

Why the Green Section?

An Address by Alex Pirie, President of the P. G. A., Delivered at the Annual Meeting of the U. S. G. A. Green Section at Pittsburgh, Jan. 7, 1927.

Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen: Well, I feel it quite an honor to be asked to come to this Association and talk, not for myself, but for my Association which I have the honor to represent at the present time. At the same time, I feel very much like the old Scotchman by the name of Jock Brown must have felt. He had been drinking pretty heavy. His business was peddling fish in a cab, and on his way home he fell asleep in the cab by the side of the road. Somebody came along and thought they would play a joke on the old fellow, and they took out the horse and turned it loose, knowing of course the horse would go on home and leave old Jock sitting on the street sound asleep. When he woke up he rubbed his eyes and looked around.

"Well," he says, "if I am Jock Brown, I have lost a horse; and if I am not Jock Brown I have found a cab."

After all the technical explanations for the treatment of the green which the trained men of the Green Section have shown us and told us about, that is really about how I feel, but it answers the question of "Why the Green Section?"

After Mr. Fitts finished this morning, the Chairman asked for questions, and there were no questions.

I was sitting beside Alex Campbell, and he said nobody was going to ask any questions about greens, because everybody has good greens; and that was another answer to "Why the Green Section?"

I think that the Green Section began when Messrs. Piper and Oakley wrote their book on "Turf for Golf Courses."

That was the inception of the Green Section. It is only six years ago since it was properly organized; in its present shape, well, you all know what it has done and what it is leading up to. So there is no use of my taking up your time by any more explanation of what the Green Section has done.

The outstanding things from a greenkeeper's viewpoint that have been done, the startling methods of economy in seeding, fertilizing, and in the application of poisonous substances for worms, and so forth, need not be gone into by me.

Before the Green Section started its work on golf courses, we were all going along pretty much in the dark. We had a fairly good idea of what we could do, but we did not know enough to know how to do it.

In the six years of the Green Section's official existence, we have learned more about the whys and wherefores than we had in all the years before in which men have been playing golf on green grass. That is also an answer to "Why the Green Section?"

I believe this officially finishes the sixth volume of THE BULLETIN. I have them all, and I am proud to be able to say I have them all. In that bulletin I have learned many, many things, and some of the things I have forgotten that I read in that bulletin, but the majority of them were new and I have remembered them. What does this do to a greenkeeper? It teaches him, and sometimes he wonders how he has been taught, how he came to know about such and such a thing. Now if he sits down himself and begins to trace back, he will find

that the most of his advanced information for the past six years has come directly through the Green Section, either from the personal representatives, or through THE BULLETIN. That is another answer to "Why the Green Section?"

If there should be any criticism of the Green Section's work from the greenkeeper's viewpoint, it might be this: That they have not obtained the close cooperation from the working greenkeepers of the country which might have been given to the trained men of the Green Section, but this condition is understandable.

The older greenkeepers felt that they had spent their lives in learning what they knew, and do not forget we have learned more in the last six years than we have in the previous twenty, and there has been more or less of a tendency to look upon the trained man as something over their heads, and something not quite to be trusted.

The whole future, and I believe it is a great future, for the Green Section, must be changed from that very understanding, which I believe is now about to go into working effect with the practical working greenkeepers' organization of the country. It might have been because of the fact that the greenkeepers had no organization through which practical experience could be "swapped" for theory, if I may use the word "swapped." I will take that back—through which practical experience and theoretical experience can get on a common meeting ground.

Now, the greenkeepers throughout the country have organized themselves, and if I may be allowed to make the suggestion, I would suggest that in addition to all the work of the Green Section throughout the clubs and through the chairmen of the green committees that they cultivate a closer and more intimate co-partnership, or cooperation rather, with the greenkeepers of the country.

I think really, gentlemen, that that is the only thing that is needed now in order to get the full benefit of all of these six years of splendid work on the part of the Green Section.

Speaking of experimental stations, if such an intimacy—or if such cooperation, rather—were established with the different greenkeepers' associations, there would not be any trouble at all about experimental stations, because I am quite sure there is no club for which any greenkeeper works that would not gladly give a piece of their ground for an experimental station, and I can imagine no happier and no greater opportunity of cooperation than to see the trained men come to a practical agreement with us, and discuss our problems together on the ground, through which they may arrive at a solution.

The Green Section announces that seed analyses and germination tests as well as analyses of fertilizers can not be made without cost to the clubs requesting such service. Owing to the large number of such requests made to the Department of Agriculture it is not possible for its analysts to give preferred service to anyone. For this reason the Green Section must seek the help of competent commercial analysts and will charge the interested clubs no more than the fee asked by the firm actually making the tests.