

## USGA Turf Talks Plumb Roots of Course Management

The USGA green section's program, "A Business Approach to Golf Course Maintenance", presented at Biltmore Hotel, New York on Jan. 26, warranted many times the attendance of about 100 green chmn., club officials and supts. it drew. The program got right down to the roots of money in course management. It set the pattern for Green Section educational programs that are to be held in Washington, Chicago and San Francisco this month.

In good timing as a keynote of the program Lawrence S. Dickinson, prof. emeritus of agrostology, University of Massachusetts, was presented the section's annual award for "Distinguished Service to Golf Through Work with Turfgrass."

### Early Study

In the early years of the school at Amherst, Prof. Dickinson and his students conducted research into golf course operating costs. The study, made on a percentage basis, was financed by GOLFDOM. The findings which were printed in GOLFDOM, will be viewed in the near future and compared with modern figures, especially with the interesting hours and percentages of labor distribution at two major clubs, a compilation made by Alex Radko of the green section and distributed at the New York meeting.

The theme of the Green Section meeting is underscored by the astonishing financial blundering of some new clubs of strictly private character and of big-talk, little-cash promotions. There is growing awareness that heavy investments and expenses of numerous private clubs have put them past the stage of management as a sideline.

Managers usually know something of the general financial picture of clubs because the accounting is done in the clubhouse office. But supts. and pros rarely are told much about the financial score at their clubs.

Carl Jehlen, gen. mgr., Baltusrol GC,



William C. Chapin (l), green section chairman, presents award to Prof. Dickinson.

### Prof. Dickinson Gets Second USGA Green Section Award

The second USGA green section award for "Distinguished Service to Golf Through Work with Turfgrass" went to Lawrence S. Dickinson, professor emeritus of agrostology at the University of Massachusetts.

The award was made at the annual green section meeting held in New York in late January.

Prof. Dickinson was a pioneer in the teaching of turf management. He established the Stockbridge winter school at the U. of M. in 1927 and since then it has graduated more than 500 turf technologists. For many years it was the only school in the country that turned out trained men to take golf course jobs.

Later, under Prof. Dickinson's guidance, a two-year course for students majoring in turf management was instituted. For several years after this, he was a one-man faculty at both schools.

Many of the improvements in golf course maintenance are directly traced to the efforts of Prof. Dickinson. Hundreds of his former students now are supts. at courses throughout the U.S.

The first green section award was received last year by John Monteith, Jr.

Springfield, N.J., gave figures on Baltusrol and other N.Y. Met district clubs that showed operating expenses, exclusive of food and beverage depts., had tripled

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since 1933 at the clubs. Jehlen jolted some hearers with the comment that taxes had doubled since 1933, indicating, possibly that the government had done better than golf club management in braking the cost climb. The reference was shocking in view of the notorious waste of most government operations.

### Show Them The Picture

Curtailment of non-essential expenses, studies of operating economies and the probability of increased initiation fees, dues and other charges are an urgent need in golf business, Jehlen stated. In view of continued demand for superior facilities and service at clubs, the problem of management probably is how to spend money to save money, the Baltusrol mgr. said. He recommends distribution of the club operating report to all dept. heads, comparing it with last year's report and with the budget. Department heads and club members can't be expected to contribute to the financial betterment of a club unless they are aware of the financial picture.

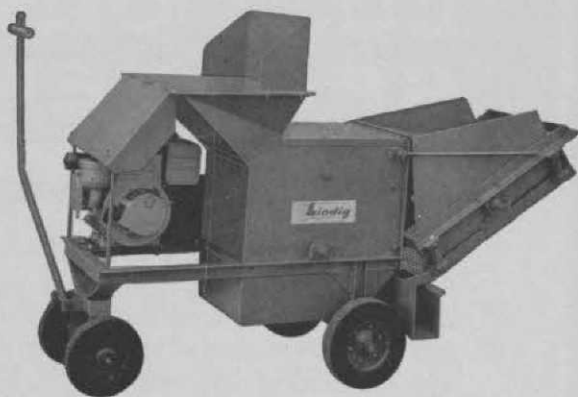
Lynn A. Smith, former green chmn., Annandale GC, and chmn. of the Southern Calif. GA course cost analysis committee, in his paper on green committee principles of organization, pointed out that if the standard of the course falls off, revenue in every other dept. of the club falls off. Yet, he said, there rarely is cooperation between the green committee and other committees of a club.

### Two Man Operation

The green committee basically is a two-man operation — the chmn. and the supt. — Smith said. Nevertheless the chmn. ought to have an understudy on the committee. He recommended that the supt. attend every meeting of the green committee. He suggested that three copies of committee meeting reports be made: one for the chmn. and two for the supt. One of these can be used by the supt. to make his report of action or comment on green committee orders or recommendations.

Smith said that the supt. is presumed to be skilled in the art of course management. If he isn't also skilled in the business of course management he is a fail-

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ure. His failure may be the fault of the chmn. who is presumed to be skilled in a business sense.

Smith cited numerous figures from the Southern California GA (1709 W. 8th st., L. A., 17) 1960 course maintenance costs report. He said the continuing rise in costs must be better controlled. The increase in Southern California course labor costs was four per cent in 1959-60. Two of the 20 clubs reporting did not increase supt. salaries. No reference was made to the relation of supt. salary increases to increase in over-all course labor costs.

#### Bring Supt. Into Act

Smith, Wm. Chapin, USGA green section chmn., John G. Clock, retiring pres., USGA, Harry Easterly, jr. and Allen M. Oakley, members of the green section committee, indicated in their remarks that they suspect a reason for preventable increases in costs of maintenance is the failure of the chmn. to take supts. "into the act" and give them the benefit of their broader business experience.

**Personnel Management:** James G. Holmes, Carl Bretzlaff and James E. Thomas went into the practical problems of getting the course workmen trained

and realizing their responsibilities. Holmes noted that a smart chmn. takes the supt. and his key men and their families on a party at least once a year so they'll all be aware that they are part of a team. Bretzlaff observed that clubs often throw away money changing green chmn. The chairman's familiarity with the supt.'s personality and abilities and his confidence in the supt. establish the basis of the efficiently managed course, said the veteran Bretzlaff. He also said that management policies varied but grass and money told the final story. He remarked that the policy of Andy Bertoni, supt., Meadowlake CC (Detroit dist.) was primarily paternalistic and that of Clarence White, supt., Orchard Lake CC (Detroit dist.) was one of training in versatility so that every good man can handle his own and other jobs well. Bertoni and White both have fine staffs, so it seems to add up to getting inside the minds of their employees.

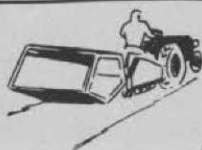
**Green Committee Service:** Harry Easterly, Jr., said he thinks the supt. should be a golfer not only because play improves his relationship with the chmn., pro and members, but because the supt.'s golf can reveal what the golfer is up against.



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## Records Are Vital

**Accounting:** Alexander M. Radko, Eastern dir. of the green section, said that the records begin with the daily time sheet. Records show that play is beginning earlier, meaning delays in accomplishing work. Radko reminded supts. that they are dealing with other people's money and with good records show the story of good management.

Radko cited the records kept by Supt. William Riley, Essex Fells (N.J.) CC and Elmer Michaels, Oak Hill CC, Rochester, N. Y., as actually telling the cost story by showing data on areas treated and on operations, instead of merely presenting figures that keep the club bookkeeper busy.

## Research May Cut Costs

**Applying Research:** Dr. Marvin Ferguson, national research coordinator of the green section, told of the possibilities of applying research to reduce operations now required for maintaining courses in high standards of condition. He indicated that application of basic research might cut maintenance costs materially. Ferguson said one job of the green section staff is to keep up with basic research, apply it to golf turf and help the supt. apply it.

**Public Relations:** Allen M. Oakley, Quincy, Ill., green section committeeman and veteran newspaper editor and amateur golfer, said a general failing is that a member sometimes knows more about course maintenance on a layout 500 miles away than on his own course. Oakley remarked that it isn't unusual for one member to tell other members that a course many miles away is in fine condition while his own course looks bad. Often the difference, Oakley declared, is that the member may have seen the other course in June and compared it with his own course in late July or August when it was impossible to keep turf in decent condition.

**Job Outlook:** Bill Bengeyfield, William Crowley, James B. Moncrief and Allen M. Oakley went into detail in telling how the course staff might (and possibly does) look at the job and the value of the smart supt. in developing the elements that make a fellow really interested in his work. Comprehension of the job, clarification of motivation, concentration of energy and other factors that account for successful education of the worker in and on the job were outlined with specific relation to course work.

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