

Chart starting in 1922 shows number of employees decreasing and pay rate increasing but over-all labor cost per hour rising \$6.

Tells Officials How Course Business Is Being Run

By HERB GRAFFIS

ROBERT M. WILLIAMS, supt., Beverly CC, Chicago, and chmn., Educational committee, Golf Course Supts.' Assn. of America, strongly believes that basic business principles of golf course maintenance should receive more attention.

Williams declares that club officials and members who don't understand operating problems and performances in course maintenance lack this understanding because the picture hasn't been put to them clearly and regularly.

He points out that the technicalities of agronomy figuring in maintenance are specialized procedures club officials and other golfers usually don't know and don't care about knowing. The superintendent is employed to be the practical authority on maintenance technicalities.

But what the green-chairman and other

officials can understand and should be told is how course maintenance is being conducted as a business and how the money is being spent, Williams emphasizes. He says that with course maintenance costs at leading clubs running from \$30,000 to \$75,000 annually, understandably club officials should and must get up-to-date and periodical reports on the operations. Williams adds: "This is the part of the superintendent's management job that his officials can understand and on which they have to be fully informed. And it's generally slighted in the rush of other duties.

"The man who is an outstanding expert at steel making, furniture manufacturing, retailing or in some profession has complex work enough with his own job without being required to know about the perplexities of course maintenance," Williams says. "He is devoting a lot of time and

thought to the club's interests for no salary without having to do a job the superintendent should do."

Basis of Official's Work

Williams then goes into some detail. "What the successful business man must have in helping his club get on an efficient basis of operation are reports that clearly tell the story of costs and activities. Then he knows how well the club's work is being done and how its money is being managed.

"When such reports are devised the superintendent has constant reminders and valuable guides to efficient operation. Superintendents know how difficult it is to compare course maintenance costs. Few courses are closely similar in factors that determine operating costs. The problem for every superintendent is to spend whatever money he gets for the course as effectively and as wastelessly as possible. This is a tough enough job when you're dealing with the uncertainties of weather and turf.

Guide to True Economy

"All of us who have charge of golf courses want to get the best results for the least money. We can see what the results are in our turf but to get an equally clear view of our competent per-

formance with money may baffle us. The information is highly important but we can't add any complicated job of record-keeping and reporting to the 12 to 14 hours a day we often have to spend on course work in the summer.

"Talks with a chairman who is superintendent of a great steel plant gave me some basic ideas on getting and presenting information my officials quickly understand and which gives me valuable guidance.

"The charts that are on the wall of my office and which are reproduced with this article tell the story fundamentally.

"One chart shows the peak number of employees and rate of pay by years. The hourly rate is in red on the chart. By going back over our club records I found that in the year of 1922 our peak was 31 workmen at 35 cents per hour. This, of course, was a year in which much of the work on golf courses was done manually.

"The hourly peak cost in 1922 was \$10.85 and in 1953 it was \$16.875. This is a shocking comparison showing the rise in course labor costs due to circumstances beyond the superintendent's control. But considering the comparison of condition of Beverly in 1922 and 1953 and the fact that high quality of maintenance is necessary to the club's sound overall financial posi-

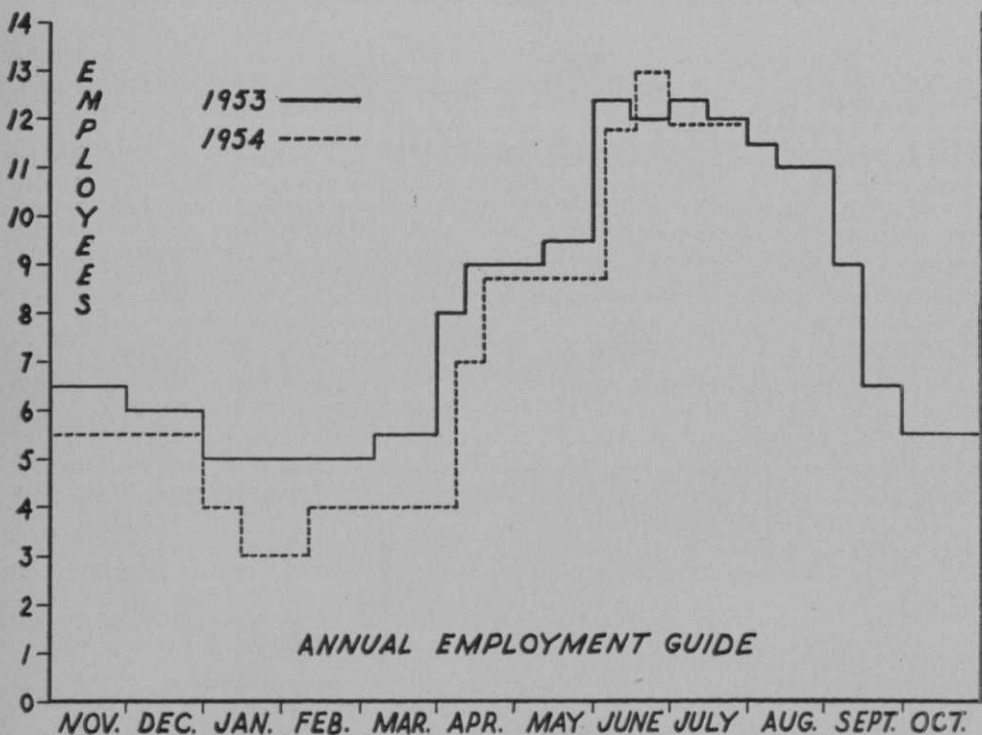


Chart shows seasonal variation in course labor workers at Beverly, with this year having smaller staff than in 1953.

tion, perhaps the increase isn't as painful as it appears.

Barometer for Costs

"The figures of 1947, right after World War II, and those of 1953 give a better barometer for watching costs. The 1947

labor cost per hour was \$14.99. The slight rise in 1951 number of employees was due to considerable construction work.

"It will be noticed that the number of employees and the hourly rate are getting into better balance. More mechaniza-

TO: MR. ROBERT A. PODESTA, CHAIRMAN, GROUNDS COMMITTEE

SUBJECT: WEEKLY PROGRESS REPORT.

Weather: Monday and Tuesday were very hot days with temperatures in the upper 90's. Tuesday evening thunderstorms started and by morning we received 1 1/4 inches of precipitation. The balance of the week has been rather mild and clear.

Labor: Eleven men; (six on Sundays) one less than for the same period last year.

Monday: Mowed tees, collars, rough and fairways. Aerified and hand watered collars on all greens. Aerified, verticut and matted No. 14 and No. 17 greens. Raked traps. Watered north nine fairways and all greens. Placed soil and seed in tee divots.

Tuesday: Mowed greens and rough. Raked footprints from traps. Changed cups, towels and markers. Applied fungicide by power sprayer to all greens. Policed clubhouse grounds. Watered collars by hand.

Wednesday: Mowed greens, banks, rough and intermediate rough. Checked cups, towels and markers. Policed club house grounds. Maintenance of equipment.

Thursday: Mowed greens, tees and collars, rough, fairway and banks. Checked cups, towels and markers. Edged traps. Power raked traps. Removed unsightly signs from Western Avenue.

Friday: Mowed rough and banks. Aerified tees on 12 holes, dragmatting after and mowing. Edged balance of north side traps. Watered tees, and greens and high spots of fairways. Checked cups, towels and markers. Club house grounds policed.

Saturday: Mowed greens and rough. Raked footprints from traps. Changed cups, markers and towels. Policed club house grounds, shrub beds etc. Watered northside fairways. Sprayed for mosquitoes around club house and near No. 15 tee.

Sunday: Mowed greens. Changed cups, towels and markers. Checked footprints in traps. Watered South nine fairways and greens.

Administration: On Thursday of this week I visited seven of the north side courses to keep aware of maintenance practices in other parts of the city. I hope to spend one day next week on the west side and then I shall have covered about 25 clubs in the district.

The most outstanding variation between Beverly and the other clubs I have visited is the height of cut and playability of our fairways. However, good playability is a matter of opinion but generally is agreed by the better players to be a close cut turf.

Donald Strand, Sup't. of Westmoreland CC, has given me two sq. ft. of Z-52 Zoysia turf. This is a grass that has received a great deal of publicity and is generally used in the warmer climates. Don has several hundred square feet growing at Westmoreland and doing quite well. I shall multiply the two square feet into several hundred and we will watch this grass and see if it has any possibilities for us.

Several members have spoken to me recently regarding the danger to caddies on the practice range. When several players are practicing at the same time the caddies cannot watch all the players and they could very easily be injured if struck with a ball. While this problem is not normally of concern to the grounds department it seems to be in this case inasmuch as the area and its maintenance enter into the problem. One solution to our range difficulty would be the operation of a regular range where the balls are hit out and left in the field. One of the drawbacks at Beverly for this system is the heavy shrubs and undergrowth along the fence where balls would be lost and also where outsiders would be encouraged to "jump" the fence and help themselves to the balls. Mr. McLaughlin and myself looked over the area this morning and agreed that the crucial area along the fence would be from the 150 yd. line to the 250 yd. line.

This distance of 100 yds. could be handled by taking out the shrubs and replacing them in that line with an 8 ft. woven picket fence. The fence would serve as a stop for balls and to keep those on the outside from seeing in. The cost of fencing for 100 yards would be about \$600. Any suitable shrubs that were to be removed could be used to fill in void areas at other points along our fence line. The fencing would be similar to that installed between No. 10 tee and the rear of the clubhouse.

I am well satisfied with the condition of the course at this time. We have lost very little poa annua in the fairways other than on No. 9 and No. 16 both of which became super-saturated from heavy rains and scalded out with the heat that followed. I expect to spike and seed these areas at the earliest opportunity. We encountered a slight fertilizer burn on No. 13 green last week and have plugged it out. This has been the only damage from any source to the greens thus far this season.

The tees are slightly off in condition but should respond well to the recent aerification.

Respectfully submitted,

Robert M. Williams, Sup't. of Grounds

Typical "Weekly Progress Report" prepared by Beverly superintendent for green chairman and members and other club officials

tion, careful labor management, research pay-off in chemical maintenance, and comparison of methods with other superintendents as we meet and discuss our jobs, all are keeping the costs from running away.

"The superintendent and chairman are in a cost battle that calls for vigilance and foresight. The visual records help them conduct their campaigns wisely.

"My chart shows the pay rate for course labor is almost four times what it was in 1922. But with extensive mechanization and despite weed, pest and disease control which now are standard operating procedures our labor force was only about two and a half times greater at the peak in 1922 than it was last year.

Close Eye on Charts

"Budgets demand that I keep a close eye on the chart of employment by months. This enables me to plan ahead on how many men and boys I'll need for the work to be done. When the boys get out of school the labor force gets larger and stays that way until they return to high school or college. This chart keeps me reminded to look for the sort of boys I want and to prepare to train them to do good reliable work.

"This chart also helps me to plan my schedule of winter work to retain key men and to keep them productively busy for the club.

"Weekly Progress Report"

"Lately I've been supplying my chairman and other officials with a 'Weekly Progress Report' which I compile from my log and which the club office copies for me.

"This has been the best job of information I've been able to do for the green-committee and our members, according to our chairman's judgment. And it certainly enables me to keep a close check on my own work and that of my staff to see that we're handling our job completely, at the right time and efficiently.

"Compiling this report is not the trouble for the superintendent that it seems to be. And it shows members that the green-committee is getting work from its superintendent and the maintenance staff."

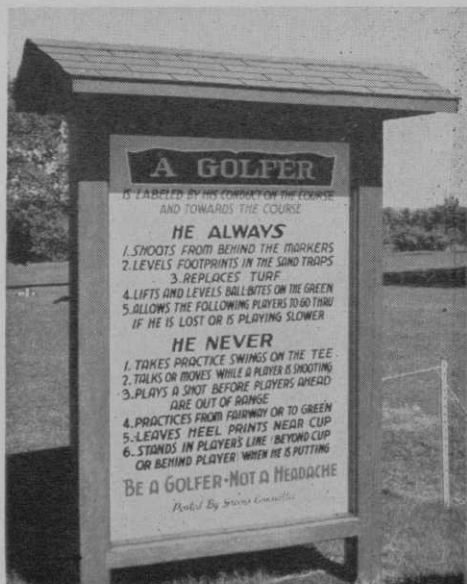
Northwest Supts. Elect Howard Williams, Pres.

Howard Williams of Vashon GC, Burton, Wash., was elected pres., Northwest Golf Course Supts.' Assn. at the organization's August meeting.

Milton Bauman, supt., Overlake G&CC, 645 14th W., Kirkland, Wash., was elected vp; and John Jaslowski, supt., Maplewood G&CC, Renton, Wash., was elected sec-treas.

FIRST TEE BULLETIN HELPS TEACH GOLFERS

At Northfield (Minn.) GC the first tee bulletin board shown in accompanying illustration has been an effective reminder to players of their obligations to other golfers and in maintaining good course condition.



The bulletin board presents essentials in a terse and tactful way. It educates the uninformed and reminds the older players. Students of Carleton and St. Olaf colleges at Northfield play a lot of golf on the course and the first tee bulletin board has done a good job of getting the collegians started right so they'll be fine examples of young people who know all about how to conduct themselves as welcome guests or members on any course they happen to play.

Cort Lippert is chairman of the Northfield green committee. He and his committee members compiled the educational material on the bulletin and had the board built for erection at the entrance to the first tee.

Joints are easily, quickly made by using quick-drying cement. All fittings on the Hempstead job were supplied by Triangle.

Late season events give the pro a good chance to sell shop stock that he might have over-bought. Especially does the pro have to watch his stocks of shirts and other apparel. Fortunately much of it can be sold for wear after play falls off at many clubs late in September. The novelty events that give every high-handicap man or woman a chance to win some prize as well as have fun should be suggested by the pro to his golf committee. Often a close tie-up of golf events with the program of events in the clubhouse is possible.

— John Brooks