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Pros Probe Progress Problem of P. G. A.

By ALEX PIRIE, President P. G. A.

THE article in September GOLFDOM on the "P. G. A. Hour of Destiny Is Here," contains some opinions and recommendations with which I am not in agreement. This same article also contains many paragraphs that are full of good solid meat. Undoubtedly it has done some good in focusing the attention of P. G. A. members on matters that can be thrashed out by the delegates to our national meeting at Cleveland in November. Let us hope that every sectional association affiliated with the National P. G. A. will send their delegates to Cleveland with a clear expression of what they desire, as it is only by such means that wise decisions can be arrived at.

One of the major problems of the P. G. A. is that of acquainting not only its own members, but golf and country club officials, with the activities and status of this organization.

In the GOLFDOM article there are several evidences of lack of information and understanding. One of these points concerned the P. G. A. championship's award to its winner. As a matter of fact, this tournament is one of the greatest "big money" events of the year. Last year at Dallas the prize money—inclusive of railroad fare to Dallas for those who qualified—was over \$15,000, and the first prize is



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\$1,000. At the Five Farms Course of the Baltimore Country Club the prize money this year will be in the neighborhood of \$11,000, and the first prize will again be \$1,000. Chambers of commerce and other civic organizations are fully aware that an all-star pro event, such as the P. G. A. National, is good publicity, and bid accordingly.

Must "Watch the Step"

The potentialities of the P. G. A. as a money making organization for its members are of such a character that they can be sadly mishandled unless keen and truly interested singularity of purpose is exercised in advancing them. We must protect the P. G. A. against exploitation by promoters who may endanger the pro reputation for good clean sportsmanship or tend to undo all that has been done towards keeping the business of our organization free from taint. There is one detail of the interesting—but not by any means new—suggestion of a paid managing director of the P. G. A. made by GOLFDOM to which I, personally, am strongly opposed. That is the notion that the manufacturers of golf supplies contribute a part of such an executive's salary. No doubt there is plenty of work such a man could do to advance the interests of the P. G. A. as an organization more thoroughly

equipped to properly handle its affairs, but the question always arises: How are we to raise the money necessary to pay for the entire time and faithful services of such a competent, energetic and tactful man as would be required to fill this position? As executive salaries go in general business, such a man would command a yearly salary of \$15,000 to \$20,000, or he would not be the kind of a man we could use to the best advantage. Now where would there be any reason in nullifying the capabilities of such a man by starting him off to serve two employers, the professional golfer and the manufacturers of golf supplies? Indirectly, he might be of some profit to the manufacturers in the work he could do in connection with P. G. A. merchandising educational ambitions, but first of all his work would have to be intimate to us and us only. I consider this proposed participation of the manufacturers in the affairs of the P. G. A. would be an embarrassing alliance for all concerned.

At various national meetings of the P. G. A., consideration has been given the matter of increasing the dues in both national and sectional bodies, dividing same increase and applying the additional income to their respective needs. As is usual in all such matters, in any field, the camp is about evenly divided whether or not the dues shall be increased.

Membership Possibilities

Out of approximately 3,000 professional golfers in the United States I estimate about 2,000 could meet the present requirements and qualify for membership in the P. G. A. Say the dues were \$25.00 a year! The National organization's half of the income if all qualified professionals were members of the P. G. A. would be \$25,000 annually. On paper this amount looks as though we ought to be able to pay an able competent man to personally conduct and carry out any progressive policies which our organization may agree upon from time to time. As a matter of cold fact, however, the getting of this \$25.00 per year dues from our membership is very much in doubt as there exists a big question in the minds of many of our members whether such an increase in the dues is necessary. That's where we come right up against a blank wall in considering the employment of a "Landis" for the P. G. A.

and let me say that never has the game of golf needed a commissioner for the same reason baseball had to get its man. Also that I am positive professional golf will never require a man to maintain it in good standing with the public.

Membership Status

This year's membership report of the P. G. A. will probably show a decrease. The officials of the organization will not evade responsibility for this and will not try to hide it from pros or club officials. Such a loss will be a sign of strength because it will mean that the P. G. A. can say to the boys they must co-operate in a business-like way that will be a credit to their profession and properly reflect the highest principles of the organization or they don't get the certificate of membership to display in their shops. This certificate is more and more being recognized as the hall-mark of an honest square-dealing golf pro. The P. G. A. certificate of membership means something to the pro displaying it. It means to his club that it has a pro with whom his comrades in the profession have entrusted their reputations. It reminds the pro that he has a responsibility to live up to. It means to the manufacturer that he is doing business with a trustworthy man. These are undoubted facts and the P. G. A. is giving them the widest and most impressive circulation. What we all want to do is to get together for the advancement of the pro interests, which, of course, are all wrapped up in promotion of more golf and greater pleasure for the golfers.

If a managing director will help, let's have him, provided we can afford him. If we can't, then we will have to continue doing our level best along the lines which have resulted in the steady progress we have already made. In the meantime the P. G. A. asks of its members that they bear in mind all their responsibilities have not been discharged when they pay their dues. To get anywhere we must all work together, confining our criticisms to constructive subjects. If we do this and concern ourselves with that which concerns us the P. G. A. will soon secure for itself as high a position in the game of golf as any professional organization working for the interests of those who compose it can hope to attain.