

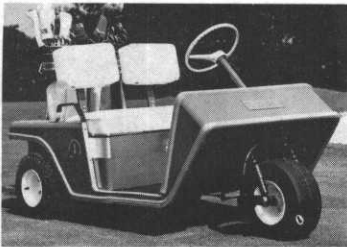
Another Look at Labor

by HOLMAN M. GRIFFIN, Southern Agronomist, USGA Green Section

It is difficult to understand why there is a problem of unemployment when so many golf courses need employees.

Some clubs have acute labor problems, while other never seem to have any. Though the wage scale at most clubs is still shrouded in secrecy and comparison is difficult, it is doubtful that wages are the only differences between the clubs that have problems and those that do not. Investigation may reveal basic differences in morale, pride and interest. If a club seeks to hire and hold capable employees, it must be interested in the people it is hiring and interest them in the job to be done. The result of interest is pride, which creates high morale. These attitudes encourage an effective and efficient working force.

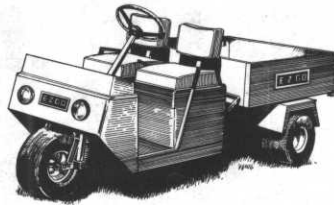
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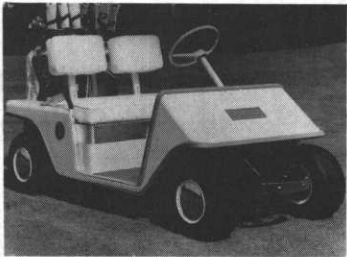
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Interest must be in force at all levels to make the plan work. To start with, the club must be interested in its key man - the golf course superintendent. Clubs must look on the superintendent as a capable administrator who knows what it takes to get a job done. He is a supervisor and his attitude is usually reflected in many ways by the men he supervises. Interest in the key man usually shows all the way down to the newest man on the force. Just like money in the bank, the interest is compounded.

MOTIVATION IS THE KEY. It is one thing to hire a man for his abilities but quite another to be able to recognize potential. Motivation holds the key to successful labor management and a manager must create the proper attitude in his men or be content with just so many warm bodies to be put through the routine motions. We have all heard the story of the three brick masons. The first, when asked what he was doing, replied, "I am laying brick". The second said he was building a wall. The third said he was helping to build a great cathedral.

The third man obviously had pride in his job and he was happy to be a part of the overall project. He acknowledged that he was part of a team working toward a very meaningful end.

PART-TIME LABOR. On the subject of part-time labor, with the exception of students and retired people who fill a special need in a special way, probably

CONTINUED ON PAGE 7

there is no such thing as a good temporary employee. The main incentive for the temporary employee is a pay check and he will tend to leave when he can make more money elsewhere. When there is a quick dollar to be made on a local landscaping job or some other similar project, the temporary help often calls in sick or just fails to show up.

When they do return, their stories of quick money and their "couldn't care less" attitude demoralizes the permanent crew.

If further proof of the inadequacy of part-time help is required, you have but to ask yourself how much incentive a man can have when he knows his ultimate reward will be to be laid off at the end of the season.

Last, but not of least importance, we come to the pay check. For the marginal worker there is little incentive to work on a golf course when he can make almost as much tax-free money from unemployment as he can for working eight hours a day.

ADEQUATE WAGES. Unemployment compensation is a fine thing if used honestly by those who need it. However, many clubs presently abuse the system by actually planning unemployment as a part of an employee's total salary. Under this system, a laborer works a few months each summer then draws unemployment during the winter. By allowing this, a club simply perpetuates one of the deep-seated roots of their own labor problem—the ability of potential laborers to get something for nothing.

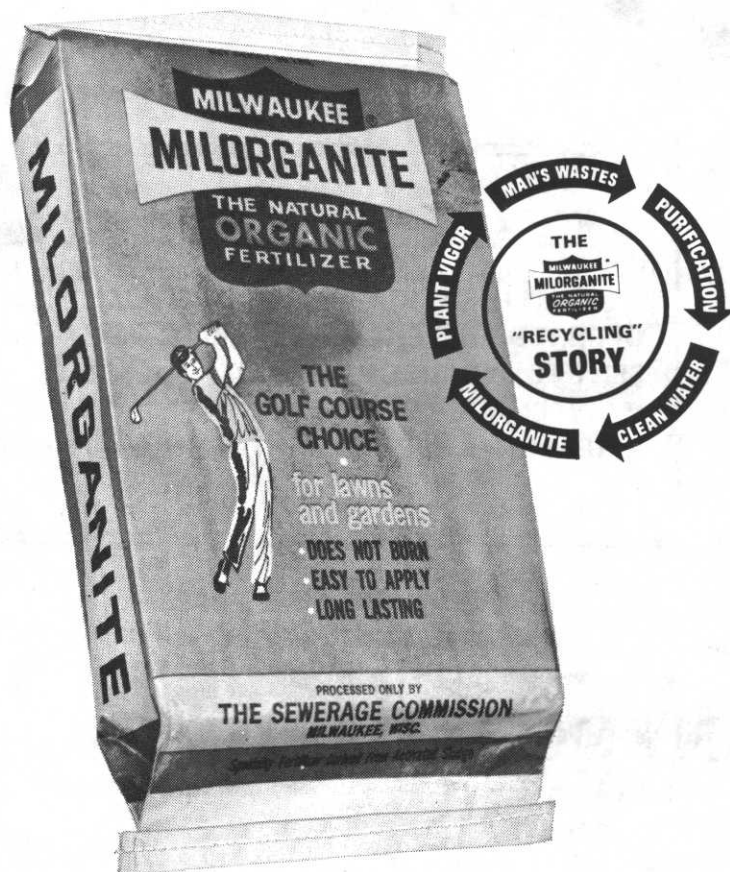
Many clubs now pride themselves on getting by with paying a legal minimum wage. In effect, they are waiting until someone tells them how much they have to pay rather than setting their own wage scale according to what the job is really worth.

Someday soon these clubs will learn that too high, rather than too low a price will be dictated and that it is too late to do anything about it.

We must realize now that if clubs are to have a good labor force, they must hire competent, full-time employees and pay them a wage comparable to the industries in the area. This makes the difference here and now between the clubs that have labor problems and those that do not.

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