

"No!"

Says E. W. HARBERT

[Pro, Battle Creek, Mich.,
Country Club]

IS PRICE ALMIGHTY

AFTER reading the articles that Wille Ogg and Herb Graffis had in March GOLFDOM, in which they ask for opinions from other pros, I am taking this opportunity to express my view based on my own case.

I have discontinued the idea of price cutting and banished the notion of chain stores hurting my business inasmuch as I don't think they hurt me or the other pros at the exclusive clubs. If they do, it is mostly the pros' fault. I do think it is just a matter of education on the pros' part.

The pro can educate his members to buy from him if he wants to work a little. Of course, there are a few "bargain hunters" in every club who will buy cut-price merchandise anyway. If one cannot win them over to his side, the only thing to do is forget them.

I do think cut price does hurt the public course pros and just a few in the smaller clubs. But I also think that the more wood one puts on the fire the larger the fire.

I hope sometimes that the pros willorget, and not talk about price cutting. As far as chain stores are concerned, I think that is for the manufacturer to remedy.

Mr. Ogg said he did not know whether the manufacturers wanted to, or did not care to, maintain prices, and did not care for the pros. I think he is right in the case of some unknowing manufacturers, for if these manufacturers did care, they would not sell to every purchasing agent of any concern who has one, or to anyone writing in and saying he is an agent for buyers or makers.

I have established a policy in my club that if a member asks me the price I pay for a certain article I am very glad to show him the invoice and he knows just what the article costs. As a rule they are business men and know I am classed as a business man and try to be. Then there is no question about buying. They also know I am not overcharging them for my stock, and as a result I think I have about 100 per cent backing of my members.

One store in our town owned by one of my members had quite a sale on some

Is price a peril to pro golf merchandising? With the cut-price stores trying their best to lure unthinking trade is the pro right to stick to the idea that "quality remains long after the price is forgotten," or to fight the devil with fire? At the private clubs the situation is not acute, but with the public and daily fee courses developing new players by the thousands, these courses are face to face with the problem.

It seems to be a matter of deciding

clubs. They were mostly dead stock from another town brought in for this purpose as leaders. I watched this very closely, and one club came to my shop in a bag. The member who purchased it came to me and apologized for doing it. He later threw the club away. The owner of the store and I have laughed about the suckers coming in and buying these clubs. This man is a very smart golfer, not as a player, but as a student of golf in all the branches.

The above case did hurt at least two other pros, for there were about 1,000 clubs in this lot and all of them were sold out. These same pros were helpless. What I meant by education of the members would be to explain as often as possible to each and every member that you are buying the best merchandise money can buy, maintaining a price for a profit, plus the service. Personal service, both in your shop and on the course, is what they are entitled to as shop purchasers.

Manage to have a few clubs just as cheap as the other fellow for showing only and not to sell, unless you have to, which would be only if a player insisted on buying. Just sell it without any obligation on your part, and I have found this overcomes one of my hardest problems.

Of course, one could talk and write on this subject for quite a while, but as far as I am concerned, I am going to try to forget the price cutter and chain store and just go to work and work hard as hell.