

GOLF'S WAR-TIME VALUES AS SEEN BY MANUFACTURERS

"What do the manufacturers think of golf's war-time prospects?" ask club officials and others looking for guidance in determining their 1942 policies and operations in the game. Here are opinions from a number of representative factors in the industry.

PROBABLY the most concise summary of manufacturers' judgment was that headlined in a Toro Mfg. Corp. ad in Oct., 1941 GOLFDOM, "There'll always be golf." Ken Goit, Toro executive, says there is no reason to revise the headline despite the nation's entry into war since that declaration of golf's permanence was made.

In the broad view of the foundation of their business the manufacturers see golf solidly justified as a balance for the high pressure unnaturalness of modern life, and see this fundamental value emphasized by war-time production, health and morale needs.

Confirmation is given their opinion by statements of medical authorities warning that the neuro-psychiatric troubles of this war must be guarded against far better than were the virtually unconsidered civilian "shell shock" cases of the unfinished World War.

Selling of golf as a promoter of muscle and nerve health instead of relying on the social aspect of the game to preserve it, is the general policy that golf goods manufacturers deem most applicable to the war-time situation.

Ads Tell Sports' Essentiality

For some months prior to declarations of war the Wilson Sporting Goods Co. has been presenting in general magazines a series of advertisements over the signature of its president, L. B. Icely, pointing out the essential place of sports in a national physical fitness and morale plan.

In these advertisements has been pointed out the failure of sports to be employed more extensively in compensating youth for social and economic maladjustments has been responsible for the high percent of selectee rejections on physical counts.

It has been urged in these advertisements that sports be fitted into an energetic national fitness campaign. Such a campaign is under way in the Civilian De-

fense Physical Training organization headed by John B. Kelly and Eleanor Roosevelt. At this writing the golf phase of the plan is not yet complete, except that the tournament pros, with Fred Corcoran directing, have been more active than any other sports group in fund raising for war relief organizations.

There is no indication now that the CD Physical Training outfit is regarded by priorities authorities in an advisory capacity on the allotment of raw materials. However, as organization of the nation's war effort proceeds, it is logical to assume that there will be some coordination to assure continuance of manufacture of golf goods and other sports goods that have demonstrated their value in a physical fitness plan.

Balls on Rationed Basis

Golf balls already have gone on a rationed basis to the customers, pros and others, of principal suppliers. Clubs unquestionably will follow, possibly before this issue of GOLFDOM gets to its readers. Purpose of the manufacturers' self-started rationing plan is to prevent hoarding and undue retail price increases and to spread the available supply of equipment as widely as possible.

Clubs that haven't ordered needed course maintenance machinery, unless they're lucky to pick up items remaining in stock, may expect considerable waits before delivery is made on such equipment as they may order. Maintenance equipment plants generally have had many of the usual difficulties of smaller manufacturers in getting fitted into war-time production effort. Material shortages handicapped them in their normal production effort. Now they're fitted into government work and exercising their genius in getting out their normal line and repair parts as a sideline when possible.

However, the majority of them are

maintaining contact with their customers with advisory services that are especially valuable in view of what greenkeepers will be up against this year.

Comparison of this war with the 1917-18 conflict is rarely possible so far as the golf business is concerned. In 1916 there were only 742 golf clubs in the U. S. and by considerable stretch of estimate only could one figure as many as 200,000 golfers. The majority of them were of the well-to-do or wealthy class.

Now there are 5,209 courses in the U. S., of which 1,873 are 18-hole, 134 larger than 18-hole and 3,202 are 9-hole establishments.

There are 2,351,000 golfers in the U. S. who played in 1941 a total of 63,406,000 rounds. Only about 650,000 of these golfers are private club members.

The basis of golf now is much broader than it was during the first World War, hence the game fits more extensively into the national physical fitness plan.

A prominent executive in the golf business who prefers to be unidentified, recalls that during the first World War many of the golfers were prominent young men who went into the Army and Navy promptly. That affected clubs adversely, but the remaining members were working hard in civilian war work and soon found that it required golf's exercise and recreation to keep them handling their jobs efficiently. Consequently, the number of rounds played was not reduced by the war.

Workers Feel Need of Fitness

This executive believes that it's far too early to attempt to forecast the effect war will have in drawing off younger golfers. However, he does believe that when the nation hits its stride, men who are engaged in war work in industry as well as those in civilian occupations, will be working on intense schedules and are bound to feel, increasingly, the need of keeping themselves in efficient condition.

The closest parallel we have today is Canada, this executive points out. Canada has been actively engaged in war since September, 1939. Sales of golf merchandise in Canada increased last year, contrary to manufacturers' expectations.

No first class club in Canada has gone out of business, although all of them have taken steps to keep their budgets in reasonable balance.

This foresighted financial planning together with accent by the clubs on selling themselves as war-time efficiency promot-

ers, will pull the wisely conducted clubs through in good shape, opines this qualified observer. Those private clubs that can't make the grade, and turn daily-fee, should have a big market in which to sell their facilities, this man believes.

He feels that manufacturers of golf equipment will find a market that will take all goods they are capable of producing. From the standpoint of the pro and other merchants, it is obvious that the wise course is to get possession of all goods justified by his market, as soon as delivery can be secured.

Golf playing equipment makers are taking on war work, in some cases, outside the usual line of their production. Clarence Rickey, MacGregor executive, reminds that this opportunity of directly helping war effort and keeping jobs for the factories' men, is very much a factor to be considered by pros who may be inclined to postpone ordering their shop stocks.



President Camacho of Mexico and L. B. Icelly, pres., Wilson Sporting Goods Co. watch an exhibition match at the Mexico City CC. Al Espinosa, Bud Ward, Wilford Wehrle, Manuel Baroso (resident pro and asst. to Espinosa at Mexico City CC), Johnny Dawson and Ed White were the players in a match which followed a lunch for President Camacho, his cabinet and the U. S. visitors.

PRESIDENT Manuel Avila Camacho of Mexico has a 6-hole course at his home at Cuernavaca, which is being enlarged to 18 holes by Al Espinosa, pro at Mexico City CC. Al is tutoring the Mexican president who already plays a pretty fair game for a businessman newcomer to golf. Several of his cabinet are quite good golfers.

A municipal course is being planned for Mexico City.

Icelly observed a rapidly extending interest in golf in Mexico and forecast that growth of the game in the sister republic would be a factor in promoting cordial personal and business relations between citizens of the U. S. and Mexico.