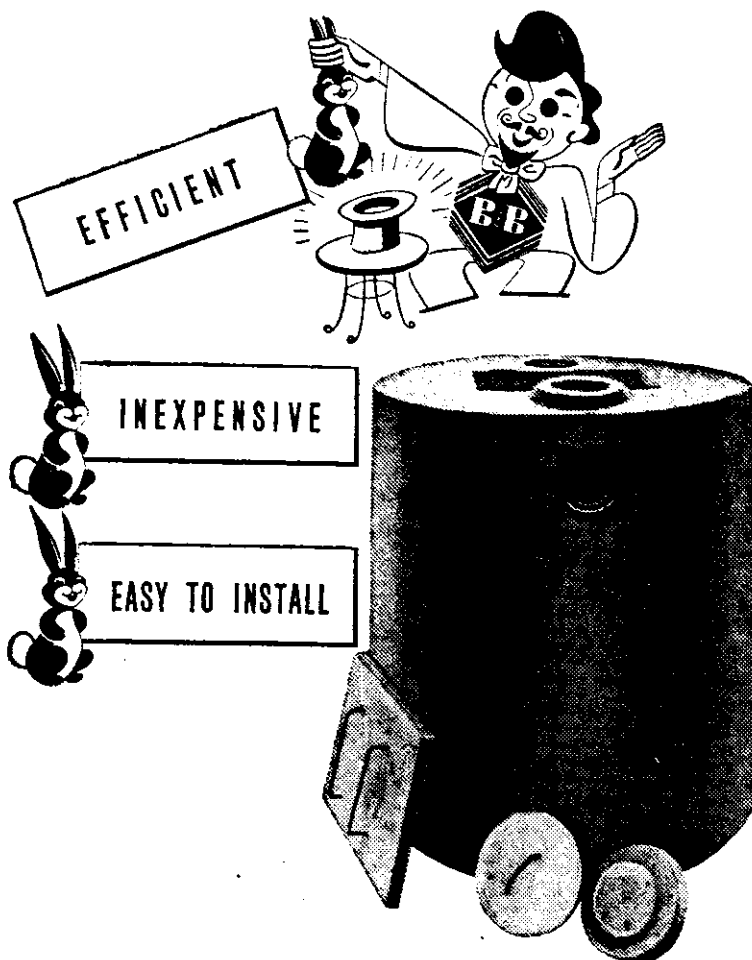


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SOCIOLOGIST LOOKS US OVER

Oregon Professor's Interest in Farming



PROFESSOR ROBERT H. DANN

"You've controlled inflation much better than we have"

"SINCE arriving in New Zealand a few weeks ago I have several times been asked to compare this country with America. But it just can't be done," declared Professor Robert H. Dann, Professor of Sociology in Oregon State College, who is spending his Sabbatical Year investigating New Zealand conditions. "The U.S. is too big and too varied between one region and another to make any comparisons that are worth anything. But I can very easily and profitably compare things in New Zealand with things in my own home State. For Oregon and New Zealand have just about the same population, the same climate, the same industries, and the same folk."

"Take farming, now. Just as with you, it's our biggest industry in Oregon—along with lumbering. A big range, like your Alps, stops the wet winds from the Pacific from reaching the eastern part so that our coast is wet and forested like your Westland and our inland area is dry and suited to wheat like your Canterbury. Only our rain stops in summer. We might get 60 days on end without a shower."

The Listener representative, looking out through a shattered window-pane, sighed for Oregon.

"Well," said the Professor. "It's good to be sure of getting all your hay in. But it's not so good to have to work all summer laying up hay and fodder for the winter. I was looking, for a long time after I landed here, to find your barns. But you don't have any—only rags on your cows. No barns to build, next to no hay to grow, and cut and turn, and store, and no hand feeding of the beasts indoors all winter. No wonder you can make a pound of butter ever here one-third as cheap as we can make it."

But surely climate could not account for all of that price difference, he was asked.

"Well, no, not directly. We haven't got your milking plants back there. You milk straight from the cow to the pig and to the cream-can all through pipes and without human hand. We milk by hand, or, at most, by cups that empty into a bucket under the cow. But then we couldn't pipe-up a whole barn full of cows, each in its stall. So our dairying is inefficient compared with yours. Only, say, why don't you drink the milk you grow? You've got the biggest and cheapest milk production in the world and, in Wellington anyhow, the finest distributing system. But nobody seems to drink the stuff."

"I'm interested in farming, of course, because I work in a college that specialises in agriculture and forestry. Our Oregon University set-up, again, is a good deal like yours. Corresponding to your University of New Zealand, which is a general co-ordinating body, is our State

Board of Higher Education. This has several constituent colleges, all of which teach general subjects up to first-year standards and thereafter specialise. With the same population we must have around double the number of students that you have. On the other hand, only about one-third of those who start finish their courses."

Returning to the subject of dairying and other production costs, Professor Dann made some comparisons between New Zealand and U.S. prices.

"Butter went up to 90 cents a pound, say 5.6," he said. "When price controls were lifted, though the new controls have got it back a little since. And milk rose to 70 cents for 32 ounces—that's roughly 2 - a pint. And haircuts quite normally cost a dollar. You've controlled inflation much better than we have. But we are producing more in the States already since reconstruction than ever before. So production should catch up on consumption by next spring or summer. And then our economic problem will be different altogether. But you, of course, have some high prices that America doesn't have. I sold my automobile before leaving for 750 dollars. And then in Auckland we rode in exactly the same model taxi bought for £900. Then the mileages you make them run! We junk our automobiles after 80,000 miles or so, and many people think that one that is two years old is getting too dangerous to ride in."

Talk of economic problems led to questions about political outlooks.

"Sure, that's the first question everyone in New Zealand puts me," replied Professor Dann. "Only most folks say 'and is America quite hopelessly capitalistic?' Well, plenty of Americans equate 'the American way of life' with economic individualism. But the idea that the majority of Americans are economically ambitious is as false as the statement that New Zealanders flop helplessly on the State. Our organised labour is of course non-political. Unions haven't

(continued on next page)