The theme of our meeting today concerns the cost of golf course maintenance. Before we get into the subject of long range planning, I believe it would be apropos to preface my report by placing the cost of golf course maintenance in the proper perspective by illustrating comparative costs of club operations and the trend of increased costs.

We frequently hear the golf club member speak of the high cost of golf. Wondering just what this cost was, I proceeded to analyze our club’s 1957 annual financial statement to find out. Some interesting facts were developed and while the figures will vary from one club to another, I’m sure the percentages run quite true to form. For instance, our 315 regular members and some 60 associates spent a total of $650,000 at the club during the year, including all expenses and charges. The total direct charges to grounds maintenance was $60,000 or 9%. The total expense for salaries and labor for entire club amounted to $317,000 or 49%. (See Table I and Table II)

### Table I

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Amount (1957)</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gross Income</td>
<td>$450,000</td>
<td>70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special Assessment</td>
<td>43,000</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caddy Fees</td>
<td>50,500</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Golf Merchandise, Lessons, etc</td>
<td>50,000</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dining Room Service Charge</td>
<td>19,000</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bar Service Charge</td>
<td>8,000</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transfer Fees</td>
<td>16,800</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Xmas Contributions</td>
<td>3,000</td>
<td>0.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gratuities (extra on checks)</td>
<td>2,000</td>
<td>0.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>$650,300</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Direct Grounds Expense</strong></td>
<td><strong>$60,000</strong> (9.2%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table II

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Amount (1957)</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Clubhouse and Pool:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Restaurant (plus serv. chg.)</td>
<td>$79,000 (24.9%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administration</td>
<td>36,000 (11.3%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bar</td>
<td>25,000 (8.2%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lockers</td>
<td>12,500 (3.9%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housekeeping</td>
<td>12,500 (3.9%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pool, Snack Bar, Bonus, Bldg.</td>
<td>22,500 (7.1%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>$138,400</strong> (59.3%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Golf and Caddy</td>
<td>36,500 (27.3%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grounds</td>
<td>42,500 (14.4%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>$317,400</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The trend toward increased costs may be readily explained by the higher cost paid for labor in recent years. At the same time, we should note that less labor is being used than was the case a few years ago. Efficiency and mechanization have to some extent offset the trend toward higher costs.

Golf course superintendents are charged with the responsibility for creating and maintaining a standard of conditions which will be satisfactory to the membership. In his attempt to accomplish this mission, the superintendent encounters a number of factors which are variable and some over which he may have little or no control. The degree of success attained will depend to a large extent upon the superintendent’s ability to control and/or counteract these factors. Let us enumerate some of these items: Budget, weather, geographic location, soil type, grounds committees, technical research, architectural design, player traffic, membership tolerance, membership desires, and organization. Our meeting today deals with several of these factors so that the Green Chairman and superintendents may better understand them and affect better golfing conditions. Specifically, today’s program covers talks on architectural design, budgeting, technical research, committee functions, and organization.

Now long range planning is an essential part of the factor designated as organization and also the topic that we are primarily interested in at the moment. Just what is long range planning and how should one go about it? Long range planning requires the defining of objectives and desires and the development of recommendations for their accomplishment. This demands specific “Blueprints for action” to carry out the recommendations and careful and accurate budgeting to accomplish the desired results. It goes without saying that complete records must be maintained with regard to progress toward objectives as well as the cost factors involved.

Budgeting for any long range plan requires a forecast with respect to the probable overall cost in order that the superintendent and the committee can present to their board the potential magnitude of the financing problem. Obviously, financial requirements in many cases will dictate the rate of progress which can be sought. Adequate records will enable such forecasts to be kept up to date in the light of experience and, of course, this means that it will be necessary constantly to re-evaluate the long range plan so that it can be amended as needed.

At our club, we have set up a long range plan for separate areas of the course such as Greens, tees, fairways, traps, and landscape. Each area has a defined objective, a specific recommendation and an up-to-date account of the progress, year by year. The first action of the grounds committee each year is to approve or amend our long range program. In this way we have established continuity and developed a better understanding of the situation by the membership as well as for the superintendent.

Editor’s Note: Mr. Williams discussed various factors which affect the standard of maintenance and he explained details of the Long Range Plan in effect at the Beverly Country Club.

Labor Management and Daily Planning

TAYLOR BOYD
Golf Course Superintendent, Camargo Club, Madeira, Ohio

Labor management and daily planning are a must with the present day high cost of operating a country club.

Let’s define labor management. It is a kindness flavored with consideration, financial help in case of need, and a fair share of the reasons for doing certain work. It is explaining to a man why he cuts greens and rakes sand traps while another man cuts fairways and roughs. It is very carefully explaining what will happen to grass when burned by fertilizer or chemicals before it happens. It is seeking his opinion of the weather forecast, how long to water a green, whether the brakes need adjusting on a truck—just anything so that he knows you respect his opinion and know he exists as a part of your working force.

The above things can be true only if the club, the chairman, and particularly the superintendent, are dedicated to the
proposition that the price of high grade supervision is insignificant in comparison with the cost of its absence. A good supervisor or leader of men should be of high moral character. He should never do anything he would not tolerate from his men.

The average golf maintenance laborer has an I.Q. of about 85 and has the mental training of an eighth grader. Taking for granted that the crew are children mentally they will respond to kindness, firmness, and good leadership for the most part. If you have an employee who is surly under good treatment, you'd better discharge him because he will be a troublemaker. There is another type or two that should be discharged when found in a crew. The accident prone person and the man who breaks or wrecks any tool or piece of machinery he uses are types that can be costly and dangerous.

We don't tolerate absenteeism because it is a morale breaker. Actually for four or five years the only men that didn't show for work were sick and called early at my home to tell me they were sick. I have had many men over the years who would not come to work regularly. When this happened the second or third time the man was replaced. You are better off without that type for your own good plus the effect on the other men. I try to get men 40 to 60 years old. The present average is 55 years.

It is my opinion that older men are better, men with farm background are better, married men are better, men who aren't in debt are better, because men who can't handle their own money are not going to handle club problems very well either.

Greensmen's Get-Together

We have at our club about once or twice a week what we jokingly call a Board of Directors' meeting with the entire crew and myself present. Many things come up for discussion. Ways and times to do certain work or any work for that matter. I pick the times for these meetings, and I pick a day when the weather is good. I have learned that men who work outside the year round are very sensitive to weather conditions, and as a result are more responsive and accept new ideas more readily when in a good frame of mind. Crazy, maybe, but try it.

Weather affects men more than it does grass—they are more sensitive—but they won't admit it.

I have learned many short cuts for doing things at these meetings. In fact, I've learned some very valuable things from men I thought had nothing to offer. Get the non-talkers to talk at these meetings—you may be surprised at what might happen.

Camargo presents a rather complicated maintenance problem with a golf course on 350 acres of hilly, wooded land, with private roads through it, a badminton building, clay, grass, and all weather tennis courts, pool, skeet and trap shooting, ice skating, horses—30-40 head, with the accompanying trails and hoof marks on the course.

This type of operation requires several men to do the work at an economical time before play starts so as not to interfere with play, but more important, so that players won't stop the men and waste man-hours. Each foursome passing each man takes six minutes time, so for ten men on the course during play, simple arithmetic shows that work during play is too expensive.

The answer to this is that we have too many men and too much equipment for 18 holes, but after everything is ready at the club, we then work on members' estates. We do everything that a member needs done. Our profit on the fertilizer sold to members alone pays for all the fertilizer we use at the club. Not all men go to members' estates. The men who cut greens stay on the course (during golf playing season) to do work that can be economically done during play.

There are many advantages to this program: 1, we have the best golf crew in Cincinnati; 2, we have the best mechanical department around; 3, all work is done before the members start to play; 4, all supplies are purchased at quite a saving because of quantity buying; 5, we keep a continuously trained crew, year after year; 6, we stock more equipment than we need so we don't suffer from a breakdown; 7, it is cheaper in the long run, because of trained personnel and proper and good equipment to do a particular job; 8, we can give a better price to the member on supplies because it isn't necessary that our "mark-up" be as high as that of the commercial retailer.
As an example, I would like to cite one member who got a competitive bid last spring on maintenance of his estate. The commercial man wanted $45.00 for the work we do for $17.50, and yet we make money on that operation.

Because of some of the above mentioned things, we were able to reduce our overall grounds department expense about $5,000 for 1957.

Location of Equipment

There are other ways whereby savings can be affected. As we said, our course is spread out. The maintenance building is on one edge of the course so that the farthest parts are nearly a mile from headquarters. We learned that the men who cut greens spent too much time transporting equipment. This was corrected by erecting small buildings just large enough to hold the necessary equipment for that particular section. The greensman, who stays on the course, also stays in his section or group of holes all day. This method makes a man responsible for specific work that is repetitious and therefore is done better and more easily.

There is one item I'm sure will save labor, that is the proper location of trees and shrubs on a course where high speed mowing is necessary. We have a tree—worse yet, a maple tree—between the practice green and the first tee. They are only eighteen feet apart, but the maple is there just the same. It cost Camargo Club over $100 last year for labor in root-pruning, extra watering, fertilizing, picking up seeds off the green, sodding part of the tee, and then raking leaves (sometimes twice a day) for two or three weeks. We have another area that once required seven minutes to mow with a tractor and mowers. Shrubs were improperly planted and now it takes a man two hours per mowing. Every club in the country has many instances like this and yet the superintendent is supposed to conserve labor. I like trees as well as anyone but in their proper place.

Care of Staff

Now to get back to strictly labor management. Men do get hurt on a golf course and it is most important to give them quick and adequate care—even to the extent of calling a doctor sometimes when it might not be necessary. Your efforts will give the man confidence in your concern for his well being. If the man is seriously hurt it will help to have his family notified quickly. Our club pays the man his wages if hurt in the process of performing his regular duties.

Another thing that pays off is the Christmas bonus with a Christmas party. Vacations also help build morale, and in my opinion, if some means may be found profitably to keep good men the year round, the overall cost is less per unit of work done on the course.

Money is important to everyone, but it is my firm belief that to a laborer it is not the most important. Two years ago a man quit Camargo after 18 years service and went to another club at 30c more an hour. He had my blessing. He came back in six months and has been very happy since. He learned that kindness, a nice Christmas party and bonus, and year round work, outlined in advance, were more important than more money.

The most important part of any labor management program is for the club directors to establish a policy and then support the green committee chairman. The chairman should support the superintendent who, in turn, should use every known method to get all possible work out of each man without abusing him.

Budgeting and Accounting

CHARLES N. ECKSTEIN
Chairman, Mid-Western District, USGA Green Section Committee; member Ravialoe Country Club, Homewood, Ill.

You have already heard a fine presentation on future planning and we must assume that clubs with strict budgets and accounting controls have already made their future plans.

Each club must place confidence in its green superintendent and allow him the full rein he needs to facilitate any program of turf maintenance. The superintendent should act as liaison between this department, his chairman, the officers, directors and members of the club. Close cooperation is of the utmost importance and the principals involved should have the utmost confidence in each other. No reservations.
Budgets mean reducing to terms of expenditure the questions (1) what do we want? (2) how do we get what we want? and (3) what does it cost? This in my opinion is common sense budgeting. On the other hand, we can have a budget determined by a figure of money which is to be spent by a club in its fiscal year for maintenance of its course and grounds. This second method is simple because standards of maintenance are made to fit the amount to be spent. In this category let's assume we are talking about the golf course only. We have so much to spend so we immediately look to the physical equipment to determine what we need to keep it running efficiently and what we must buy to do the job. We know what is involved in fungicides, fertilizers, gasoline, oil, paint, supplies such as flags, washers, etc. We know what is involved in watering so the real unknown in a budget of this type is how much are we to spend on labor. This usually is about 70% of our total budget but may not be in this case. Next the superintendent's salary and the balance for ordinary labor. In my opinion this is the consideration that establishes the standard of maintenance by using this budgeting method.

This is for the birds—because we are forcing the quality of maintenance to fit a predetermined amount of expenditure. With the amount left for labor we probably cannot afford to cut greens, mow fairways, rough, tees, etc., as often as needed, and we must then make a compromise between standards and money available. We may also find it necessary to cut out necessary fungicides and fertilizer. Such shortcomings may not show up the first year but courses maintained according to this type of thinking will end up eventually in poor condition.

I believe that the proper method of budgeting is for the superintendent to sit down with his committee and to determine the standards of maintenance that the members desire and should have. Example:

A course should be at its peak of maintenance six days a week instead of two. If greens aren't cut every day they will be different. The same holds true for mowing fairways and tees and raking traps. All in all, when we start with the standard of what we want at the beginning we have a completely different budget picture ahead of us. We are now at the point where we determine how much this costs and then we have arrived at our budget figure.

Everything must be planned in advance and the cost determined because any deviation is going to reduce the standard we previously established. So much for budgeting, and I really just skimmed the surface.

Breakdown of Costs

I don't believe we are going to be able to do much about combating costs with accounting practice. I do believe, however, that superintendents should keep records of labor and a breakdown of various jobs in their records, even though club management will not permit these many labor accounts in the clubhouse ledger.

There are many forms available among individual clubs for the men working on the course to record the number of hours they spend doing various jobs on any particular day. The superintendent should be very much interested in preserving these records because of their value to him and to the green committee. Because of variations in accounting procedure the value of such accounts is very small for purposes of comparing costs with other clubs. It would be my idea that if these figures are to have any value between one club and another, then universal accounts would be in order and I do not think this would create any problem in the club office general ledger.

A questionnaire sent out by the Chicago District Golf Association provided some interesting figures. There was a considerable variation in expenditures for any particular item of expense. A club with an abnormal expenditure for repairs may have rehabilitated a well. The danger in figures of this sort is that somebody somewhere, in order to make a point, can pick out individual excesses and minimums and use them as arguments to foster or defeat a program. Uniform accounting systems by areas would eliminate such abnormalities and this phase of accounting has great possibilities, but takes tremendous cooperation.

Other problems involved in comparing expenses by clubs is that unless the previous history of expenditures is well known it is impossible for any definite conclu-
I believe that the club wants to know and accounting practice may help prove:

1. That the superintendent is a conscientious, efficient, up-to-date employee who is at all times keeping up with his fellow green superintendents as to knowledge and practices.

2. That the money is being spent at its ultimate value.

The club relies on the superintendent to keep up with the latest, most efficient, modern methods and a smart superintendent will edify his chairman, committee and members as to what is going on in the turf field.

Word of high quality course maintenance spreads through a district and immediately sets standards for other clubs. Members of clubs want to know why their course is not as good as others. Alibis and illogical reasons will not fill the bill today. If the club is not spending sufficient funds the members should know indirectly through the green superintendent that if sufficient funds were spent maintenance would improve.

In conclusion, I think that a club must follow the following pattern:

1. Establish a long range program of the things that they deem desirable for a better course.
2. Establish standards of maintenance for the current year.
3. Determine how much it would cost to maintain the established standard.
4. Break up the proposed future plan into stages that could be accomplished each year with the money available.
5. The superintendent and committee establish bookkeeping procedures which would give them the information they desire as to how the money was spent and how the labor was utilized.

Superintendent-Green Committee Chairman-Membership: Working Together

J. PORTER HENRY
Member, Algonquin Golf Club, Webster Groves, Mo.

The purpose of this meeting indicates that the USGA Green Section is vitally concerned with the ever increasing cost of golf. In times of great prosperity this problem is not too serious, but it becomes acute and troublesome when business recessions overtake us. When I first took over the green chairman's job at Algonquin, in St. Louis, in 1936, our green budget was $12,000. Today it is $51,000, and we are doing no more than we did then. Our dues went from $85 to $360.

In spite of this substantial increase in course maintenance, when we talk about the high cost of golf generally we must not fail to distinguish between the cost of golf specifically and the cost of country club maintenance.

While the country club has a distinct place in the field of golf, I would like to see more clubs devoted to golf exclusively. Thousands of fine Americans who love the game cannot afford the country club, and are forced to use the public courses, which do not furnish the opportunity for the extensive companionship provided by the private club.

A club without hotel or entertainment facilities can be built for less than half of the cost and can operate for a little more than half the dues.

The green chairman must remember that his department, which concerns itself with golf, is in keen competition with the country club or social department. When business slackens off and the need for economy seems paramount, many times the country club members of the board are apt to start their economy with the green budget, which always proves uneconomical in the long run.

The green chairman must support his superintendent for a sound maintenance program, and he must remember that in the average club more people are members because of golf than for the social activities, although the social devotees, because of greater contacts, become better known than the average golfer and consequently are elected to the boards.

It seems to me that the first requisite of good cooperation between green chairman, superintendent and locker room is
a green chairman interested enough in his job to hold on until he learns his lesson sufficiently to be of help; and a membership and board sufficiently aware of the importance of the green chairman's job to keep him in office long enough to enable him to serve a useful purpose. The office of green chairman cannot be a perfunctory one. He has much to learn, and it takes time to learn it.

A green chairman can be an asset to a club or a liability. If he thinks he knows too much about grass culture and maintenance, based upon a mere superficial acquaintance with the subject, and insists upon putting his own ideas to work against the advice of his superintendent, the Lord pity the golf course and the superintendent. If, on the other hand, he knows nothing about the subject, and is therefore unable to appreciate the problems of the superintendent, he is worthless as a liaison officer between the superintendent and the locker room. Likewise, if the green chairman hasn't the courage to risk the displeasure of the members when the situation requires, he is failing in an important aspect of his job. Many times a temporary inconvenience to members is repaid a hundred fold in the long run. Such temporary situations invariably arouse the ire of a few members, but that ire must never be permitted to interfere with the program. Nor must it be assumed that a vociferous few represent the majority of the members.

After many years of experience it is apparent to me that our progress comes largely through trial and error. In summing up our progress, we learn not what are the ideal things to do—because we reach no ideals—but primarily what not to do, because of our many experiments which are so often unsatisfactory. We are constrained to draw the conclusion similar to that of the bachelor who married late in life, and thus gained familiarity with the vicissitude of both single and matrimonial life, and in a contemplative moment concluded, whether you marry or not, you'll regret it.

There are times when some radical steps must be taken when problems arise, and on these occasions the green chairman is wise to keep his board, as well as his membership, informed. If he is a good publicity agent he forestalls criticism and dissatisfaction, if not he invites both.

We adopted an expedient of procuring a sympathetic attitude on the part of the membership by acquainting them to some extent with grass problems. With the aid of the entertainment committee we had a dinner meeting devoted to grass. Many of our members live in private homes and are interested in their lawns. We felt that they could benefit by our experience. The program started by the green chairman giving a rather detailed explanation of the grass plant dealing with the function of the root, the functions of the leaves, with soil conditions, with fertilizers, which showed them why a short cut was injurious and why a long cut could be adopted without difficulty in their lawns. I took up the question of weed control and explained some of our practices in this respect. I took advantage of the occasion to give reasons for occasional closing of the course. Then I threw the meeting open to a question period at which time let me hasten to add I very discreetly turned the meeting over to the superintendent. They spent nearly an hour on questions.

A prolific source of annoyance to the locker room as well as the chairman is the question of closing the course temporarily when weather conditions demand. In our district when the long hard rains saturate the greens in hot weather, and when the hot sun may appear at any time, we have found that a great deal of damage results from play. When these circumstances arise we close the course. This happens seldom. After consulting with the superintendent I personally assume the responsibility of the actual
closing. Those who have planned their games for the day start their fussing, although I have found that the vast majority are always behind the green chairman in decisions of this kind.

Acting from a genuine motive—to do everything to build better turf for the members' enjoyment—the superintendent and green chairman must pursue their efforts willing to be replaced rather than to let possible criticism induce them to avoid a necessary, if annoying, practice. It must not be inferred from the above observation that constructive criticism and suggestions should not be welcomed. Indeed they should be invited. I have profited by many constructive suggestions over the years.

**Question and Answer Session**

**MODERATOR:** William H. Bengeyfield, USGA Green Section Western Director

**PANEL MEMBERS:** Mr. Williams, Mr. Boyd, Mr. Eckstein, Mr. Henry,
Mr. Charles G. Chapman, member of Country Club of Detroit, Grosse Pointe Farms, Mich.
Mr. Herb Graffis, Journalist & Publisher, Chicago, Ill.
Mr. James M. Latham, Jr., USGA Green Section Southeastern Agronomist

**MR. BENGEYFIELD:** Let's start the questions by asking one of Mr. Williams. How often should long range planning be reviewed?

**MR. WILLIAMS:** I think it should be reviewed annually. New committee members should have a chance to understand, study, and re-evaluate the plan. Cost changes represent a factor that will call for reevaluation of a program.

**MEMBER:** Why is it that many clubs place the cost of swimming pools, tennis courts, clubhouses and things of that nature under golf maintenance. Will Mr. Eckstein please comment?

**MR. ECKSTEIN:** Each club handles these things a little differently. The only satisfactory way of handling such matters is to set up a separate budget account for each item of this kind. Actually, most clubs charge some costs to other budget items. I noticed we were buying sand when there was no money in the sand account; it was charged against the drainage and sewerage account.

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**DR. FERGUSON:** I don't believe there is a special committee but students rarely have difficulty getting placed. Green Section agronomists are able to help graduates get into jobs for additional training.

**MR. BROWN, Secretary, Golf Course Superintendents' Association:** The Golf Course Superintendents' Association is quite concerned about the training of people as well as the cost of operation. Part of our function is a clearing house for employment, and we have continual requests from clubs and superintendents for young men who are interested in going into the profession. We welcome such inquiries from young men, as we do welcome inquiries from clubs seeking to hire such individuals.

**MEMBER:** I am from the Olympia Fields Country Club in the Chicago District, and it is a great opportunity to take young men and train them as I have done. My thought has been that it would be a good idea if we could provide scholarships—a lot of clubs pay into scholarships for caddies.

**MR. WILLIAMS:** The Golf Superintendents' Association now sponsors, I think, three scholarships. In answer to the same question, at Beverly we have recognized this problem and we are doing what small part we can with our limited funds to help, train, and school some of these young boys who want training.