

GOLF COURSE PROTECTION

This heading is not intended to have reference to vandalism as it might indicate. We are concerned about adverse action that might be taken by various governmental agencies or legislative bodies that would have detrimental or adverse effect on the operation and maintenance of golf courses.

There have been several instances where attempts have been made to limit, through legislation, the use of fertilizers on golf courses, yes, even to go so far as to abandon its use. There have been other feelers out concerning rationing of fuel, real estate taxation methods and some very harsh regulations concerning the use of necessary pesticides.

At this point, before we go further into the subject, we recommend that President Rich Rannells of the Minnesota Golf Course Superintendents' Association add one more committee to his already fine committees. The new committee to watch very closely the work of the various legislative bodies, be it federal, state or local, for any proposals concerning the operation or maintenance of golf courses. If and when they find something of this kind that it be reported immediately to the President for him and his Board to take the necessary action to protect the interest of golf. After it has been determined what action is to be taken, the MGCSA should enlist the help and cooperation of the other golf organizations in the State, such as the MGA, Minnesota PGA, MWGA, both the men and ladies Minnesota Public Links Associations, and the Club Managers Association.

There was a time when golf courses were seldom affected by such matters but this has long since passed, and now the superintendent and all other supervisors at a golf course must consider these laws with almost every action they take.

The MGCSA, like many others, may be guilty of complacency and not mindful of the serious inroads that have been made and others which some contemplate might be made if nothing is done to stop them. Consider that most decisions made concerning golf are based upon the premise that golf courses as they have become known, will continue. This is not necessarily correct, for example, recent governmental attempts in some areas cast a dark shadow across all golf courses, and in some instances endanger their very existence.

When professional association of "greenskeepers" now known as "Golf Course Superintendents" were established many years ago, the primary reason for their formation was to assist the members in scientific areas of turfgrass management through dissemination of new information. While this reason still exists today, an important new area also exists, that of being in a position to react to potential governmental actions.

Examples of cooperation between professional associations and governmental bodies can be found. Within the golf course superintendents' profession, there are several excellent examples of how a united group can insure that its interests are represented and considered prior to final action. First at the federal level and more recently at the state level and where taxation, for example, is involved, at a local level. In Massachusetts and Michigan, for example, some legislators proposed the banning of non-farm fertilizer usage and in Wisconsin there was a bill concerning the use of pesticides. At first individual or local interest was aroused, this was closely followed by organizational efforts to present information to legislators which was vital to a complete and thorough understanding of the problems which would follow such a ban. Fortunately these state and federal proposals were permitted to die without moving beyond the committee level.

The Golf Course Superintendents Association of America made determined efforts on the Massachusetts and Michigan fertilizer bills and on the Wisconsin pesticide bill by advising the chapters in those states of the proposals together with sug-

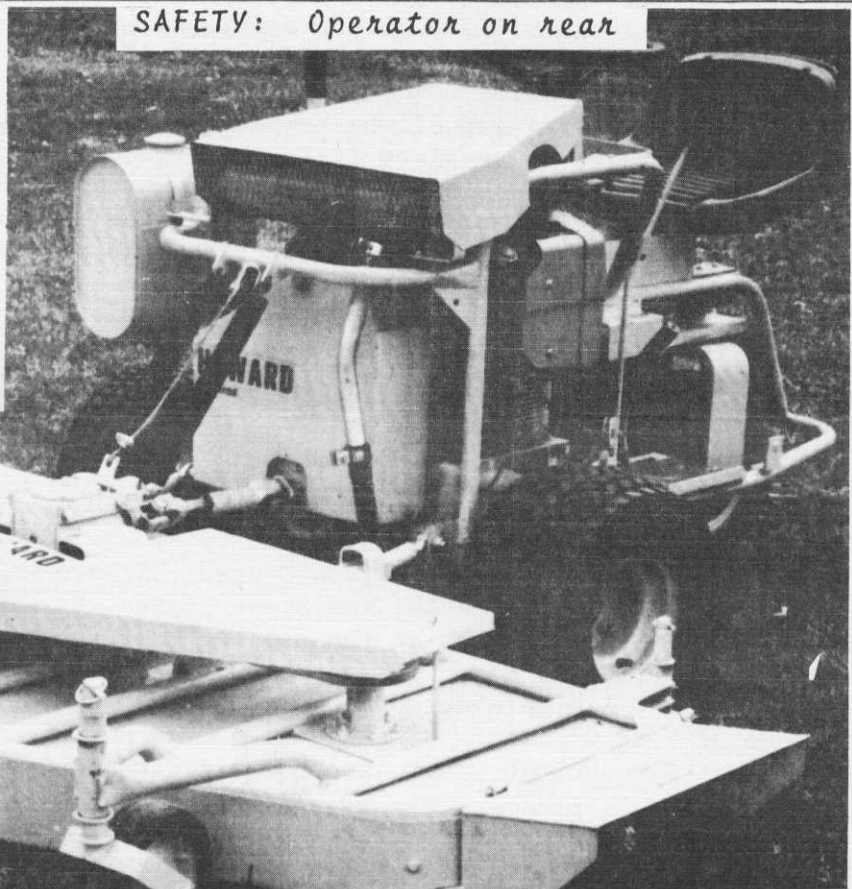
gestions as to the action they should take, such as taking uniform action through a letter writing campaign and to offer testimony to support their contentions; the GCSAA also offered information as to their position. The action and support of the GCSAA is not entirely new. They had previously given testimony concerning pension reform legislation as well as in dealing with the Environmental Protective Agency; however, involvement in the state-level legislation is relatively new and caution must be taken to insure that counter-productive measures are not permitted through a conflict of actions by the state and national organizations.

Because more and more legislation is of concern to golf courses and historically it has been demonstrated that legislative actions are duplicated from local and state levels to the national level and vice versa. Another thing that must be taken into consideration is that a piece of legislation may appear to be insignificant at the time of passage and later, through interpretation and enforcement policies, become of tremendous import to the profession and the superintendent's ability to perform his required tasks.

As we think of this situation we become more concerned about the absence of such a committee, not only in the Minnesota Chapter, but others that do not have such a committee as well.

As to the name of such a committee, it would seem proper for the President and his Board to come up with a name. It could be Protective Committee, Legislative Committee or any other name as long as the purpose and duties of the committee are Properly outlined and carried out.

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