

University of Mass. Turf Meet Staged as Work Conference

By GEOFFREY CORNISH

A workshop conference important in the history of Turf Maintenance was held at the University of Massachusetts on March 8 and 9.

Dr. Ralph A. Van Meter, President of the University, greeted 180 delegates. In his opening remarks the President stated that some people criticize "Business as Usual" in this time of crisis. "However, we pass from crisis to crisis," he said, "and if we are to maintain our way of life, 'Business as Usual' is a sane and essential policy, provided of course it is not allowed to interfere with the defense program. The role of golf courses in a crisis is obvious, and it is important they be kept functioning."

The conference was held at the conclusion of the 21st Annual Ten Weeks Winter School for Turf Managers. Nineteen candidates representing ten states successfully completed the course and were presented with certificates.

Conference subjects stressed production methods, pertinent to the present time. There were no speeches. Discussions were held and policies formulated in open meetings. For each subject a board of six or eight men was chosen from delegates by drawing of names. The subject was introduced by the chairman. The Board discussed the topic on the stage before the audience. A policy was formulated and the audience was then invited to comment. A strict time limit was observed for each subject.

At the conclusion of the conference

President Homer C. Darling presided at the annual meeting of the New England Turf Association. Election of officers was postponed until July 1 to coincide with the State fiscal year.

In addition to discussions and as a substitute for speeches, nine printed papers prepared by staff members of the University of Massachusetts were given to delegates. The subjects were as follows: Bermuda Grass for Massachusetts; What About Grubs?, Mosquito Control for the Golf Course, Tree Work on the Golf Course, The Oak Wilt Disease, Walks for Golf Courses, Cut Flowers for Club Houses, Temperature and Humidity Observations on Bent Turf, Soil Organic matter.

Subjects discussed in open meetings together with main points are given below:

The Buyers Expectations and Practical Production, Chairman, Professor Lawrence S. Dickinson.

Professor Dickinson showed a graph presenting his impressions of changes in the last thirty years in players' expectations, greenkeepers' knowledge of grass, their salaries and prestige. His graph indicated that much more was required of greenkeepers in 1950 than in 1920. In the same period the greenkeeper's knowledge of grass had increased tremendously. However, his wages had not increased in proportion, and his prestige had barely kept pace with his wage increase. Professor Dickinson stated that the green



Delegates attending the University of Mass. two-day workshop conference on turf management.

keeper must consider himself to be the production manager, and not only is it necessary for him to understand all phases of growing of turf, but he must practice business methods.

Subsequent discussion brought out that more club members are satisfied with the greenkeeper's production efforts if he makes daily adjustments to his course to suit the type of play anticipated. All too frequently these adjustments are overlooked, although all they may involve is



Members of the 21st annual Ten Weeks Winter School for Greenkeepers at the Univ. of Mass.

placement of cups and tee markers and changes in height of cut to suit the type and number of players expected. The use of Greenkeeper's Bulletin Boards and co-operation with club professionals were also emphasized.

Labor Prospects, Chairman, Professor Geoffrey Cornish

Attention was drawn to the existing labor shortage. Later discussion indicated that, for the present at least, the shortage is not quite so critical as it might appear at first glance. According to Board members, advertisements in newspapers and inquiries have brought results.

To obtain seasonal labor, the Board mentioned the following sources: High Schools, Colleges, Partially Disabled Veterans, Other Partially Disabled Men, Men in Other Jobs Willing to Work Part Time.

The Board decided that much can be done to hold existing men. From the floor Arthur Anderson outlined the program of the Brae-Burn Country Club where men receive two weeks' vacation, up to two weeks' sick leave, \$1,000 life insurance policy, hospitalization and a Christmas bonus.

Joe Klem of York Golf Club, Hinsdale, Illinois, suggested that clubs should explore the possibility of obtaining displaced persons if labor cannot be found at home.

Fertilizer Economies; Chairman, Dr. William C. Colby, Head of Dept. of Agronomy.

Dr. Colby reviewed the fertilizer situation, giving the following figures to com-

pare supplies in the United States this year over last. Synthetic Nitrogen, up 15 percent; By-products Nitrogen, up 15 percent, Natural Organics, up 5 percent, Imported Nitrogen, up 2 percent, Exported Nitrogen, off 40 percent, Superphosphate, off 10 percent, and Muriate of Potash, up 15 percent.

On the whole, the fertilizer situation looks bright except that Superphosphate is a bottleneck in production of mixed fertilizers. Furthermore, golf course priority is low. Therefore economies are essential.

General methods put forward to effect fertilizer economies include the following:

(a) On acid soils, fertilizers will be more effective if preceded by lime.

(b) Soil analyses effect some saving.

(c) Time of application is important. Applications when there is little or no growth, as in the late fall, very early spring, and in periods of prolonged drought (on non-watered areas), are lost in part before the turf can use it.

(d) Heavy applications are frequently wasteful. In the North East one pound of Nitrogen per 1,000 square feet per month is a normal application to putting greens. On the University of Massachusetts test plots it was found that this monthly rate, applied $\frac{1}{2}$ pound every two weeks for a total of six or seven pounds in the growing season, produced turf equal to that obtained after heavier applications.

(e) Fertilizers require careful storage. Certain types of fertilizers should not be stored for very long periods. One delegate observed that many tons of fertilizers are wasted on golf courses annually through inadequate storage.

Production Assets and Fixed Charges, Chairman, Professor Lawrence S. Dickinson

Important assets frequently overlooked by a club in a crisis are: 1) The superintendent, 2) State College advisory services, 3) Lessons of World War II, 4) Accumulation of good practices over the years which will allow the course to remain in good shape for a few years after cuts are made, and 5) Grass will grow even if neglected.

These commonplace assets are often overlooked, but they buffer the crisis.

A half hour was set aside for further suggestions from the audience concerning subjects discussed during the day.

Chet Jenkins of Arthur D. Peterson Company was quoted as saying that it is important for a greenkeeper to play his own course once a week to realize the player's viewpoint.

Paul J. Murphy, Little St. Andrews Golf Course, cautioned superintendents that high wages paid help is not always a guarantee of excellent work.

Homer Darling, Juniper Hill Golf Course, observed that Mercury Fungicides have advanced up to 300 percent in price. Cuts will no doubt be necessary in their use this year.

Production Equipment, Chairman, Orville O. Clapper, Pres., Clapper Company of New England

Equipment required on an 18 hole course was listed. Board members estimated that the value of the equipment to be between \$30,000 and \$38,000. Mr. Clapper's figure showed the total value as \$35,000 divided as follows: For Fairway and Rough, \$12,000, For Tees and Greens, \$6,000, For the Shop, \$4,600, Hand Tools, \$1,100, General Equipment, \$7,800, Miscellaneous Equipment, \$3,500.

The importance of a equipment inventory, fire insurance, and a shop was emphasized.

Production Costs—Budget for 1951, Chairman, Professor Lawrence S. Dickinson

The main points mentioned were: 1) A budget should be prepared and broken down to show how money is to be spent. 2) One member stated that he had a five year program for purchasing new equipment. 3) Professor Dickinson stated that a budget should not be thought of as money, but as labor hours, materials and equipment. 4) Superintendents not required by their committees to make a budget, will find one useful. 5) A budget shows the overall planning of a greenkeeper. It is not necessary to live by it down to the last penny. 6) The budget is an indication of professional improvement.

Possible Alterations in Producing Mechanics,

Chairman: Professor Geoffrey Cornish

Methods of making cuts were discussed. When cuts are necessary on a golf course there are two main ways of achieving them: 1) Spreading the butter thin, lopping off a bit here and a bit there, and 2) Cutting out entire units such as one nine, the tennis courts, clubhouse grounds, etc.

It was brought out that if cost analyses have been maintained the superintendent will be in a good position to advise where cuts should be made.

Economies can sometimes be made by

- 1) Raising the height of cut and mowing fewer times per week.
- 2) Narrow the fairways.
- 3) Make fertilizer economies.
- 4) Eliminate some back tees.
- 5) Reduce top-dressing.
- 6) Increase number of mowers in gang.
- 7) Purchase time-saving equip-

ment. 8) Investigate use of Sodium Arsenite on rough in place of mowing.

The Board favored cutting out entire units rather than spreading the butter thin. Quality can then be maintained.

Getting Buyers to Realize the Manufacturing Situation, Chairman, Sherman Moore, Supt., Hollywood GC, Deal, New Jersey.

The buyer of good turf, the player, does not understand what is taking place and what has to be accomplished on a course before it provides pleasurable golf. The following suggestions were made to superintendents to acquaint members with their work: 1) Invite members to inspect the equipment in the tool shed, 2) Carry on conversations with members concerning turf and managerial aspects of course maintenance, 3) Attend conferences and field days—the superintendent will be conspicuous by his absence, 4) Write articles for local newspapers on growing of grass, 5) Maintain cost accounts to show committee and members, 6) Play golf with members, 7) Put up slogans in locker rooms, 8) Praise the course instead of emphasizing its bad features, and 9) Refrain from criticizing your predecessor.

McLaren Heads Midwest Turf Foundation

Mal McLaren, Supt., Oakwood CC, Cleveland, O., was elected Pres., Midwest Turf Foundation at the Foundation's annual meeting held during the Purdue short course. Don Strand, Westmoreland CC, Wilmette, Ill., was elected vp. Dr. Kenyon T. Payne, Purdue geneticist, continues as executive sec. Dr. Fred V. Grau, USGA Green Section; Edward Fifield of City of Gary municipal courses, and L. L. Fontaine, Big Springs CC, Louisville, Ky., were elected Midwest directors.

Retiring Pres. Carl Bretzlaff in his report urged members to get other golf clubs, park board, cemeteries and others commercially interested in turf to participate as members in financing and results of the Midwest research.

Executive Sec. Payne reported 173 members of Midwest Turf Foundation in 7 states and presented summaries of the Foundation's valuable turf research during the previous 12 months.

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