

# Pros Contemplate Starting Co-op Buying Bureau

IT IS evident that the last annual meeting of the Professional Golfers' association of America dug into the merchandising aspects of the pro's job in a manner that may have far reaching consequences. Now Willie Ogg, chairman of the committee appointed at the Cleveland meeting to investigate the pro buying situation, has made the first announcement of the activity to the general public.

Ogg's statement concerning the plan was made to W. E. Mullins of the Boston Herald. The part of the interview that is authoritative, according to Ogg's confirmation to GOLFDOM, says of the P. G. A. buying investigation:

"At the annual meeting of the Professional Golfers Association of America in Cleveland some weeks ago the subject was discussed in detail and the outcome was the appointing of a committee charged with the duty of forming a buying syndicate of national scope which will restore the professionals to a position in which they will be more firmly entrenched than they ever have been.

"The new scheme will hit the golfers in their most tender spots, their pocketbooks, because if it succeeds the price of balls and clubs will undergo a huge reduction and if the professionals can prove to the millions of golfers in the country that they can reduce the cost of golf, they will emerge from the struggle for supremacy with victory perching on their banners.

"Willie Ogg of the Worcester Country Club has been designated as chairman of the newly formed committee, and therefore the shrewd Scot from Carnoustie is in the best position to explain the new venture. Here is what he has to say about it:

"If we succeed in our endeavor to give the golfers cheaper golf the professionals will become valuable adjuncts to the club. We intend to organize a buying syndicate. Thus, we will be in a position to meet any competition and undersell it because no one can buy as cheaply as we can and, having less overhead and no thoughts of a

middleman's profit, we can pass the savings along to the players.

"The cost of selling products to the professionals as individuals is enormous and far out of proportion to the price of the products. The manufacturing concerns with which I have discussed the venture have given it their approval because they will make more profit than they do now, even with giving us a higher discount, because risk will be eliminated and the selling expenses greatly reduced.

"There are 1,800 members of the P. G. A. with an estimated buying power of \$7,000 a year for each member. Although that figures up to more than \$12,000,000 it really is a conservative estimate.

## Seek the Support of Players

"We want the moral support of the golfers, the clubs and the governing bodies, and I predict that we will have it because the members will benefit from it. The professional will not need a salary with all his members trading in his shop, because he will be amply repaid by the increased volume of business and his position with the clubs will be made more secure.

"We have not yet canvassed all the manufacturers and we have not yet discussed the subject with the United States Golf Association, but after we have explained to both we do not anticipate any objection."

## Still in Embryo

The P. G. A. enterprise is still very much in the formative stage, although some sections of the national body, notably the Mid-West P. G. A., have been doing some collective buying successfully.

In the Herald's story reference is made to the operation of the various service bureaus in buying for the greenkeeping department of the golf business, and the inference is made that this buying threatens the merchandising future of the pros on an independent and co-operative basis. There's nothing to this angle of it, states Ogg, for the sale of golf goods as a club proposition, having had its test, is a prac-

tically dead issue, selling generally having returned to the supplying of golf goods to the players by competent pro merchandisers.

Collective buying as a practical proposition has its limitations and its disappointments, as has been demonstrated by Russia on a grand scale and on a lesser scale in innumerable cases. But there is no denying that in certain instances, and under expert management, it has simplified and saved in the golf field. To just what extent the P. G. A. can profitably and properly go is still a matter engaging the studious attention of Ogg and his committee associates. No matter how successfully the quantity buying works out, we doubt that it will bring the day when "the professional will not need a salary with all his members trading in his shop." This part of the interview we question as a correct transcript or interpretation of Willie's remark. The facts, as indicated at the vast majority of clubs where P. G. A. members are located as professionals, won't justify the statement and for that reason the canny Ogg, who knows the situation from the ground up, undoubtedly wouldn't make such a far reach for the millenium.

### The Mid-West Plan

Young "Chick" Trout, who is pro at Topeka, (Kan.), and president of the Mid-West P. G. A., is one of the bright youngsters who are progressive pro business men. He says, of the Mid-West idea of pooling purchases:

"We have organized a purchasing department, which pools our purchases and we pay cash upon arrival of the goods. We have a capable business man of Kansas City who does all the ordering and pays the manufacturer.

"Then when he delivers to us we pay him. We are able to get a nice discount because our combined order goes in at once. The manufacturer only has one account instead of say 30 or 40.

"We feel that this will help the pro with his credit. Instead of him having a great quantity of goods come in at one time, he will have smaller shipments, be able to take his discount and reorder.

"He will soon find himself a better buyer, that is he will be buying goods that he feels he can sell because he knows it is his, because he pays for it upon arrival and because he must get his money out."

### Where Makers Stand

Just what the reaction of the manufac-

turers is to the proposed plan will continue to be a matter of conjecture until definite details of P. G. A. tentative buying pool ideas are available. A reduction of manufacturers' selling expense and credit losses together with big volume business is something that ordinarily justifies price concessions made out of savings, but there are so many slips between the cup of theory and the lip of practice that the pros and manufacturers both have a lot to consider before they can declare dividends out of the hoped-for new profits. In any event, the slightest discouragement of expert individual action in the selection of pro shop merchandise, is to be avoided, and the tiniest element of "racketeering" coercion would be fatal. In the hands of the Ogg committee the manufacturers may be assured that full and fair consideration will be given the makers' interests in order that the entire enterprise, if found feasible, may be worked out for the common good.

## U. S. Construction Methods Adopted in England

MESSRS. FRANK HARRIS BROS., builders of more than 200 English golf courses, among them the Eden course at St. Andrews and the Royal Wimbledon, have been making extensive use of American methods and equipment in their operations, according to J. W. Collis, managing director, Tractor Traders, Ltd. At present they are working on some 300 acres of Windsor Great Forest, once the hunting ground of the kings of England.

Two 18-hole golf courses are being constructed with a large clubhouse for the accommodation of the members of both courses.

Between 3,000 and 4,000 acres are available for building, but the immediate scheme is to be confined to 1,200 acres, exclusive of the 300 required for the golf courses. Given good weather, it is hoped to have the courses ready for play by the first of the playing season.

There are 100 acres of tree roots to be removed, and this work is being done shortly by the two-ton and five-ton "Caterpillar" tractors.

These tools have now been at work long enough to demonstrate the great saving to be effected as against the method of horses and slip scrapers as before employed.