

Pros and Makers Study "Hall Plan" of Buying

By HERB GRAFFIS

WHAT some close students consider the most logical foundation for a pro collective buying plan is that proposed by Charles Hall, pro at the Country Club, Birmingham, Ala., and president of the Southeastern P. G. A.

In brief, the Hall plan calls for the pros placing their orders for opening of the season stocks at the close of the previous season. It involves advance cash payments to be handled by sums deposited with the various sections of the P. G. A. and paid to the manufacturers in the fall when the orders are placed. This, Hall and the supporters of his plan maintain, would fully earn a substantial discount because of the firm orders it would give manufacturers far enough ahead to enable them to keep a good factory force on during the winter and because of the financing it would provide for factories during the selling "off season." Sums based on each pro participant's annual buying would be required as a down payment in advance before the individual pro could share in the additional discount contemplated in the plan.

The pros who are entertaining high hopes for the adoption of the general policy of this plan point out that basically it is one that brings about a consummation devoutly to be wished by the manufacturers. Many of the boys are stirring up discussion of the plan so when the Ogg collective buying committee reports at the P. G. A. annual meeting to be held at Atlanta the first week in November some definite agreement with the manufacturers may be reached as the Golf Club Manufacturers' association will hold its convention in the Georgia metropolis at the same time.

View Various Angles

One of the shortcomings of golf as a business is the seasonal element. Despite the popular impression that everyone in the golf business is getting richer faster than the cash registers can ring up the totals, it takes only a few minutes with pros or manufacturers to reveal that the public is getting its golf goods cheap, considering

the factors that have a heavy bearing on profits in any business that has a pronounced peak load and a sales curve valley that the resort business of the south and California can't push up to the point where any degree of a reasonably even level is maintained.

Some of the probers of the plan raise the question of pro financing on this basis. When a pro gets through his season the prospect of several months of non-productive time may cause him to keep the band tightly wrapped around the roll rather than take an increased profit next year by cutting loose from a very respectable part of what his net earnings have been during the previous season. This is answered by the plan's proponents by saying that it would be a good thing if the pros would be educated in availing themselves of their bankers' help in financing. It would be a great education in business methods and an ever present incentive to thrift with bankers on the job as assistant guardian angels of the pros' money.

As we see it, the plan also would provide some impetus to more effective pro merchandising because the boys would be anxious to get their money back as soon as they could the following spring.

May Help Earlier Hiring

At the start, the plan as now outlined, would mean that the biggest savings would be for the pros who are in the best positions for they are the ones who are so sure of their jobs the spring following that they can go ahead and order. The other fellows would have to take a long chance or be out of luck. Perhaps in the latter respect it would serve to correct one of the lamentable conditions the pro has to face—the late hiring of the clubs. During the course of a year GOLFDOM is directly instrumental in getting approximately a hundred pros and greenkeepers located. About nine-tenths of these are engaged in the six weeks immediately before the opening of the season. It makes it tough for the pros for they are the victims of uncertainty all winter, the club

doesn't get the benefit of having some good man spend his winter planning how he is going to serve his new club with surpassing satisfaction next season, and we spend a lot of the time, at a period vital to our own financial salvation, writing, wiring, telephoning and visiting clubs and fellows who want to get signed up.

If the pros have something that will get the clubs to sign up their men well in advance, by having it generally known what it means to the pro's actual cash outlay for the merchandise he will offer to the members, it may serve to eliminate this thoughtless and avoidable delay in hiring.

What Help to Makers?

What seems on surface inspection to be a quite helpful and important phase of the plan is the aid that will be extended to the manufacturers' financing. To what extent this will be of assistance it is impossible to determine as it calls for prying into business details that properly are private property. However we always have held to the opinion that the pros should not unreservedly criticize club makers for letting go of big and partly frozen stocks of merchandise in the plant when the goods meant conversion of a frozen asset into cash required by good business judgment and nature's first law of self-preservation. Our howl has been in voicing the pros' protest that such sales are often made without consideration of the pros' right of protection against price demoralization—a right he has earned by making the golf market and by keeping in the saddle as the one who primarily forms and guides the public preference in golf goods.

With the pros buying in big units, paying in advance, and ironing out the expensive and violent variations in the manufacturing curve they give the manufacturers a big money inducement ranking the pros as buyers with the large spot cash stores. When these stores get busy with the bait of spot cash, it must be conceded by any pro who knows his business A. B. C.s that a manufacturer is going to be sorely tempted even though the manufacturer knows the store buyer is going to take the maker's pound of flesh in beating the price down.

Pro Advance Must Continue

That point is brought up by those who think Charley Hall has put forth the germ of the idea that eventually will develop into a solution of the pros' problem of

buying on a fairly balanced basis with the rest of the retail golf trade.

During the past couple of years the pro has shown an astounding progress in his merchandising at his club. There is no manufacturer who is in intimate contact with the golf field who hesitates to concede this truth and to compliment the pro for coming out and claiming his due when it was being subjected to question—question that now has been definitely banished. If the Hall plan is the one that Willie Ogg's committee passes on for action at the Atlanta meeting as being the one it thinks will be valuable to the manufacturers as well as to the pros, then it is up to the makers.

In the meanwhile it will do no harm to thoroughly thresh out the plan, for and against, so each phase may be thoroughly surveyed and appraised. Any comments that pros or manufacturers have to make on the basis of this plan as above set forth, or any suggestions of policy or of detail that may be advanced, GOLFDOM will be glad to receive for publication, either under the writer's signature or anonymously, as the writer instructs us.

Midwest Greenkeepers' Show Set for Sept. 9

SECOND annual equipment demonstration of the Midwest Greenkeepers association will be held at Sunset Valley Golf club, Highland Park, Ill., Sept. 9. The initial presentation of this event was well attended despite the rain and brought forth many interesting and practical demonstrations.

Greenkeepers, green-chairmen and supply men are invited by the Midwest organization to attend the affair and to make demonstrations of equipment and supplies. Details relative to exhibits may be secured from Peter Stewart, Sec. of the Midwest Greenkeepers association, 543 Central ave., Highland Park, Ill.

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