

## Supts. Tell Golf Club Officials Course Management Needs

For the sound management of every golf course, each official to be qualified to express judgment on any phase of course maintenance should read the authoritative observations course superintendents present in GOLFDOM's leading article this month. This informative series will be continued in future issues.

There is a far more serious situation in golf course maintenance than most club officials and nearly all golfers realize. That the situation has not developed into one that could badly injure the vast and growing appeal and business stability of golf is largely due to the little understood or appreciated work of resourceful golf course superintendents.

In the following statements the club official, Green chairman and Green committeeman gets a close-up on problems that must be understood, handled with understanding and cooperation, and to a large extent solved.

Otherwise, blame for mismanagement that may be accumulating will be on the officials who failed to inform themselves and not on the superintendents who warn of situations that require prompt, decisive action.

HERB GRAFFIS  
Editor

### Men Outrank Turf As Maintenance Problem

By R. L. MITCHELL

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At this stage of the history of golf course maintenance we are compelled to view our problems as those not of turf alone but of turf in its relation to men.

Because we develop and maintain turf for the pleasure of golfers and must have men in this work of ours we have to appreciate that our human problems and our turf problems must be kept in sound balance.

In balanced judgment of our work we are compelled to recognize that the most important problem in turf maintenance today is that of attracting and holding good employees.

Why is this problem important? Because regardless how much a person in a supervisory capacity may know of golf course maintenance or how much techni-

cal knowledge of turf growing he may have, all or at least the most of that knowledge must be used and applied through and by the staff of employees working for and under him.

For a supervisor to most successfully apply his knowledge to course operation he must have well trained, capable, interested and loyal personnel on his staff. Employees who stay only a short time, and are not interested in their job, and have no incentive to stay on the job, are not that kind of personnel.

Why does the problem exist? It is difficult and in the lower brackets almost impossible to attract and keep good employees for two reasons. The first is salaries offered in comparison with other fields. The second is lack of employee benefits such as year-around employment, vacations, sick leave, hospitalization, and pension plans.

What is the answer? First of course

is to pay competitive wages, and by that I mean competitive with similar lines of work in industry or other fields. Competitive with other clubs means nothing as they are probably facing the same problem for the same reasons.

The second is to offer year-around employment to as many employees as possible, by doing everything possible in slack season such as repairs, tree pruning, construction, etc. The third is to offer a program of employee benefits such as vacations, sick leave, pensions, etc., that is comparable to that offered in other fields. The fourth is to train and help any employee desiring it to obtain better positions either in your own organization or with other clubs. The net result desired being an attitude on the part of your personnel that working at the club is something worthwhile and not just another job to fill in until something better shows up.

Have we solved the problem at this club? No, not entirely. But we do recognize the problem, are working on it and with the active help of my club officials hope to come reasonably near to solving it in the not too distant future. I might add that the problem exists in all phases of club operation to some degree, as well as in golf course maintenance.

## **Dues Raise Required to Meet Increased Costs**

**By CARLTON E. TREAT**  
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You ask me what I think is the most important problem that faces golf course maintenance and my first main and continual answer is for golf clubs to raise their dues in a corresponding ratio as the operational costs and expenses have increased. If labor, machinery, supplies, etc., have increased 25 per cent or more (a pretty low figure), to put the clubs on a healthy basis the dues should be increased correspondingly. Its fighting the impossible to operate a golf course with income at a 1930-40 income with 1952 expenses.

The struggle of keeping golf courses and golf establishments going, with such an increase of labor, machinery, and material costs, has been a losing one, unless the income from dues has risen also. If this struggle has not lost valuable employees, it surely tends to make a "dead duck" of their initiative.

Too many golf courses are working their courses, clubhouse, etc., so much

overtime with outside groups in order to try to gain this extra income that the maintenance crew not only has a heavy added burden but often is crowded out on its routine work.

How many superintendents have been dying to get at some real improvements on their courses but are continually set back by lack of funds, lack of labor and time in which to do it.

Outside parties may bring in needed income but don't lose sight of the fact that they also bring added expense; a dollars and cents expense, and the "expense" of dissatisfaction among the members.

A round of golf at any club causes maintenance expense but when a club has an "office" or "company" golfing party, the expense of a round of golf goes up. Mainly for the reason that these players are not interested in the course, as such, they invariably have a number of "hackers" in the group, want added play areas for quoits, softball, and what not. Their round of golf costs the club a good deal more than the cost of a member's round.

Golf clubs will not be on a sane basis until they get their dues more in line with the increased cost of operation.

It seems to me, therefore, that the most important problem facing golf course maintenance today is to have most clubs increase their dues. It's a tough job to operate a club on dues of the 1930-40 period against 1952 costs. If a golf club is worth anything it should be worth its keep!

Please understand I am not speaking of any one particular club but wholly of golf clubs, in general, in my study of greenkeeping problems over the years.

## **Employee Relations Require Officials' Study**

**By JAMES REID**  
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Attention to the technical problems of course maintenance and progress in that respect have been so much greater than action given to the problem of golf course manpower that the situation is paradoxical in a business conducted for and by sportsmen.

The factories with higher wages, extra payment for overtime, bonuses, share the profits, golf courses for employees and other rewards greater than those received by golf course employees have put golf course superintendents up against a stone