

cap match ends in a tie at the completion of a round, a full 18 holes must be played off in order to determine the winner.

The Green Section; Its Needs and Its Opportunities

Address of C. V. Piper, Annual Meeting of the Green Section, January 5.

Gentlemen, I will have to make my remarks very brief, and I will try to make them pertinent. We will have to take a few moments for a business session, and then we are going to see some moving pictures of Bobbie Jones in slow action, so that you can see exactly how he does it. I had intended to show a series of slides dealing with golf architecture, but our apparatus is not very satisfactory for the purpose. Golf architecture is a subject which we shall have to study more seriously. The great majority of our American golf courses are not anywhere nearly as good as they should be. Anybody can lay off a mediocre golf course, but it takes a creative artist to lay off a golf course that is a fine test of play and at the same time a thing of landscape beauty. There are not many such courses in America. I think the British are beating us here. They have published two books on golf architecture. In this country we have not published one. The Green committee is at work on one now. Practically every other technical, scientific, or commercial organization has a society, and many of them publish journals. The golf architects ought to organize. They are advancing. Many of them are doing some fine work, for which they deserve thanks; but there is altogether too much mediocre work yet. It is going to improve the more rapidly as more golfers learn to appreciate what good architecture is; and that is the reason why we should all study it. There ought to be a reason for every bit of construction on a golf course, and the architect should be able to explain that reason clearly.

Now I want to explain briefly what the Green Section is, as I find there is a great deal of misapprehension in regard to it. It is a cooperative organization of the golf clubs, who supply the funds through their annual dues. It cooperates with the United States Department of Agriculture. The United States Department of Agriculture is a public-service organization, and the study of the problem of turf as relating to parks, lawns, golf courses, and so on, is one of its functions. With the money from the Green Section, the men in the Department of Agriculture are able to do more investigational work than they would otherwise be able to do; that is, the Green Section funds, to some extent, supplement the Department's funds, although thus far the Department has been putting in more money than has the Green Section.

Now there is absolutely nothing in this for the scientific men in the Department of Agriculture, except that it gives them the opportunity to do more work along lines in which they are interested. There is not any graft in the thing; there is no possible way by which a scientist in the Department of Agriculture can get one dollar out of the Green Section. If he does, he will lose his job, and probably spend his time for a period as a guest of Uncle Sam in one of his well-known apartment houses. Now I want to make this particularly clear, because a few people made insinuations that in some way or other the men in the Department of Agriculture are profiting financially. In fact, I have had one letter in which we are absolutely accused of being grafters. I do not claim that our ethics are any higher than those of ordinary men; we are probably as susceptible to the influence of money as anybody else. I recall a story of a government official during the war who was in a very responsible position. One day he was approached by a representative of a contractor, who offered him

\$10,000 if he would use his influence in his behalf, but he turned him down. A few days later the ante was raised to \$25,000, and he turned it down; the third time it was raised to \$40,000, and he turned it down, but he telegraphed to Washington, and said, "Send another man down here at once; they say every man has his price, and these fellows are getting pretty near mine."

Now the objects of the Green Section are purely altruistic. We are trying to help the golf clubs for their own benefit and for the benefit of the public. One of my economist friends tells me that this is all wrong. He says, "You know, the function of the rich is to get all the money they can from the bourgeoisie and the proletariat, who are not able to use it intelligently; therefore, whenever there is a chance to pry money from the idle rich, that is the proper thing to do." He says, "Let these fellows get all the money out of the golf courses they can."

Now we do not take that point of view at all. We have learned that the average golf club is only a few jumps ahead of the sheriff, and that the clubs are not as rich as they are reputed to be. Some men in business, in dealing with golf courses, do not seem fully to understand this. Most of the clubs do; and I think they realize that we are working for their benefit. The best asset of a business house is satisfied customers; and a lot of the golf clubs have not been satisfied with the dealings they have had with some business houses. A part of this has in the past been due to ignorance, I am sure. I do not believe the business houses—or at least with rare exceptions—have been purposely deceitful—that is, in over-selling to golf clubs. Of course, a drummer might do that, because the bigger the bill he can sell the more his commission. I said to some seedsmen in Washington not long ago, "Gentlemen, you have a very much worse reputation in the minds of the public than you deserve; it is a little better than that of a real estate man, and not much better than that of a bucket-shop man. You ought to correct this psychology."

Now I understand some of the reasons which have brought about this condition in the seed trade, but it is up to the seed trade itself to clean house. If there are crooked people in the business, get them out. You owe it to yourselves and to your own interests to see that your business is conducted on a high ethical basis. Of course, that is pretty hard to do; but that is what they have got to do to get the right kind of reputation with the public.

In this connection, Lloyd George told a story the other day which I thought was very clever, a story of Roosevelt which I had not heard before. Roosevelt remarked, "It is very strange that whenever I say 'Thou shalt not steal' there is a panic in Wall Street."

Now we have never accused any business man dealing with golf courses of being crooked. We have never mentioned unfavorably or favorably, in correspondence or otherwise, the name of any firm doing business with golf clubs. We lean clear backwards to try to be absolutely fair to everybody. When we have anything to say, it is stated in the form of a general statement; but some people apparently take these general statements home, and say, "Well, this means me; those fellows are after me." Well, of course, we are not to blame for that. We certainly have never mentioned any firm as being crooked or as using unethical methods. We suspect that some have probably done so, and we want them to quit it.

The Green Section, for its further growth and development, depends upon you people—you people who are the members of this Green Section. There are a whole lot of clubs in the country which are not members; and

the only explanation that we can make is that they do not understand what it is all about, and I find that to be the case very frequently. They simply can not understand that here is an organization which is working for the benefit of the golf clubs, which has nothing to gain, no ulterior motive, except working for the progress and the good of golf. Some business men find difficulty in understanding that. Now, scientific men may be chumps. The ordinary man thinks that they are; he thinks they are a kind of crazy people who are working at things out of which they can not make any money. Well, they are a curious group of people, but they are working primarily to advance knowledge; and it is in this they get their satisfaction. They certainly do not get it out of the salaries they draw, because they usually get very meager incomes. That fact may operate to make them more susceptible to graft. But unfortunately we are hedged about so that we can not take graft. That may be why we are so honest (laughter).

Now, I want to make it clear that there is still an enormous amount of work for the Green Section to do, and I can not see that it is ever going to end—not alone in the matter of investigation, but also in the matter of education. Education is notoriously a long and slow process. For example, after practically every paper that has been given here, you have asked questions galore; in other words, you are after education. We are trying to put forth nothing until we have a pretty convincing argument that it is correct. And in this very complex problem of greenkeeping it is very easy to reach erroneous conclusions. You have had a couple of demonstrations of that.

Now let me say that all the questions and answers in *THE BULLETIN* are genuine. We have not yet been driven to the necessity of faking up questions so as to keep that column full; in fact, we have bales of them to use. I have sometimes thought it would be a great joke if I were to fake up a lot of them, and have them signed by Tom, Dick and Harry, to see how Carrier and Oakley would answer them (laughter). Unfortunately, most of the greenkeepers do not yet realize how complex some of these problems are, and consequently they do not put up to us some of the questions which we are afraid they may ask.

Mr. Maxwell spoke about the southern courses. I have had a little experience in the tropics, and was recently again down in Florida and Cuba. I went down to Cuba partly for that purpose. A new grass was recently sent to me which we knew only botanically. This grass was a native of western Mexico which somehow got into Cuba about 20 years ago. It has spread over very large areas there, and makes wonderful turf. It is such a vigorous thing that it crowds out every other grass. It looks as if it is going to be extremely valuable for the tropical and semi-tropical regions, and for many purposes I feel sure it will replace Bermuda grass. Incidentally, we have notes on a great many tropical grasses, and there is a great amount of work still to be done on them.

Now this brings me to the point of the further growth of the Green Section. The present method of financing is not satisfactory. We get letters from all kinds of people, all kinds of clubs, lots of them not members of the Green Section; but as a public service institution we are bound to give them information just as we would to members of the Green Section. We try to get them into the Green Section, of course; but we are in duty bound to give them the information. It is not the private property of the Green Section, and it can not be, as it is obtained in co-operation with the Department. I want to make that perfectly clear. We would

also like every one to get THE BULLETIN who wants it, and at a modest price. Under our present system of financing we can not do this.

There will come up before the United States Golf Association today at its meeting a scheme for re-financing the Green Section which it is hoped will be adopted and put into practice another year.

To supplement the present funds, which run about \$12,000 a year, the plan proposes an endowment fund for the Green Section, the interest on which could be used for Green Section work. This would serve not only to enlarge the work of the Green Section, but to perpetuate it. There has been no publicity given to this, but some people have heard of it, and, strange to say, we have already received some contributions. One friend told me that a very wealthy man had fixed up his will so that his whole fortune would go to the Green Section. That fellow is a real golfer (applause).

Now this is a perfectly sound proposition. Whether the funds will be forthcoming or not, we do not know; but if they are forthcoming they will bring about an enlargement and perpetuation of the Green Section.

We have had lots of clubs tell us that our visits have saved them \$5,000 or \$10,000, and so on; but whether that means that they would put that much into an endowment fund is another question. The Green Section needs enlarging, because we in the Department of Agriculture have relatively little time to devote to its work. We need more men in the work; we need to train men who can carry on the work in the future; and all of that, in the end, spells more funds. I hope that whatever method the United States Golf Association agrees on will meet with the cordial support of all golfers.

Now, in closing, I want to thank all the Green Section members for the support they have been giving in the past. The golf clubs have been very highly appreciative. We have letters galore of the most complimentary sort, which, of course, add to our pleasure in giving service. We do not claim to be infallible. We realize that we are dealing with very complex problems, and we are perfectly willing to listen to any and all suggestions we can get. We want every greenkeeper to try experiments on his own account, and he may discover some very valuable things. The field is wide open, and we want to encourage investigation in every way, which is the only road to advancement. I think we are more and more getting to the point where the business men understand us and realize that in a broad way we are really working in their interests and not against them. The business man, the seedsman, the manufacturer, the machinery man, all other people concerned with goods that golf courses use, are doing a great deal to help in the advancement of golf. Without the machinery man, we would be nowhere in the modern golf course; and the machinery men who are getting out better and better machinery are doing a great service. I wish it were possible to mention the names of commercial men who are doing good things. It might be well now and then to mention the names of commercial men who are doing things that we do not think are so good, but it is impossible for us to do that. I want those men, business men who are making constructive advancement, to understand that we are deeply interested in their work; we are following it up as closely as we can, and we appreciate that they are real factors in the development of golf.