dia Kondria*.

Parking Lot Hunch

It is difficult to say just what has been Southern California's outstanding job of late. I can only write personally of San Gabriel. I think a very important job was an improvement in our system of parking on the parking lot. Previous to this improvement there was always some bother whenever we had a crowd. Usually, some thoughtless person took more than his share of parking space. Some parked too near other cars, making it difficult to open the large doors of modern cars. Then there were others who insisted on parking crooked instead of straight, so that fenders got bent, scars were made, and tempers were wrecked.

Today, all is calm and placid on the parking lot. Each car is allowed 8 ft. parking space, which allows the widest door to open freely. All we did was to make forms for concrete 8 in. in the ground and 4 in. out of the ground, roughly finished. We made the forms about 9 in. at bottom and 4 in. at top, coming to a point at entrance. Before

we did this construction work, we used to paint lines on the asphalt once a month and on busy days pay a man to park cars. Today, we have a permanent line of direction for each car and no future expense for paint or labor.

It was a simple job of construction and hardly worth mentioning but it has proved itself highly efficient for parking. Then there are always the usual touches here and there on any golf course. Grounds will run down at the heel unless one is continually vigilant. There is the usual dead wood in trees, shrubs to be replaced, hedges to be trimmed, benches and flag poles to be painted and a little beautifying here and there. It's one continual everlastingly interesting job, this supervising a golf course, and yet, who wants a different calling?

Monteith Is Speaker at Midwest G. A. Meeting

CLOSE to 150 members and guests of the Midwest Greenkeepers' Ass'n. attended its annual tournament and meeting, Oct. 2, at Medinah CC, Chicago district. The turf lads spent the daylight hours playing the club's No. 3 course and inspecting the USGA Green Section's experimental bent plots, maintained by the club's superintendent, Norman Johnson. Later, they attended a dinner where William Otter, head of the Chicago District GA's green-committee, served as toast-master and Dr. John Monteith, head of the Green Section, was principal speaker.

Golf prizes went to Melvin Warnecke (Olympia Fields CC) for first low net of 87-18-69, Emil Massiocchi (Onwentsia C) for a nice 39-37-76 low gross, Bob Duguid (Evanston GC), Charley Shiley (Illinois GC), Bill Stupple (Exmoor CC), and Stanley Arendt (Inverness GC).

Monteith spoke principally of the experimental plots now established at 40 clubs located from coast to coast. Purpose of this widespread test is to discover what effects, if any, various climates, soil conditions and cultural methods will have on the bent strains. The Green Section knows how these various strains perform

at its Arlington nursery and now is interested in the national picture.

For this purpose, greenkeepers, pros and all golfers are asked to visit these nursery plots frequently, rate the strains in order of suitability as putting turf and turn in the ratings for transmission to the Green Section. From these reports, once enough of them have been received, the Section will be able to form a national preference rating on the 12 strains under test.

One interesting point brought out by Monteith was that opinions of dub golfers are just as important to the Section as the carefully weighed selections of the greenkeepers. In general, the dub's ratings will not vary widely from those of the turf experts. This was demonstrated at Medinah, where Monteith persuaded a bystander whose knowledge of turf was no more than could be gained by an occasional game of golf, to rate the plots along with the greenkeepers. The dub's selections of strains matched exactly the average of the greenkeeper's



Medinah's twelve bent test plots being rated by members of the Midwest GA.

first six choices and he also hit the 11th and 12th selection on the head. Few of the greensmen picked the plots as accurately as did the dub.

For this reason, Monteith urged the members of the Midwest body to invite the golfers at their clubs to visit these experimental gardens and rate the grasses throughout the season. The more returns the Green Section is sent during this experiment, which will be continued for several years, the more accurate the final conclusions to be drawn.

At Arlington, Monteith reported, some extensive tests have been under way for the past five years on rates of seeding and fertilizing. Next season, similar tests are to be started throughout the U. S. to check on the results at Arlington.

Mrs. C. B. Willard, Exmoor CC, Highland Park, Ill., is scheduled for re-election as Women's Western GA president. The organization has had one of its best years in tournament activity, membership and finance.