

PROS ARE STAR SALESMEN

Lauds Pros for the Selling Technique They Have Developed

PROS HAVE ample reason for congratulating themselves on the first page story that appeared in a recent issue of the Peoria (Ill.) Journal.

Under the heading, "Calls Golf Pro Best Salesman" there appeared in the Journal a report of a meeting of 400 life insurance salesmen. Robert A. Tennant, head of the field education and sales promotion division of the Metropolitan Life Insurance Co. in the feature address of the meeting rated the golf pro as the country's ace salesman.

Quoting from the Journal's report:

"Mr. Tennant advised the insurance men that they could well take a lesson from the golf 'pros' not only in golf but more especially in selling. Develop a technique in selling as does the golf 'pro.', said Mr. Tennant.

"Mr. Tennant told the insurance men of his experience with the golf teacher, making reference to the fact that his game was not greatly improved but at the same time he kept on taking lessons. The fact that he continued to be a pupil of the 'pro' was due to the sales ability of the teacher.

"If we would develop a technique as has the golf 'pro' then we would not have the tremendous turnover in the insurance field nor would we have the low production," said Mr. Tennant.

I'd like to know the name of the professional at Mr. Tennant's club because he is a fellow who has done pro merchandising a lot of good. The main thing the fellows need is to realize that they are above the average as salesmen. When they shake their inferior complex they are all set to go places in merchandising. Pros have heard so much about bum credit and dead-seated and sleepy-brained errors of some of their comrades that they are not especially inclined to realize that by and large the pro is a star merchant. When they really know they are so good they can take pride in their achievements it will be a great day for the pros, the

clubs, the club members and the manufacturers.

Pros' Merchandising Rise

Expert estimates of 1934 golf business indicate that the pros for the first time in years did the largest proportion of the dollar and cents volume of golf business. This has been achieved despite the competition of those who are reputed to be the world's smartest merchandisers, the department store fellows.

It is quite a feat because the merchandising era in pro golf is comparatively new. The pros developed from bench club artisans and sellers of their own limited volume of handicraft into expert small retailers in less than ten years. This is a development practically unparalleled in the retailing field. The fact that many of the professionals have not had the advantages of higher school or business education makes the pro merchandising advance actually somewhat of a miracle.

Almost alone among the smaller retailers have the pros been able to survive and progress while the chain store movement has swept other little retailers toward the discard.

Big store merchandising, long tagged the smartest of selling, has only hooked into the pros on a cut price basis so low that the stores actually lost money on many of the golf goods bargains advertised as leaders. The stores, of course, hoped to make up the loss by trimming the suckers on some item other than the cut-price leader. But these store merchandising stunts usually are temporary irritations and the pro manages to get his share of the entire season's volume of business. When the pros finally get smarter in buying and don't send back unpaid-for clubs at the end of the season, they may no longer suffer from what has been one of the stores' most brutal dips into pro profits—the store cut-price sales of "obsolete" models of clubs.

Manufacturers having this merchandise thrown back on their hands at the end

SAYS INSURANCE EXPERT

of a season sell it cheap for cash to some store just before the start of the next season. Then the store puts on a big sale and nips pro club business in the bud. The pros who consider an order as a business contract and don't return to the manufacturer merchandise they haven't sold, may holler their heads off about these early season store sales, but it never can do any good. Consignment selling to pros also has been responsible for some of this returned goods evil, but since the code has outlawed consignments, the pros are not getting a lot of stuff which they haven't firmly ordered. At least they're not supposed to, because violation of the consignment clause in the code involves serious penalties.

Pro Must Be Good

Gradually the faults in the pro merchandising picture are diminishing and today the pro is expected to be a superior merchant or he's not sure of his job. Good merchandising is what club members expect of a pro. Probably the most impressive aspect of the high class character of pro merchandising may be seen in the sale of women's golf equipment. Women are naturally shoppers. They habitually visit department stores where golf goods are on sale. Well, under such circumstances you'll admit that the sales to women are going to be made by the best merchandisers. It is a fact that the pros are doing a larger part of the women's golf goods business than are the stores. Something for the pros to think about and correct is that the pro shops do a larger percentage of the women players' entire volume of business than they are able to do with the men. In living up to the reputation as "best salesmen" given them by Mr. Tennant, the pros will have to correct this weakness in their shop sales to men.

The Tennant testimony that he continued to buy lessons although his game did not greatly improve is something for the fellows to think about. Apparently Tennant's home club pro is either above the average in sales ability or good fortune, because most of the pros' pupils

want to be made near-champions after a few lessons or quit altogether. However, the merchandising of lessons has given the pros a chance to really do their selling stuff. In the opinion of this observer the boys have done splendidly in this basic detail. When the pro has a pupil properly sold on good instruction the pupil gets more enjoyment out of golf and is in a frame of mind more susceptible to the purchase of golf equipment from the pro.

Play Up Kids' Business

GOLFDOM firmly believes that one of the smartest things the pros are doing is to develop children's interest in golf. This is market insurance and market development. Free class lessons for members' children or class lessons at nominal prices have done much to bring boys and girls into the game. The pro who hasn't some plan for handling the youngsters on his schedule for 1935 operations at his club is not up to par as a business man.

The Illinois PGA plans an energetic campaign for pushing golf in schools as part of its 1935 work. This is a fore-sighted job that other district groups of the pro organization also should handle, and undoubtedly will. President Horton Smith of the Illinois PGA has been pledged the eager cooperation of such prominent members of the Illinois section as Tommy Armour, Harry Cooper, Ky Laffoon, Frank Walsh and Bob Macdonald in this educational work which has for its objective making golf play good for credits in physical education work at schools. The kids will get several thousand dollars worth of golf instruction for nothing.

Pros debate the wisdom of free class lessons at their clubs. Sometimes it's the right, smart thing to do; other times a little dough for the lessons helps to maintain interest. Circumstances alter the cases. But in the case of the Illinois school lessons the pros are going to give the free lessons as a starter and the chances are that a diligent, earnest follow-up on this school work will make paying jobs for a lot of pros.

It used to be a rather frequent criticism of pros that a nickle was held so close

to the pro's eye that the sight of a dollar beyond was blotted out. You seldom hear this any more. That's a fairly certain sign of merchandising development.

On all hands the pros are presenting proof that there is foundation for the laurels bestowed upon them in the Tennant address. With the boys now learning that the public knows they are good salesmen—and expected to be good salesmen—you may look for a marked pick-up in the nation-wide standard of pro selling. No good merchant can stand still and certainly the pros can't because their increasing business and recognition as merchants gives them greater responsibilities and problems.

One of the problems that they may have to face in 1935 is a revival of hectic price-cutting. The NRA will hold hearings at Washington beginning January 9 to consider eliminating price-fixing provisions from codes. S. Clay Williams, head of the NRA board, says that price control information gathered by the board "justified the position that price fixing is inconsistent with the most effective functioning of our industrial system."

But, regardless of what future developments there may be, it is beginning to be obvious that the pros generally are able to handle the situation. It has faintly dawned on some of them that they are good and recognition of their selling ability made so boldly by an expert like Mr. Tennant is what the boys needed to give them a highly profitable self-confidence.

North and Odland Authors of Fine Bulletin on Greens

ONE OF the finest and most complete reports ever issued on the management of putting green grasses is Bulletin 245 of the Rhode Island State College experiment station. The authors are H. F. A. North and T. E. Odland of the station staff and the title of the report is *Putting Green Grasses and Their Management*. Contents of the 44-page bulletin will prove of considerable value to all greens workers, and every greenkeeping library should contain a copy.

The experiments which are reported were begun as a study of a large number of grasses to determine their value for golf greens. Some of the vegetative strains have been propagated with stolons in comparison with seed. The turf from colonials and seaside creeping bents have been tested from original lots and from

seed produced in Rhode Island from the same lots.

The bulletin is designed primarily to furnish information which will aid those concerned with the growing of fine turf in choosing the most satisfactory grass for special conditions. The quality of the turfs has been determined by rating important factors individually and collectively.

Tests have shown that the fertilizer treatments used and the soil reactions maintained have been generally satisfactory for most of the bent grasses. A deficiency of lime resulted in serious damage to the plats of creeping bent during one of the seasons of the test.

The velvet bents as a class have been rated higher in quality than the colonial bents. Rather wide variation was found among the former in this regard and only the exceptional strain was rated higher than the average of the colonial bents. The three types of colonial bent under test were found to differ in the prevalence of rhizomes, color of foliage, and production of nap. Differences in the quality and susceptibility to brownpatch of the turf were found in the different strains of the common type of colonial bent.

The creeping bents have been rated lower in putting green qualities than the colonial bents. The stolon creeping bents as a group were found of nearly the same value as the lots of seaside creeping bents tested. Wider variations in quality were found among the stolon strains such as Washington and Virginia than among the seaside creeping bents.

The turf of velvet and creeping bents grown from seed was found similar in quality to that produced from stolons of the same strain. Likewise the turf of colonial bent and seaside creeping bent from seed grown in Rhode Island one generation produced turf very similar to that of the parent grasses. As a rule the seeded turf was found more susceptible to disease than the parent stolon turf.

Velvet bents were rather generally susceptible to dollarspot, and colonial bent to brownpatch, while creeping bents were mildly susceptible to both diseases. Snowmold was found in creeping bent turf.

A system is suggested for the general maintenance of the putting green.

Copies of this valuable bulletin may be obtained free by writing to the Rhode Island State college Agricultural Experiment Station, Kingston, R. I.