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VOL. 4

JUNE, 1930

## Describes Soil's Part in Turf Maintenance

By O. J. NOER\*

OLF courses rarely possess soil which is ideally adapted to the growth of turf grasses. Other factors carry more weight in the selection of prospective sites than suitability of soil. Yet the soil is the foundation upon which the grasses develop.

Except on some of the very sandy soils, it is seldom necessary or feasible to attempt profound modification on fairways. With favorable weather conditions, rapid establishment of desirable turf depends upon careful soil preparation, proper fertilization and selection of grass varieties adapted to local soil and climatic conditions. Improvement of poor turf on old established fairways is usually a matter of supplying plant food deficiencies, accompanied by some re-seeding, where the turf is unusually thin.

Greens are the backbone of any course, and are always the subject of comment by golfers. An unfavorable soil environment is responsible for more turf troubles on greens than all other causes combined, and arises from failure to provide soil of suitable make-up during construction, or the use of undesirable soil in subsequent top-dressings. Either cause is lamentable because it is impossible to quickly change the soil after the surface is covered with turf. The limited areas occupied by greens

\*Soils Technologist, Milwaukee Sewerage Commission. makes it practical to modify the soil during construction and thus to provide the best possible medium for turf growth. Furthermore, when the soil foundation is satisfactory, turf maintenance is simplified and the danger of serious disaster during the hot, trying, mid-summer months is greatly minimized. The present tendency is to demand perfect putting surfaces at all times, which necessitates even more attention to details of soil than ever before.

NO. 6

#### Work for Good Root System

The soil is essentially a medium for the development of the turf roots, and a healthy extensive root system is always the forerunner of robust turf structures. Water and most of the essential plant food elements are obtained from the soil, but roots also withdraw oxygen which is contained in the soil air. Of these the water and air relationship is most important, for plant food can be supplied readily, but it is difficult to change the capacity for air and water.

Mineral particles derived from the weathering of rocks, and organic matter produced from plant and animal residues are the two main solid constituents of all soils. Depending upon the preponderance of organic or mineral matter, two broad groups are recognized. The organic soils, either peat or muck based upon the extent of decay, occur in marshes and poorly drained areas, where excess moisture prevents or retards disintegration of the plant structures. They are of limited extent and in themselves not suitable for greens. The excessive use of peat or muck to modify the physical condition of heavy mineral soils may lead to trouble because of their tremendous water-holding capacity. and the tenacity with which the water is held. In extreme cases, during periods of heavy and continuous rains, or by constant over-watering, the soil remains saturated with water and the roots deprived of oxygen, suffocate and finally die. It is almost impossible to cope with unfavorable weather conditions when the physical make-up of the soil is wrong.

#### Look to Organic Matter

Soils in which the mineral particles predominate are most common on golf courses. The presence of organic matter in the surface soil is its distinguishing characteristic and serves to differentiate it from the deeper subsoil. During decay plant residues are converted into dark colored substances designated as humus, so depth of color serves as a rough indicator of the amount of organic matter present. The almost complete absence of organic matter is one cause of failure when attempts are made to grow turf on areas from which top soil has been removed. The organic matter improves soil structure, increases water-holding capacity and is essential to the life and development of soil micro-organisms. The preference for black soils is so universal that they are prized above all others. While desirable, there are other properties of greater importance from the standpoint of greens. A light colored sandy loam is far superior to a black clay as a medium for turf maintenance. When the properties of the mineral particles receive the attention they deserve, turf maintenance will be easier.

The size of the predominant or important soil grains determines pore space, ability to hold and move water and also influence the rate at which plant food elements are made available. In order to classify soils, the particles are grouped into three main separates, sand, silt and clay. Sand includes the larger grains and is further subdivided into coarse, medium, fine and very fine. The clay particles are exceedingly minute and, by virtue of that fact, even small amounts of clay exert profound effects. Based upon the proportion of these separates, soils are designated as sands, sandy loams, loams, silt loams, clay loams and clays. These terms are commonly used without realization that the amounts of sand, silt and clay are the determining factors. From the practical standpoint, the effects of sand and clay are most important. A sand soil is one containing 80 per cent or more of the separate sand, the balance may be all clay. A clay soil, on the other hand, contains 30 per cent or more of the separate clay, the balance may be sand. Thus the addition of only 10 per cent clay may change a soil from one extreme to the other. modify a sand, very little clay is required. but large amounts of coarse sharp sand are needed to materially change a clay.

From the physical standpoint, the sandy loams and loams are the best suited to greens. They contain both large and small particles which assure abundant pore space of sufficient size to provide good aeration, hasten rapid removal of excess water, facilitates rise by capillarity, and yet they have adequate water holding capacity.

#### Water and Air Division

Under ideal conditions, soil water exists as a film surrounding the soil particles and it is from these films that the root hairs absorb water as they advance. Surplus water beyond that necessary to surround the particles is of doubtful value to the grass, and may be positively harm-It fills spaces which should be ocful. cupied by air, and in extreme cases, where the soil is completely saturated, all air is excluded. This is detrimental to turf growth and also to the development of desirable soil bacteria. Water is a poor conductor of heat and tends to lower soil temperatures. In the spring, excess water often retards initial turf growth by preventing the soil from reaching temperatures at which growth can commence. Supplementary drainage may be required to provide for rapid removal of surplus water, especially where subsoils are 80 compact and impervious that downward movement of water is retarded. Neglect to insure good surface drainage is a further menace. In periods of heavy precipitation, the downward movement of water may be too slow to rid pockets and depressions of water which should be carried off rapidly at the surface. So-called sun scald or winter kill may destroy turf in such areas.

The promiscuous use of supplementary water is a dangerous practice. Other things being equal, the amount of growth parallels moisture supply up to a point



During construction of the new Evergreen Golf Course (Vancouver, Wash.), a Caterpillar 30 tractor made short work of the land clearing

where additional water becomes harmful by restricting the air supply. Abundant moisture produces soft lush leaf structures, which cannot withstand intense heat or severe wear, and such tissue is more susceptible to irreparable damage by fungus diseases. On undulating greens uniform watering may deprive high areas of water and result in too much on low areas. Insufficient water encourages shallow root systems, and if the soil is allowed to dry completely, it tends to shed water, thus retarding re-absorption.

The surface soil is more than so much inanimate matter. It teems with microscopic life and undergoes constant change throughout the growing season, as a result of the activity of these minute factors. Without their presence, plants cannot exist. These micro-organisms are the scavengers of the soil, for they attack and break down plant and animal residues, which are utilized as a source of energy During decomposition, the and food. plant food elements contained in the complex organic matter are resolved into simpler compounds which the turf can utilize, carbonic acid is also released by them and is further augmented by excretions from the turf roots. The carbonic acid exerts a solvent action on the insoluble plant food elements contained in the mineral soil grains.

There are two types of soil organisms, the anaerobic, which thrive in the absence of air, and the aerobic, which demand oxygen. The anaerobic organisms prodominates in water saturated soils and may produce products unfavorable to turf growth. It is the desirable aerobic organisms which must be fostered. Conditions favoring their development are, a well aerated soil, containing decomposable organic matter, moisture and mineral plant food elements. Their activity is depressed by low soil temperatures and medium to extreme soil acidity. When conditions are made favorable, they multiply rapidly and, although invisible, are tireless workers.

Turf depends upon the soil for seven of the ten chemical elements essential to normal and complete growth. It is obvious that these must be present in forms which the roots can take up. Almost without exception, soils are plentifully supplied with four, but may be deficient in one or more of the elements, nitrogen, phosphorus and potassium, sometimes referred to as ammonia, phosphoric acid and potash. Nitrogen occurs in the organic matter, so light colored soils contain less nitrogen than those of dark soils. Even so, if the organic matter is in forms which resist decay, additional nitrogen must be supplied. Almost all the phosphorus and potassium are in the mineral soil fraction and are more prevalent in the finer particles. except that phosphorus is always least abundant. Sands are frequently low in potassium, while it is plentiful in the loams and clays. From the standpoint of golf course turf, nitrogen is easily the dominant element, phosphorus and potassium playing minor roles. Only when all other soil factors are favorable does fertilization become entirely effective, and only then can maximum results be expected from their use.

### How Good Pro Works As Club's Valued Asset

WHEN golf club officials realize what makes a first-class professional and the dollars-and-cents value of such a man to the club, then pro golf has a clear road to highly satisfactory status as a business career. If that happy time arrives somewhat prior to the moment Gabriel blows his horn there will be a real living income for the competent professionals and a complete elimination of the present problem of the "boot-leg" pseudopros hoodwinking officials into giving them jobs that good men should have just because the unqualified men will work for less.

GOLFDOM has made frequent reference to a pro going to a club job where some other pro was starving to death and the new man making a handsome income out of real service to the same members. It now strikes us that we have missed part of that story in not showing the influence of the right man in the right job on other phases of club finances. During the past winter when we had plenty of time to study club annual statements, we were impressed with comparing 1928 and 1929 statements of clubs that had hired for the 1929 season new pros who we personally knew were good business men. In no case did the club with a good pro added to the payroll fail to increase its annual income less than \$8,000. Each of the cases considered was that of an 18-hole club. The favorable effect of a good pro on club income is too invariable to be considered a matter of luck. It pays to hire a good man and encourage him to make some real money, for he promotes club interest, club business and results all along the line.

The smart pro consciously and consistently endeavors to make each member feel that this particular member owns the club that the pro's services are his personal property—and that by no means the least of the values of club membership is the pro shop and the pro's interest in the member's enjoyment and golfing progress.

#### Pros Developing Their Value

There is more being done in this direction by pros than club officials realize. Most of the men who have been successfully in the same pro jobs for years are following the above stated policy with such subconscious smoothness that the members and officials possibly take the service too much as a matter of course to rate it at its proper value.

Jimmy Thomson of Mohawk at Schenectady brings out this point, when he says:

"I believe that in order to be of real value to your club a pro must have a practical experience in all departments which includes greenkeeping, club making, teaching, plaving, caddie supervision, and must be an all round good salesman. The average club member is a good sport and if the pro at any club will show that he is at the club for the benefit of the club and also his own benefit financially, I feel sure the members realize he is a real pro. I have worked this out at my club here and I am safe in saying that practically every member patronizes me. I think you will find all pros that have been in position for years are men of this calibre."

Some indication of Jim's earnestness in serving his members is apparent in that Swingrite limber-shafted club invented and made by him. Thomson had the problem of getting his pupils to permit the clubhead to do the work. He has turned out a flock of first-class players as the result of this instruction aid he invented. The idea was prompted by his desire to give his members results from his instruction, rather than from the primary urge to make himself a capitalist. Hundreds of other good pros are working along the same lines. By the way, this limbershafted club of Jim's is going good and a lot of the boys endorse it highly for instruction. He sells it for \$8.75. What its pro discount is, we don't know, so you'll have to write him about it.

#### Shop Shows Pro Service

Another New Yorker, George Pulver, pro at McGregor links, Saratoga Springs, emphasizes the business aspect of a pro's work for the club members by leaving nothing undone to establish his shop and

#### JUNE, 1930

his service so they are considered next to the course itself as necessities for playing.

Value of impressing upon club officials and members the fact that the pro is an important part of the business facilities of the club is brought out by Pulver in his remarks on his shop.

The Saratoga Springs professional tells GOLFDOM:

"I have tried to keep my shop clean, well painted, and to have on hand the finest, most popular, and the latest golf creations obtainable. To this end I have searched golf markets, both in United States and Great Britain, for clubs, balls and accessories of every kind to which the fancy of my club members might turn. In addition to standardized merchandise, I have purchased novel and unique equipment in small amounts to create shop interest, and from time to time, I have added specialized instruments of precision to help me in balancing, weighing, or matching members' sets, and to better aid me in fitting them to their golf needs.

"Also I have tried to be zealous and sincere in the routine things, such as arranging tournaments, suggesting construction changes, encouraging the developing of young golfers, and in general being a golf factorum about the club.

"In short, I have tried to anticipate my members' wants, keep my mind open to innovations, and avail myself of technical equipment such as slow motion pictures and all other new wrinkles that might assist me in carrying on my profession. By constantly and feverishly searching for something new or better, instituting business practices in my shop, strengthening my credit rating by discounting my bills, I feel that my function as golf advisor for my club members has been very perfectly realized."

#### Newnham Promotes Play

Another pro luminary who runs a shop that is one of the tangible assets of membership in his club is Fred Newnham of the Greensboro (N. C.) C. C. Newnham has one of the best pro shops in the south and has so repeatedly proved that it pays a member to come out to his shop and have expert assistance in selecting the right golfing merchandise from a comprehensive and carefully selected stock that he is doing the biggest business of his 18 years' history at Greensboro. Fred went with the club as pro-greenkeeper when it was started in 1912 and it looks like the Newnham name will be prominent for years to come in the "Pivot of the Piedmont" for young Fred, who was runner-up in the Carolina junior championship of 1929; is rated as one of the south's most promising players.

Newnham, pere, is a great believer in building up club interest by bringing down scores. Tully Blair, 1929 state champion, is one of Fred's pupils. Newnham has two group classes, one of 12 girls and another of 40 boys. A picture of some of these girls shows equipment that plainly indicates the youngsters are getting started off right. With the women's golf market growing rapidly Newnham is making sure that these subdebs in his club are not only going to develop into first-class golfers but into good patrons of his shop. A service like this, that extends the active value of club membership to the youngsters of the members is one of the items that go to make a good pro at bargain at any price.

#### Service Value in Selling

Freddie Canausa, pro at the U. S. Military Academy at West Point, and also connected with the Storm King club at Cornwall, N. Y., where his brother is in charge, is another one of the professionals who takes to heart the pros' responsibility of seeing that each player makes the most of his opportunity to play.

At West Point, Fred has charge of the 9-hole course and the group and individual instruction of the cadets. The potential generals do not have much time for play while they are at the academy so Fred has the interesting and difficult job of getting the youngsters well grounded and interested in the game in comparatively brief intervals. He aims to give them such a fine start that when they get to be captains and their top-sergeants do all the work for them the young officers will be able to cash in on the Canausa foundation. Right here is where the ability of the professional to select proper equipment for each play is emphatically valuable. It is Canausa's notion that the value of expert pro services in seeing that his members get the best clubs for their own special needs has a monetary rating at least equal to the cost of the clubs. That's part of the bonus the member gets for belonging to a club with a competent pro.

At Storm King, Fred and his brother make it a point to greet each member and

guest, and to nurse along club boosting so the membership situation will be favorably influenced. He sees to it that the caddies are made a part of the club's selling force so that each member and guest is never immune from exposure to the club's attractions while they are on the grounds. "If you handle your job so you make the members like you, you are making them like their club," is the way that Canausa defines his policy for making the pro a substantial asset to the organiza-"Don't wait for the members to tion. come to you. Go after them in a nice way with some sincere show of interest in their games, their equipment and their enjoyment of the club. Your officers have plenty to do in taking care of their own business burdens so if the pro will keep in mind his opportunities for lightening the club work of his officials and making their terms of office successful, he is doing exactly what the club wants done and what pays the pro greatest in the long run. It takes experience and tact to know just what to do in this respect without being considered presumptious or nosey, but a fellow has to have good judgment anyway before he is going to get anywhere as a pro business man."

These representative professionals have a real place in the array of assets boasted by their clubs and they are constantly on the job to make their worth to each member a tangible factor. That's what makes the pro picture bright these days. The merit of the good men is so obvious when officials really sit down and think it out that there is no lure to the false economy of a so-called pro who is not qualified by experience, temperament and ability.

There is only one real danger in today's situation and that is the tendency of clubs that have let themselves in for some sad experience with one of the false alarms, to get the erroneous impression that all pros would mishandle their job the same way. Even a little investigation of part of officials of these unfortunate clubs would show that the good pro is the rule and the "punk" the exception.

#### JACOBSEN HAS NEW CATALOG

Racine, Wis.—Jacobsen Mfg. Co., has issued a new catalog describing in detail its power green-mower. The book is a thorough job of presenting the features of the Jacobsen equipment, both in type and illustration, and makes interesting reading for those concerned with the purchase and operation of power mowers.

#### Stopping House Losses by Garbage Check

T O PREVENT glassware from breakage and loss, no glasses are placed in the same tray with china and silver. Special small trays are kept on buffets and on side stands and on which glasses must be placed when carried to the glass washers, separately.

Second, in stacking dishes on trays in the dining room, silver is separated from china and placed on one side of the tray. When the tray reaches the dish-washing room the layout is such that before it reaches the scrapping hole over the garbage can, the silver is taken from the tray first and placed in baskets for the silver washers. The tray with the china is then passed on for scrapping.

Third, it is absolutely essential that every bit of silver be separated from the china before it reaches the scrapping hole.

Fourth, a guard is always kept at the scrapping hole to prevent any items of china dropping through accidentally when there is a great volume of traffic.

Fifth, linen containers in the form of long baskets, more or less in the shape of those used on tally-hoes with a greater diameter and painted to match the woodwork or other color scheme of the room are distributed at different points in the dining room near service tables or buffets. No linen is ever placed on a tray of soiled china or silver, but must be deposited immediately in these baskets, which are emptied frequently into linen hampers located near the exit of the dining room.

Sixth, in whatever place your garbage is stored before it goes out of the building, a trough, similar to that used by contractors for mixing cement is provided. All garbage is emptied into this by an employee of the club who examines it minutely with rake or pitchfork, picking out any items which might have accidentally gotten by the garbage hole guard.

Seventh, after the garbage has been thoroughly raked over it is again placed in barrels and by this time the opportunity for any silver going out in it is very small.

Eighth, it is, of course, best to do business with a reliable concern when disposing of garbage and have an arrangement with them whereby your silver is returned to you in the event that any slips by.— *Club Managers' Assn. Bulletin.* 

### Comparing Course Labor Cost Percentages

#### By JAY M. HEALD Greenkeeper, Country Club of Greenfield, Mass.

F OR a long while the golf press, greenchairman, members of board of governors and greenkeepers have wondered "how much it should cost to maintain a golf course?"

At the Massachusetts greenkeeper's school this year, Prof. Dickinson required that his assistants devote a portion of their time to some special study closely related to the greenkeepers' profession. Having often wondered if there was a logical answer to the question, "how much should it cost for labor to maintain a golf course?" I set out to see if there was a definite answer.

Prof. Dickinson has in his files co<u>c</u>les of greenkeepers reports as submitted to their chairmen, together with complete files of the magazines published in this country having to do with golf course maintenance, probably as complete a set as could be found in this country.

I felt that if there was an answer to this question it was in this collection of records, and by working on a percentage basis it would make the comparison of the course spending \$20,000 with that course spending \$10,000 perfectly fair.

The reports were studied and any construction figures found were deducted from the total as well the division to which they belonged. Compost piles and turf nurseries in nearly all cases were carried as separate items. These I combined under the division "greens." Watering labor was charged 90 per cent to greens, 10 per cent to tees; assuming this to be a fair basis. However, the amount represents only a small percentage. In no report used was any mention made of fairway watering. After the percentage of money spent for labor on greens, fairways, tees, traps and rough had been computed and added together in no case did it equal 100. This was due to the fact that each course spent money for other items that were not common to all courses. These items were such as landscape, walks and roads, repairs, equipment, ditches, water lines, tennis courts, barn, police, etc. In each case, however, the percentage represented by these numerous items equaled 100 and I have grouped them under the heading "Balance."

#### Labor Percentages

The following table shows the percentage spent for labor on 18-hole courses for greens, fairways, tees, traps, rough and balance, as well as the location of the club:

| Location.<br>Mass | Greens.<br>50 | Fair-<br>ways.<br>4 | Tees.<br>10 | Traps. | Rough. | Bal-<br>ance.<br>21 |
|-------------------|---------------|---------------------|-------------|--------|--------|---------------------|
| III               | . 48          | 8                   | 2           | 7      | 8      | 27                  |
| Ill               | . 26          | 16                  | 6           | 16     | 6      | 30                  |
| Mass              | . 26          | 16                  | 6           | 16     | 7      | 29                  |
| Mass              | . 33          | 18                  | 9           | 8      | 3      | 29                  |

About half of the queries on course maintenance received by GOLFDOM concern costs. More questions on this subject come from greenkeepers than from green-chairmen,

Thus, in our opinion, this effort of a practical greenkeeper and a practical scientist, begun at the 1930 M. A. C. greenkeepers' school, deserves the serious attention and definite encouragement of every greenkeeper and green-chairman.

Cost percentages of course depend on a fairly large number of items ranging from soil character to the somewhat nebulous demands of the membership, but there's no sound reason why these percentages can't be determined close enough to enable the inquiring and conscientious greenkeeper to check on his labor management and labor efficiency.— THE EDITOR.

| Conn | 30 | 14 | 6 | 10 | 4 | 36 |  |
|------|----|----|---|----|---|----|--|
| Mass | 32 | 16 | 8 | 8  | 4 | 32 |  |
| III  | 24 | 4  | 7 | 6  | 1 | 58 |  |
| III  | 32 | 14 | 6 | 12 | 5 | 31 |  |
| Mass | 23 | 11 | 8 | 2  | 8 | 48 |  |

It is apparent that the labor expenditures are not much different, and when compared to the average it would seem as though costs were at present as near constant as they could ever be. The above figures show averages of 32 per cent for greens, 12 per cent for fairways, 6 per cent for tees, 9 per cent for traps, 5 per cent for rough and 36 per cent for balance.

The following table lists the nine-hole courses in the same manner. Unfortunately all these courses are in Massachusetts:

| a | <br>Greens.<br>48 | Fair-<br>ways.<br>13 | Tees, | Traps. | Rough. | Bal-<br>ance.<br>31 |
|---|-------------------|----------------------|-------|--------|--------|---------------------|
| b | <br>29            | 7                    | 4     | 5      | 6      | 49                  |
| с | <br>30            | 11                   | 8     | 4      | 8      | 39                  |
| d | <br>37            | 9                    | 4     | 6      | 9      | 35                  |
| e | <br>30            | 8                    | 6     | 6      | 7      | 43                  |
| f | <br>32            | 12                   | 4     | 8      | 9      | 35                  |
| g | <br>30            | 13                   | 6     | •••    | 2      | 49                  |
| h | <br>34            | 11                   | 6     | 5      | 11     | 33                  |
| i | <br>35            | 8                    | 4     | 5      | 11     | 37                  |
|   |                   | -                    |       |        |        |                     |

Average.331054740Again in the nine-hole courses it seems

they are running along the same lines. A comparison of the eighteen and the nine averages is interesting:

| 9  | 33 | 10 | 5 | 4    | 7 | 40 |
|----|----|----|---|------|---|----|
| 18 |    |    | 6 | - 22 | 5 | 36 |

As one would expect that the difference is due to architecture and it is clearly borne out in the traps.

Having found that on a percentage basis there is a fairly definite amount to be spent on the golf course labor, whether one has \$10,000 or \$20,000 at his disposal, cannot the green-chairman and greenkeeper look around and see how near they are coming to the average, and if not why not? There is an answer somewhere on the course, it is probably architecture or maintenance.

#### Manager Discovers Secret of Good Management

RECENTLY the writer attended a dinner of managers held at a club where the managerial genius and his chef were determined to show the boys what a party should be.

As is usual at most golf club parties, many of the diners were engaged in earnest confab and sampling some of the alledged real "McCoy" for quite sometime after the hour announced for dinner. After the meal was served and the entertainment was being launched, the chef was brought up from the kitchen to receive well deserved plaudits from the expert appraisers of cuisine. The chef's remarks were short and to the point. In acknowledging his welcome he said:

"You are a hell of a bunch for club managers. You have dinner announced for seven and sit down at eight." After these terse and telling remarks he wiped off his brow and knocked off a mighty drink.

Next to me there was a veteran manager who leaned over and remarked: "That's the best speech I ever heard made at a managers' meeting. All of us are apt to forget that our members are human beings just like we are, while we are kicking that the members forget that we are human beings just like they are. Most of the troubles I have are just because humans are human. Here we, who share with our members' wives the complaint of the members staying too long in the locker-room at mealtime, are doing the same thing to drive a chef and the dining room captain crazy. It was different before we had prohibition. Why, I can remember ......"

And then the manager and the reporter reminisced, sobbed and hoped far into the night.

#### Ban Sport Goods Paid Testimonials

ANY endorsement of sporting goods which is paid for, either in cash or merchandise, is to be used in advertising only when the advertising carries the statement that the testimonial has been purchased. This agreement and one prohibiting the secret giving of money or anything else of value to agents of customers as an inducement to influence purchases were the two features of the action taken by the sporting goods manufacturers' trade conference. This meeting was conducted by Garland S. Ferguson, Jr., chairman of the Federal Trade commission, at White Sulphur Springs, May 7.

The eighth of the resolutions named as an unfair trade practice and slated for abandonment any person or firm discriminating in price between different purchasers "where the effect of such discrimination may be to substantially lessen competition."