

Greenkeeping—Today and Tomorrow

The Practical Facts as They Appear to Exist

By PROFESSOR L. S. DICKINSON—*Massachusetts Agricultural College*

This is the first of a series of articles forecasting for the first time the future of the greenkeeping profession in America. A synopsis of the entire series is announced elsewhere in this issue.—Editor.

MANUFACTURERS of golf course equipment, the makers of fertilizers, the growers of grass seed, and even scientists to some extent, have been very zealous in their efforts to provide better golfing conditions.

Such zeal is commendable if it doesn't surpass its immediate usefulness. These zealous efforts are the inevitable result of business competition, particularly when the buying public is playing with a rather new commodity. Though golf is said to be an "ancient" game, it is comparatively new in the United States.

A very striking example of over-zealousness by business toward the promotion of better golfing conditions is the fact that we have very highly concentrated fertilizers placed upon the market without adequate means of being spread until very recently.

Major equipment, fertilizers, and particularly minor equipment have been forced, because of business competition, to show (apparent) improvement each year without due regards to the long time effect upon turf maintenance. Scientists, also, have failed in some instances to be of full value, because of their narrowing of efforts and lack of practical appreciation.

Before the zealous competition for business existence has caused golf course supply concerns to drive greenkeepers and Green chairmen to further

insanity, it is fitting that in this year of 1931, those connected with the management of golf courses should stop and consider the facts.

The depressed business conditions necessitating strict economy, with great increase in the number of golf players, together with their demands for better playing conditions, make 1931 a very critical year for greenkeepers. Because it is a critical year it

is necessary that fundamental facts be understood, appreciated, and given full value. While it is desirable that the greenkeeper should consider these facts, it is *necessary* that the *Green chairmen* should appreciate them.

There can be but few arguments against the statement that the *golf course* is most essential to a golf club, yet it sometimes seems as if the board of directors, Green chairmen, or even the greenkeeper fail to realize such a fact. No golf club-house would ever be built or maintained without a golf

course, and we find many hotels building golf courses to attract visitors.

Each golf course is unlike other courses as regards terrain, soil conditions, rainfall, temperature variations, and previous use. Deficiency in any one factor is bound to have its effect upon the course maintenance program and budget. The physical condition of the course must be maintained at a high standard in order to keep the club's playing mem-



PROF. L. S. DICKINSON

GREENKEEPING - Today and Tomorrow

Synopsis of a series of articles on Greenkeeping and the Care of Turf written exclusively for The National Greenkeeper

By PROFESSOR LAWRENCE S. DICKINSON

*Assistant Professor of Horticulture, Massachusetts Agricultural College
Professor in charge of Greenkeepers' School, Massachusetts Agricultural College
Honorary Members of the National Association of Greenkeepers of America*

CHAPTER 1 (March Issue)

Prologue to series. There are many other factors than fertilizers, mowers, and watering that materially effect the results and costs of turf maintenance.

Subject of article: A statement of the practical facts as they appear to exist. These affect the results and costs.

CHAPTER 2 (April Issue)

The Green chairman and greenkeeper in their present status must be understood as the human factor greatly affects the results of any practical operation.

Subject: Green chairman and greenkeeper.

CHAPTER 3 (May Issue)

Golf course maintenance is analogous to operating a factory. Both have an expensive factory, and both have a definite product and should pay dividends.

Subject: Similarity between golf course maintenance and factory operation.

CHAPTER 4 (June Issue)

Green chairmen and greenkeepers must realize the great changes in maintenance methods have increased the value of a competent greenkeeper. The increase in the demands of the players for better turf must also be considered as adding responsibilities to the greenkeeper's task.

Subject: The growth and probable future development of the golf course factory.

CHAPTER 5 (July Issue)

Labor saving machinery and added equipment have a very great affect upon the results and costs of golf course maintenance. The chairman and greenkeeper should carefully evaluate the probable results before purchasing any equipment.

Subject: The influence of labor-saving machinery on golf course maintenance.

CHAPTER 6 (August Issue)

Salesmen of golf course supplies, professional golfers, low handicap members, and incompetent experts are often responsible for poorer results and higher costs. Chairmen and greenkeepers should be qualified to cope with these influences.

Subject: The influence of salesmen, professional golfers, and low handicap members upon the results and cost.

CHAPTER 7 (September Issue)

Very little consideration has been given to the effect of course alterations upon the maintenance cost and new construction frequently adds 10% to the maintenance cost. These factors should be distinctly understood by the chairmen.

Subject: The problem of factory alterations.

CHAPTER 8 (October Issue)

Much misunderstanding and injustice has resulted from inaccurate cost keeping, and particularly from incompetent study of costs. The unwarranted juggling of club funds at the expense of the greenkeeper's budget is a "white lie" that many clubs will answer for at the judgment day.

Subject: Understanding and interpretation of costs.

CHAPTER 9 (November Issue)

Efficiency studies by C. P. A.'s and others, made without the appreciation of golf or practical application, are the cause of many changes in the results and costs.

Subject: Efficiency studies.

CHAPTER 10 (December Issue)

The year's progress tabulated and a few forecasts for 1932 as a result of the tabulations. There will also be a summary of the articles.

Subject: Greenkeeping 1931 and probably in 1932.

bership high, and to attract visiting players, so that the combined club dues and green fees will furnish sufficient funds to properly maintain the course—a sort of a dog chasing his tail affair.

GREEN GRASS IS MOST ESSENTIAL

THE most essential part of a golf course is the grass—*green* grass. The chairman and greenkeeper must never lose sight of the fact that grass is a *living* thing. Unlike machinery it *grows* instead of *revolves*; it is animated and needs food and rest. This grass is usually being forced to live under very abnormal conditions. It is frequently clipped, over-stimulated, and abused in many other ways.

The fact that grass lives and dies, very greatly affects the cost and result of turf maintenance, and should arouse the human instincts of the Green chairman and greenkeeper when they are considering the purchase of any new cutting equipment or a change in the turf's diet.

Turf culture is being materially aided by scientific research and as such research progresses more assistance will be obtained from the scientists. The knowledge thus gained from scientific research is bound to effect the costs and results of turf maintenance and theoretically, science should have the greatest effect of all factors.

Practically there are two other factors which have effects equal to that of science upon the costs and results of turf maintenance. These factors are: first, the Green chairman, and second, the greenkeeper. These men have full control over the application of the scientific findings. Failure by either man to properly interpret and use scientific prin-

ciples is sure to lessen the effectiveness of science and can often cause serious damage to the turf.

A greenkeeping friend of mine applied ammonium sulphate at the rate of 15 pounds per 1000 square feet because he thought that if five pounds (the amount recommended) was good, fifteen would be excellent. Was science responsible for the resultant burn, or friend greenkeeper?

CLUBS MUST STUDY FACTS

THUS it appears to the writer that in this year of budget-cutting and cost-saving ideas in the business of golf turf maintenance, we had better understand the practical facts as they exist. Without knowledge of the existing facts that are fundamental in governing the costs and results of turf maintenance it will be unwise for any golf club to try to keep the pace being set by machinery and fertilizers.

The facts are: 1. Business competition has caused chairmen and greenkeepers to focus their attention on commercial products beyond the point of practical application.

2. A reasonably good golf course is necessary to a golf club and its terrain, soil, and physical features are endowments either good or bad.

3. Grass is the most essential part of a golf course and grass is animated.

4. Science is effective only to the use made of it.

5. The Green chairman and greenkeeper having control over the application of science are equally important with science.

To be continued in April



Meet Jno. Anderson - - New N. A. G. A. Director

I came to the United States ten years ago, after being connected with golf clubs, both in Scotland and England for twenty years. I took over Ludlow Country Club, Springfield, Massachusetts, which was under construction, staying there four years as greenkeeper.

From the Massachusetts club I went to Hazelton Country Club, Hazelton, Pennsylvania, then to Crestmont Golf Club, West Orange, New Jersey. I have been in charge here now for five years.

This course was new and unknown then, but in five years, it has advanced so far that it is to be the scene of three Major Tournaments this year—the Metropolitan Open Championship in July, the New Jersey State Open and the Women's Open in August.

I often compare the greenkeeper's job in the United States with his fellowman in Scotland, for instance, and find that the American greenkeeper has the more strenuous job. With weather conditions so variable, and changes so rapid, his nerves and skill are taxed to a greater extent than his European confederate.

JOHN ANDERSON.