

At Long Beach Meeting

Supts. Talk Turf Technicalities But Are Preoccupied with Economics

By HERB GRAFFIS

THE economics of golf maintenance provided the high note of the 27th annual convention of the Golf Course Supts. Assn. of America. The financial phases of golf course work figured prominently in almost every technical address during the turf conference sessions at Long Beach, Calif. on Feb. 7, 8, 9 and 10, and in the equipment exhibit shopping was active on the basis of spending for economy.

Attendance was satisfactory although eastern and midwestern representation naturally was limited. Superintendents from courses west of the Rockies offset the absent ones from further east.

There was a record registration of supts.' wives, indicating that many of the girls had been promised the trip last summer when they were complaining about Dad getting up before daybreak, coming home all hours of the night, worn and worried, and not giving his family much of a chance to know him. That was a smart job of domestic relations done for the clubs.

Part of the background of economic discussions throughout the conference concerned the salary, fringe benefits, security and other points covering the supts' jobs which have their wives also comparing golf club employment with that in industry.

The Golf Course Supts. Assn. of Southern Calif. headed by George Lanphear, with the hearty help of the Southern Calif. Golf Assn. and the Southern Calif. PGA, raised about \$9000 toward defraying con-

vention expenses. The main items on the budget were \$3500 for ladies' entertainment and transportation, \$2500 for the national GCSA for defraying expense of the educational conference and \$1250 for bus transportation. Unused portion of the collected fund is to be turned over to the Southern Calif. Turf Council.

New Men Needed

The prevailing shortage of top grade supts., accented by the number of new courses and their demands, was frequently referred to during formal and informal sessions. New men aren't coming into the field to the extent necessary to meet club requirements. The case of the new president of the GCSA, Ward Cornwell, changing from Lochmoor Club to the Detroit GC, is indicative of the bidding for first class men, so supts. at Long Beach said. In many instances, second and third men on a maintenance staff are leaving to take supt. jobs.

Some of the supts. were of the opinion that the personnel shortage is going to correct the economic situation in general for supts. and that men qualified by temperament and training will be coming into golf club work from schools in increasing numbers before long. In the meanwhile, the present shortage accounted for considerable interest in the proposal presented by Marvin Ferguson of the USGA Green Section for a six-week school in course management at Texas



Golf Course Supts' Assn. of America, at its annual meeting held during the organization's 27th National Turfgrass Conference, elected an administration headed by a veteran and widely known supt. Ward Cornwell. The official family: Front row (l. to r.): Frank Dunlap, director, Baltimore (Md.) CC; Paul Weiss, Lehigh CC, Allentown, Pa.; Ward Cornwell, pres., Detroit (Mich.); Agar M. Brown, secy-treas., St. Charles, Ill. Back row (l. to r.) are Directors: L. E. Lambert, Oakwood G&CC, Dodson, Mo.; James E. Thomas, Army-Navy CC, Arlington, Va.; Elmer Border, Olympic CC, San Francisco, Calif.; Donald G. Strand, Westmoreland CC, Wilmette, Ill. and John A. Gormley, Wolfert's Roost CC, Newtonville, N. Y.

Agricultural & Mechanical College.

It was plain that fellows who did get into course maintenance work some years ago liked it well enough to stick, and look good after the years. At the GCSA annual banquet pins were presented to veterans present whose names were on the list of 77 who had been GCSA members for 25 years.

Highlights of turf conference addresses:

Keep Players Happy

The opening conference session was devoted to the subject of keeping the golfer happy. In a panel discussion, Edward K. Zuckerman, president of Brentwood CC, Santa Monica, Calif., advised the supts. not to try to make their courses tougher to play than the other fellow's layout. He suggested putting emphasis on condition and balance of the course rather than tricky pin placements and complicated traps. Zuckerman also hinted that the supts. could do a far better job of establishing good public relations with their club officials and members so that the latter are fully aware of the problems confronting the greenkeeping dept.

Howard Montgomery, pres. of the Southern Calif. Club Mgrs. Assn., traced the evolution of clubhouse development. Speaking of present day aspects of the clubhouse, he pointed out that not only

must trained specialists be hired to operate the golfers' haven, but they should be constantly reminded of their obligation to keep the members happy.

The pro-supt. relationship was discussed by Bud Oakley, vp of the Southern Calif. PGA and pro at Palos Verdes, Calif. CC. Oakley stressed the need of teaching the golfer respect for the physical aspects of the course as well as rules and etiquette, pointing out that this responsibility was primarily the pro's. Oakley outlined his organization's work with Juniors and also told how his state's pros and supts. had collaborated in helping to supply courses and instruction to Veterans Hospitals.

The final panel speaker, Roy Nelson, Golden Valley CC supt., Minneapolis, Minn., alluded to some of the "above and beyond" facets of the greenkeeper's business. Among them he included tree planting programs, improvements where unsightly spots mar a course's beauty, better restroom facilities, more benches spotted around the course and wider use of shrubs.

The last speaker on the opening day program was Rex McMorris, executive vp of the National Golf Foundation who dwelled on golf's terrific potential for expansion in the next few years. His speech will appear in a future issue of GOLF-DOM.

Cool climate maintenance was the theme of the second day's morning meeting. Dr.



Ward Cornwell (1), new GCSA president, accepts the gavel from Bill Beresford and prepares to take over for the coming year. Cornwell also is taking over the supt's job at Detroit (Mich.) CC, having moved there from Lochmoor CC in Grosse Point. In the background is John Gray, Windsor, Ont. supt.

Robert M. Hagan, Dept. of Irrigation, University of Calif., gave a lucid discussion of "Sensible Water Management", using a wide variety of slides, graphs and tables to enlighten his audience. The irrigation expert emphasized that the big problem facing the supt. is in knowing when and how much water to use as well as knowing how to water. Tests and studies made by Hagan's dept. were reviewed. They show that the irrigation interval depends largely on soil structure and that absorption and evaporation rates of various plants play a highly important part in the whole scheme of irrigation.

Plans are being made to prepare Hagan's studies in printed form which will be reproduced in GOLFDOM when available.

William F. Bell, Pasadena architect, told the GCSA audience that course construction costs today are not much higher than they were 30 years ago. This, he said, is due to the mechanization factor and because turf research and improvements wrought by the supts. themselves has done away with many false starts in green, tee and fairway construction that were prevalent two or three decades ago. Bell's speech was punctuated by a movie, prepared by James Harrison, Turtle Creek, Pa., architect, illustrating the various types of construction work going on today.

Following up on the construction theme, Cecil Hollingsworth, who owns and operates Singing Hills CC, El Cajon, Calif., stressed the lack of capable machine operators in building courses and warned

promoters, supts., and others interested in new construction, to investigate the performance records of contractors and subcontractors before signing contracts. Hollingsworth also recommended vigilance in forcing builders to hew to plans and specifications.

Continuing Improvement Program

Public course players came in for discussion when Walter Fuchs, supt. of Gleneagle CC, Lemont, Ill., took over the rostrum. Fuchs pointed out that catering to the fee golfer means more than merely providing him a good course on which to play. "If you want to bring him back," said the Lemont supt. "you have to roll out the rug in the pro shop, lockerroom and restaurant as well as on the first tee." Fuchs then described his continuing improvement program at Gleneagle which has resulted in the planting of 2,000 trees in recent years, the addition of several lakes and reworking roughs and traps.

"Experience with Improved Bent Grasses" was the subject of a speech by Leonard Hazlett, who heads the Beechmont CC, Cleveland, O., greenkeeping corps. Hazlett described experiments with Pennlu and a nursery recently installed at his club. The high point of his address came in showing a slide film, step-by-step procedure of renovating seaside bent greens. Greens were aerified four or five ways and plugs, topdressing and fertilizer were mixed on the site, with the complete job taking only 90 minutes. As soon as his crew moved out, Hazlett said, play was resumed and in not more than a few days marked improvement in the quality of the bent was noted.

Dr. Fred Grau, West Point Products Corp. agronomist, followed with a description of new bent grasses, the text of which will appear in a future issue of Golfdom.

The Wednesday afternoon session covered warm climate maintenance. Speakers included Louis LeValley, Fresno State College (Calif.); Dr. James Watson, chief agronomist, Toro Mfg. Corp., Minneapolis, Minn.; L. W. DuBose, Jr. supt., Houston, Tex. CC; Carlos Smith, supt., Guadalajara CC, Mexico, and Dr. O. J. Noer, Milwaukee sewerage commission agronomist.

Bermuda on a Large Scale

Louis LeValley's remarks dwelled on water management of alkali soils although he enlarged on Dr. Robert M. Hagan's earlier thesis by telling how water affects

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the underground growth of grasses. Dr. James R. Watson told the supts. of the possibilities and described the management of the various new warm climate grasses. L. W. DuBose reported on the large scale planting of improved Bermuda at the new Houston CC, now under construction. Following the planting of a five-acre nursery, 80 acres of fairway were planted. The first step was to use a special sprigging machine for planting 36-in. rows. Then, said DuBose, the area was covered with an inch of topsoil and watering and aerifying followed. As soon as Bermuda appeared, the sprigging machine was brought back and the area between rows planted.

Tells of Supts' Trials

Carlos Smith, who came from Mexico to attend the GCSA meeting, told of the many trials and tribulations that come with preparing a course for such a big event as the Mexican Open, and the misgivings a man in his profession may have when told that his club has been selected for a tournament of this kind. Smith's conclusion was "if you have something to work with and are willing to pitch in, you'll discover most of your worries are imaginary."

The text of a speech covering fertilizers by Dr. O. J. Noer, who followed Smith on the program, appears on page 98.

If some degree of lethargy tended to creep in after two days of discussing the technical aspects of greenkeeping, it was completely dispelled on Thursday morning when GCSA members gathered and

began examining the economic and sociological phases of their profession. More than ordinary interest was evinced in subjects in this category, and post-session discussions of contracts, wages, training programs and similar topics were particularly lively as well as prolonged.

Contracts Evoke Interest

John Clock, Long Beach atty. and USGA official, led off by talking on the subject of contracts. Comparing oral and written agreements between employer and employee, Clock stressed the many disadvantages of the verbal contract and advised the supts. that, all things considered, a written agreement produces a much more satisfactory relationship between two parties than one not put in writing. Some audience unrest was detected when the Long Beach atty. reminded his listeners that if a supt. quits to take another job before his contract is up, he is liable to pay the difference in wages that may have to be paid to get a qualified replacement.

Besides recommending a written contract, Clock also told the supts. to avoid signing agreements in which generalities or loose wording may lead to misunderstandings. In short, he advised, the supts. to either get what they wanted in writing, or to make sure there was no doubt in their minds as to the terms to which they agree. (See page 66).

In conjunction with Clock's speech, Elmer Border, Olympic CC, San Francisco, Calif. supt. gave a detailed outline of the supt's responsibilities. It touched on maintenance, purchase of supplies and employment.

Border emphasized that undoubtedly the supt's most important task today is setting

Here's a view of the turnaway crowd that attended the GCSA banquet in Wilton hotel. More supts' wives than ever before accompanied their husbands to this year's convention.



up and maintaining training programs. "It's something we have to live with," Border pointed out. "We're faced with the problem of transiency among our employees. If one leaves, we have to make provision to train a new man. Otherwise, too much of a work load is thrown on those who remain and they, too, start thinking about shopping around for other jobs. On second thought," the San Francisco man added, "proper training gives an employee more confidence in himself and in you. The result is he is more inclined to be loyal to the person who trained him."

Developing Public Relations

Touching on a public relations theme, Tom Dawson, Jr., supt. of the CC of Virginia located in Richmond, told the audience it was up to GCSA members themselves to elevate their profession. "We are not in position to hire experts to beat the drums for us," said Dawson, "and so we have to do it ourselves." How does a supt. go about doing this? Dawson gave these suggestions:

1. Improve press relations. Invite newspapermen out to see the course and explain what you're doing.
2. Offer to give the local newspaper weekly tips on lawn and gardening.
3. Get the greenkeeping dept. into the club magazine.
4. Don't overlook the chance to speak at club meetings or any other place where you think you can do your profession some good.

Keep Day to Day Records

Budget discussions were headed by Howard Baerwald, LaGrange, Ill. CC supt., who declared that the biggest failure of the supts. lies in not keeping proper and up-to-date records. He suggested putting this stint on a day to day basis, thus obviating the necessity for laboring through recapitulation at the end of the month and taking the chance of overlooking numerous expenditures that should be included in the expense ledger. Baerwald also cautioned his listeners to keep abreast of prices in order to take full advantage of the market and, in addition, not run the risk of being out of funds before the end of the year because too much has been paid for too little.

On Thursday afternoon the greenkeepers visited Meadow Lark GC, Huntington Beach to inspect trial plots and study experiments carried on at that club.

The theme of the final session, held Fri-

day morning, was "Progress in Golf Course Management." Alexander Radko, NE director of USGA Green Section's regional service teamed with Charles K. Hallowell, Mid-Atlantic director of the same organization, to discuss fairway renovation. Both men agreed that the supt's big job is to sell the idea of renovation to club members. After this is done, cost estimates of carrying out the project may again prove to be a stumbling block. Radko advised that most persuasive renovation selling is started from a "pride in the course" approach. Cost obstacles often can be overcome by either prorating the work or expense over a period of years.

Once the program is undertaken, the supt. has to turn to diplomacy and thoughtful scheduling in order not to seriously aggravate or inconvenience members, Hallowell said. He added that the program should be carried out either in the spring or fall for best results from both an artistic and employers' or members' relations standpoint.

Dr. Marvin H. Ferguson, Southwestern director of the USGA Green Section and Texas A & M faculty member, the next speaker, posed the question: "Is Research Producing Better Turf for Better Golf?" The conclusion was that it is, although Dr. Ferguson conceded that either scientific work on a problem, or its acceptance upon completion, sometimes is or seems unreasonably slow. DDT, he pointed out, was compounded in 1874 but it was 70 years before it was widely used as an insecticide.

Reviews Research's Contribution

Reviewing the turf researcher's contributions to golf in the last 10 years, Dr. Ferguson cited the development or improvement of nine important grass strains as well as the many fertilizers, insecticides, fungicides, herbicides and tools that have been made available to the supt.

As a windup to the speakers' and panel sessions, Bill Willett, Worthington Mower Co., John Norton, Toro Mfg. Corp., and Jim Hoffman, Roseman Mowing Machine Co., gave some interesting, behind-the-scenes information about the mowing equipment manufacturing business. All ventured the prediction that the production of power equipment, which has increased from 100,000 units in 1946 to 2,500,000 in 1955 will continue to grow, and that the greenkeeping fraternity will continue to benefit from many innovations in the design and manufacture of equipment used in turf management.

Following this, Charles G. Wilson, agronomist with the Milwaukee Sewerage Commission, summarized the high points of the four-day session.

Exhibition Wins Plaudits

On Friday afternoon, GCSA members gathered in the exhibition hall where they had the choice of viewing exhibits and attending discussions covering irrigation, grasses and weeds, disease and insects, and soils and nutrition. Thirty-minute question and answer periods, presided over by experts in these various fields, were an added feature of the displays.

The exhibition phase was run off so smoothly and prompted so much favorable comment that it will undoubtedly become a regular feature of all future national turfgrass meetings. This was the first year the greenskeepers were shown the unique "panel" type exhibition which was given trial runs at earlier meetings of Northern and Southern Calif. Turfgrass Councils.

Course Business Conference At California Recreation Meet

By VERNE WICKHAM

Front line information brought to the conference table by some of the leading golf course men of the Pacific Coast, featured the Golf Course Planning and Operating Clinic held at the annual California Recreation Conference in San Diego, Feb. 12-15.

Herman W. Riece, supt. of Recreation for Kern County acted as general chairman of the steering committee which arranged the clinic.

Presiding over the opening session Monday morning was R. G. Renfree, Sacramento Director of Recreation and Parks. To the recreation officials numbering nearly 100 in the Balboa Park Club was brought the story of financing methods under the broad title of "How to Get A Golf Course."

Rex McMorris, vp of the National Golf Foundation set the theme for the entire program by recounting what was going on in golf all over the U. S., telling of the tremendous need for more courses, citing national figures on new course planning and construction and giving data and evidence on this "game of a lifetime."

Leo Calland, San Diego Park and Recreation, described the long-range plan of using municipal funds to build municipal golf courses; Dr. C. B. Hollingsworth, UCLA Physical Education supv. told the

lease plan on municipal lands; John Lewis (Twenty-nine Palms) told his financing experiences and George Mifflin, golf course manager at Taft told how community effort got his community its golf course.

A question and answer period followed the talks.

Discuss Where to Build

The afternoon session was titled "Where to Build the Golf Course" and brought golf course architects, maintenance men and supts. to the speakers table. Americ Hadley, Supv. of Recreation for Golf for Los Angeles, acted as chairman for the afternoon sessions.

Heard in the first afternoon session were William F. Bell, of Pasadena and Jack Daray, of Coronado. Both are members of the American Society of Golf Course Architects and gave tips and advice on where to build the golf course. William Benguefield, western director USGA Greens Section, Don Rodvold, Balboa Park and H. E. Coughlin, Los Angeles County golf director, covered maintenance problems in short talks. The entire panel answered questions.

The second half of the afternoon session was entitled "How to Operate the Golf Course." Heard on this panel were club professionals, course operators and business managers who spoke on starting methods, fund control, value of a good professional to the municipal course, tournaments and promotion. On the panel to bring their operational story to the conference were: Robert H. Hoyt, San Francisco recreation and park dept., Keith Jacobs, Montebello, George Lake, Long Beach and Fred Maheu, San Diego.

3-Par Growth

Wednesday morning a session was held on the "Three Par Golf Course" where all phases of short course operation were covered by the speakers. Keith Jacobs acted as chairman. Rex McMorris, of the National Golf Foundation, told of the tremendous growth in this type of course during the last 18 months.

Since there are three general types of operation in the California area, speakers were chosen to represent each of the three types.

R. W. Siler, Recreation Supt. of South Pasadena, spoke on the type of operation there where 35 acres of city-owned land is leased for 50 years to private operators who have built and operate the short course. Mitch Angus, of Casa Colina in San Diego, told of his operation where he and