

The Green Section Took A New Direction in 1953

IN ITS EARLY YEARS, the main thrust of the Green Section was research. From 1920 through 1952, direct research, in cooperation with the United States Department of Agriculture, resulted in many improvements in turfgrass.

Better turf at a lower cost — that had always been the primary aim of the United States Golf Association ever since it established the Green Section. This objective had been accomplished mainly by 1) development of knowledge through Green Section research; 2) stimulation of cooperative research by other agencies; and 3) dissemination of results through the printed word, conferences, and a limited number of visits to golf courses.

Then, in the February, 1953, issue of *USGA Journal and Turf Management*, Richard S. Tufts, Chairman of the USGA Green Section Committee, wrote that the Green Section, an instrument of research for over 30 years, would take an entirely new direction — it would emphasize direct service to USGA member clubs and courses through personal visits by the Green Section staff who would advise them on their turfgrass problems.

And so the new program, called the USGA Green Section Regional Turf Service, was established. Mr. Tufts emphasized, however, that continued research and experimentation would be necessary, but in the new scheme of things, the Green Section would give financial and moral support to research by others rather than engage in much research itself. Then, the research results having been produced, the Green Section's own highly specialized staff of trained agronomists would take the results directly to the golf courses.

The plan, as originally conceived, called for the establishment of a number of regional offices so that every USGA Member Club would be within easy reach of a Green Section regional director. Each regional director would be a practical scientist — a trained agronomist who specialized in golf course problems.

Ever since World War II, the Green Section had been decentralizing research activities away from its headquarters and out into various regions where peculiar sectional problems had to be met and solved. The new emphasis on direct service to Member Clubs was simply a continuation of that decentralization.

As originally established, the Turfgrass Advisory Service sought to provide two principle benefits to Member Clubs: 1) Intimate, specialized consultation service on a regular and permanent basis, located to best serve the convenience of the subscribing clubs; and, 2) maintenance and coordination of turf experimentation on a broad scale to bring the greatest possible return to the member clubs.

The keynote of the whole program would be to prevent trouble, not merely to prescribe remedies for sick golf courses.

The first regional office was actually established in June, 1952, at Davis, California, with Charles G. Wilson as Western Director.

Today, the Green Section has six regional offices as well as its national headquarters based at Golf House, Far Hills, New Jersey. Regional directors and staff agronomists, a total of 10 men, travel over 200,000 miles and make 1,300 visits annually to clubs subscribing to the Turfgrass Advisory Service.

Early sod cutting method and a modern machine.

