

Course Rehabilitation Needs Noted by Greenkeepers

By JOE GRAFFIS

CORRESPONDENCE and interviews with greenkeepers bring out the fact that greenkeeper records during these times are going to dictate a great part of postwar work at clubs.

A prominent eastern course supt. writes:

"Our club is one of the older and better clubs in this section and always has expected the best. Since we went into a slump of play during gasoline rationing and couldn't spend money for needed items of course maintenance if we wanted to, about the best I can do is to keep things going now and make notes of the work that will have to be begun the minute the war ends.

"Even fertilizing, seeding, weed treatment and other turf treatment for which we can get material has been neglected because of lack of labor. Some of the little labor that we do get is labor that is holding night-time war jobs and fatigue is bound to reduce its results on the course. However, I am not complaining. I think the outdoor work probably is a good change of pace for these factory workers even if they are rather old. I have been trying to get discharged veterans but as we have many factories around here offering more money I haven't had any luck in selling the health-resort qualities of golf course work.

"We now are running the course with five men and myself, and I used to think that 12 men was the absolute minimum. I know I never was wasteful in handling labor. So it is a sure thing that with half the men on the job we are doing just half the work that should be done to maintain a course in the condition our members have been educated to expect. At present they are making no complaints, but right after the war's over I think they again will be asking for perfection on the greens, fairways and tees, and in the traps.

"That means I am going to have to jump from a course force of six men up to 18 or 20 men to put things back into pre-war shape, and that may mean an argument that can cost me my job.

"About the only thing I see that I can do now is to make notes of everything that has been neglected because of war

conditions so I can put the entire record before the chairman and let him fight it out with the board."

Other letters and interviews express the same basic situation. Experienced greenkeepers believe that after the war there will be sharp competition for members and the club which gets its course in superb condition soon will be the one which will have the edge. But one thing they don't believe will change is the difficulty of selling a green-committee on the necessity of a decided increase in budget. That is the reason many of the smartest greenkeepers are keeping wartime journals of work done and work that had to be skipped, in as complete shape as possible. The record will have to speak for itself.

"What I think may make the job of reconditioning courses after the war a hard one for greenkeepers is the immediate demand for spending in replacement of equipment," the supt. of a southern California club comments. "Inability to get good mechanics and careful operators has quickened the depreciation of machinery. Now, with course labor hard to get it is ruinous to have machinery break down and hold up work. The first thing that postwar chairmen probably will want to do is to replace equipment, and the greenkeeper will be all for that except that he will have to make a delicate decision in determining just what percentages of machinery and labor expenses to set in his budget."

On this point there are varying opinions. Some greenkeepers believe that in a few years there may be drastic changes in course maintenance machinery design and construction. They are hoping that they'll be able to get by with repairs on major items until they see the new designs come in and prove themselves. Others think they'll be lucky to have machinery hold together until the war's end and that they'll be glad to get new equipment of prewar standard design and construction which demonstrated itself as eminently satisfactory.

Observation of numerous greenkeepers is that drainage systems will be among first items needing extensive overhauling. Roots have interfered with the performance of systems and drainage conditions

that before the war showed need of revision have been neglected to the extent that course injury from that cause has become increasingly serious.

Careful watch has been maintained over watering systems. In cases where the greenkeeper has been on the job during the war the pumping and piping has been vigilantly checked and such minor repairs as have been needed have been made promptly. Due to reduced wartime budgets the watering systems haven't been used except when the greenkeepers have decided such use was urgently required. That's meant a minimum of service demanded from the installations. The majority of the complete installations are comparatively modern and trouble-proof, hence there's not much concern about their need of costly repairs, extensions or modernization after the war.

In many cases greenkeepers expressed the belief that enforced reduction of greens mowing during the war was resulting in nappiness and other defects of greens surface that would not have been countenanced on first class courses before the war, and which probably will call for complete correction after the war.

There is considerable indication from greenkeepers, and chairmen too, that the fairway weed percentage is getting far too high. This, greenkeepers particularly say, is the result of clubs having been too quick in sacrificing fertilizing and weed chemical control. The clubs will have to pay for that in extensive work after the war, greenkeepers believe, and add that they have seen courses where practically complete reconditioning and reseeding of fairways will have to be done to reclaim them from pasture status.

Great jobs have been done by greenkeepers in wartime maintenance. Despite adverse weather added to the complications of wartime labor and material conditions the courses are in better shape than players probably expected, or have reason for expecting. Nevertheless experienced greenkeepers who know the infinite detail of first class course maintenance are keenly aware of many jobs they have been compelled to sidetrack during the war. They have seen that nature, when it is allowed to get out of control, can insidiously and seriously lower course standard under the condition the greenkeeper wants as evidence of his mastery of his profession.

As the many little things that all together constitute perfection in golf course maintenance may be forgotten in the work and worry of wartime, foresighted course superintendents are adding to their greenkeeping logs notes on jobs to be done at the first possible postwar time.

Colorado Springs Golf Course Has 25th Anniversary

★ In June Patty Jewett GC, Colorado Springs, Colo., will observe its 25th anniversary as a municipal golf course. The club was a gift to the city by K. K. Jewett in memory of his wife.

Before the transfer to the city, the club had operated for many years as a private club. It was then known as the Colorado Springs GC. It was preceded by the Town and Gown GC which was opened in the nineties.

Many improvements have been made to the golf course in the quarter century of city operation. All greens, fairways and tees are of grass. Yardage is 6,595 for regular play and nearly 7,000 for tournaments. Many tournaments have been held here. The first Pikes Peak Open, held last year, will be an annual event at the club, to follow the Broadmoor invitation in early August.

The club is located less than three miles from the center of the city and even in wartime, with the gas restrictions, golfers can get to it without trouble. In normal years the Patty Jewett Club has 300 to 400 annual members, although the daily green fee is the largest source of revenue. Visitors from all states of the union and many foreign countries play here during peacetime, and while very few of this group are now able to travel, play at the course has been almost as heavy as in normal times, as an army camp and air base are located nearby. Special rates are made to the men in the service, both officers and enlisted men.

Pike's Peak and many miles of the front range of the Rocky Mountains form a background for the course and the view from the club is said to be one of the finest in Colorado. The golf course is open for play over 300 days each year. In the last ten years the highest being 351 days and the lowest 298 days. While golf is the main attraction, other forms of recreation, such as cards, billiards, ping pong, etc., are open to the members of the club. Light food, beer and soft drinks are available daily, and dinners, dances and parties on special occasions.

Fees for play are kept at a minimum so that many may use the facilities provided, and if play in the future warrants enlargement, the club expects to have an additional nine or eighteen holes.

Owen McHugh, mgr. of the club, says that it has been a prominent factor in establishing Colorado Springs as one of the most popular tourist centers of the west.

Wartime maintenance problems, of course, are severe, but the standard of course conditions has been kept high.