

## A Commendable Enterprise of the Western Golf Association

The Western Golf Association has recently sent out the following letter:

Gentlemen:

The Western Golf Association has established an Organization and Development Division to collect and compile facts concerning the establishment and operation of golf clubs and public and community courses.

We hope that enough material can be got together to be useful both to the members of the Association and those who have new courses in mind.

Most of the problems of financing, organization and upkeep have been met and solved. By making this experience available, mistakes can be avoided and money saved.

Will you please, therefore, answer the questions on the enclosed blank as fully as you can?

The spaces will probably be insufficient. Do not limit yourself on this account. Be as full as possible in your answers. Do not hesitate to use as much paper as you may need. The Association hopes to get together records which will be permanently valuable and earnestly asks you to help.

Very truly yours,

(Signed) W. W. HARLESS, Secretary.

We are pleased to note this activity because we believe that the future progress of golf depends much on the economy and efficiency with which clubs are organized and conducted in all these departments. It is to be hoped that the clubs will respond generously in this new cooperative effort, as without doubt much of value to all can be made available.

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## What Constitutes Standard Maintenance?

E. J. MARSHALL, TOLEDO, OHIO

The question most frequently asked is: What should it cost properly to maintain an eighteen-hole course? But so far it has been impossible to give a satisfactory answer, and it is obvious an exact answer will never be possible. No two courses are alike in construction, soil and turf conditions, location with respect to supplies of materials, or, what is most important, attitude or demands of members. One course may have an elaborate system of traps and bunkers while another may have only natural hazards; one may be on stiff clay and another on loose sand; one may require a great deal of artificial drainage, and another may not require any; one course may have good top-soil available for dressings and compost, while another, being on poor soil, may have difficulty in getting supplies. There are so many uncontrollable factors that it is hard to set a standard of cost.

The least controllable of all factors are the members. They seem to act like sheep. First it's one whim and then another. We have one course in mind where the greenkeeper is obliged, in order to satisfy members, to rake and manicure all the traps and bunkers twice a week though they are built in a natural loose sand and would be better traps if left to take care of themselves more or less. A trap without whiskers like a Son of David's is not a regular trap. This brings us to the point we are trying to make, that there can be no standard set for fair cost of maintenance until the essentials of good maintenance are agreed upon in some way, nor can there be a fair comparison of costs until costs are kept on the same system of accounting. What are the essentials of good maintenance? or, What is

good maintenance? or, When is maintenance good? or, What must be done to have good maintenance and what may be omitted? For the present only an Irishman's answer can be given; that is, we must ask those who inquire about what the cost should be, the question, What is good maintenance? Certainly good maintenance is not the variety exhibited on a few *ultra* courses which are kept in championship form every minute of the season. By good maintenance we mean such as permits and requires good golf to be played. It is just as important to have conditions such as to compel good golf to be played as it is to permit it to be played. The game does not contemplate absolute freedom from bad lies, but it is expected that they shall be unusual or uncommon.

To make a start toward an answer to our most-frequently-asked question, we have done a little in the way of working up a system of cost keeping, and to go further we ask, What, in the opinion of our readers, constitutes good maintenance?

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### The Value of Opinions Based on Experience

C. V. PIPER

A famous skeptic once remarked that every idea in this world resolves itself into a matter of opinion, and, so far as he was concerned, "opinion be damned." That is all very well for a metaphysician; but we must play the game of life with the equipment nature has furnished. The mere fact that this equipment enables the race to live and multiply bespeaks at least a partial efficiency. It is of course clearly recognized that opinions based on observations and experience differ, and this applies to practices in growing turf as well as to other things. In the culture of grass turf, there are rather wide divergences of opinion in regard to such matters as watering, mowing, top-dressing, spiking, etc. The conclusion resulting from experience or even from critical experiments at any one place or on a particular soil type is no definite criterion that the conclusion will be found true elsewhere. Therefore the opinions of any one man at a particular place based only on observations and experience are to be taken with a certain measure of allowance.

On the other hand if a number of men each report their conclusions based on observation and experience and there is a considerable degree of accord in their views, the points in which they or most of them agree are to be regarded with great respect. Therefore symposiums on such subjects as mowing, watering, etc., are of high value. If there be practical unanimity of judgment on the value of a certain practice, this judgment may properly be considered a *fact*. Technically it is empirical truth, that is, based only on experience and experiment, but lacking clear explanation.

As to the explanation of any particular fact, it may be relatively easy to advance a dozen hypotheses or guesses. Only by means of critical experiments can the truth or falsity of a hypothesis be tested. It usually requires a relatively enormous amount of evidence to establish the probability or reasonable certainty of a hypothesis, which then advances to the dignity of a scientific theory. If a scientific theory remains valid under all experimental tests, it may be considered established or true. Furthermore, from such a theory various considerations or consequences may be formulated,