



NEWS LETTER

*“Some men succeed by what they know;
some by what they do; and a few by what
they are.”*

OCTOBER

1939

This NEWSLETTER is published monthly by the Greenkeepers Club of New England, and sent free to its members and their Green's Chairmen. Subscription price ten cents a copy, or a dollar a year.

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West Barrington, R. I.

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October, 1939

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The ideas and opinions expressed in the subject matter of this NEWSLETTER are not necessarily those of the Editor or the members of the club as a whole.

Where is that article YOU were to write for the NEWSLETTER? . . . The R. I. Greenkeepers Association met on October 16th with Tony Guimelli at the Winnesucket G. C., Woonsocket. . . Dr. DeFrance of the R. I. Exp. Station and O. O. Clapper and Dick Finerty of the N. E. Toro Co. were among New Englanders present at the Arlington Turf Plots meeting on September 22nd. They report a very interested and well-attended meeting there. . . The Newport C. C. has five fairways, tidal wave covered last Fall, plowed, harrowed, and seeded this past month to Astoria bent. . . Reports from Kittansett are that the reseeded there of fairways with the alfalfa disc seeder have been very successful. . . To get soluble phosphorus so that it is available to the roots of grass, incorporate the P in the soil before the seed or stolons are planted. . . Bone meal is not advocated for lawn uses. . . Type of lime generally recommended for turf use is ground limestone. . . We recently heard that Rutgers is working on tests for wear quality of turf, basing tests on amount of relative water that can be squeezed out of a given weight of fresh cut clippings, under a certain hydraulic pressure per square inch. . . "Let the grass grow, instead of make it grow". . . Does every department of your club understand the problems of the other departments? . . .

Why not notify us when you have a change in the green committee? We like to keep our records straight. . . From this angle, we believe that a club has a certain moral responsibility to its employees, at least to those who are doing their job well. . . It should not fire any such employee because of a sudden change of committee, or because of any fancied whim of a few members in power. . . Whether you call him a greenkeeper or a golf course superintendent, the work in his charge is too important to intrust to any house manager or pro with no experience or training for the work. . . The Fall is a fine time to make sure that your drainage lines are working properly, and to make corrections where needed. . . Have you noted the recent price jumps in mercury compounds? We'd better have no brown-patch next year, or we'll all be broke! . . . We haven't heard much about the activities of the M. G. A. Service Section Committee this season, is it alive? . . . How about some news for the next NEWSLETTER? . . .

OCTOBER MEETING

The regular monthly meeting was held on the 2nd at the Riverside Golf Club, Weston, Mass. Due to cold and wet weather a smaller crowd than usual was present.

The greenkeeper-green committee chairman tournament was won by Simeone Braio and Henry Doyle of Wachuset with net best ball of 63. Second net went to Frank Wilson and Richard Tefft with net score of 68.

Prizes in medal tournament for greenkeepers without partners were won by following:

A. J. Sperandio, 83-13-70.
Edwin Hansen, 91-20-71.
N. J. Sperandio, 81-10-71.
Sam Mitchell, 97-26-71.

We regret to announce the death of our fellow member, Denis Crowley, on October 3rd. Denis had been greenkeeper at the Wollaston Golf Club for the past 18 years, and before that five years at Tannuck and nine years at North Adams. His widow and two sons survive.

A fine gentleman, always a helpful associate, his passing on is a distinct loss to us all.

FROM THE GROUND—UP The Road to Recognition

by C. K. BRADLEY
Paterson, N. J.

The subject of Greenkeeping Recognition, Dave, starts a train of thought back to 1924. I finished breaking in a man on a remodel job on Long Island, and rejoined the boys at the Ledgemont course in New England. In those days, we fellows would follow the line of construction jobs, and there were plenty of them. It sort of got in the blood, Dave, we were young, and foot loose. Arriving at Ledgemont, I found Bill Keenan from the Ten Mile River course, Paul Steinbarn from Philmont down in Pennsy, and Frank Brady, former time-keeper at the famous Dixie layout in Canada.

MacDonald was doing the rough construction, with Charlie Whipple in charge, Bill and Paul as foremen, and Frank the usual pencil work. My pals put in a word for me, so the club hired me to build the greens, tees and traps, do the seeding and clean-up work, and get the course ready for maintenance. Bill was foreman over the clearing gang, and as he was through blasting out stumps and rocks, turned "Jimmie", his taffy-handler over to Paul who was tending the drainage.

To the workmen, Jimmie had a "come-down" from dynamiting to ditch digging. He did not seem to mind—in fact he liked to dig in the dirt, even though the gang ribbed him, which he took with his ready grin. Good bottom to Jim's ditches—he'd cut right to the grade, with no refill, and possible tile settling later. I made a mental note of this—would like to use Jim later to cover the stone base, when we were ready for placing soil.

One lunch hour, the ditch gang ribbed Jimmie for his "artistic work". He laughed this off with, "If my work and living is digging a ditch, it becomes an art of carving the earth—just as much as cutting stone, engraving metal, or modeling soap. Or if the art is painting a picture, or playing music, it can be done only one right way, if whoever is doing it wants to get any satisfaction of his time spent in this life."

Wow!—The longest speech the man has made, since I met him. That settled things, his philosophy caused me to beg Jimmie away from Paul that night when we got back to the boarding house.

Jim came with me, and to this day, I have not found a better man than he, in golf course grading. I got to know him quite well in the next few months. The men all liked him—a natural leader—and I calculated some day he'd be in charge of a job of his own. He was born in a mining town—parents of two different nationalities. His father was killed in a mine accident, and his mother died from an ailment a few years later. Alone in the world, he shifted about, road building, rigging, any work so long as it was a job. Married at twenty, and at the time we met was twenty-five years old—already on the way to having a large old fashioned family.

Avid reader, this Jimmie. During lunch he'd be absorbed in the Saturday Evening Post, Readers Digest, mechanics, and invention magazines—anything that could teach him something—while the other men swapped stories unfit for a minister's son to hear—you know the kind. We had interests in common. I was a restless scrappy kid in school, had all the chances but did not take advantage of them, and now, was studying to try and make up for lost and wasted time. Jim dubbed me "King Pin", being that I was lanky and skinny—and for other reasons—but that's another story, Dave.

When we pulled up stakes and went to the job near Bloomfield, Jim came along, and sent for his family later. We fellows kept batchelors' hall in the upstairs rooms of the farm house on the job—the "pastafasula", hard white bread and dago red on the menu at the commissary, did not appeal to us. Jim installed his tribe in the rooms below us.

I once remarked to Jim's missus, that he was a great reader. "You don't know the half of it", she said, "He reads at the supper table, and even in the bath room—improves his mind while he fills his belly—or relieves his bowels". Well, that was my habit too—nothing else to do, no place to go, miles away from town as we were. I had a few books on soils and such, and some publications of the old Carter outfit on greenkeeping, so I loaned them to Jim, thinking they might be of interest. I guessed right. Next time he got a chance to go to the main town, he joined the library, and came back with books on gardening, botany, and fertilizers.

With young mouths to feed, and a plot available for a garden, it was not long before he had vegetables growing. He certainly learned things from those

books—judging from the bumper crops his garden yielded. He also had this proverbial “green finger” of gardeners—the house soon had flowers growing around it—and some shrubs he planted then are still there to-day—around what is now the club house.

When construction work was finished, and winter set in, Jimmie moved his family to Florida, to a job that Carl A. was laying out. That was the last I saw of Jim for a number of years.

—Dave, help yourself to those cigarettes on the table, and please toss one over to me.—

I spent my time knocking around, tree surgery, landscape gardening, going to sea in the winter, between construction jobs. Block's private course in Portchester, the Shore Club, Hillsgrove, the State Airport seeding job, course contract maintenance—and the market crash that took me to the cleaners. New jobs were not as numerous as they used to be. I saw the handwriting on the wall, and since I was building a course in New York State, decided to take in a couple of terms of Mass. State Winter School, and gradually take root. One can get around quite a bit in half a dozen years—Dave.

Bill Kennon had settled down—got a job as a civil engineer, with the Big Town, Paul went with a building contractor remodeling factories and the like, and Frank Brady went into the lawn supply business. I was the kid of the bunch, and my wife was beginning to wonder when we were going to settle down too, and I cease living out of a steamer trunk. I wondered what became of Jimmie?

One blazing hot day, at the Newburgh job, finds me busy snake-holing out rocks from the ninth fairway. Dynamite used to not effect me, but this day I've got one terrific headache—can't work with gloves, and begin to think I'm getting soft and sissy. I lit a cigarette to shoot off the string, and was about to yell “fire”, when I saw a car pull in down by the tractor shed. “Just another salesman”, I thought—plenty of them these days, depression you know, and they got to be somewhat of a nuisance.

The driver stepped out of the car, spotted me, and started trotting up the hill. Never saw a salesman run after seed business yet, so stopped to gape at the sight. When he got nearer, lo and behold, I saw it was Jimmie!

I prepared to tell him the best I could offer was fifty cents an hour. We shook hands, slapped each other on the back, then stood off to look each other over. Me, with a headache, and covered with grime. Jim was all dressed up, shoes shined—and oh my gosh—even his finger nails clean! He had heard there was a construction job over this way, and a sassy-scrawny guy in charge that fitted my description, so he drove over to investigate.

He said he too was working, “Have a fine job, my business is to serve the best folks in town with an essential luxury-commodity”. Prohibition was still in effect at the time, so I winked, and asked him if he made his liquor in the bath tub, or got it off the boats? He laughed at this, and advised me he was not a bootlegger, but in the greenkeeping business—18 hole private course paying \$250 a month, with house, light, heat and car operating costs included.

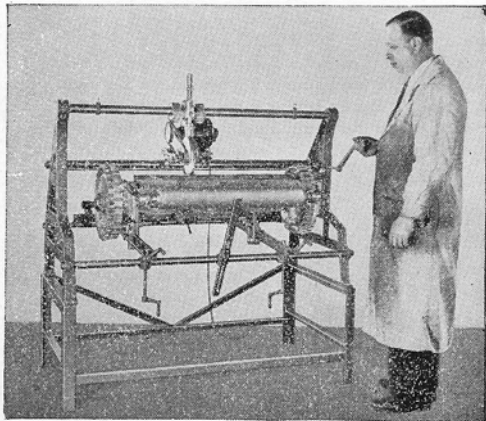
I set off the charges, put the gang to cleaning up the stones, and showed Jim around. He left with my promise to come east and visit him soon. Shortly after, we had a couple of days heavy rain—left the ground a sea of mud, so I shut down operations, and headed for Jim's course.

Arriving at the clubhouse, I inquired as to the whereabouts of “Jimmie the greenkeeper”. I was directed to the “maintenance headquarters” to seek Mr. W---- “the golf course superintendent who had charge of the greenkeepers”. Passing the first tee, I noticed a neat sign worded to the effect that V. J. W. was the superintendent of golf course maintenance, that comments on the course condition by players were welcome—and please deposit same in the box under the sign.

When I go on another course, I look it over in the same manner a man compares another woman to his wife—if you get me. Evidently, Jim was listening to my ideas, expressed back in Bloomfield days. Neatness and precision in maintenance was my first impression of his course. Fairways had good turf, greens the kind one wished for, workmen all wearing the same color, and neat work clothes—all busy doing something with a definite object in mind—no lost motion, or fenagling around. I circled the barn that was tidy all about. Inside, things were put away in order. A large plateau of muck was under different stages of cultivation, part of it in vegetable crops, that I learned later

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were jointly shared by the club house kitchen, Jim's and the greensmen's families.

I entered Jim's office to find him there, amidst his telephone, typewriter, record forms, file cabinets, and reference books. His files contained copies of "Golfdom", commercial circulars, repair parts lists, maintenance records, and costs, all indexed for quick access. I complimented Jim on his thoroughness, and got the low-down on how he obtained the job and what he made of it under depression conditions. . . .

(to be continued in an early issue)

Gene Mauro has recently completed rebuilding the 6th green at Framingham, resodding with some of the old sod and the rest from his nursery. This sod is of mixed bent. Plans call for rebuilding of other greens as time permits.

Wachusett now has a new tee on the 4th hole, making the hole some twenty yards longer. Simeone Braio also reports that his club is planning an extensive Winter program this coming season.

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GRASS FOR THE GOLFER

Dr. A. E. V. Richardson

Council for Scientific and Industrial Research
(Reprint from the Australian Greenkeeper)

The production of grass is a serious business, both for the grass-land farmer and also for the golf greenkeeper. The aims and technique of production of each are entirely different.

The grassland farmer endeavours to produce on a given area of land, at a reasonable expenditure, the maximum amount of nutritious herbage for his grazing animals. He achieves this end by growing a mixed perennial pasture composed of grasses and clovers, and allowing this associated mixture to develop to a growth stage at which it can be used profitably by the grazing animal. Yield or bulk of herbage and nutritional value and palatability at the lowest cost for fertilizers and management are therefore his major objectives. Superphosphate and clover are essential for implementing his policy, for pasture cannot be permanently productive without clover, and clover cannot be maintained without superphosphate.

Clover is essential because these plants gather nitrogen from the air through the nodules on the root system, and the nitrogen so supplied greatly stimulates the growth of grass. The enhanced growth of clover, through the use of superphosphate, results in increased nitrogen fixation and increased yields of grass.

The golf greenkeeper is not in the least concerned with such considerations as yield and bulk of herbage, balance of clovers and grasses, palatability and nutritive value of the herbage. His clients—the golfers—insist on an ideal putting turf, playable for 365 days in the year, resistant to wear, and free from weeds. They want a short, dense mat of grass which will provide a uniformly even and smooth surface to hold the ball on its way to the hole. The greenkeeper aims at securing a putting green composed entirely of a single grass species, or at most two species of similar habit and texture, and in maintaining the turf perennially green, close cropped and free from clovers and weeds. To achieve this objective, he must maintain the green at a standard of fertility and at a moisture level that would be unattainable on a grassland farm run for purposes of profit.

The most competent grassland farmer might therefore make a bad greenkeeper unless he changed his outlook and technique towards grassland production. It is not that the principles underlying production of grass are different on the farm and on the golf course, but rather that the aims and technique of production are utterly different. Official grassland research has necessarily been directed to the technique of economic production of grass on the farm, and only recently has attention been devoted to the technique of producing grass for golfers.

Much attention has been given during the past decade in U.S.A. and Great Britain to the importance of scientific research on grass production on golf courses, with the object of solving the many intricate problems involved. It must, however, be remembered that the climatic conditions of Australia are substantially different from those of England, the eastern portions of the United States, or even of New Zealand, and moreover that the soils are widely different. The practices adopted in these countries could not, therefore, be adopted without substantial modification in Australia, and for these reasons research work is essential to provide a sound basis for Australian greenkeeping practice.

The Victorian Golf Association has taken the initial step in inaugurating test plots on the Riversdale Golf Links, and investigational work of such a nature is essential to an understanding of the problems involved in maintaining golf courses in an efficient condition.

Classification of Golf Course Problems

The major problems on golf courses may be classified as follows:

1. The choice of the most appropriate species and strains of grass for use on fairways and on putting greens.
2. The maintenance, by the use of appropriate fertilizers, of a standard of fertility, particularly on putting greens, that will maintain the selected grasses in perfect ecological balance.
3. The control of weed competition and of clovers, especially on putting greens, and the maintenance of a weed-free, disease-free turf.

With respect to grass species, couch grass (*Cynodon dactylon*) is used almost exclusively on fairways, and in many localities it must be used as a basis for putting greens. It is hardy, easily established, and the cost of maintenance is low. It is, however, purely a

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summer grower, and is at its worst during a large portion of the golfing season. There are many strains of couch grass of widely different types, varying from coarse-leaved types to those with a leaf almost as fine as fescue. A great variation exists, too, in the growth period of strains, and there is a great opportunity for isolating and propagating pure strains of couch for widely different habitats and uses.

The most satisfactory grasses for putting greens are Bent (*Agrostis*) and Fescue (*Festuca*) species. Formerly, greens were usually sown with a mixture of bent and fescue, but turf composed of a single species is becoming increasingly popular. Many species of bent grasses have been used for putting greens, e. g., Brown-top (*Agrostis tenuis*), of which there are many strains, including the New Zealand, Rhode Island, and several Victorian naturalized types; the true creeping bent (*Agrostis stolonifera*), including cocoos, Sydney or Albert Park bent, and the various American strains; velvet bent (*Agrostis canina*) forming very dense turf of fine-leaved grass.

Certain of the fescues, e. g., Chewings, are of particular value for putting greens. Like brown-top, Chewings fescue forms a dense mat of fine texture and is persistent. Brown-top and Chewings' fescue, by their habit of growth, blend well together and make an almost ideal turf. Brown-top, however, needs a higher fertility standard and thrives under moister conditions than fescue, and it is therefore more difficult to maintain a mixture of these grasses in perfect condition than either of them separately. In a mixed grass lawn of brown-top and fescue, the greenkeeper must aim at maintaining the fertility standard and the soil moisture standard at a sufficiently high level to permit both of these grasses to make a balanced growth without dominance of either species. If the fertility standard is too low or the turf receives insufficient moisture, the tendency will be for the fescue to become dominant, whilst a high fertility standard leads to the dominance of brown-patch.

Appropriate Fertilizers

The maintenance, by the use of appropriate fertilizers, of high standards of fertility, is one of the outstanding problems in the maintenance of golf greens. Nitrogen in large quantities is the most essential fertilizer. It must be

applied at a rate per acre that would bankrupt a grassland farmer. There are many forms in which nitrogen may be applied—sulphate of ammonia, nitrate of soda, blood manure, nitrochalk, etc. Each has its own peculiar value and results, and the form to use depends on the purpose for which it is applied. The green, however, may be made or marred by the form in which nitrogen is applied.

Sulphate of ammonia is unquestionably the most useful all-round form of nitrogen on golf greens. Applied in adequate quantities at sufficiently frequent intervals on a good turf of brown-top or brown-top and fescue, especially with an occasional dressing of sulphate of iron, it gives a continuously green, weed-free, worm-free turf, whereas the application of equivalent quantities of nitrogen in the form of nitrate of soda, ammonium phosphate, or nitrochalk, may give quite different results. We need not here consider the scientific reasons for this, beyond observing that the continued application of sulphate of ammonia leads to an increase in the "acidity" or the hydrogen-ion concentration of the soil. This—again in marked contrast to farming practice—is an advantage for golf greens, as it tends to confine the herbage exclusively to gramineous species, to improve the grass, and reduce the weed content. Weed invasion is apparently inhibited under acid soil conditions.

Quantities of sulphate of ammonia approximating 3 cwt. per acre per annum (or approximately $\frac{1}{2}$ oz. per sq. yard every two months), is the minimum quantity that should be applied on brown-top or brown-top-Chewings' fescue greens. An occasional dressing with a supplement of sulphate of iron, applied at the rate of 1 cwt. per acre per annum in two or three applications, improves the green colour of the grass, reduces fungus diseases, kills clover, and reduces the weed content of the greens.

Loss of Plant Nutrients

With the regular and frequent mowing of fine turf there is a substantial loss of all plant nutrients. If the clippings can be conserved and returned to the turf in the form of a suitable compost, the phosphorous and potash will be returned in the proportions needed by the grass. A portion of the nitrogen may be returned, though substantial losses are inevitable under any system

of preparing compost. Grass clippings mixed with friable loam and allowed to stand in a stack until well rotted make a valuable material for treating greens.

Experience tends to show that lime is neither necessary nor advantageous on golf greens, even as a means of correcting high acidity of the soil. The position in regard to phosphates requires investigation. On the farm, soluble phosphates are indispensable and fundamental as a means of raising fertility. On the experimental areas at Riversdale Golf Links, heavy applications of ground rock phosphate have given turf of attractive appearance and colour equal to any turf on the experimental area.

One striking feature of experimental work carried out on turf is that many effects of treatment, particularly the effects of manures, cannot be observed in one year, but require several seasons before either the full benefits or the disadvantages of specific treatments become apparent.

The Weed Problem

The destruction of weed population and clover on putting greens is a problem of importance on golf greens, but this, as shown above, is largely a matter of manuring and management.

The destruction of weeds on fairways is of considerable importance on many golf courses. Recently the whole of the fairways of two excellent holes at one of the golf links in the metropolitan area had to be ploughed up, planted with couch and bent stolons, and put out of action for a substantial period to eradicate *Plantago*.

There are several methods of controlling the weed population on fairways, and particularly the types of weeds such as *Plantago*, *Hypochaeris*, etc., with a rosette of leaves closely addressed to

the soil. One laborious method is the mechanical removal of such weeds with hoes and other hand implements. Another method is the "spotting" of these weeds with individual doses of weedicides. A more promising method is the use of a weedicide spray, the strength and concentration of which was so adjusted that it would kill such rosette weeds without materially injuring the more resistant gramineous plants such as couch, which forms the basis of the fairway.

This method of controlling weeds has been used with success on experimental pasture plots in Adelaide. *Oxalis* or "sour-sob," for example, and capeweed, are particularly susceptible to sodium chlorate solution at concentrations of 2½% to 3%, whereas the shiny, smooth leaves of perennial rye-grass are practically unaffected by such a concentration. Hence a large measure of control of sour-sob or capeweed may be secured by several sprayings of sodium chlorate at a concentration so adjusted as to administer a severe check to the sour-sobs without affecting the rye-grass.

The possibility of adjusting the concentration of a weedicide either to kill or to administer a severe check to the weed without seriously impairing the grasses of the fairway—couch or bent—is one which is worthy of exploitation by golf experimentalists.

It must be remembered that one species of *Plantago*—rib grass—which causes so much trouble on fairways, has actually been sold by seed merchants as a pasture plant. The various species of *Plantagos* and *Hypochaeris* (or flat weed), though a nuisance on the fairways, are not unwelcome in farm pastures.

The general condition of golf fairways at any given time is a reflex of the

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past management, i. e., manuring, top-dressing methods, and times of cutting, watering, etc., which has been applied to such fairways, and the sward is never static in character but markedly dynamic and responsive to a marked degree to skilful management methods.

The main purpose of this brief article is to suggest that there is wide scope for research and investigation on the best methods of maintenance and management of golf greens and fairways, the selection of the best strains of grasses for greens and fairways, and for the development of more effective means of controlling undesirable weeds, and determining the extent to which soil fertility, species, and management may be harmonized and blended to produce an ideal environment for the golfer.

Parts of a Letter from C. K. Bradley, Read at R. I. Field Day—

I was in hopes of being present on this, the eleventh birthday of the Rhode Island Greenkeepers' Club. Ten years ago, on this day, I had the honor to be host to the club when we held our first organization meeting at Bonnet Shores. Due to fall work and vacation schedules being what they are, I regret that I cannot attend the meeting to-day. If I cannot be with you in person, at least I am in spirit, and I am again honored to take some part in this programme.

Ten years ago, few of us made regular visits to the Experiment Station, or had a comprehensive idea of the excellent work done here. We were riding the crest of a boom that was soon to collapse. Back in '29, Doctor Odland and Mr. North told me that some of the turf plots were then 35 years old. Last March, at the Recreation Conference in Amherst, President West told the assemblage that the main interest in the R. I. Greenkeepers' Club to-day centers upon the cooperation with its Experiment Station.

This is good—for when research in any form is regarded in the broad and general aspects that fit in with others,

and diversified education—research becomes stimulating and progressive. Whenever research is mentioned, I am inclined to think of another word in connection, and that is REVIEW.

We have passed through a decade of depression of business, and study on how to attain better turf within to-day's budgets, through soil and chemical means, to mention but a few.

Now let us be coldly practical—or material (if that sounds better). Ten years, despite a business depression, freak weather, and a hurricane and we have attained better turf through research, business enterprise, and our applied knowledge. We realize this. Do those we serve recognize us for it? Do we get better pay for a better product attained at less cost? Our greensmen are more skilled—are they better paid—do they work a longer season? Do our golf patrons and the public KNOW what we are, what we have accomplished? I think not, for if this were the case, we would be getting paid in proportion to our worth, and we would not have such things occur as, for instance, men of high calibre discharged from greenkeeping positions—and novices put in their places—in the name of "economy and efficiency".

"Politics" in golf clubs to-day, as in other things, is the wasteful costly factor. We owe to our clubs, our turf and ourselves, the efforts to lead our golfers away from this folly. This is a phase of greenkeeping that we all will do well to consider, and upon which to act in the NEXT ten years.

Keep up the good work with the Experiment Station, but let us who apply the findings, capitalize on our absorbed knowledge, and prove the value of it to our golfers. After a greenkeeping organization has survived ten years, it enters what is known as the "long pants age". We have graduated from school here in Rhode Island, and now it is time to go to work. In all sincerity, I therefore suggest that each and every greenkeeper in Rhode Island join the progressive strides being made by the Greenkeeping Superintendents' Association.

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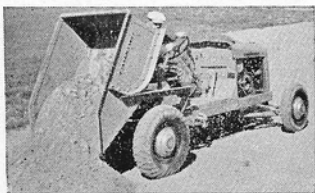
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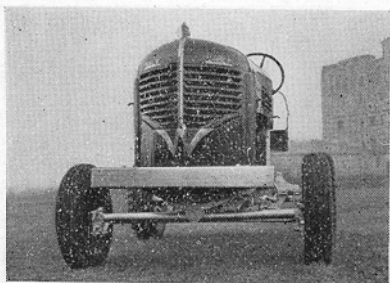


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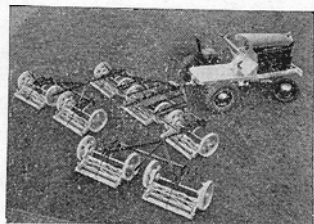
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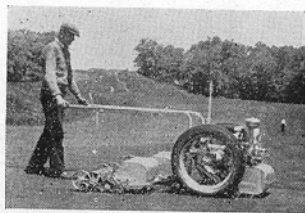
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