

## Greenbrier Adjusts to New Labor Set-up

By WALTER W. COSBY  
Supt., Golf and Grounds, The Greenbrier  
White Sulphur, W. Va.

One of the most important things we are faced with at present is modernized labor relations. We are one of the few golf courses in the United States which is completely unionized. Our union is established as a maintenance union, affiliated with the AFofL which makes our operation slightly different from that of the average courses, and I think that whether you like unions or don't like unions, it is a situation which will spread in the next few years so you might as well get used to the idea.

Our labor union under its present setup has definitely benefited the golf course worker by putting him on a seniority basis, vacation with pay, sick leave, and several other privileges which the average golf course worker does not obtain. Of course, this has increased our maintenance cost considerably and has required us to buy more of certain types of equipment to overcome tremendous increase in pay.

This has also caused us to do some remodeling and reconstruction which was badly needed in the first place, to cut down our maintenance overhead and do more work with machinery. We have also found that we can do our own reconstruction by holding our key men and doing it in the winter time when the play is very light in this section of the country. In this regard it has been a help because the normal procedure has been in the past to lay off most of the men at the end of the fall season and rehire at the beginning of the spring season, which gave us a terrific labor turnover. This has been corrected by the change in our maintenance program so that our turnover in labor is perhaps only 25% as much as it was in past years.

I have found that the development of new equipment for changed conditions is probably developing faster than the conditions are changing. We bought considerable equipment last year and have found it very satisfactory and well ahead of equipment requirements that were considered modern 5 years ago.

Regarding the turf problems in our area for the past season, men who have been here for a number of years tell me it was the toughest they can remember. We had average rainfall in April and most of May, but during June and July the rainfall was 75% below average with the average temperature 8° higher than the average recorded over the last 10 years. Fortunately, the humidity was only slightly above normal.

Our greens held up very well, going a little off color in late July. Then along came August with humidity about average and 6 inches of rainfall, above normal. We had one green on our Lakeside course which is an old saucer job and we actually had to bail water out of the center with a bucket and dry it up by using old sacks to sop up water to make the green playable but found that we improved the whole situation with severe aerifying and working in one of the new soil conditioners. This is the only green out of 46 greens which gave us any severe trouble.

### Close Mowing Damages

This being natural bluegrass country we have had very good fairways here until 3 years ago when the player demand for closely mowed fairways became so great that we had to cut our height from 1½ in. to ¾ in. and on some special occasions to ½ in. You can well imagine what happened to our bluegrass.

This year clover of White Dutch variety pretty well took over so we tried sodium arsenite on four fairways on our Old Dutch course which is watered and four fairways on our Greenbrier course which is not watered.

The results have exceeded our expectations and after fertilizing and overseeding with bent in the watered fairways and a mixture of bluegrasses in the unwatered fairways, we believe we are going to be able to control the clover problem satisfactorily and at the same time using a mower height of ½ to ¾ in. on the bent and hold it through the summer on the watered fairways.

Of course, if we can get Merion B-27 to mix in our unwatered fairways I think we have whipped the problem there also.

This reminds me of one thing that is getting quite a few superintendents into trouble. There has been a lot of newspaper publicity in the past 6 or 8 months regarding the use of Merion B-27 mixed with one of the Zoysias in combination for fairways and telling the general public that they would be almost divot-proof, drought-proof, and disease-proof. Did you ever try to buy a 100 pounds or 200 lbs. of Merion B-27? The laughter you get practically drowns out your request. However, we are being asked two or three times a week when we golf course superintendents are going to wake up and use some of this perfect grass.

The course superintendent's worst problems become easier and many of them are solved when he gets a chairman who understands the superintendent's business.

—NICHOLAS CASSA  
Supt., The Country Club of Harrisburg (Pa.)