

## Spring Work at Inverness

W. J. ROCKEFELLER

Every professional greenkeeper should be pleased that the Green Committee of the United States Golf Association has been organized and made up of scientists and earnest active amateurs. These are the men who advance the standard of greenkeeping. We who are at it every day and hour come to accept conditions as we find them and go our way confident that nature will come to our relief sooner or later. We apply our stock remedies and treatments and let nature take its course. The amateur, however, is not content. He wants to find out what it is all about and the "why" of it, and though he may do some foolish things and make mistakes, his very earnestness often leads to important discoveries. The professional greenkeeper therefore should assist the Green Committee of the United States Golf Association by putting at its service all the practical knowledge and experience he has. Both will benefit.

The ordinary individual can plan his season's work with a feeling that he can adhere fairly closely to his program, but the poor greenkeeper, especially in the spring, is lucky if he accomplishes the half of what he plans. First it snows, then it rains. The day it rains all the workmen appear, and if the day is clear they all stay home because the baby is sick or the almanac predicts snow.

March may come looking like a lamb to some, but it is doubtful if any greenkeeper ever saw it otherwise than as a lion.

Nevertheless, wind and weather permitting, this is what is planned for Inverness this spring. It might be well to say that our machinery and equipment has been overhauled during the winter and is ready for use. The tee boxes and benches have been repaired and painted so they look like new and to give the members something to think about, the tee box of each hole having more than one tee has painted on it the distance from the different tees. New flags and poles are ready. Plenty of sand was hauled into the bunkers and traps during the winter. Our supplies for the season have been purchased. When gentle spring does come, we shall be ready with our paraphernalia if nothing else.

We usually open our regular greens to play at Inverness very early, often before the first of April, so it is apparent no favorable time for work can be wasted.

Our Green Committee has fixed May 15 as the day after which no construction or alteration work may be done. We are not to be allowed to let construction work interfere with the full enjoyment of the course by the members this season, at it is thought they made enough sacrifices last year in preparation for the National Open to be entitled to everything we can give them. Before the date fixed, we must complete a considerable amount of grading and turfing around our number eighteen green which could not be completed last year, and we must do all we can toward the completion of a long list of big and little items of changes required to satisfy the Green Committee.

Just as soon as the condition of the course permits, it will be thoroughly raked—sacrificed, you might say—with forged rakes, the notion being that by this means the dead material is removed, the grass roots are loosened or cultivated, and a strong early growth is fostered. It may be this is an extravagance, but the Committee believes it is desirable.

Fertilizer in the form of well-rotted barn manure will be applied at the rate of about four tons to the acre. Last fall we top-dressed the whole course with mushroom soil at the rate of about ten cubic yards to the acre, so we hope with even reasonable weather conditions to have a satisfactory turf this season, but the greenkeeper does not live who can grow grass without rain. All the fairways will be rolled with a six hundred pound roller.

The rough, bare or thin areas in the fairways will be given a thorough "going over" and will be seeded and given an extra heavy top-dressing of compost. We have about one thousand cubic yards of compost ready for use and will be able hereafter to fertilize and top dress with our own materials and avoid the use of more expensive and less satisfactory substances. The fairways were seeded in the fall so that our spring seeding will be limited to the few spots requiring special attention. Our seed, by the way, was bought on sample, which was tested for identity and germination at Washington, and the quality of the shipment will be verified by a like test.

All the old scars left from last year's unrepaired divots will be cut out with an ordinary hole cutter and filled with good turf taken from some out-of-the-way place in the rough. It is surprising how quickly and economically a lot of ugly and annoying holes can be repaired in this way.

The first time the grass is dry enough early in the spring the rough will be burned over to remove the dead grass so that our mowing machines can be worked on it next year without becoming clogged up. We intend also, if we can find the time, to skin some of our rough by removing the turf and some of the top soil after which we shall sow sheep's fescue, thus getting material for our compost pile and, we hope, producing a rough that will be more suitable and require less attention.

We are inclined to the view that we may be applying too much fertilizer at one time and that a too luxuriant growth of grass is possible. A course with a perfect turf and no bad lies is more of a park than a golf course. The game, without occasional bad lies, is not golf, but nevertheless, nothing pleases the members more than a soft, deep, heavy turf, and after all the members are the one who pay the rent and our theories must give way.

All our greens and approaches for say up to forty yards will be raked and cross-raked with special care, harrowed or sliced two ways with a Velvet Lawn Seeder and seeded at the rate of about eight pounds of German bent to a green and an equivalent amount on each approach. Here we look with more favor on the re-seeding of greens in the spring than in the fall for the reason that the seed is subjected to less disturbance and is more likely to germinate on that account. Fall seeding should be done here late in August or early in September, at a time when the course is under the heaviest play of the year. The point is that the fall seeding discommodes players, and the seed itself has not so good a chance to germinate as if sown in the spring.

After this our greens will be top-dressed with mushroom soil. The top-dressing will be worked in with the backs of wooden rakes and by dragging steel mats across the greens. Our top-dressing of greens will be comparatively light as we expect to top-dress lightly once a month during the season with mushroom soil and occasionally with common yellow sand. We think much better results, better turf and better putting

surface can be expected from frequent top-dressings than from infrequent dressings with nitrate of soda or other inorganic stimulants.

If the Green Committee of the United States Golf Association ever arranges a contest in top-dressing, we propose to enter our "Old Mat," as he can do a better job than any one we know. Any golfer may well envy the ease of his back swing with a shovel and his follow through is marvelous, the punch in his swing comes at just the right moment and his finish is beautiful. The top-dressing goes on fast, smooth and even.

This program seems to us well calculated to produce results, but after all no amount of care, work or material can obviate the burning and destruction of a long dry season. Nothing will take the place of rain. We do not anticipate having an excessive amount of leisure from the time the snow leaves until this work is done and after that all we shall have to do will be to cut the greens nearly every day, cut the fairways once or twice a week, keep the bunkers raked, fight dandelions, pearlwort, buckhorn, chickweed, grubs, moles and ants, chase the neighbors' hogs out every now and then, keep the tee boxes filled, patch up leaky water lines, and listen to the advice of members and apologize for not having moved tee markers.

NOTE—The soil at Inverness is a sand loam.—Ed.

---

#### *Pounds not Bushels*

Buy grass seeds by the pound and not by the bushel. The number of pounds to the bushel is not definite, and the purchaser has no means of knowing just how much seed he will get if he purchases it by the bushel. The recognized weight per bushel of many of the turf grass seeds is considerably lower than the actual weight of properly cleaned seed. Some states have established weights per bushel of grass seeds, but the federal government has not done so; therefore this has resulted in much confusion, as the weights fixed by the different states are not the same.

---

#### *Mowing the Putting Green*

It is well to establish a proper level of cutting putting greens as early as possible in the spring, as it is quite difficult to lower the level when it is once established. Especially is this true during the hot months of summer. Under such conditions, if the grass is crowned it recovers very slowly.

---

#### *Sheep's Fescue*

Sheep's fescue, where it can be grown, makes an excellent covering for bunker mounds. It is possible to get a very good covering of sheep's fescue, both on newly-constructed bunkers and old ones, by dibbling-in pieces of turf an inch or more in diameter; these can be placed approximately eight inches apart. This method is productive of quick results and is not an expensive one.