

GOOD TIMES AND BAD

JUST as sex gives life to the novel, so it used to be said that frequent references to inflation would enliven any discussion on economics. In the experience of A. J. Danks, Senior Lecturer in Economics at Canterbury University College, this is now not so. "Inflation these days," he says, "is no longer a term enshrouded in delicious horror. . . . When it comes to prices rising and rising we can take it: we are used to it." Without flatly contradicting the expert, it can safely be said that not everyone will agree with the last part of that proposition, but no one will quarrel with his next conclusion that the still-infallible source of worry and trouble is the prospect of a slump. "When is the slump coming?" Mr. Danks is regularly asked, and that gives him a starting point for six talks on the economics of boom and slump which are to be heard from YA and YZ stations at 9.15 p.m. on Thursdays, starting on July 22.

Though Mr. Danks doesn't share the certainty of many people that a slump is coming, he thinks that much not only can be said but needs to be said on the subject. For a start he assumes what he calls the "academic referee's hold" and takes a look at what has happened already. Boom and slump, as history shows, isn't something peculiar to our day, even if the slump of the 1930s was stubborn and prolonged beyond what previous history would have suggested. But if the trade cycle is something that can be studied over long periods, attitudes to it have not re-



A. J. DANKS

mained the same: the answer to the question "What should one do about a slump?" is very different today from what it was, say, 100 years ago.

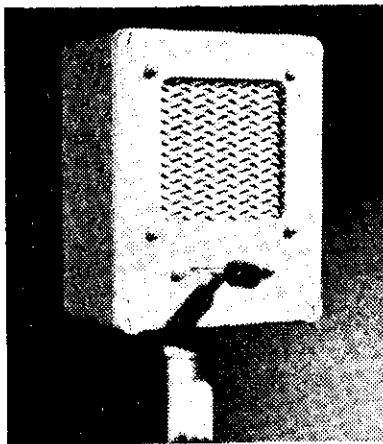
In fact, the conclusion Mr. Danks reaches at the end of his first talk is that people will no longer accept slumps. By way of protectionism, old age pensions, the dole and the like, *laissez faire* has been fighting a losing battle, and with the Welfare State it has almost disappeared. "The point," says Mr. Danks, "is really not whether we shall have a slump again, but what we shall do about a recession, a threatened downturn." And it is this question of how depressions are generated and what can be done to stop them that concerns him in succeeding talks.

Better Hearing in the House

FORTY-ONE new "speakers" were installed in the House of Representatives for this session. For a few minutes, in fact, there was a forty-second, the one shown below. Norman Johnston, of NZBS Head Office Engineering Section, brought it with him when he took *The Listener* to the House one morning recently to explain the sound reinforcement system which now helps Members and Hansard and Press reporters to follow debates more easily.

When the session began a few weeks ago Members found that a small loud speaker, like the one on this page (about 4½ in. by 3½ in. by 2 in.) had been mounted behind each seat in the cross benches. Similar speakers, but of different design, were on the Hansard reporters' tables and in the Press Gallery. The NZBS, which installed the speakers, notified the Clerk of the House that the job was completed on the first day of the second hundred years of New Zealand's Parliament.

Mr. Johnston explained that the speakers were part of a sound reinforcing system similar to the one used in the House of Commons. Fed at a very low volume with sound picked up by the 18 broadcasting microphones



N.P.S. photograph

above the Floor of the House, they should be clearly audible if the listener's ear was not more than 12 to 18 inches away. Members could switch off their own speakers, and so that they were not distracted by the sound of their own voices coming from the speakers, these were switched off automatically from the NZBS control room in the House when microphones near by were being used. Speakers on the Hansard tables were also silenced if a near-by microphone was in use.

Like all the radio installations in the House, the new speakers have been made as unobtrusive as possible. Mr. Johnston said that for the technicians the wiring was a rather difficult task as it was fed through from beneath the wooden staging at the rear part of the Chamber. The system can be extended to the rest of the House if this is later thought desirable.

While installing the sound reinforcement system the NZBS took the opportunity to overhaul and improve the broadcasting equipment in the House. New equipment installed includes a high-pass filter which, without affecting the quality of broadcast speech, cuts out all low-frequency rumble from ventilation fans and building noises.

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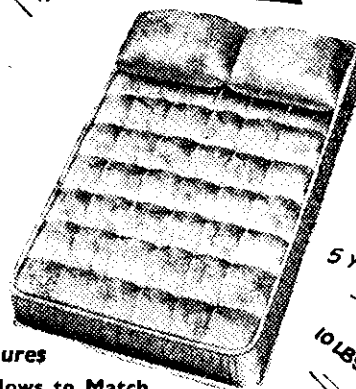
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