

AUCTION BRIDGE

By B. M. J.

"WHEN do you make an opening bid of two in a suit?" is the query forwarded to us by an Indianapolis correspondent. Our answer emphatically is "Never." It has been my invariable practice when making either an opening or a subsequent bid to render my conveyance as free from ambiguity as possible. When an opening bid of one in a suit is made, my partner may bank on my having tops in that particular suit as well as the possibility of something else in one or other of the remaining suits.

Whether I intend my bid to be a warning or in the nature of pre-emption, three tricks at the very least is the contract I set myself. Do not get the idea that this opening preemptive bid is simply length without strength. It is a really strong bid intimating a possible game call, especially should my partner weigh in with a couple of helps in the off suits.

I am quite aware that many players utilize the opening two-bid in a suit to indicate length without tops. On such a card I absolutely decline to do anything but pass, but that does not interfere with a later attempt to show the suit, in view of the fact that my partner may be able to communicate something denoting his card has trick value. My after bid ought not deceive him, and the essential difference between an opening and a subsequent effort is at once apparent to any thinking individual. Pursuing the same line of argument at once it becomes apparent that a bid over a previous declaration, made by one of your adversaries, cannot be treated with the same amount of respect as if it were an actual opening bid, and for this reason one must be careful about the amount of support given.

Not very long ago I happened to be partnered by a woman esteemed to be above average. We were game all and entering on the decider she opened the bidding with two diamonds. The next player passing, I was at a loss to understand what my partner intended to convey, but finally passed, as did the fourth player. With little or no trouble four tricks in diamonds accrued, but no more. A perusal of the hands in my illustration will at once show that against any possible defense I could have made three, and possibly four tricks in no trumps as well as securing rubber.

Politely inquiring from my partner for some enlightenment on her two-bid, I was informed that as she held the four honors she deemed it advisable in our best interests to try and play the hand in that suit. We ultimately lost the rubber, and those miserable fifty-six honor points cost us a matter of eight hundred and fifty points. The only bid on her hand, I suggest, was one diamond. A spade might have been bid on her left, and unquestionably my immediate response would have been two no-trumps.

♠—5, 4.
♥—J, 9, 2.
♦—A, K, Q, J, 3, 2.
♣—A, 3.

♠—3, 2.	N W E S	♠—K, Q, 9, 8
♥—A, 8, 7, 6,		♥—Q, 4, 3.
♦—7, 6.		♦—10, 5, 4.
♣—K, J, 10, 7		♣—8, 2.

6.

♠—A, J, 10, 7.
♥—K, 10, 5.
♦—9, 8.
♣—Q, 9, 5, 4.

The only opening two-bid, and one I am particularly fond of making when the material at my disposal is sufficient justification, is two no-trumps. It is such a splendid shut out that its utility should be promptly availed of whenever a reasonable chance presents itself.