

Big Clubs Point Way to Cost Cut By Varied Membership Classes

By J. W. FULTON

President, Club Bureau, Inc.

IN THESE times of mental and financial depression, we hear much about the high cost of golf. We hear of failures to balance budgets, of assessments to cover deficits, of loss of members because of assessments—and higher dues and more assessments because of a heavier burden on the fewer members remaining.

Many clubs, after years of successful operation, some of them with fine traditions, have become panic stricken and waived transfer fees and reduced the admission fee to almost nothing,—only to discover that low admission fees no longer impress the buyer. He has come to ignore first cost and to consider annual dues charges, the probability of assessments, and the liability assumed for funded debt.

All of which has suggested to the golfing public that perhaps private golf clubs are economically unsound. Most of them represent investments of from a quarter to three-quarters of a million dollars, and are essentially idle five days of each week and five months of the year. Someone has reminded Mr. Average Business Man that he carries an original investment of a thousand dollars or so, plus dues, plus frequent assessments, plus special sinking funds, plus his share of the interest charges on some part of a million dollars for twelve months of the year—and plays only on week ends and occasionally during the week for six or seven months. The golf-plant is practically idle nearly three hundred days each year.

What's the Distinction?

A *golf* club was originally presumed to be an organization devoted to the game of golf, with a membership limited to the capacity of the course on the peak days of play. Accommodations were usually limited to a small clubhouse, frequently occupied and run by the professional. They served light lunches and provided a bath. The dues until a decade or two ago did not average \$50.00 per year.

A *country* club, on the other hand, is an

organization in the country devoted to a diversity of sports, such as golf, tennis, bathing, trap-shooting, riding, etc., with a children's playground, and social functions including dancing, cards, dinner parties and general forms of entertainment.

Golf is not expensive at *golf* clubs, if they are strictly golf clubs. It is not expensive in *country* clubs, if they are strictly country clubs with an auxiliary membership and diversified attractions. Golf is expensive only in golf clubs that assume to combine the attributes of both the *golf* club and the *country* club in one organization.

The dues in modern golf clubs now average over \$200 per year including assessments necessary to balance the budget of expenditures. Dues are \$50 to \$75 higher than they were three years ago, while assessments are growing less popular and possibly less frequent.

The annual dues in country clubs are only about half as much as in so-called golf clubs because the cost of operation and carrying charges are not assumed by the limited number who can use the golf course, but are spread over three to five times as many members, each of whom contributes to the cost of the particular activity in which he is interested.

Few Simon Pure Clubs Left

There are not many golf clubs left in the metropolitan districts. Outside of a few easily distinguished by their low dues charges, it can almost be said they are limited to pay-as-you-play courses. Likewise, in a discriminating sense, there are but few country clubs, because while many of them provide a considerable range of entertainment and auxiliary sports, the expense is all borne by the golfing member.

A great majority of clubs are neither golf clubs nor country clubs. Although organized for golf they have undertaken the financial burden and assumed the functions of the country club. Because of the interest of the entire family in golf,

racketeering promoters have influenced these clubs into keen competition with each other to provide to an extravagant degree the social features of the country club, while their income is limited to the dues that can be collected from the golfer.

Solution: Non-Golfing Members

It cannot, therefore, be regarded as strange that golf is expensive in the modern golfing organization. This situation can in many cases be remedied. Almost any of the so-called golf clubs can extend its facilities somewhat, financing the cost of doing so from the sale of social memberships, and thus distribute the cost of operations among the requisite number to make the burden lighter.

A survey was recently made for data on large clubs, specializing in golf, but having social or non-golfing memberships for those not interested particularly in the game. It was disclosed that they were all ranking clubs, rating very high in prestige in their various districts, and yet their dues were less than half the annual charges in clubs that attempt to combine the social facilities of the country club and golf activities in one organization.

Information was sought from many clubs, among which were the following nationally known organizations:

Merion Cricket Club, Phila.—36 holes; 1,900 members.

Sunset Hill C. C., St. Louis—18 holes; 1,700 members.

New Orleans C. C., New Orleans—18 holes; 1,600 members.

Lido C. C., New York—18 holes; 1,500 members.

Los Angeles C. C., Los Angeles—36 holes; 1,550 members.

Olympic G. & C. C., San Francisco—36 holes; 5,000 members.

Boston C. C., Boston—27 holes; 1,200 members.

East Lake C. C., Atlanta—36 holes; 1,200 members.

Chevy Chase C., Washington—18 holes; 2,000 members.

Baltimore C. C., Baltimore—36 holes; 3,000 members.

Wilmington C. C., Delaware—18 holes; 1,200 members.

Philadelphia Cricket C., Phila.—27 holes; 1,850 members.

Philadelphia C. C., Phila.—36 holes; 1,300 members.

Dupont C. C., Wilmington—18 holes; 1,300 members.

Maplewood C. C., New Hampshire—18 holes; 1,500 members.

Capital City C. C., Atlanta—18 holes; 1,000 members.

Allegheny C. C., Pennsylvania—18 holes; 1,000 members.

Total courses, 24; total membership, about 30,000; average golfers per course, 400; average social members per club, 1,350.

Following is a list of the questions asked and the replies returned, which for obvious reasons cannot be given in detail:

(1) Do non-golfing members reduce the financial burden on golfing members? (2) Is there objection on the part of your golfers to social members? (3) Does a social membership affect the prestige or standing of a club? (4) What privileges are extended to such members? (5) What are the features that attract non-golfing members? (6) What is the initiation fee, and what annual dues? (7) Does the non-golfer own an equity?

Digest of Replies

(1) That social or auxiliary members reduce the burden on the golfer is shown by the fact that few of the clubs investigated charge over \$100.00 per year for golfing. None, so far as learned, is in financial distress and assessments are practically unknown.

(2) There appears to be no prejudice to social members on the part of golfers. One club, permitting play on week days at regular guest fees, said there was an occasional protest, but general satisfaction.

(3) It appears that large clubs with auxiliary memberships are well regarded in whatever district located.

(4) Privileges of the clubhouse are extended with all the social activities embraced, such as cards, dances, dining, etc. Children's playgrounds are provided, as is tennis, croquet, etc. Invariably a swimming pool is provided, and pronounced the strongest magnet for attracting young members. Regarding golf privileges, if any, there was a considerable variance in the replies. Some permitted no golf. Some permitted a certain number of games per year on paying the regular fees. Some permitted golf at certain hours, or on certain days at fees somewhat less than guest fees. Most of them, however, permit special members to play on the five week days on payment of regular guest fees.

(5) The attraction cited by the large majority was the swimming pool. If made

attractive with a suitable pavilion equipped with showers and lockers to avoid encroaching on regular locker room, canopy shades, lounging porches and soft drink parlors, it appears to be the strongest magnet. Tennis came next as a requisite. Cards, dancing and facilities for dinner parties were mentioned.

(6) The initiation fee for non-golfing memberships runs all the way from \$100 to \$500. The dues from \$3.00 per month to \$60 per year. The average initiation fee appears to be about \$200, with dues of \$50.

(7) The membership is usually non-equity, non-voting,—simply a privilege membership convertible into a regular with credit for its original cost. It may be transferable at 25% of the original cost, or not as desired, and depending on the amount charged for same.

Take Your Choice

The conclusion from this comparison of golf clubs attempting social activities and country clubs equipped for a diversity of sports is obvious:

If you want low priced golf, limit your facilities to the requisites of the game.

If you want social activities,—brass buttons on the doorman, "ritz," cards, dancing and other forms of entertainment, open your club to those who enjoy those diversions, and let them contribute their share to maintenance with golf privileges limited to week days or eliminated entirely.

You cannot furnish the forms of entertainment that go with country clubs to the small group who can play golf on peak days, without making the game expensive.

Auxiliary memberships constitute a most fertile field from which to recruit regular golfing members, much better than "season privileges" or "term memberships" which not only tend to lower club standing, but destroy the market for regular memberships.

Golf club members are supposed to be prejudiced against large memberships. They are not. Like everybody else, they like to go where there are activities—where the crowd goes. Large memberships are not objected to in city clubs, and in golf clubs only when congestion occurs on the course.

There are comparatively few places of attraction in the country designed and maintained for other than golfers; most places are simply roadhouses.

Regarding the salability of social memberships one point is usually overlooked: Not every person or family that is fond of

the country and appreciates a place other than the roadhouse or public resort for an automobile ride or dinner in the country—not all these people are interested in golf. If they were, the resorts and country dining places would go out of business. The cost of golf naturally limits its membership to those who join essentially for the game—little else is of special interest to the golfer.

A club member can probably nominate ten prospects for such a membership easier than he can think of one prospect who can be sold a golf playing membership. In other words, 500 memberships of this sort can be sold for a given amount—say, to net the club \$150 or \$200 easier than 50 can be sold for double that amount for regular golf playing memberships, entailing heavy dues, obligations for funded debt, and the possibility of being assessed.

What can be more sound economically than to increase golfing activities on days when your course is comparatively idle? What can be sounder than to increase your income in the dining room and from house operations, if it can be done without encroaching on the golfer? What action would be as popular with present members as to distribute the annual expense of non-golfing activities among double the number of people and thus reduce the cost of golf for equity members?

American Golf Guide Returns to Reference Shelf

American Annual Golf Guide. 1930-1931 edition. Pub. by Golf Guide Co., Inc., 134 Centre St., New York City. 528 pp., illustr. \$3.00.

LAST PUBLISHED in mid-1929, the American Annual Golf Guide once more takes its place among the valuable reference volumes of the game. As in previous years, this fourteenth edition devotes the greater portion of its pages to a directory of United States and Canadian golf clubs, with names of officials, distance from town, length of course, green fees and similar information. According to the publishers, these listings are as accurate as intensive effort can make them.

In addition to the directory of clubs, the Guide contains full statistical data on all important golf tournaments, both national and sectional, a list of golf associations of the U. S. and Canada, brief biographies of prominent golf champions of the present and past. A section is devoted to a full reprint of the official rules of golf.

Native Sons Whip Skimpy Budgets With Smart Use of Machinery

By ARTHUR LANGTON

A CERTAIN college president defined an educated person as one who can adapt himself to any conditions in which he happens to find himself. This being true, greenkeepers far and wide should feel justified in writing several degrees after their signatures as the result of having taken a post-graduate session in the school of hard knocks. The severe faculty of this institution has administered in the past, and is continuing to administer, a course of study necessitating the closest diligence on the part of the greenkeeper if he is to avoid failure. New and unexpected conditions confront the student at every turn so that the unbroken routine is the rule rather than the exception.

In California, as elsewhere, this year has been particularly trying on the course superintendent in that adverse conditions have combined against him to a degree never before experienced, but the fact that he is coming through with honors seems to be a testimonial to the excellence of his previous training. Unprecedented heat and sultriness has been accompanied by brown-patch of all known varieties, army worms, cut worms, and a host of other pests. And then there has been the depression. But through it all few golf courses or even parts of courses have been absolutely unplayable and in the majority of instances few golfers are aware of the stress to which their courses have been subjected.

Ingenuous with Machinery

In order to bring about this favorable condition in the press of circumstances it has been necessary for the western greenkeeper to utilize every available money saving device that he or his fellows could contrive. Particularly has this been manifest in the mechanical department of the golf course and it is this phase of the greenkeeper's activity that may be deserving of special mention because of the ingenuity displayed therein and the general adaptability of some of the resulting gadgets and contrivances.

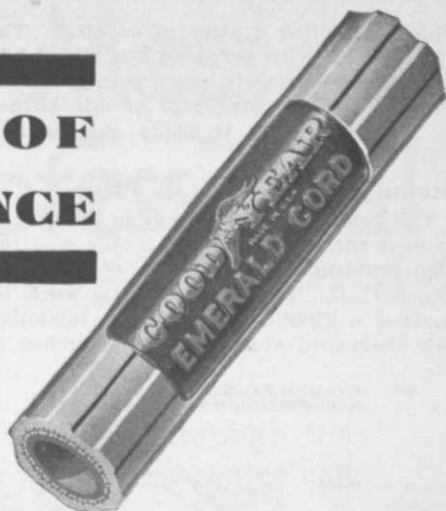
However, to say that it took the current

economic condition to develop the latent mechanical ability inherent in the California greensman would be doing him a rank injustice. Years ago he found that machines made for eastern conditions would not in every case be equal to the work demanded of them on the Pacific coast; therefore it became necessary for him to modify the existing machines or to develop new ones. That these inventions were effective is demonstrated by the fact that many of them have been seized upon by national manufacturers whose products are in use on all golf courses. An excellent example is that of the power mower. In 1913, W. W. Beaver, greenkeeper at the Virginia C. C. of Long Beach, attached a cutting unit to a mobile chassis upon which was mounted a one-cylinder gasoline engine as a medium of locomotive power. True the newborn monster was ugly, slow, cumbersome, and apt to tear things to pieces, but it was a forerunner of the modern machines which skip over fairways today mowing a 12-foot swath.

A visit to any southland course will convince the most casual observer that every effort is being made to curtail expenses, and the methods used are such as to be of possible interest to every greenkeeper in the nation. For instance, Jack Wilson, now at the Rio Hondo club in Downey, has a device for filling in the holes made on greens by high pitched balls. This gadget consists merely of a piece of one-inch pipe in which a longer metal rod is inserted. When filling holes the greensman goes to the apron of the green and jabs one end of the pipe into the turf and pulls it out. This extracts a divot which can be pushed out by the rod into the hole mark on the green. This system which is that of the hole cutter used on all greens is especially useful on new or soft greens on which pitched balls make a hole too large for the turf to be pushed back into place.

The same greenkeeper frequently uses a match and time-saving grass burner consisting of a length of pipe bent into the shape of a cane, in the curved end of

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which is stuffed a piece of sacking. The pipe is filled with kerosene and allowed to impregnate the fabric which is then lighted as a wick. The advantage of this burner is that back-firing is made quicker and more effective.

Stolon Planting Permits Play

The necessity of transferring his greens to bent without interrupting play was the nice problem of F. C. Groos of the Long Beach C. C. To aid him in his work he devised a dibbling machine by fastening two sharpened steel discs, nine inches in

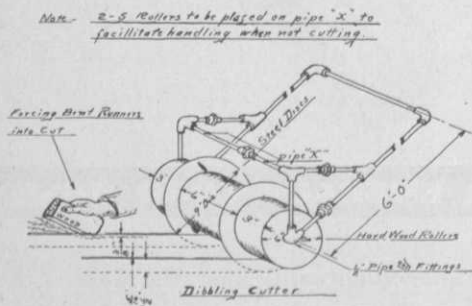


Diagram of stolon dibbling device made by F. C. Groos.

diameter and six inches apart to a hardwood roller six inches in diameter. To an axle in the roller he affixed a pushing handle. This device made the cutting of slots in the green to receive the stolons easy and accurately spaced by having one disc run in the cut made on the former trip. The process of forcing the runners into the cuts was to use a piece of four-inch grooved flooring, one edge of the groove being cut away, the other edge being covered with tin to prevent wearing. The runners were inserted into the cuts with one hand while the piece of flooring in the other hand forced the grass down to the required depth—about three-eighths of an inch. After six cuts were planted they immediately were topdressed, rolled, and watered so as to prevent both cuts and runners from drying out.

The results obtained were most gratifying for in little more than 30 days from the time of dibbling, 11 individual bent plants were present in a four-inch plug cut from one of the greens. The plants had grown not only to the surface but had spread from one to one and one-half inches on both sides of the original incision. In from three to six months a distinctly perceptible movement could be seen in the

greens; the bent had filled in rapidly and crowded out the upright grasses. In less than a year the Long Beach greens were all better than 75 per cent bent and six months later they were practically pure. Not a green was out of play for a single day.

Must Have Sprayer

One of the most ingenious greenkeepers among those in Southern California is William Thompson in charge of the Mountain Meadows course at Pomona. He recently has completed a spraying outfit that would be of great use on any course. It consists of a small centrifugal pump attached to the engine from an old tee and approach mower and a hundred gallon tank mounted on a course-made trailer. The tank is of special interest, being a round-bottomed, flat-topped affair divided into two compartments so that chemicals to be sprayed can be dissolved in one while the contents of the other are being distributed. The outfit, while being exceedingly compact and light, will generate 150 pounds pressure, enough for all golf course purposes yet not great enough to require the use of special hose.

Not being supplied with electricity, Thompson has constructed his own power plant in the shape of an old Ford motor which operates all the shop machinery at a cost which compares favorably with that of electric power. One of the machines that is run in this manner is a home-made mower grinder with a traveling carriage which moves the blades to be sharpened along the face of the grindstone in the approved manner. Not one in a thousand have Thompson's mechanical genius to compensate for temporary budget restrictions.

Lesson Shelter Is Inviting

Professional Harry Pressler's portable shade at the San Gabriel Country club has become famous throughout the state as the place where this popular pro gives his lessons throughout the summer months. It consists of a boxlike framework on wheels covered with palm fronds and was constructed by Greenkeeper W. E. Langton of the mission town course. The structure is located on the practice grounds and can be moved so as to face away from the sun and to be always on a good patch of turf, thus tempting all and sundry to take lessons without danger of being blistered.

At Hacienda C. C. near La Habra, L. N. Boynton decided that the use of his green

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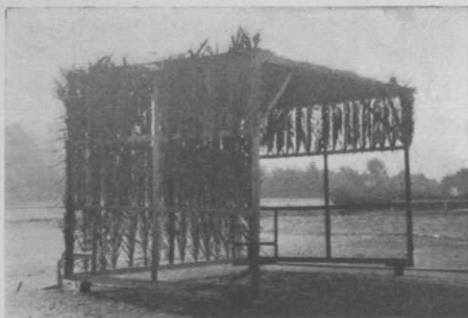
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Portable lesson shelter made for Harry Pressler by W. E. Langton.

spiker required too much time so he remedied this difficulty by the simple expedient of hitching it behind his power greens mower where it travels merrily along waiting for some manufacturer to take up the idea in a big way. The same man almost has completed his augmented topdresser which he believes will give absolutely even coverage with no ridges. It is built around a popular topdresser now on the market but has an additional agitating medium and a screen which further guarantees that the dressing will be deposited evenly. When completed the improvements to the old machine, which give every evidence of success, will have cost less than five dollars.

Work on New Machines

Besides the gadgets made by greenkeepers to meet new conditions, nearly every one is working on or planning some new machine to revolutionize some particular phase of his daily work. Frequently these marvelous machines never materialize; sometimes they progress far enough to be proved impractical; occasionally something of real significance is evolved. Thus Greenkeeper Beaver, he of the early power mower, is working upon a power driven spiker to puncture the layer of adobe which is present just beneath his turf. All current spikers will not penetrate deep enough without tearing the turf, but Beaver believes that he is on the right track; if so, his machine when completed will be a boon to all greenkeepers with adobe-founded layouts.

For years a number of the greenkeepers have been attempting to produce a machine that will eradicate Bermuda grass, but so far they have been unsuccessful. Several machines have been developed which will cut the grass' runners, but this

acts as a method of cultivation and the pest grows stronger and stalkier than ever after such a treatment. The only effective way of removing Bermuda without digging up the whole green is that advocated by W. H. Johnson of the Royal Palms course at San Pedro. This method consists of rolling up the turf so the roots of the weed are exposed to enable one to dig them out with a knife. The turf is then unrolled and all remains of the weed are dug out and the edges of the turf are sealed with soil and sand. In this way play is not interrupted and all evidences of the weeding vanish in a few days. This system may be slow but it is effective and it is doubtful if it will be superseded within the next decade by mechanical methods. Crabgrass is another weed that defies mechanical means of eradication, jackknives or two-pronged forks being the most effective weapons to be used against this enemy of good greens.

Returning to the matter of mechanical ingenuity, it is gratifying to note that Eastern manufacturers are very much on the watch for any ideas which they may glean from greenkeepers on the coast. As a consequence the big concerns now are never very far behind the trend of turf culture in California.

Pro Collects Damages for Contract Violation

ALTHOUGH AN unkind fate seems to decree that many a pro gets buffeted about from pillar to post, it occasionally happens that things work out differently. According to word from Michigan City, Ind., damages amounting to \$600 were awarded Eddie Baening, who had been professional at the Long Beach C. C.

Baening was employed at the aforesaid club in 1927 and 1928, and after his first year there he was given a contract for 1928 and 1929. However, at the end of his second year, officials of the club refused to hire him for the next season.

Although his salary was stipulated at only \$1,500 annually, he sought to recover \$10,000 damages, which he said had been caused him by the loss of profits in the sale of golf equipment, instruction, and damage to his professional reputation.—*The Bristolite*.

After club elections, GOLFDOM should be told the names and mail addresses of new officers.

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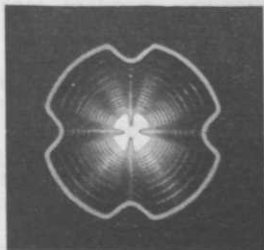
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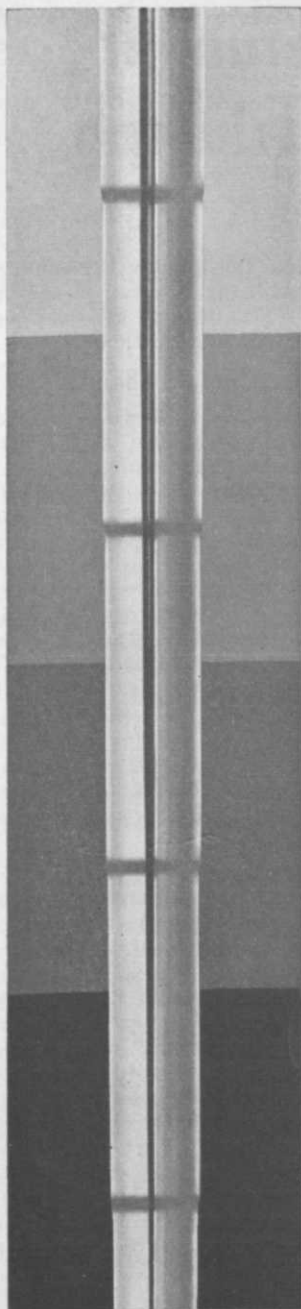
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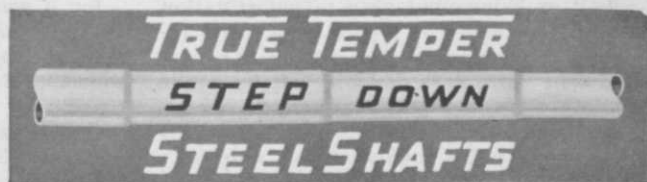
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Enlarged longitudinal view looking through the interior of the new "True Temper" Compensator Shaft.



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Season of Trials Forerunner of Pros' Biggest Sales Triumph

By HERB GRAFFIS

PRO BUSINESS during the season now closing provided the most severe test of ability, resourcefulness and energy the field has faced since it became the giant of sport industry. Although the operations were spotty there is ample reason to believe that the pro dollars and cents volume of 1931 business will not drop as much as 15% under last year. This is no cause for bringing out the pipes and playing agonized piobaireachds, since last year's income total was well above the increase that might have been expected by the most optimistic forecaster. Under prevailing business conditions the pros hadn't much license to hope for the substantial boom they experienced in 1930. Accordingly, the 1931 business represented a healthy gain over what might be considered the average annual increase for pro volume over a three year period.

The year again demonstrated that destiny has picked the pros as its pets. The season started with a rush and up to the middle of June golf business was registering its greatest half-season sprint in history. Some of the pros were pretty blue during this period as the stores were unloading standard make 1.62-1.62 balls at prices 40 fathoms below sea-level. Stocks of the wood-shed club manufacturers were being liquidated through the stores. These hit-and-run makers were getting out of the racket. They learned that the stores constituting their only outlets would play one maker against the other on price alone until there was a decided net loss in selling the stores.

This hammering buying practices of the stores also took from the established makers plenty of pounds of flesh and these makers were giving down blood along with the flesh without having the hunch to call a halt on being Shylocked. That situation resulted in many of the manufacturers recently announcing, for 1932 pro encouragement and protection, policies that plainly show the pro is America's sweetheart so far as the smart manufacturer is concerned. The manufacturer who isn't

planning to make the pro the keystone of his 1932 merchandising is going to sob on New Year's eve, 1932, that he has not been doing as good as trading nickels.

Make Good on Golden Chance

Art Boggs, sage pro at Kirtland (Cleveland district), called the turn on the year when he termed it "the testing season." The pro who got comfortably through this season and considers that his work was better done and his advancement in merchandising ability and attitude was considerable, is the fellow who has won the manufacturers over to making the pros the fair-haired boys of selling. They also are the pros who will retain this dearly won and valuable victory. As a matter of fact, they will be the pros who will have no difficulty in getting or keeping good jobs in 1932. The year revealed, even to notoriously indifferent officials, the definite value a good pro has in his club's operations.

The pros' "live-and-let-live" policy toward the manufacturers permitted a profit that far more than offset the demerits of pro credit. The credit situation has been improving among the pros although the hopes for the great clean-up P. G. A. officials planned for this year were blasted by general business conditions. Some clubs that previously had guaranteed member payment to the pro, did away with the guarantee. Plenty of the boys are worrying today about how to get money due them from their members without the members getting sore at being diplomatically dunned and then taking out their saffron ire by scheming the pro out of his job.

Weather Is Worst Blow

But it wasn't general business conditions as much as the insufferably hot weather from the middle of June on that was responsible for the slump in sales. As a tip-off on what it meant to business: George Bowden, canny Caledonian at Maketewah (Cincinnati district) sat in the