

# GRAU'S ANSWERS TO TURF QUESTIONS

BY FRED V. GRAU



## Two British Visitors Take A Flying Trip to See U. S. Turf Installations

The U.S. was honored recently by a visit from J. R. Escritt of The Sports Turf Research Institute, Bingley, Yorkshire, Eng. Escritt is assistant director of the Institute under the longtime capable leadership of Mr. R. B. Dawson. The visit was made possible through the courtesy of Peter Slater, Leathers Chemical Co., Radford, Yorkshire, and Hercules Powder Co., Wilmington, Delaware.

Upon arriving in New York, our visitors called at Golf House to pay their respects to Joseph C. Dey of the U.S.G.A. and view the many relics and trophies of the game.

While staying in Wilmington, Escritt and Slater were shown Hercules CC where Frank Tull explained various practices and procedures. At Wilmington CC, Harry McSloy showed them around. A visit was made to Merion Cricket Club where Albert Colaiuta and Harry Wilcox were hosts.

### Visit Penn State

Monday, July 15, was spent in reviewing the plots at Penn State with Joe Duich and Bert Musser guiding the party. Many points of difference were discussed and comparisons of conditions in the U.S. and the U.K. were made. Of great interest were the soil modification plots and methods of feeding.

At Williams CC, Weirton, W.Va., Charles Onoretta, pro-supt., explained his course's maintenance program over the 10 years it has been in existence. Charley's Penncross greens, incidentally, were in excellent shape.

At Kingston, R.I., our visitors saw the university layout. Its work was explained by Charles Allen, foreman. This station

has continuously conducted turfgrass research for nearly 70 years.

In the Washington, D. C. area, Tantalum-on-the-Potomac was visited. Seeded Bermuda fairways, severely winter damaged, are covering with hardy strains that escaped the killing dry cold this spring. Jim Thompson, owner, and Barclay Whet-sell, supt., spared no effort to show off the development. This included a trimaran speedboat ride to Mt. Vernon and Fort Washington.

At Beltsville, we joined Kenny Payne and Jim Beard from Michigan and Felix Juska of the plant industry station. The layout of plots were impressive, especially the strain building and breeding program. Tall fescue plots show no evidence of clumping such as one sees so often in lawns. A visit with K. G. Clark completed the all-too-short visit to the U.S.D.A. plant industry station.

Before Escritt and Slater left New York for a few days in California, a visit with Al Radko of the USGA green section was planned. With Karl Kolb of Leslie-Agri-form, a visit to the Hercules, Calif. plant also was scheduled. Then, after a short hop over the North Pole, our visitors would be back in London ready to tackle their own problems in their own climate.

### Conditions Are Compared

The visit coincided with some of our hottest weather. Temperatures of 90 to 100 scorched the unwatered grass. Low temperatures prevail generally in Great Britain. There also is a fairly uniform distribution of rainfall. Organic matter tends to accumulate because bacterial activity is slowed by low temperatures. One big problem, Escritt and Slater pointed out, is to get rid of excess winter moisture. Close mowing is the rule and heights of 2/16 are as common as 4/16 in the U.S. Colonial bent and Chewings fescue pre-



## Growing Turf the Hard Way

First in a series by TOM MASCARO



*In getting this series underway, we don't like to remind supts. of those trying days of the last two or three winters. But this shows you what can happen when flood waters float huge ice cakes (some estimated to weigh more than a ton) over a course and more specifically, a green. This photo was taken at the Indianapolis, Ind., munny course where John Vaughn is the supervisor.*

dominate and form excellent putting surfaces with only two pounds of nitrogen a year. Creeping bent, fed with 8 to 10 pounds of N a year as in the U.S., simply would not be tolerated, we learned.

### We Grow More Grass

It can be said that we in the U.S. grow and dispose of much more grass than they do in the United Kingdom. Our higher temperatures, variable soils and weather "burn" organic matter more rapidly, necessitating the application of additional nitrogen to supply the grass. The accumulated organic matter in England seems to hold the soluble N in sulphate of ammonia, causing it to release more slowly than in U.S. By contrast, sulphate is rapid in action and quickly dissipated in our climate.

The visit of Escritt and Slater was too short and too crowded as so many are when it is desired to see as much as possible in limited time. It is hoped that

more visits of reciprocal nature will be arranged in the near future to enhance an exchange of ideas and experiences between our countries.

The Sports Turf Bulletin is the official publication of Sports Turf Research, a private enterprise which does consulting work over a wide range in the British Isles and on the continent. Many students of turf in the U.S. may wish to write to the Institute and apply for a subscription to the Bulletin which is extremely interesting and informative.

### Golf Car Tax

The Internal Revenue Service has ruled that club members' payments for the right to use their golf cars on the course are dues subject to the federal excise tax. The IRS says that the privilege of using the cars as well as club facilities for storing and servicing them is so closely related to playing golf itself as to be indistinguishable from it.