

# Grau's Answers to Turf Questions



## Supts. May Get Headaches Trying to Avoid Them

"Avoiding Built-In Headaches", handled masterfully at the GCSA conference by L. E. (Red) Lambert, deserves special attention by virtue of the tremendous potential for good of this gigantic project. By accepting responsibility for clarifying the several phases of properly planning and building a golf course, the supts. have drawn wide attention to the contributions that they can make to better courses. In their effort to help architects and builders avoid built-in headaches, the supts. are assuming their own monumental headaches.

In this business of golf, each one of us is working for the golfer — the man who pays the bill. His pleasure and satisfaction is or should be our only aim. He is not pleased when his new course, which he has played for one or two years and for which he has paid a large sum, must be taken out of play and rebuilt at heavy additional cost, simply because it was designed and built in such a way that maintenance was practically impossible. It is not our place to elaborate on this theme.

It is our hope that a good beginning will receive the whole-hearted support of each responsible person who can contribute to providing the kind of a course that can be maintained easily to provide the very best playing conditions for the players.

### Support from PGA

In talking with Lou Strong, the new PGA pres., the impression was gained that strong support for the expressed construction principles may be expected from members of his organization. It is hardly necessary to point out that a happy golfer in the pro shop is a better business risk than one whose round has been marred by rebuilding, ground-under-repair and "Course Closed."

It is not yet wholly clear as to who is going to bring desired coordination of effort among those who plan, design, build and maintain new courses. The new committee of the new course first must be made aware that mistakes can be avoided by adhering to certain well-established principles. Everyone might agree on procedure but, if funds should run low during construction, the temptation is strong to say, "Let's skip the drain tile. We can save some money here by using native soil, etc. etc." Ways must be found to follow the agreed-on specs without deviation so that the finished course will play and can be maintained as designed, granting that it was properly designed to begin with.

It is not enough to have a capable supt. on the site during planning and design. He must be given authority to issue a 'stop order' when construction violates a principle. Supts. have told many sad stories of their experiences with new courses. For example, one told of trees that were bull-dozed for fill into a ravine which was the site of a green. Knowing that the logs would rot and settle and make the green completely unplayable, he reported to the committee and requested a stop order. Only, the committee approved the operation and reprimanded the supt. for interfering with the architect and builder. Two years later it cost the club over \$10,000 to rebuild the green.

Through the combined and coordinated efforts of the GCSA, the PGA and the USGA Green Section, there should emerge a statement of principles which could become the authority by which an architect can confidently prepare specifications for a new course. This would give assurance that built-in easy maintenance would produce a layout that would be a model of excellence.