

K. C. Pros Plan Exchange of Inventory Data

ONE OF THE plans that the P. G. A. members in the Kansas City sector are considering for 1932 deserves some attention from other sections of the organization. The Kansas City boys plan to bring to their meeting the first of next July full lists of the merchandise they have in their shops at that time. From this inventory data the boys will be able to compare notes and exchange unsold goods so end of season inventories will be reduced to the minimum.

The experiment is to be conducted by the boys as a test proposition in the hope that it will convert the largest possible amount of merchandise into cash that will come in handy during the winter and provide some liquid capital for financing the following spring's purchases on the 7 per cent discount basis. Wm. Wotherspoon, professional and president of Old Mission G. C. told GOLFDOM about the plan and the hopes the K. C. pros entertained for the manner in which this plan might be profitable to the pros and the manufacturers.

Wotherspoon does not believe that the plan will work miracles to the extent that it will enable the careless buyer to command the assistance of other pros in unloading junk he has bought. However, he does believe that the careful buyer, who may have been somewhat over-confident in ordering or who has been bumped by conditions at his club, will be able to work his way out without having his surplus dam up on him.

Psychological Factor.

Bill further believes that psychological element will enter into the arrangement and prove a stimulus to bigger sales. He considers that some of the pros may take stuff off of the other fellows' hands and put the heat on in selling this merchandise in the perfectly human and pardonable effort to show the other hombre who is the master salesman.

One thing it is believed the plan will do when followed up monthly late in the season is enable the pros to take better sales advantage of good playing weather in the latter part of the autumn. This year there

were a lot of good days with heavy play in October but the boys lost out on sales because they were afraid to carry enough merchandise to risk being stuck by the sudden advent of winter.

All merchandise will be exchanged at the price the pro paid for it. This will give the P. G. A. section a responsibility of seeing that the goods are paid for as there will be some embarrassing complications if it is found that one pro turned over unpaid-for goods to another professional who paid the first pro cash for the goods.

Wotherspoon advances another argument for the plan when he says that in helping each pro to clean out his stock it will eliminate the blame that the pro puts on the manufacturers' salesman for overloading in the event the pro is stuck with some of the order at the end of the year. "It's just human nature on the part of the pro," says the Old Mission man, "to blame the salesman for selling him too much too late in the season rather than take the blame himself for poor judgment."

Idea Is Not New.

In investigating the profitable possibilities of the proposed operation, GOLFDOM consulted some of the manufacturers. George Mattern, of Crawford, McGregor and Canby, commented:

"I think it is a good move if the boys would get together about mid-season and find some way to turn their merchandise to each other and co-operate in every way to move their stocks.

"The plan is nothing new. All you have to do is get in touch with Bert Way and Jack Smith of Cleveland for details of its earlier working. As I recall, a few years ago when Jack Smith was pro at the Highland C. C. which is a public course, about mid-season all the boys in Cleveland turned over to him merchandise that was not moving and Jack would put it on sale at almost any price to clear the decks. Personally, I think it worked out fine and was of benefit to all Cleveland pros. I also feel a policy of this kind would work out O. K. in Kansas City and be an advantage to both pros and manufacturers. As you know,

Herb, after all the big idea is to clean off the shelves and get goods into the hands of the consumers."

After getting this tip from Pop we got Bert Way to tell how the stunt worked. The Mayfield mentor advises:

"The plan George Mattern mentions was in operation here before the matched sets of clubs became so popular. Jack Smith, being at a public course, was successful in disposing of many odd clubs. I think I sold him more than 200 assorted irons and woods. Jack also took many clubs off Colin Dow's hands. I think the idea of the boys in Kansas City is a good one and believe they can help each other out in the way you mention. Joe Mitchell and I have done something along this line for a long time."

Keeping the stocks balanced and full enough to keep from loosing sales recommends the K. C. move. Julian W. Curtiss, president of A. G. Spalding & Bros. commends the idea by saying:

"Anything that tends to get stock cleaned up and in the finest possible condition is something you may be sure A. G. Spalding & Bros. approve of in the strongest possible fashion.

"I always have cautioned our salesmen that they never are to try to load up any customer. They are to watch and see that their customers have enough of everything but never too much; that is a very important part of their job."

Not Entire Salvation

A. L. Mercer, pres., Vulcan Corp., gives warning that the fellows are not to expect that this plan will be the answer to all of their merchandising problems when he says: "It is always the safest policy for professionals to buy cautiously and then to merchandise whole-heartedly. There is the danger of each man feeling that his merchandise is in better condition than it actually is. Not knowing whether the professionals are planning to buy from each other outright or accept goods on a consignment basis, it is impossible to express an opinion on the financial phases of the proposal. The consignment basis, of course, always involves considerable danger and misunderstanding which the boys must plan carefully to avoid if they experiment on this policy.

"One of the pitfalls to avoid is too hasty sales. In reality this year the pros have carried over very little merchandise and have done a much better merchandising

job than ever before. The thought the Kansas City men are giving to speeding the movement of golf merchandise is a healthy indication of continued progress regardless of what business conditions may prevail during 1932."

Mercer's comment reminds us that the Kansas City fellows plan to exchange goods on a consignment basis during July and check on the results at a meeting the first of August so the Vulcan man's warning about the perils of consignment deals fits into the case.

Harry West, special sales representative for Wilson-Western, has had an opportunity to talk over the plan with the fellows in Kansas City and according to his statement the plan is something that Wilson's professional division approves because it believes that Wilsons as well as the pros will gain in sales volume from any check-up that shows each pro exactly where he stands before the season is so far along that chances to make up for lost sales have vanished.

Survival of Fittest

Bob Crandall, president of the Burke Golf Co., points out one of the stumbling blocks the K. C. pros will have to consider when he says: "It might be that the fellow who was a good manager would be called on to help the one who was lacking in foresight and industry." There's something to that point as the survival of the fittest probably is going to be the answer to one of the pros' serious problems, that of employment. He believes the plan may work out satisfactorily but that it will call for a lot of planning and thorough work, which is true. The canny Crandall brings up another point that remains a debatable issue so far as GOLFDOM's staff is concerned. He says: "I am inclined to believe that whatever items were found slow moving in one pro's shop in a given district would turn out to be just the same sort of a dog in any other kennel. That, of course, is just a general statement. You can't tell anything about a plan of that kind until it actually is tried."

According to GOLFDOM's observation of many instances of slow moving items in pro shop stocks the reason simmers down to about 25% a combination of merchandise and members' buying inclinations and 75% the pro's merchandising ability, if the merchandise is fairly standard. There are some clubs that simply won't go for much of certain brands, but they are in the minority.