



GREENKEEPING— TODAY *and* TOMORROW

By PROFESSOR LAWRENCE S. DICKINSON

Assistant Professor of Horticulture, Massachusetts Agricultural College;
Professor in charge of Greenkeepers' School, Massachusetts Agricultural
College; Honorary Member of the National Association of Greenkeepers
of America.

CHAPTER III.—SIMILARITY BETWEEN GOLF COURSE MAINTENANCE AND FACTORY OPERATION

“**H**ow are the greens today?”

That question is asked many times during the golfing season. “How is the course today?” is another familiar question. “Why can't we have as good a course at Blank,” is a question that always invites criticism of the home course, and too frequently, criticism of the Green committee chairman and greenkeeper.

Those questions are analogous to “How's the market today,” “Has American Can gone up,” and “Why doesn't Down and Out company pay dividends.” All the questions noted are either directly or indirectly influenced by the eagerness to receive dividends and to cut coupons. There is a business and competitive influence present.

The same member who destructively criticizes the greens will offer apologies and excuses for the failure of some stock to rise, or manufactured product to just miss being the best. He has by knowledge about business and appreciates its difficulties; even becomes sympathetic, and aggressive against criticism. His knowledge forbids destructive criticism, and very likely if he could be shown that there is a similarity between manufacturing and golf course management, he would become a booster of the club and a constructive critic.

GIVE GOLF BUSINESS CONSIDERATION

THE increasing large number of pay-as-you-play, and semi-public golf courses makes it very important that golf should be given a business consideration. The general business depression has curbed the carefree attitude of the playing members, causing them to consider the value received from their

investment in membership dues and time while playing.

To many clubs, and particularly to greenkeepers and Green committee chairmen, the present hard times will in three years from now be considered as a blessing in disguise. By that time they will be obtaining full benefit from the sound business methods of management that are being forced upon some clubs because of their financial condition or are being adopted by others because of the influence of school and magazine propaganda and progressive greenkeepers.

A golf course and a factory can be compared, for both are producers, and both have consumers who become satisfied or dissatisfied customers. Both have operating costs, cash receipts, sometimes cash dividends, and inventory value, a number of stockholders, and a board of directors. Furthermore on each golf course, as with each factory there is a trade name and a “special brand” of product. Also each has its type of customer, all greatly affecting the cost and standard of maintenance.

GOLF COURSE IS THE FACTORY

THE factory is the golf course. The terrain with its physical advantages and disadvantages; the landscape attractiveness; the drains; water system; turf nursery; soil; and tool shed.

Improvement, neglect, or loss of any one part of the golf factory is comparable to additions, alterations, neglect or fire in factory management. The costs and results are greatly affected by any change. Manufacturers spend thousands of dollars to alter or build additions to their plants, either



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to produce more of the same quality at a less cost, or to produce better quality at the same or less cost. The factory plant cannot be "run down" or poorly managed without a falling off of customers.

Golfers withdraw their stock (membership) in one course and invest it in another whose factory (golf course) is better. One hundred dollars invested in a correctly located and built drain, could easily pay 25-40% on the investment in lowered cost of maintenance and golf balls retrieved, plus player satisfaction.

MACHINERY OF THE GOLF FACTORY

THE general architectural design of the course and the physical condition of the tees, rough, fairway, and greens can be termed the machinery of the golf course. Like all machinery they should be sufficiently large to carry the load, well oiled (clipped) and kept in good repair (fertilized). No Green committee chairman will permit neglect of the machinery of his factory because such neglect would affect the costs and results of his product and therefore the dividends. The same Green committee chairman, forgetting for the time being his business ability, might cause neglect of certain

of the golf course machines, and make alterations on others that will greatly increase the costs, if the results are to be kept up to a standard.

A factory usually has a superintendent, several foremen, and a number of laborers for its operating force. Because there are a number of men at work in a factory, the factory building is large and the machinery looked upon with admiration and awe, no one thinks it strange that the superintendent receives a large salary or does little physical work because he is a trained man and must spend his time directing the various operations to see that no errors are made.

The golf factory is operated by a greenkeeper and a few men. The greenkeeper possibly has some time to do physical work, but it is his particular job to see that the cultural treatment of the course is correctly done. He must be just as much of a trained man in his line as the factory superintendent, for his product is not one that can be repaired quickly or if an error is found, be rejected.

GREENKEEPER MUST OUTGUESS WEATHER

ERRORS in golf turf management are slow in appearing. The greenkeeper must be able to "out-

guess" the weather, and no one should forget that he is trying to produce a product that depends entirely upon *living grass* for its greatest selling factor. The greenkeeper, unlike the factory superintendent, must have training in many phases of his work, because he has to personally supervise the workmen. His office work is equally important with that of a factory superintendent.

Both factory and golf course have tools to help them with their production. The greenkeepers' tools are the mowers, tractors, fertilizers, sprinklers, compost pile and other similar items. The greenkeeper must see that these tools are efficiently used, and well cared for.

The product of a factory is something that is tangible, something on which a monetary value can be placed. Under ordinary conditions the product is sold at a profit which is shared among the stockholders as dividends. Each year the physical condition of the factory is recorded in a record book and a monetary value charged against it.

The golf course factory also produces. Its products are not tangible, no money value can be placed upon them, (except on side bets) for the

products are health, pleasure, happiness, a certain form of religion, and low scores. If the product is satisfactory today, the factory (course) is in excellent condition, but if indigestion causes the product to be distasteful why that same factory (course) is in "terrible condition."

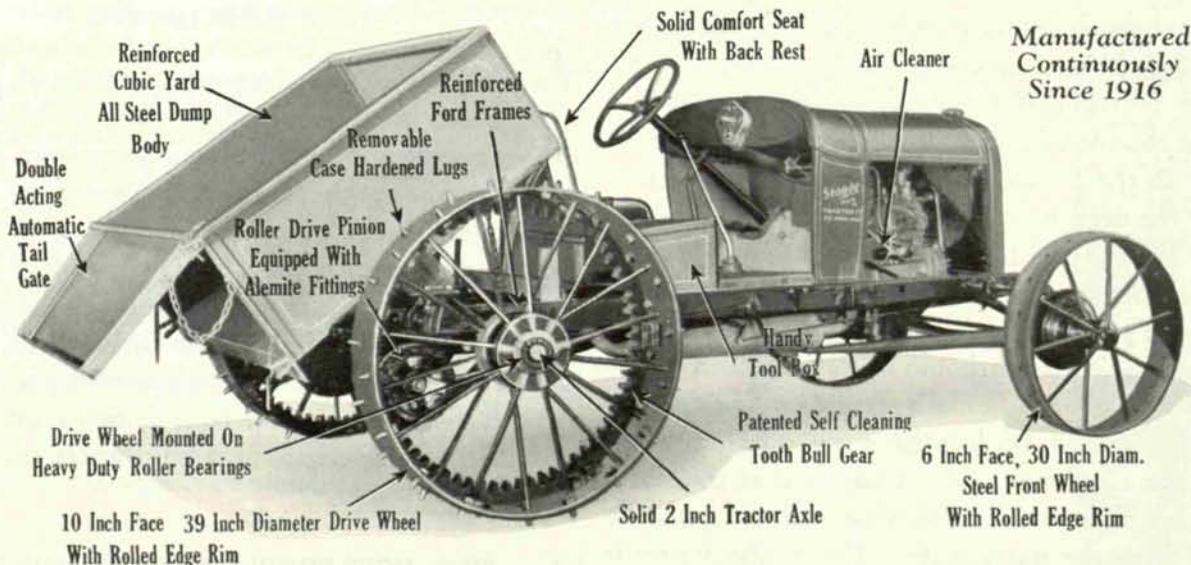
"Unfortunately golf clubs do not take an inventory of their factory (physical condition of the course) and record it in a book, so there is no way of telling what the stockholders (playing members) can divide as stock dividends (better playing conditions). They should do so.

The amount of money invested in a golf course is comparable to that invested in a large business and because the golf course (unless it is a pay-as-you-play or municipal course) pays no money dividends it should not be permitted to operate as a "hit and miss," "everybody's" and "nobody's" business affair. There is as much business in golf course maintenance as in manufacturing a pair of shoes.

Next Month—Chapter IV.—The growth and probable future development of the golf course factory.

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