PROS and MAKERS Now In Hopeful HARMONY

By HERB GRAFFIS

DESTINY DID A very lusty job of kicking around golf goods manufacturers, pros and other retailers during the greater part of the 1932 season, but it is beginning to appear that the brutal treatment might have had some benefits on the same line of reasoning that an expert attack of assault and battery by a chiropractor once in a while cures some of mankind's ills.

Last year at the close of the season GOLFDOM estimated there was about 25 per cent of a normal year's sale of golf goods in the hands of jobbers and retail outlets other than the pros. Some manufacturers scoffed at this estimate as being far too high. Along about June this year these scoffers volunteered the sad admission that we had been conservative.

This surplus was a severe handicap to the liquidation of golf clubs. About the only liquidation that showed any decided process in clearing out excess stocks was that of the higher priced clubs and of balls. Selling the cheaper clubs at any price was not attended with much success. This work has proceeded slowly and from all information we have been able to pick up there is enough of the cheaper stuff still unsold to slow up the start of 1933 in spite of sharp curtailment of manufacturing schedules before the season advanced.

That condition does not affect the pros to any great extent, except to prove again that they are good fortune's pets. Some retailers who handled golf goods because they enjoyed a price edge are threatening to discontinue golf goods retailing next year because anybody has been able to meet their prices and take from them their former advantage. Consequently their reduced sales have been done at a decided loss. With this elimination of competition it seems like golf retailing is getting back to a specialty shop basis, which, of course, means greater prominence and activity for pros.

Pros Getting Smarter

Discussing the merchandising situation with representative pros at the PGA championship and from investigations of many pro shops during the past few weeks, GOLFDOM has foundation for the belief that pros will carry over less frozen stock at the end of this season than at any other season-end since pro shop merchandising became big business.

The boys are getting smarter and they are getting a whole lot more selling guts. They are firing up on their own efforts instead of blaming someone else, either manufacturer, store, or members, for sluggishness in sales. Undoubtedly no one censures pro shortcomings more than the pros themselves. The credit situation has been getting constant attention from the PGA and has shown many signs of improvement during this past season which has been the toughest in general business history. But still the last credit report of the Club and Ball Manufacturers' associations shows approximately $500,000 in accounts delinquent six months or more from pros and other retailers. The worst of that is that the report is incomplete.

On this credit situation it must always be remembered that credit is under the control of the seller and when the amount on the cuff passes the half million dollar mark it is high time for the sellers to decide on a uniform policy that will protect themselves against a costly yen for big volume at the sacrifice of net profit.

May Change Pro Lineup

When the manufacturers decide on such a step—and stick to it firmly—then you may see a new line-up in the pro field. The business men in pro golf will be retained in their jobs and the others will go overboard. This may furnish some of the answer to the pro unemployment problem.

With good credit standing appreciated as a necessity by the substantial pros, there is only one need for kindergarten business education still before the pro field. That is the vital job of getting the fellows to realize that an order is an order. Every year, along to the close of the season, the manufacturers have shipped back to them a lot of clubs that the pros who are unacquainted with orthodox business practice haven't been able to sell. Those pros simply say they won't pay for the stuff and here it is. That backwash that the manufacturers have to dispose of some way is one of the aggravating reasons why pros must start each season competing with cut price sales of stores that firmly contract to buy surpluses shipped back unexpectedly by pros too late to be sold at something near the list price.

Discussing this situation with pros who acknowledge that the manufacturer is caught over the barrel, pros maintain that such return shipments are the direct result of manufacturers' overselling to unduly enthusiastic pros who consider the goods are sent to them more or less on a consignment basis and see no violation of business ethics in returning the unsold and unpaid-for merchandise. This controversy could go on interminably without anyone being able to follow the buck in its frequent and speedy passing—and probably will, unless manufacturers and pros get together on a campaign of education to make the entire pro body realize that an order is just what it is termed—AN ORDER.

Show-Down at Peoria

One of the brightest spots in the pro manufacturer relations is the appearance of a new attitude of understanding. Plans of the PGA for its annual meeting to be held at Peoria, Ill., early in November, now contemplate inviting leading manufacturing companies to have an executive in attendance for a day devoted to consideration of the mutual problems and hopes. That such a session could be even mentioned would have been rated Utopian three years ago when some of the manufacturers' private talk referred to numerous pros in such endearing terms as "dead-beats" and "cry-babies" and the pros in passing judgment on the manufacturers used tender terms like "double-crossers" and "chiselers."

Now, among the leaders on both sides it is considered that the primary work to be done is to get both houses in order. It is fully realized by the men who rank the highest in pro and manufacturing circles that unless there is pro and manufacturer co-operation in readjusting golf goods distribution to prevailing conditions and united effort to eliminate the evils that have grown Tosy-like in the business, it will be "just too bad" for all concerned.

Whether the players realize it, or not, golf goods were supplied this year at a cost probably representing a substantial net loss. That can't continue, but who will be able to survive as manufacturers and as retail distributors are going to depend a whole lot on the outcome of sympathetic and thoughtful deliberations of the manufacturers and pros during the forthcoming twelve months.

"Uncle John" Carr Resigns from Pittsburgh F. C.

AFTER MORE than 30 years as a member of the Pittsburgh Field Club, the last sixteen as an executive, "Uncle John" W. Carr has resigned and has moved to Port Henry, N. Y., his boyhood home. Thus the club and Western Pennsylvania golf loses one of its leading lights in the promotion and development of the sport.

The Field club gave "Uncle John" a testimonial dinner just before his departure. It was in appreciation of his many years of service as an official of the club.

Carr joined the organization in 1902, when it was a cricket club. Golf was being played on a small scale, but the sport did not assume importance until 1913, when the present property was purchased, and a new course built. In 1916 Carr was elected to the directorate at Pittsburgh and since then he has held practically every executive office with the exception of president. He was vice-pres. in 1916-17, and sec'y-treas. from 1923 until his retirement. He also served on various committees, and for many seasons was green-chairman, during which time he supervised numerous changes in the layout of the course.