

EDITORIAL

Purchasing for a Green Committee

It may be not inaccurate to say that roughly one-third to one-half of a golf club's revenue is expended on maintenance. Someone must purchase the labor and material. Shall it be the greenkeeper or the chairman of the greens?

Common sense would seem to indicate that the chairman of the greens should at least have his hand on all purchases. He ought to know or take the pains to inform himself as to the quality and prices of materials and the amount required for use.

The greenkeeper may be ever so honest and competent and his judgment may be entitled to the greatest respect, but the money to be spent belongs to the club, and it is the duty of the committee to see that it is honestly and effectively spent.

There are dealers in materials of all sorts who will get business, if they can, by bribery, either by payment of commissions or by favors, cigars, loans, or what not.

The Federal Trade Commission has felt obliged to condemn vigorously such practices in many cases. An honest greenkeeper would not think of accepting a commission or a favor and would instantly inform his chairman if one was offered. A greenkeeper who accepted a commission without the full knowledge and consent of his committee would expect to be discharged if his offense were discovered.

It is the positive duty of a green committee to know as much as possible about the business it has charge of; and why should not the chairman, or some one on the committee, see that purchases are properly made?

Any good purchasing agent gets samples and prices because he knows there will be a new purchasing agent on the job if he does not get a dollar's worth for every dollar. He sees to it that the prejudices, whims, and personal interests of those who use or work with the materials he buys do not lead him to pay high prices or to secure poor quality.

A green committee should handle its purchases for its club exactly as a member handles the purchases in his business.

The dealer who is directly or surreptitiously dishonest soon finds out that the committee is applying sound business methods, and either looks for some easier victim or gets down to brass tacks. Only by keeping in touch with purchases can a committee know what is going on.

If fertilizer or seed is to be bought there should be definite information as to kind and quality; besides, the quantity should be figured with accuracy, based on so many acres or square yards to be treated and a fixed quantity to the acre or yard. Why buy a lot of stuff and have it left over to deteriorate? And why buy less than enough? If you want seed, you can get it either full of weeds and chaff, or clean; and you can get it with or without "bunk." Get samples and prices. Submit the samples to expert tests as to identity and germination. The honest seedsman who expects to stay in the business and hopes to sell the same customer twice will be glad to have his seed so tested.

Every committee should know and take into consideration the treatment given the course in previous years, and a definite policy should be

carried out, which, of course, is impossible if control of purchases is not maintained.

Equipment such as mowers must be renewed from year to year, and should be purchased only after careful study. It goes without saying that the type and make should not be changed every year to meet mere whims and fancies.

In employing labor the same principles apply. A fair rate should be paid, but loafers or lazy favorites should not be tolerated. It is only by close personal contact with purchases that green committees can see that materials are of good quality and get a dollar's worth for a dollar.

The labor expense incident to proper maintenance is the largest item and must be given careful attention, but it is believed that economy is not always to be realized by putting workmen on a common labor basis. If the work is properly arranged so that employment can be given to trained men during a large part of the year, it is obvious that these men, because of their training and experience, should not be classed as common unskilled labor, and it would seem that they should be entitled to from ten to twenty per cent. more than common labor in the vicinity. Manufacturers can figure the cost of training or "breaking in" employees to do a particular job; so it would seem that a man who has been trained is worth more to a green committee than a common laborer.

The buying is not all. The materials should be weighed, counted, or checked on receipt.

True, a business man who happens to be on a green committee cannot look after all the details himself, but he should see to it that this is honestly and properly done by some one; and if it is known that such a man is on the job and giving the supervision he should, a wholesome restraint will be felt by those who might be dishonest. Business is business, whether conducted for money or pleasure, and it becomes foolishness when neglected.

Ammonium Sulphate

C. V. PIPER AND R. A. OAKLEY

A recent article in the daily press regarding the effects of ammonium sulphate on turf grasses as determined by experiments continued through twenty years at the Rhode Island Experiment Station has created much interest. The article referred to was brief, and emphasized particularly the effect of ammonium sulphate in banishing weeds. Broadly speaking, the article was not inaccurate; but for better understanding there are certain details that need clarification.

The Rhode Island experiments are noteworthy and rich in significance to golf courses—certainly for the New England states, and probably for all the northern tier of states except in the semi-arid region. Detailed accounts of the way in which they were conducted and the results secured have been published from time to time, but particularly in the bulletins and reports of the Rhode Island Experiment Station.

The soil at Kingston, Rhode Island, is a well-drained loam of good texture but "acid" or "sour"—that is, it turns blue litmus paper red. The natural grass growing in the old pastures in the vicinity is mainly