

MORE APPLESAUCE ABOUT EZRA

By MYLES COEN

IF we keep on publicizing Ezra Applesauce, people will be writing the editor for his address in the hope of getting a lesson from him. Other famous teaching reputations have been built upon no sounder foundation.

W. C. Jackson involved me in this controversy by quotation in June GOLFDOM. Just to hold the franchise I would like to toss in a few random notes.

1. Don't build too big a fire under Ezra. We entrenched professionals may feel the heat ourselves. Ezra might say: "All right. So I'm not a qualified teacher. Show me your license." That would be very tough to answer.

We PGA members seem to think that heaven has bestowed the teaching concession in these United States upon the Professional Golfers Assn. That may be true through some mysterious arrangement that I have not heard about, but we have yet to prove that we deserve it.

Membership in the PGA is based on tenure of service and not upon ability under any heading. As Jackson pointed out, the PGA is becoming a trade association, with a sideline in promoting golf tournaments. Teaching seems to be one of those necessary evils to which no decent man would refer.

2. I am all for Ezra if he is a competent man. If I were an amateur I would rather take a lesson from an Ezra Applesauce who had made an honest effort to learn something about teaching golf than from a professional of many year's standing who had never made any such effort. I do object to the fact that we have no way of knowing whether Ezra or any other instructor knows what he is talking about. A man might be the Einstein of golf teaching and he would not rate knee-high in public estimation compared with the subject of the most recent ballyhoo or the last winner of the Potter's Field Open. For God's sake let's set up some system of finding out who knows what he is talking about and who doesn't.

3. Jackson brought up the point of the amateur who turns pro over-night. The amateur who is a student of the game with a definite intention of making professional golf his livelihood should be welcomed.

I do object to the amateur who has al-

ways intended to turn pro but is happy to enjoy the prestige of an amateur meanwhile. I am a believer in the old-fashioned definition of an amateur as a gentleman who plays golf with his friends and fellow amateurs for his own amusement. I don't like the fake amateur who uses the amateur side as an easy way of building up a reputation and the pro side as a convenient means of cashing in. In other words, I don't like amateurs when I have to compete with them for a living.

4. In all talk of licensing teachers it seems to be assumed that this is a job for the PGA. I cannot see this. The PGA, as the organization representing professional golfers, has the obvious duty of initiating and supporting a campaign for the examination and certification of golf teachers. It cannot reasonably be empowered as the sole arbiter in the matter, nor approval reserved for its membership. Any man who can prove his qualifications before an impartial body should be allowed to teach and should be encouraged to do so. I speak as a loyal member of the PGA. Loyal even to its mistakes.

5. In contra-distinction to most of those who talk about licensing teachers, etc., I happen to know something about it (an exception is granted to Jackson). That sounds like egotism. It is.

Just to prove it I will make one point. A license is only as good as the enforcing power behind it. Suppose the PGA granted licenses as teachers to some or all of its members. So what? The public would go serenely along taking lessons from Ezra and all his relatives. It might be possible to get legal recognition of the golf teacher but that would throw the whole thing into political hands and would mean dickering with each individual state.

The United States Golf Assn. is the logical body to get behind such a move. The duty of protecting amateur golfers from fakers and charlatans is implied in the nature of that organization. The USGA would have no financial interest in such a program and has the prestige to make its endorsement mean something.

Nothing in this is to be interpreted as a criticism of W. C. Jackson.