

his profit and satisfaction. He is sure to come home full of praise for the other course and loaded with figures. He is sure to say, "Why, our course looks like a cow pasture alongside that one, and they only spend two-thirds as much as we do." The Lord only knows what the true explanation of the difference is, but it is certain that the thing would practically explain itself if the costs were kept on the same basis.

We are aiming at a cost system so simple and practical that it will be applicable to every club and be workable by anyone who is fit to be a greenkeeper. Suggestions and questions are solicited. We shall be pleased to receive letters from greenkeepers giving their views and experiences.

The Club Members and the Green Committee

The chairman of the green committee of any club has a very difficult position to fill. He is the natural recipient of every complaint regarding the condition of the course, and it is rare, indeed, that he is accorded any appreciation or thanks. The other members of the committee escape, perhaps because the chairman is the logical target. It is probably true that ninety per cent of the complaints are made by players who have little knowledge of golf course problems and perhaps none in regard to the limitations under which the green committee is working. Most commonly complaints are endured by the chairman; but occasionally he is taunted to irascible retorts. We have often wondered whether it is not possible to guide the faculty of players to find faults so that it will be an asset to the green committee and to the club. Why not extend an earnest invitation to every member who plays to point out faults and deficiencies, but with the proviso that every such criticism must be accompanied by a constructive suggestion? Wisdom may come out of the mouths even of babes. The effect on the members should be to divert their attentions to the problems themselves and thus soothe their irritated feelings. From the chairman they will learn of difficulties they had not known, which, in turn, should lead them to devise ways and means to help his committee. In short, it should help build up a morale among the players and make them a source of strength to the green committee instead of a lot of carping critics. Incidentally it will greatly broaden the knowledge of the players on a lot of things about a golf course of which they had not dreamed. The plan suggested will require more time than the much-heralded one of telling the players to go to a decidedly warmer climate; but we believe in the end results will more than justify the effort.

Here's the sign to put up:

Every member of this club who uses the course is invited and urged by the Chairman of the Green Committee to make complaints to him whenever he finds anything unsatisfactory on the course. The complaint may be verbal or in writing. This condition is, however, attached: the complainant must prepare a constructive suggestion that will make for correction of the fault or for provision of the need.

Straining at the Gnat

R. A. OAKLEY

There is an unmistakable tendency nowadays to look upon the prices asked for seed of the fine turf grasses as being excessively high. Especially is this true in the case of the fine bents. The seeds of these grasses are

selling today at \$1.50 a pound and upward—a high price, to be sure. Truly it is enough to frighten the inexperienced purchaser. In fact, some of our readers refuse to become reconciled to the present price situation, and it is evident that many of them have purchased seeds of less desirable species for their greens either because they have regarded it as a matter of necessary economy or because they did not want to be held up. This attitude comes about mostly from lack of information on several phases of the subject. Few, indeed, appreciate what it costs to harvest and prepare seed of the bents and fescues for market. They are continually comparing the bents with redtop, a seed cheaply grown and easily harvested and cleaned. Furthermore, they are lacking in their appreciation of what modern methods of sowing have done to reduce the quantity of seed necessary for a satisfactory stand, and what poor economy it is to sow less desirable seeds on putting-greens when, after all, if intelligence is used, the seed item is only a very small one compared with the other items of cost incident to the making of a golf course.

Whatever our individual opinions may be on the price of seed of the bents and fescues, we might just as well make up our minds that until something agronomic or economic develops greatly to increase the supply of these seeds or materially to lessen the cost of putting them on the market, the prices will not appreciably be revised downward. The situation is a natural one; there is nothing artificial about it. If anyone thinks he can get acceptable mixed bent seed from Germany, or Colonial bent or Chewings fescue from New Zealand or Australia, and sell it in this country at prices appreciably lower than those obtaining today, let him try it; or if he has even a vague idea that he can harvest pure Rhode Island bent seed and market it at anything like redtop prices, let him play his hunch. A real jolt is surely due him.

Naturally there is a feeling of sympathy for those who accept the present seed prices with reservations. These prices admittedly are high. But the grim humor of the whole situation is that some of the individuals who are making the loudest protests now, bought seed in the good old days of the special putting-green mixtures without batting an eye. For curiosity's sake, let us compare the present with the past.

As late as 1919, special putting-green mixtures were the rule rather than the exception. Here is the make-up by actual analysis of a fair average of the best of them:

Red fescue	36% by weight
Kentucky bluegrass	24% by weight
Redtop	20% by weight
Crested dog's-tail	6% by weight
Weed seed and inert matter.....	14% by weight

The average price at which a mixture of this kind sold was 40 cents per pound, which was in excess of the price of each of the constituents taken separately. Green committees seemed to worry little about the price or what the mixtures contained; and as further evidence of their liberality, they bought these special mixtures in quantity sufficient to sow them at the rate of 20 pounds for each 1,000 square feet of green. This meant an outlay of \$42 for seed for a green of 6,000 square feet. It was **certainly** an excessive outlay for the kind of turf that resulted.

Today we know that if intelligent methods are used an excellent stand of grass can be obtained by the use of 5 to 7 pounds of the fescues, or 3 to 5 pounds of the bents, for each 1,000 square feet. In brief, the seed bill today for a 6,000-foot green is approximately \$27 if the fescues are used, and approximately \$36 if the green is sown with the bents. Furthermore, when the seeding is accomplished, if it is done properly and at the right time of the year, the club has something to show for its money.

Economy is commendable; but it should not be practiced at the expense of the greens. Good greens are priceless. Economize by using seed intelligently. Do not waste it in reseeding old turf or sowing it at the wrong season of the year. Real economy is possible by passing up the "fool's gold" that is offered in bags, cans, bottles, and crates. Too commonly it is bought with almost unbelievable credulity. Better be thankful that genuine bent and fescue seed is available. The price may seem high and hard to accept philosophically; but everything considered, the situation now as compared with that of a few years ago is as the gnat to the camel.

What Constitutes Standard Maintenance?

E. J. MARSHALL

The green committee of the U. S. Golf Association is besieged with questions in one form or another as to what is a fair and reasonable amount of money to spend in a year on the maintenance of a golf course. At this time it is quite as impossible intelligently to answer these inquiries as it would be to say what a man should spend a year properly to support his family. So much depends on the unknown or variable factors—soil or climatic conditions to be met, the money available, the treatment required to get on a proper basis, and, lastly but most important, the tastes and desires of the players.

The players on nine-hole courses such as Hillsdale, Michigan, and Lebanon, Ohio, are pleased and satisfied, though they might prefer something better, with maintenance that costs from fifteen hundred to eighteen hundred dollars a year. On the other hand the players on some of the courses near the big cities demand a perfect course every day of the season and do not complain when the cost mounts to from twenty to twenty-five thousand dollars a year.

Obviously it will always cost more, and perhaps an unreasonable amount, to keep a course in tournament condition every day than to keep it up to a practical playable standard. The problem is to determine when a course is maintained up to a practical playable standard and what that sort of maintenance should cost.

Neither the green committee of the U. S. Golf Association nor anyone else can answer the questions as to proper cost of maintenance until by common consent of players a standard of maintenance is agreed upon as good enough for practical purposes, nor until a comparison of maintenance costs on many golf courses can be compiled.

The committee is convinced that a great deal of waste and extravagance can be eliminated when there is more information available on these points. How is this to be brought about? The obvious answer is by getting the clubs throughout the country, or those interested in sensible