

When Comparisons Are Odious

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I HAVE read with interest many and varied articles on up-to-date greenkeeping from the theorist, the golf expert who writes to some of the daily papers, the doctor and tailor, lawyer, banker, etc., and anybody else who is fortunate, or unfortunate enough to be made the chairman of a Green committee. What fine greenkeepers some of these men would make. I can't understand why some of the first class golf clubs in America don't engage these men. I am sure they would be in pocket, suppose they only paid them a salary of \$25,000 per year.

How can you expect the ordinary greenkeeper to know, who has only had a practical experience, when to mow his greens, to top-dress and fertilize, to rake the traps and cut the rough, to clean, oil and have the tools put away in a methodical manner in the tool shed.

It is really a wonder the poor fellow knows when to commence work without being called. These do's and don'ts we read so much about are more harmful than helpful. To be candid they are generally just one person's opinion, theories that if carried out by the greenkeeper and they fail, why, he is to blame anyhow.

How many times do we read or hear it repeated that the greens ought to be cut every day, tees every other day, top-dressed and fertilized once a month, etc., etc. They do this at So and So's club and they get wonderful results. Greenkeepers who are members of the National Association of Greenkeepers, The Mid-West Association, etc., are visiting and inspecting So and So's club and seeing for themselves what perfect putting greens, lovely tees, beautiful fairways, and in general what well manicured golf courses are like away from home.

The comments and discussions from these visits to various golf clubs are certainly interesting and educational from more than one point. The greenkeeper finds that these clubs with their big salaried experts and wide-world reputations (and also big budgets) have got the same old complaints and diseases and complex problems afflicting them as the greenkeeper has at home. Brown-patch, drying out, burnt up grass, grubs, worms, weeds, etc., etc. He also finds that the wealthy club is spending as much in one year on its grounds as he has to spend in two.

When comparisons are made of golf courses they should be made by a committee of experts who take into consideration the money that was expended in the construction, the drainage, the general locality, the ex-

penditure per year for equipment, etc., and also whether it is per U. S. G. A. standard or whether it is to suit its own committee and members.

I remember some few years back one of these experts visiting a golf club and when asked his opinion of the course, he gave it freely—the makings of a very fine course properly worked and supervised, greens were in poor condition, which was unknown to the Green committee until they got his report, fairways were bad, traps were faulty, which was all due mostly to having a poor greenkeeper. The Green committee was much discouraged by his report and came to the conclusion they had a golf course in poor condition, and likewise a bum greenkeeper.

The outspokenness of this expert's opinion was a censure to the greenkeeper. The Green committee, however, decided to visit the course the expert had charge of, taking the greenkeeper with them to broaden his knowledge and pick up a few pointers. What a disappointment awaited this committee. Instead of finding a golf course which ought to have been in tip-top condition they found it in worse condition than their own. They found that five greens were out of commission and the members were playing on temporaries. They also found that the very things the expert had drawn their attention to on their own course was neglected and in much worse shape on his own. His expenditure per month for labor was between four and five hundred dollars in excess over the club which he had been knocking. As things turned out it proved to be a big boost for the greenkeeper and his committee came to the conclusion that a practical man was of more use to them than an expert theorist.

Why can't we all be candid and fair in our opinions? Don't always knock the other fellow. Find out under what conditions he is laboring, what difficulties he has to overcome, and rather give him a helping hand. I am sure there is room for all the experts and greenkeepers too in the good old United States of America, so let us one and all pull together. By doing so we can be of much value to one another and also to the clubs we represent.



Fred W. Sherwood