

# A Western Experimental Station

By CHARLES EVANS, Jr.

**A** GOLF course can be no greater than its greens, and every greenkeeper is well aware of the fact. Experiments with grasses, soils and climates have been conducted for a long time with considerable success, but there is much more to be done and learned.

The United States Golf association conducts a station near Washington, D. C., and the knowledge and discoveries of its green section are at the service of the membership clubs of the association, and in the comparatively short time that it has been engaged in this technical work it has been of great service to the clubs of the country. But climate has a great deal to do with the growth of the numerous species of grasses, and the sort of grass that flourishes best near the city of Washington might not be the very best kind for Chicago and other parts of the Middle West, therefore, an experimental station a little nearer home might be of considerable value.

**S**OMETIMES I have thought that there could be found a sort of grass that would grow in any soil or climate. At least I might have believed that had I never seen Butte, Mont.; having seen it, I find myself occasionally afflicted with a strange unbelief, but perhaps I should never expect anything except lichens to grow on rock. I am encouraged in my attempt at optimism by the knowledge that in many states of the South, where grass on tees and putting greens was practically unknown, Bermuda grass now has justified its name and turned the dark, sandy places on golf courses into bits of pleasantly green landscape. With the advent of Bermuda grass in the South there came champions, so who knows what a really fine new grass might do for our section.

The bent grasses and the planting of their stolons for quick greens have taken a very certain place on all courses, but there is still a very decided uncertainty about our greens, and I know of no place where thousands of dollars can be dropped more easily, and no place where one cares less to experiment. Yet, how often are we called upon to run these risks.

I recall a time when, for a number of years, the old



Chick Evans

Homewood club had the finest greens around Chicago. Then they began to change, and with all the expense and expert care given them they continued to deteriorate. There seemed to be no knowledge expert enough to meet the situation, and finally, as I remember, the greens were dug up and completely rebuilt. A rather tragic situation for any club to have to meet. Having to destroy and begin over again puts a whole course out of play for a long time.

**T**HE Chicago Golf club, after years of unprecedented success, suffered greatly with its greens. Now I understand they are in beautiful condition, but the course has been almost entirely made over. The Edgewater Golf club has also suffered with its greens, but now has very good ones but the great question about these successful greens is: How firm is the foundation on which they are builded?

Will they keep indefinitely in good condition, or will they have to be rebuilt after a few years, at a great cost of money and inconvenience to the members? Or have their greenkeepers attained the certain knowledge of upkeep that means good greens lasting from year to year? Happy the time when we know the care and treatment necessary to insure us the green and velvety beauty that we love to associate with our courses.

**T**HEREFORE the commissioners of the forest preserves of Cook county are willing to give free of charge to a responsible association the ground and a house for an experimental station in the raising of grasses. The clubs of the district will pay a fee for upkeep and experiments in soils and grasses. Such a station should be invaluable to the golf courses, and even to the farmers, of the Middle West

The probable location for this interesting experiment that promises to be so useful is at Dam Number Two, just west of Wilmette, Ill. It may mean everything that is good to our part of the country and that is why I have saved the announcement for the very end of the article.

*Editor's note—This article is reprinted by permission from the April number of the 10,000 Lakes Golfer.*