Annual Report of the Green Section for 1932

By Ganson Depew
Chairman, Executive Committee

The Green Section for the year 1932 is glad to report that it has been able to continue its various activities in an efficient manner. In April it was necessary for the United States Golf Association in the interest of economy to reduce its Green Section Budget for 1932. This was done without very serious interference this year in the continuance of our activities which the Green Section in a larger way has been conducting for several years past. The reduction will, however, unfortunately, affect to a greater extent our activities in 1933.

General Activities of the Green Section During the Year

Unlike the season of 1931, when extreme weather conditions produced unusual turf troubles, the season of 1932 was about normal, and hence the demand for advice from the Green Section staff on disease problems was somewhat less. There was, however, an increased demand for all types of information on economy in course maintenance. During the year even a larger proportion of the member clubs than usual availed themselves of the opportunity to have the Green Section examine and report on seed and soil samples and to give advice on numerous maintenance and construction problems. The advisory service has been carried on through correspondence and, as much as possible, by personal interviews on golf courses, Green Section gardens, in offices, and in laboratories.

The most important rôle of the Green Section is to carry on experimental work in an effort to solve the many and ever-changing turf problems of the numerous golf clubs of the country. Without accurately tested knowledge on all phases of golf course construction and maintenance, its two other rôles, extension and service work, would become almost valueless. There are many maintenance problems yet to be satisfactorily solved, and a much larger technical staff could well be kept employed in efforts to obtain the valuable information needed by golf clubs on more economical and effective maintenance. The principal research of the Green Section has been conducted at Washington and at Chicago. A number of experiments were also conducted on golf courses in chosen locations on turf maintained under heavy playing conditions. These tests were conducted through arrangements made with the golf club committees. Also many valuable data are being accumulated through 21 demonstration gardens established at various selected parts of the country. The extension or educational work has been carried on through various Green Section meetings and exhibits. Thirteen summer meetings were held, attended by large numbers of greenkeepers. Exhibits were shown at the United States Golf Association annual meeting at New York in January and at the Sportsmen's Golf Show at Boston in February. Educational work is also carried on through the Bulletin and by selected articles in certain other publications. The Green Section staff has also helped in the educational work of the national and the various sectional greenkeepers' organizations and of greenkeepers' short courses held at various state colleges.

Arlington Turf Garden

Experimental work was continued as usual at Arlington supplemented with tests on local golf courses under playing conditions.

Interesting observations were made on different species and strains of grass for putting green purposes and different mixtures for fairway purposes. Some of the new strains under trial, particularly velvet bent, continue to show promise. Some opportunity was afforded for studies in the control of cutworms and sod webworms, and it is now felt that these pests may be satisfactorily controlled on fine turf by any of several poisons. Earthworms were particularly troublesome, as they were elsewhere in the country also, and remained so in spite of repeated trials of remedies hitherto effective. More work should be done on this problem. Particularly good opportunity was afforded for advanced studies of brownpatch on the

Green Section meeting at the Mid-West Turf Garden, Everett, Ill. Summer of 1932

shaded, more humid garden recently planted in a low area beside the Potomac River. This garden continued to prove its value, since, due to its location, disease studies may be continued there at times when diseases are inactive on the main garden with its open exposure. The systematic study of fertilizers, which has been under way for some years, was also continued. An experiment on the effect on turf diseases of morning, night, heavy, and light watering was conducted on putting greens under actual play on a local course and information regarding certain theories of watering was obtained. Weed control studies were continued and some promising results were obtained in the control of crabgrass on fairways. If the results of this particular work continue to be satisfactory after further experiments they should prove extremely valuable to the many golf clubs having difficulty with this weed.

Mid-West Turf Garden

Since its construction four years ago, the work on the Mid-West turf garden has been carried on in much the same manner as the work at Arlington. This garden, however, contains different sets of tests, supplementary to the Arlington work. Many of these tests were planned to procure a more complete understanding of the specific problems of the Middle West. Part of the work was discontinued this spring in order to curtail the expense as much as possible. By summer, however, it was found that funds were not available to support further experimental work at this garden. Labor assistance supplied through the kindness of A. D. Lasker enabled the reduced Green Section staff to keep the garden in a presentable condition until the meeting which had been scheduled for September was held there.

Park executives gather at the Arlington turf garden in 1932 to study the results of golf turf experiments. Many of the public links are located in the public parks

Supplementing the experimental work at the Mid-West turf garden some preliminary research work has been carried on, in cooperation with the Botany Department of the University of Chicago, on the effect of different heights of cut upon maintenance of turf and also on the effect of nitrogen in different forms upon grass growth. It is regretted that for purposes of economy this research work had to be brought to a hasty conclusion. Reports of these preliminary tests have been prepared for publication in the Bulletin.

Demonstration Gardens

The series of demonstration turf gardens continued to provide much information for those interested in turf maintenance on courses in the vicinity of the gardens. There are now 20 gardens in various sections of the United States, and one in Canada. The Canadian garden is maintained through cooperation with the Royal Canadian Golf Association, and members of the Green Section staff attended the summer meeting held there as guests of that association. The Green Section has had splendid cooperation from those in charge of the courses where these demonstration gardens are located. Extensive reports have been received regularly this year and assembled for publication. Well-attended gatherings of golf club officials and greenkeepers have been held at the gardens, and the behavior of the different grasses, fertilizers, and other treatments has been discussed

on the grounds. At many of these meetings members of the Green Section staff have been present to explain the work. It has been found that discussions of turf problems are much more valuable where such demonstrations are at hand than are discussions of similar problems indoors, where direct examples of results can not be exhibited.

Green Section Summer Meetings

The allowances for summer meetings and other travel were practically stricken from the budget. The summer meetings and travel, however, were not entirely neglected, as a number of various organizations and clubs affected by these economies considered this personal contact sufficiently valuable to justify their paying the expenses necessary to continue this extension work. A series of outdoor meetings was held as follows:

August 1. Philadelphia Country Club, West Conshohocken, Pa.
August 1. Pine Valley Golf Club, Clementon, N. J.
August 8. Allegheny Country Club, Sewickley, Pa.
August 9. Municipal Golf Course, Niagara Falls, N. Y.
August 12. Royal York Golf Club, Toronto, Ontario.
August 15. Century Country Club, White Plains, N. Y.
August 17. Charles River Country Club, Newton Centre, Mass.
August 22. Country Club of Virginia, Richmond, Va.
September 8. Mid-West Turf Garden, Mill Road Farm Golf Course, Everett, Ill.
September 9. Westwood Country Club, Clayton, Mo.
September 11. Tulsa Country Club, Tulsa, Okla.
September 12. Hyde Park Golf and Country Club, Cincinnati, Ohio.
September 13. Arlington Turf Garden, Arlington, Va.

Nearly 1,000 persons interested in turf maintenance attended these meetings. In spite of the limitations of the Green Section budget only three less meetings were held this summer than during the previous year and the attendance was up to the high average established that year. Members of the Green Section staff were present at various other local gatherings of chairmen of green committees and greenkeepers in addition to the above meetings sponsored by the Green Section.

In September the American Institute of Park Executives held its annual meeting in Washington. As a part of the regular program of this organization there was a meeting at Arlington turf garden in order that those present who are charged with the maintenance of golf courses in the public parks might become acquainted with the fine turf research work of the Green Section.

Greenkeepers' Short Courses

Last winter the Green Section staff took part in the programs of the greenkeepers' short courses given by the Pennsylvania State College, State College, Pa.; Michigan State College of Agriculture, East Lansing, Mich.; University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, Minn.; University of Wisconsin, Madison, Wis.; New Jersey State Agricultural Experiment Station, New Brunswick, N. J.; and Massachusetts State College, Amherst, Mass. The Green Section has welcomed the opportunities to cooperate with the institutions giving these courses.

Correspondence and Service to Member Clubs

The Green Section staff was able to keep up with the usual large amount of seasonal correspondence with member clubs regarding the various problems encountered last season. There was an increase in the number of soil samples sent in to be examined. Many inquiries regarding the use of organic materials for soil improvement were received and an increased interest in information regarding fairway watering was noticeable. The Green Section was able to supply helpful information in these instances.

The Green Section staff visited a large number of courses on request and gave advice on numerous turf problems. Due to the demands, at certain times, on the time of the Green Section staff, it was not always possible to visit golf courses immediately upon being requested. With few exceptions, however, it was eventually possible to visit the golf clubs which desired such service, and in some instances clubs were saved travel expense money by grouping the requests so that two or three clubs in one vicinity could be visited while the Green Section representative was in that neighborhood. During 1932, members of our staff visited courses located in 21 states, and in Ontario, Canada.

Green Section Bulletin

It was decided to publish the Bulletin six times a year during 1932 instead of monthly, as in previous years. There is a financial saving in the publication of fewer numbers in a year even though the number of pages of reading material in the yearly volume is maintained. The publication of only six numbers permits of more effective distribution of the time of the Green Section staff. The Green Section has continued its policy of grouping related material in a single number of the Bulletin. It has been necessary in two cases to make these numbers three or more times as large as the old monthly numbers. Some subjects can not be effectively handled in Bulletins of smaller size, and under the old system of twelve numbers to the volume it was necessary to break up this material into two or three separate numbers.

Fertilizing is better than reseeding.—In a pasture survey made in West Virginia a few years ago 98 per cent of the farmers interviewed suggested reseeding pastures as a means for improving them. Less than 10 per cent of them suggested applying fertilizers. Later when the State Agricultural Experiment Station workers made a study of various means for improving pastures it was found that the judicious use of fertilizers and lime gave the best return for the money invested in pasture improvement. The tests showed that scattering seed over a poor pasture without any other treatment was useless. Thus it is apparent that the combined judgment of practical men can not be regarded as the most accurate guide when new methods are being considered. Experiments and practical experience on golf courses long ago proved that fertilizing was of greater importance than seeding to improve turf.

The degree of excellence of a golf course depends on three things: (1) its architecture; (2) its standard of maintenance; (3) its landscape beauty.