

Meeting of the Green Section

Washington, D. C., July 21, 1921

During the Twenty-Fifth Open Golf Championship, which was played at the Columbia Country Club, Chevy Chase, Maryland, members of the Green Section present in Washington at the time held an informal meeting on the evening of July 21 in the grill-room of the Wardman Park Hotel. There was an attendance of about 60. Prof. C. V. Piper, Chairman of the Green Committee of the United States Golf Association, presided.

In the opening address President Howard F. Whitney, of the United States Golf Association, presented a brief outline of the history of the USGA, and discussed in considerable detail the facts and factors that led up to the formation of the Green Section of the USGA. Mr. Whitney spoke in part, as follows:

"It appears from authentic records that Dr. W. S. Harban was the first golfer who went to the U. S. Department of Agriculture for technical assistance in regard to green turf problems. This was in 1906, when he first met Messrs. Piper and Oakley. Two years later when Mr. Charles B. MacDonald was building the National Links near Southampton, Long Island, he encountered such serious problems in attempting to grow satisfactory turf on the old sand dunes that he applied to the Department of Agriculture for help, which was of course accorded. In studying the difficult turf problems at the National Links, the Department scientists came to the realization that the existing knowledge on the subject was very far from adequate and that extensive experimental investigations were necessary. Unfortunately, no funds were available for the purpose; but in cooperation with many golf clubs a considerable amount of investigation was undertaken by the Department men. Much of the information thus garnered formed the basis for a long series of articles in the golf journals by Messrs. Piper and Oakley. The first appeared in January, 1913. These articles were immensely helpful, but in the meantime the needs of the golf clubs for information and advice were increased enormously. In the spring of 1915 the Executive Committee of the USGA waited on the then Secretary of Agriculture, Hon.

David F. Houston, and requested additional help in solving the problems of greenkeeping. The committee pointed out that about \$10,000,000 a year was being spent on the establishment and maintenance of turf by golf clubs, and it was believed that through ignorance half of the money was wasted. As a result of the appeal the turf experiments were begun at Arlington, in the spring of 1916, the results of which having already been of the highest value. An indirect response of the committee's appeal was the publication in January, 1917, of *Turf for Golf Courses*, by Messrs. Piper and Oakley, a work that has been of enormous assistance.

"About the time when the Executive Committee waited on Secretary Houston, the Committee was urged to establish some sort of information bureau, and perhaps publish bulletins by which needed and timely assistance could be rendered to golf clubs. The Executive Committee considered the matter but did not deem the time auspicious for undertaking additional responsibilities. In 1920 Mr. E. J. Marshall, of the Inverness Club, Toledo, Ohio, became strongly impressed with the great need of doing something to help out in the various turf problems confronting golf clubs. His earnest and dynamic personality influenced many prominent golf enthusiasts, in particular, Mr. Hugh I. Wilson, and through their efforts the Executive Committee formally established the Green Section November 20, 1920. The first number of *The Bulletin of The Green Section* was issued February 10, 1921. The eager welcome with which it was received leaves no doubt that this new undertaking was one for which there was urgent need. So far as I can discern this is the first time in the history of sport that its devotees have established a journal purely to promote its growth and welfare. We feel that it marks an important landmark in the progress of golf."

Following President Whitney, Mr. W. D. Vanderpool, Secretary of the Association, made a brief address mainly in reference to the ravages of the brown-patch disease on fine putting-green grasses. This prob-

lem he characterized as the most serious that confronts the golf courses of the United States. Mr. Vanderpool described how they had checked the severe spreading of the disease at the Morris County course, in New Jersey, by spraying with Bordeaux mixture and by applications of sand and charcoal. His observation led him to the conclusion that the disease was more virulent on greens which had not the advantage of a free circulation of air, such as those near woods or in hollows. On the suggestion of their greenkeeper they were about to experiment with applications of flowers of sulphur at Morris County in an effort to check the disease. All present were urged to conduct similar experiments on their own initiative and report the results to the Green Committee of the USGA for the benefit of all concerned.

The Chairman of the Green Committee, Prof. C. V. Piper, then addressed the meeting as follows:

"It seems fitting that on this occasion there should be presented a brief report on the progress thus far made by the Green Section and of the more important problems with which it is confronted. The evident record of its activities are the seven numbers of The Bulletin already issued. In the future, as heretofore, The Bulletin must be the chief medium of a mutual educational campaign that must necessarily be a continuous one. We must not underestimate the amount of repetition necessary to get the ordinary man to understand and to act intelligently. The work of preparing The Bulletin involves much time, and the Service Bureau entails a very large and increasing correspondence. Many letters of warm approval of The Bulletin and the Service Bureau have been received and seem to confirm the Committee's ideas as to the great need of the help it is furnishing.

"There are numerous requests from golf clubs for visits to advise them in reference to their turf problems. At the present time such requests can not be fulfilled, excepting as a member of the Committee may chance to be in the place. It would be highly desirable if the Green Section could afford the services of one or more competent specialists to travel and to assist golf clubs in reference to turf matters, but this is out of the question until its revenues are far greater

COMING EVENTS

- November 17-18**
Arizona Turf Conference
 University of Arizona
 Tucson, Arizona
- November 30-December 1-2**
15th Annual Oklahoma Turfgrass Conference
 Oklahoma State University
 Stillwater, Okla.
- December 5-9**
Fifty-Third Annual Meeting of
American Society of Agronomy
 Morrison Hotel
 Chicago, Ill.
- December 12-13-14**
15th Annual Texas Turfgrass Conference
 Texas A. & M. College
 College Station, Texas
- 1961**
- January 8-9**
Mid-Atlantic Turfgrass Conference
 Lord Baltimore Hotel
 Baltimore, Md.
- January 16-19**
Rutgers-New Jersey Turfgrass Conference
 Rutgers University
 New Brunswick, N. J.
- January 27**
USGA Green Section Educational Program
 New York, N. Y.
- January 29-February 3**
32nd International Turfgrass Conference
and Show—Golf Course Superintendents
of America
 Royal York Hotel
 Toronto, Canada
- February 27-28**
Southern Turfgrass Conference
 Peabody Hotel
 Memphis, Tenn.

than at present.

"Besides the problems limited to grass turf there are many others that confront green committees. Among them are **golf machinery, greenkeepers, buildings, golf architecture, landscaping golf courses, cost of construction, golf course management methods, training greenkeepers, golf courses at minimum costs.**

"There is a large amount of knowledge based on experience in the possession of most golf clubs. It is proposed that this information be gathered by appropriate questionnaires and the data tabulated for the benefit of all interested. In addition it is becoming evident that in certain types of machinery at least we shall need careful comparative tests to determine the relative merits of each make.

"Cornell University has established a 4-year course to train men to be superintendents of parks, golf courses, large private estates, and the like. It may in addition provide a 2-year course to train greenkeepers. This action was taken in

response to a memorial from the Green Committee pointing out the great need that exists. There is reason to believe that some other colleges will establish similar courses of study.

"In this informal meeting there is opportunity to discuss many things of interest to all. Everyone is urged to present any matter of interest that pertains to greenkeeping. At the present moment we are all keenly aware of the menace of brown-patch, the greatest single problem with which greenkeeping is confronted. It may be well to include it in our discussion.

"Until the Green Section enrolls every golf club in the United States, it can not exert its greatest influence. It is recognized that many of the clubs are poor financially, but even so we believe it will be true economy for them to join the Green Section. Manifestly we must make every reasonable effort to secure the enrollment of each golf club, for every one of them has something to teach the rest of us, as well as much to learn."

The speaker then invited those present to inspect, while in Washington, the experimental turf plots which had been established by the Department of Agriculture at Arlington, where among other things, treatments of brown-patch were being conducted and efforts were being made to condition soil so that it would not grow white clover, which had a marked tendency to displace creeping bent in putting greens. He alluded also to experiments under way to circumvent the ravages of brown-patch by seeding on the greens an annual grass, like crab-grass but with finer leaves, which is killed with the first frost but thrives on the greens during the period that the bents and fescues have succumbed. Five or six such annual grasses were being tested. In referring to crab-grass he called attention to the fact that it was not altogether a nuisance. "Imagine the fairways at Columbia at this time with the crab-grass omitted" Professor Piper said, "and you would see only bluegrass languishing during the dry, hot weather of summer." As regards the eradication of crab-grass, though it would not thrive in shade and is killed by frost as well as artificial refrigeration, no practical or economical methods had been devised for the application of such remedies. Neither would it

withstand salt. With this in view, the Department was testing certain grasses that would grow in strong alkali soils for use on putting greens where by applications of salt the alkali grasses would thrive but the crab-grass would perish.

Alluding to the invaluable work of Mr. E. J. Marshall in the organization of the Green Section, the Chairman then introduced Mr. Marshall, who pointed out the great benefits that could be derived from the coupling together of the experience of the thousands of practical greenkeepers throughout the country, with the technical knowledge rendered immediately available by the scientific men belonging to the Department of Agriculture who were whole-heartedly lending their support to the movement. The mediums for the dissemination of this knowledge were The Bulletin of the USGA Green Section and meetings of the delegates to the Green Section. Of great value also were the district green sections and joint meetings of such district green sections, including visits of the delegates and greenkeepers to the various golf courses and discussing on the grounds the many turf problems involved. Such district green sections had already been organized in Detroit, Philadelphia and New York. The good that could be accomplished in this way had already been demonstrated particularly in the case of the Detroit Green Section. It was decided that meetings of the delegates and greenkeepers should be held from time to time, first at one golf course and then at another.

The meeting was then thrown open to general discussion.

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TURF MANAGEMENT

The book "Turf Management," sponsored by the United States Golf Association and edited by Prof. H. B. Musser, is a complete and authoritative guide in the practical development of golf-course turfs.

This 354-page volume is available through the USGA, 40 East 38th Street, New York 16, N. Y., the USGA Green Section Regional Offices, the McGraw-Hill Book Co., 350 West 42nd Street, New York 36, N. Y., or local bookstores. The cost is \$7.