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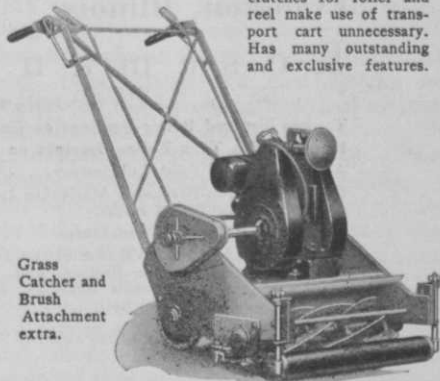
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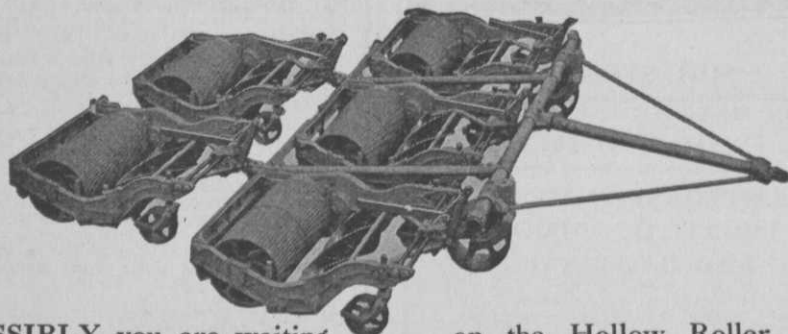
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# Golfdom

The Business Journal of Golf

REG. U. S. PATENT OFFICE

VOL. 5

JUNE, 1931

No. 6

## Early Signs Point to 1931 as Golf's Biggest Season

By HERB GRAFFIS

**E**NOUGH of the 1931 golf season has passed in review to justify a reasonably definite advance appraisal of the entire parade. Summarizing the findings: 1931 promises to give 1930 a close run as the record year of the golf business. With an even break in weather conditions from now on, there are other indications that point to 1931 as the banner 12 months of the game's commercial history.

Only one factor threatens the situation. Exposure to the current national practice of planting the fawny snugly and then setting up a wail for the government to "do something" may wilt some of the weaker minds in the business, but no extensive development of this yellow fever may be expected from the present personnel responsible for club operation or from the manufacturers of playing and maintenance equipment.

### Early Start This Spring.

Right now the golf business is envied by almost every other business in the country. Although we have had more than the usual rain this spring, the total rounds of play at representative courses in 20 different localities is approximately 5 per cent greater than at the same time last year. The mild winter and early spring accounted for the increase.

The rain has made the grass fairly jump out of the ground. This has meant rush

orders for mowing equipment. Some of the clubs thought they were going to be able to get through the year with equipment patched up to the last extremity. Heavy service on the established turf resulted in a quick break-down of the worn equipment. It is almost impossible to get serviceable second-hand mowing equipment. More exacting standards of the smaller clubs has provided a big and lively market for this used equipment this year. Now that the smaller clubs are not able to pick up this equipment with a couple of years of easy service left in it, they are passing the hat among their members, thus raising the cost of the new equipment they need, rather than by incurring the risk of a club deficit.

All this pounding away at the chronic annual assessments of golf clubs has begun to show benefits. The clubs are paying now for what they buy, or they don't buy. From a fairly extensive personal survey GOLFDOM advances the opinion that golf clubs generally have more money in the banks right now than they ever have had before. Previously we have cited the estimate that golf club interest charges in 1930 averaged approximately \$1,000 less per 18-hole club than they were in 1929. This is a saving of about \$2,500,000 a year that was made possible because the clubs are beginning to operate on a business basis and are not going wild on capital expenses of alteration or enlargement,

passing the problem of payment on to succeeding administrations.

### Don't Curtail Too Boldly.

There is a peril of this thrift business being overdone by the usual golf club violence of extremes. The clubs that have satisfactory membership positions these days are the clubs with good courses, adequate and inviting clubhouse facilities and pro shops that are service stations for the members. Curtailment of the operating costs of any of these departments often is reflected promptly in an unavoidable let-down in operating standards. Such a lapse is fatal to the membership campaigns. As a matter of fact, study of the membership situation in metropolitan areas has suggested the possibility that there is a membership limit beyond which the average club cannot go without assuming almost certain operating losses under existing standards.

About five years ago the active membership at the average 18-hole metropolitan district club was from 180 to 220. A membership of from 225 to 275 constituted the entire roster. Now, with most of the men members active and a lot of women playing, the clubhouse especially is not able to give each member the individual attention they have been led to expect without having a big and expensive force of waiters or waitresses, idle a good part of the time. The managers are up against it in the matter of getting high class, emergency help at the clubhouses. There's where a lot of the clubhouse deficit originates.

### Menus Due for Shake-up.

Food prices are lower, but just as long as club officials and a minority of voluble members insist on the preservation of a generally obsolete tradition of "club" service standards and menus, the house manager hasn't much of a chance to operate at an even break. Even the barbecue stands are cutting down house lunch business, and with a fair volume of this business the club has one of its best chances to serve good food at low food cost. Revision of the clubhouse feeding practices, in accord with the ideas of many experienced managers, probably will be one of the next advances in golf club business operation. It takes only a casual study of the business done by the cafeteria at Olympia Fields (Chicago district) to make club officials and managers think about the prospects of menu and service revision.

Some of the clubhouse equipment makers have been complaining about golf business this year, but theirs is about the only woeful statement in the field. They attribute the lack of the customary amount of new business to the clubs spending the money on the courses. These clubhouse suppliers, however, have registered no kick about replacement business in silverware, china and linens. They say this is nicely above what would be considered a normal year's business.

Three years ago GOLFDOM concluded, after extensive investigation, that the golf courses were due for a general revision of maintenance policy by replacing the manual labor with machinery whenever possible. This conclusion was the result of hundreds of interviews with greenkeepers. At that time 18-hole club maintenance staffs were composed of from 13 to 19 men. This year, at clubs where competent greenkeepers have been allowed to mechanize their courses, one frequently will find excellent and thrifty maintenance with staffs of 9 to 13 men and a superintendent. The savings, in many cases, pay for the machinery the first year. That is the real foundation for the course maintenance equipment business being good.

Growth of knowledge about turf maintenance also has been responsible for a healthy increase in golf fertilizer business during the last 9 months. The greens end of the golf field has provided a shining example of spending to save that might happily be extended to other businesses.

### Fee Course Business Good.

Daily-fee courses are having a very satisfactory play early in the season and expect that this will be a high-mark year despite the unemployment. The extension of the five-day week idea and the growth of women's golf is helping them a lot. In some places the prices have been cut, but unless the competition is keen and the finances in need of a sudden and temporary exhilaration, the cuts are not especially necessary, nor are they drastic. Comparing the cost of daily fee golf with driving an automobile, for instance, or even with the cost of attending an indifferently done movie at some ornate picture palace, is not doing any damage to the cause of fee golf by a long way.

The better grade fee courses in some instances are cashing in on the inability of some players to hold onto private club memberships, but this is not as extensive

as it might seem off hand. Private clubs in some districts are suffering losses of membership due to men who formerly belonged to two or three clubs are reducing their connections to one golf organization.

Generally this has been offset by a reduction in the initiation costs of metropolitan district clubs. This has brought a lot of live new members into the folds and their house accounts and transfer fees promise to far more than make up the loss taken on the initiation fee. Naturally there are complaints from those who bought club memberships two years ago for \$1,800 where the memberships now are selling at \$800, but they have something to show for their initial expenditure which is more than can be said about the market "investments" some of the complainers made.

### Cut Prices Only Pro Worry.

The pros this year are doing a good business, although they have been held back by rain. Leading manufacturers are running at a gait that makes new production records seem certain, although they are catching hell on the lower priced clubs put out by wood-shed factories. Thousands of new retail outlets for golf goods have sprung up this year, and the salesmen in many of these places hardly know enough about golf goods to tell the buyer "which end of the caddie to grasp."

Although this ignorance is going to burn some of the new golfers and take some business away from pros and first class manufacturers, it will teach the buyers to go to well qualified sources of golf merchandise when they really want something worth while. From a number of well authenticated reports some of the newer manufacturers already are about ready to fold up. They go after the store business and here the first, last and middle question is "price" 95 per cent of the time. When the beginner in the business takes his line of junk in, figuring that he has the world stopped with his store price of 85 cents for an iron, the store guy tells him some other poor sap has offered him clubs for 80 cents per. The victim then says, "Oh, to hell with it. Take them for 75 cents each. I am getting out of the golf business."

Foremost manufacturers set themselves for just this sort of a break on the lower priced goods and although the quality golf goods business is split a few more ways than it used to be, all of the first class manufacturers are cheerful and active.

The merchandising situation is helping to make better merchants of the professionals because the competition generally is with such stuff that a pro can show his customers plainly and gracefully they are running the risk of throwing away their dough if they fall for the cut price trash.

Some salary cuts have been made in the golf field, but only by clubs that are in delicate shape and anxious to get quickly on the right financial basis and work out of the mire of heavy carrying charges they walked into some years ago when they were led astray by the delusion of grandeur. It is to be hoped that these minor cuts, made more on the basis of "principle" than for the money involved, will get the deserved compensation when the readjustment eventually is effected. There are comparatively few first class golf club department heads out of work for now operating abilities mean more to the clubs than ever before. Thus, it may be that this year when other businesses are sobbing and the golf business is good, may impress on the golf field the value of competent department heads who are given authority without uninformed interference that enables them to operate clubs on a business basis.

### P. G. A. Championship Sept. 14-19 at Providence, R. I.

**C**HAMPIONSHIP of the Professional Golfers association will be played this year Sept. 14-19 at Wannamoisett C. C., Providence, R. I. Mutually satisfactory financial arrangements have been made between the Providence officials and the tournament bureau of the P. G. A. and plans already are under way to make this tournament the greatest in P. G. A. history.

With Boston, Worcester and Hartford right at the door and New York just a short drive away the Providence people have a good gallery territory. It will be the first major golf championship to be held in Providence.

Only those pros who have their national and sectional P. G. A. dues paid as of July 1 will be allowed to participate in the qualifying play for the P. G. A. championship. It is expected that this will result in the P. G. A. membership showing a record total by the first of July. The group fire and theft insurance plan of the association meant so much of a saving to the members that it was responsible for a recent spurt in membership. In many cases the saving exceeds the dues.

# U. S. G. A. Enlists Greenkeepers As Advisory Board Members

By HERB GRAFFIS

## U. S. G. A. WELCOMES GREENKEEPER REPRESENTATION

(Special wire to GOLFDOM.)—It was a great pleasure for the United States Golf Association to appoint greenkeepers on the advisory section of its Green Section. I am confident that with the representation of greenkeepers on the committee we all will receive and exchange valuable advice and support. With all of us working together in harmony we will give the golf clubs of the country the best possible playing conditions.

GANSON DEPEW,

Chairman, Green Section,  
United States Golf Association.

**A**NNOUNCEMENT of new committees of the Green Section recently made by H. H. Ramsay, president of the U. S. G. A. introduces into the turf field an advisory committee comprising prominent and competent greenkeepers and pro-greenkeepers as well as green-chairmen. This innovation, which makes the greenkeepers officially recognized partners in the Green Section activities, is the answer to the greenkeepers' prayer expressed repeatedly in GOLFDOM since the first issue of this publication.

It is certain that the introduction of greenkeepers into the official roster will result in a more vigorous prosecution of the Green Section's work. This labor undoubtedly has been handicapped by a shortage in finances and personnel as well as by the undercurrent of greenkeeper feeling in some spots that the organization was operating in the rarefied atmosphere of higher science rather than in the exacting territory of dirt. The able and conscientious John Montieth and Ken Welton of the Green Section have persistently endeavored to demonstrate by work and words that there is existing no foundation for such suspicion of scientific detachment and when Chairman Ganson Depew of the Green Section made his memorable address on "Co-operation" at the Greenkeepers' convention last February, close observers correctly saw prospects of early

recognition of greenkeepers by American golf's ruling body.

Greenkeepers who have muttered about neglect of the strictly practical problems of the fellow who is in dire need of the aid of applied science now will have a chance to voice their complaints officially through their own representatives or keep silent. The Green Section has been asking continuously for expressions of greenkeepers' rating of pressing problems. However there has been a sad lack of definite expressions from the field. In the meanwhile the Section, fully taxing its limited facilities, has done the best possible according to its own lights. Under the new line-up the greenkeepers are given plenty of opportunity for having their say.

## Rating As Executives

Regardless of the merits of the present controversy as to whether or not the term *greenkeeper* or *golf course superintendent* most impressively and accurately describes the importance and scope of the course expert's work, it is almost a certainty that the debate has brought home to U. S. G. A. officials the wisdom of taking vital practical men into their close councils. Club officials, inclined to think in terms of their own business operations, have a true appreciation of superintendents' status in their shops, but with the average city man's attitude toward the essential soil toilers, have been subconsciously thinking of the course superintendent as merely a grass grower and grass cutter. In appointing greenkeepers to its advisory committee the U. S. G. A. has given the course executives inspiration and a place in the sun hitherto generally denied them.

In announcing the personnel of the new committees, President Ramsay also releases news of the research committee composed of Green Section scientists and experts from the U. S. Department of Agriculture. This committee continues to be a valuable factor in the furtherance of turf work as it brings into the Section's activities use of government resources. The golf clubs have been paying heavy taxes

without getting any too much of a break in the allotment of government expenditures. With the lawn owners standing to benefit considerably from some of the findings, the results of the research will be extensively distributed.

### Personnel of the Committees

Appointments of the committees, as announced by the U. S. G. A., are:

#### *Research Committee*

From the United States Department of Agriculture: K. F. Kellerman, F. H. Hillman, Russell A. Oakley, A. J. Pieters, Oswald Schreiner, Harvey L. Westover.

From the United States Golf Association Green Section: John Monteith, Jr., Kenneth Welton.

#### *Advisory Committee*

Douglas Call, Richmond, Va.; N. S. Campbell, Providence, R. I.; Wm. C. Fownes, Jr., Pittsburgh, Pa.; A. J. Goetz, Webster Groves, Mo.; William Harig, Cincinnati, Ohio; J. McRae Hartgering, Detroit, Mich.; Frederic C. Hood, Marion, Mass.; Norman Macbeth, Los Angeles, Cal.; John Morley, Youngstown, Ohio; Guy M. Peters, Chicago, Ill.; Alex Pirie, Fort Sheridan, Ill.; William J. Rockefeller, Toledo, Ohio; George V. Rotan, Houston, Texas; George Sargent, Columbus, Ohio; John Shanahan, West Newton, Mass.; Sherrill Sherman, Utica, N. Y.; Frederick Snare, Havana, Cuba; Charles E. VanNest, Minneapolis, Minn.; W. R. Walton, Washington, D. C.; Alan D. Wilson, Philadelphia, Pa.; M. H. Wilson, Jr., Cleveland, Ohio.

The latest move of the U. S. G. A. Ramsay regime should be exceedingly welcome news to the club department heads. Early in the year Ramsay and Charles Hall, president of the P. G. A., came to an agreement regarding pro employment that already is having beneficial effects. The policy of the U. S. G. A. administration plainly seems to be all for giving the club department heads a chance to do more specific, practical work for the clubs instead of being repressed by uniformed interference and absence of recognition by the game's "all highest."

### Get Together, or Else—

When the managers, professionals and greenkeepers finally get together on the matter of mutual recognition and co-operation for the good of the clubs, the cause of business operation at golf clubs will be immeasurably advanced. The subject of

this alliance of three department heads was thoroughly discussed at a conference of the three association heads prior to the Club Managers' association meeting at Pittsburgh this spring. Definite action was taken by the pro associaton in inviting representatives of the other two groups to work with the P. G. A. executive body, but what the other associations will do depends on the decisions of their executive committee meetings to be held in the near future.

The U. S. G. A. in this appointment of the advisory committee has led the way to the sort of co-operation that the greenkeepers, pros and manufacturers had better adopt quickly for their own good.

## 1931 Golfer's Year Book Now Available

*The Golfer's Year Book. 1931 Edition. Edited by William D. Richardson and Lincoln A. Werden. Golfer's Year Book Co., 331 Madison Ave., New York City. 806 pages. \$3.00.*

**F**OR the golfer who find himself arguing on any phase of the game, fine ammunition for settling his dispute can be found in the Golfer's Year Book, the 1931 edition of which has just come from the presses. In addition to listing a large percentage of the golf clubs of the United States and Canada, with official's names and other data, the book gives full histories of all national, sectional and state tournaments and associations, golf data of foreign lands, a tournament calendar, a list of golf professionals, and a buyers' guide to golf products.

There are a number of special features. O. B. Keeler contributes a fine story of Bobby Jones, to whom this edition is dedicated. Innis Brown clarifies the rules of golf by arranging them alphabetically and defining them in a style more easily understood than the formal wording of the rules themselves, which are also included in their customary arrangement. Articles on various other phases of the game have been contributed by sundry authorities, including Bernard Darwin, Dr. John Monteith, Jr., Albert R. Gates, Clifford C. Wendehack and Ganson Depew.

The subject matter of the book is a true reflection of the game of golf in its present popularity and the answer to almost any question on the game can be found within its covers.

# California Boasts of Machine Use in Maintenance Betterment

By ARTHUR LANGTON

**I**NTRODUCTION of mechanical maintenance equipment on California golf courses has followed, or possibly been in the van of, the general trend evident throughout the United States caused by the development of the idea that cheaper and better work could be done by the use of machines of many types. No one will deny that residents of this state are inclined to be boastful, but the opinion seems to be very well substantiated that California courses have more and better machinery than those of the East. In many cases this may not be true but the fact remains that topnotch courses on the coast in order to maintain their positions, have had to adopt the finest mechanical means at their command.

Western turf maintenance equipment is of high quality because it is the most modern on the market. It is the most modern because it is not given the eastern opportunity to get old. In California there is not a single item of equipment, with the possible exception of some of the irrigation devices, that is not in constant use throughout the year. Added to this is the extreme hardness of the ground on many courses which is particularly wearing on cutting equipment. And topping off the list is the predominance of hills incorporated in the design of most Coast courses. Golf architects with hills, mountains, and valleys for the asking have been unable to resist the temptation to include in their designs as much vertical topography as possible. Therefore it can be easily understood that the practice of operating machinery day in and day out over hard ground up hill and down dale does not make for mechanical longevity.

Furthermore it had been found that equipment with apparent mechanical defects, no matter what the cost, is far from the most economical to purchase. California courses are run with the minimum margin allowed for breakdown or other emergencies, so that machinery in the repair shop acts as a break to the whole maintenance system. Unless manufacturers

are prepared to stand by their goods and be ready at a moment's notice to render service in the way of replacements and repairs, they will not have the ghost of a chance of doing business with the greenkeepers of the Pacific Southwest, as more than one manufacturer has found to his cost.

## Course Headquarters Glorified.

The mechanical trend at golf courses has taken on one pleasing aspect on at least California golf courses. In the old days the shop, shed, barn, or toolhouse, as it was variously known, was nothing more than a roof under which to store rakes, hoes, shovels and other equipage then considered necessary on the well-kept course. There were no arrangements and conveniences for the employees; frequently the structure relied solely for its illumination upon the discouraged light that managed to filter through filthy cobwebbed windows. For his office the greenkeeper had a packing case or a rough bench equipped with a pencil and a hook as a file.

Today the shop is a palace by comparison. Smooth, clean, cement floors support gleaming lathes, forges, grindstones, drills, buffers, and welding equipment. Efficient electric motors and overhead pulley systems gives the semblance of a factory to this modern descendant of a once humble structure. Electric lights are placed at convenient intervals, while lockers for the men line the walls and, in many cases, showers are provided for the groundsmen. And as for the superintendent's sanctum, hardwood desks, carpets on the floor, comfortable chairs, desk sets, and an air of big business is present in what was once the realm of the cockroach.

## Skilled Mechanics in Change.

The reason for this startling metamorphosis is the advent of the skilled mechanic, which event was necessitated by the demands of the complicated machinery which even the skill of the ubiquitous and adaptable greenkeeper could not satisfy. The mechanic, expecting and demanding





Thirteenth green at Montebello where power maintenance shows benefits in good condition and economy.

favorable working conditions, insisted that his surroundings on a golf course should at least be no worse than those he would find elsewhere under more accustomed conditions. This insistence made for a general toning up around the shop, an improvement which by force of demand included the facilities of the groundsmen. Moreover, this improvement assumed wholesale proportions when it was demonstrated that the whole staff could do more and better work if conditions around the shop were favorable.

In speaking of the equipment contained in a modern western shop, let us take an excellent example, that of the Montebello Park public golf course over which Gene Marzolf is superintendent. This is an 18-hole affair which in addition has a 450-acre real estate tract attached which must be cared for by the club personnel. This involves grading, road maintenance, and the

upkeep of lawns around the tract offices. The course itself draws patronage from the metropolitan area of Los Angeles and thickly populated suburban communities. Play is uninterrupted except by darkness and the usual congestion is experienced on week-ends and holidays.

### Marzolf Has Prize Layout.

To maintain this course and tract there are ten men exclusive of mechanic and gardener, two five-unit gang mowers for fairways, two tee and approach mowers, and two power greens mowers. Hand mowers are used only about two hours each week to trim around traps in places the power equipment can't handle. Housed in a \$5,000 shop there is \$3,000 worth of tools devoted to the upkeep of course equipment. These include a self-contained general purpose lathe, a reel sharpening lathe, a forge, a lifting crane, two power-driven drill presses, one large and one small, and an oxy-acetylene torch outfit. With this equipment Marzolf and his mechanic have been able to effect every repair necessary to his course maintenance machinery except those involving the use of electric welding. But it is to the credit of the Montebello shop that drastic repairs are rarely necessary owing to the mechanic's constant surveillance of the working machinery. Every day as each cutting unit is brought back to the shop it is greased, oiled, and washed, and the cutting height is checked in readiness for the next day's work.

This California greenkeeper is a firm believer in the efficiency of machinery on the course and in the shop and regards the habit of borrowing equipment as practised by some greenkeepers as a weakness. "I have found," he says, "that the borrowed equipment is usually out of adjustment or not adapted to my particular needs. It is



Gene Marzolf, Montebello course supt., operates a business office for business-like course maintenance.

then necessary to take time off to get into usable shape, which sometimes spoils it for the owner. On our own course we will not tolerate machinery that is not in first class shape."

### Wants More Standardization.

As evidence of the improvement in mechanical conditions Marzolf points to the fact that a dozen years ago every golf course barn contained as many as ten broken down cutting units. They rarely were worn out, but cluttered up the barn because there were no repair facilities available. However, he does believe that further improvements can be made in machinery with benefit to the greenkeeper. One of these improvements is in the direction of standardization of equipment. At the present time there seems to be no agreement among the firms making golf course machinery as to what is right or wrong. This may be only a transitory stage similar to the one that the automobile industry went through years ago.

In regard to specific developments along mechanical lines that are being hoped for in California, there is hardly a greenkeeper in this locality who is not eagerly looking forward to the general adoption of topdressing machines that work efficiently when loaded with damp material. There are many kinds of apparatus on the market which will handle dry topdressing to anyone's satisfaction, but which will clog or distribute unevenly when soggy compost or soil is applied.

Tractor wheel spuds or sod pins offer another field of improvement. A constant source of expense and trouble is incurred on California courses by the necessity of replacing these spuds, in some cases as often as every other month. Mowers which will cut rough grass evenly and smoothly is the request which comes from one course, while from another, a public one, comes the demand that someone do something about strengthening flag poles to withstand for longer than six months the rough treatment meted out to them by the pay-as-you-enter player.

### Trick Tees Costly.

Also for the public golf course greenkeepers the millenium will have arrived when some genius devises a mechanism to keep home-made tees out of cutting reels. Paper, wooden, and celluloid tees are not so cheap as to prevent many golfers from manufacturing their own from such blade-destroying materials as roofing nails, etc.

## New Jersey Plans Turf Field Day June 15

**N**EW JERSEY'S state experiment station at New Brunswick will be the scene of a field-day program devoted entirely to turf culture on Monday, June 15. The meeting is sponsored jointly by The New Jersey State Golf association, the New Jersey State Greenkeepers association, and the experiment station. Invitations to attend are extended to all persons interested in producing and maintaining turf.

The program will begin at 3 p. m. (daylight saving time) on the experimental turf plots of the Agronomy department at the college farm, New Brunswick. Each of the several hundred plots will be labeled, so that visitors may draw their own conclusions as to the effects of the various treatments and conditions. Discussion of the field experiments will be conducted during the afternoon.

At 6 p. m. the group will adjourn to the Hotel Woodrow Wilson where dinner will be served at a cost of \$1.50 per plate. Following the dinner, there will be talks on turf culture and a discussion of problems. Several speakers of national reputation are on the program.

## Cleveland Pros Start Season with Dinner for Officials

**C**LEVELAND district P. G. A. inaugurated the season with a dinner for officials of the local clubs at which about 90 pros and officials discussed their mutual business problems. W. H. Way, veteran officer of the pro association, was chairman of the meeting. Way and other professionals spoke on what the pro is trying to do for the game and related some of the details of business operations now being studied by the P. G. A. members.

Ganson Rose, Harry Spittler, pres. of the Cleveland District Golf association, and Ed Doty, treasurer of the C. D. G. A., spoke from the club officials' viewpoint.

The dinner was an interesting and profitable affair and will be made an annual feature of the Cleveland district P. G. A. schedule.

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If your assistant is ambitious and can make more money for you, see that he attends the P.G.A. Business Conference.

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