## Babson On . . .

THE BOND MARKET

The other day we were talking with the partner of a large financial house. He said they had been looking for an experienced trader of bonds for better than a couple of months. A number of prospects were interviewed; but, long on ambition, they were very short on the chief qualification: experience.

BACK IN FASHION AGAIN

Actually, it is no wonder that experienced bond men are scarcer than hen's teeth. Common stocks have been all the rage with the average individual investor ever since the end of World War II . . . and for a spell even before that. Banks, insurance companies, and some trustee were the only ones who had much interest in bonds. As a matter of fact, even they bought more from necessity than from their love of

During the last big war, the Gov-ernment and the Treasury, on the one side, and the Federal Reserve Board, on the other side, co-operated to keep interest rates low to hold down the huge expense of a soaring federal debt burden. This "accord" was highly inflationary . . because every time the Fed bought bonds to support the bond market, it filled the banks fuller and fuller of loanable funds. At the end of the fifth decade, this accord was scrapped; interest rates started a long climb, and bonds went into a secular slump from which they have not yet emerged. Today, yields of 6% on bonds are not hard to find, and these handsome returns have attracted buyers who never be re bought bonds. In a word, bonds are back in fashion again! BUT WHAT ABOUT INFLATION?

With the exception of a short period toward the end of the 1950's, those who bought bonds during and after World War II have had a very bit er experience. First, most of the bonds purchased had low coupon rates . . . ranging from around 2% to something over 4%. Naturally, as interest rates moved higher, the older, lower-coupon-rate issues fell in price. Second, during most of this period, stock prices rose handsomely . . . making bonds look like a very poor second choice indeed. Third - and most damaging to the bond owner - prices for consumer goods climbed ever higher, so that the yearly interest received bought less and less and the purchasing power of the bond when paid off at maturity was far below the pur-chasing power of the original in-

The recent swift rise in the coupon rates on best-quality bonds to 6% and even higher - is giving the buyer a good current income and lessens the danger of any future fall in the prices of such issues. Many will tell you that the threat of inflation, of further advances in the cost of living, makes bonds still unattractive; but this fear may be unwarranted today. At present low quotations for many sound bonds, all their owner has to do is purchase Lem at a discount and hold them to capital. This method of protecting against inflation was not available then 3% bonds were selling close to 100. And the competition from stocks - even after their recent slump - is not very great, since many of the popular issues now yield only 3%-4%.

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TAX EXEMPTION TOO

There seems little doubt that Congress will raise all income taxes for 1967. Such action will make taxexempt bonds more appealing than they are now. Once it was thought that only the very wealthy should be interested in tax-exempt securities. However, those who pay only 20% to 30% of their taxable income to Uncle Sam can make really worthwhile savings in present de-pressed tax-exempt bond markets. Many of the tax-exempt obligations issued ten and fifteen years ago, with maturities in the next five years, can be had today at deep discounts. You pay no federal taxes on the yearly interest while you hold them, and you enjoy the favorable long-term capital gains tax on the increase at maturity. THE LONG VIEW

A review of the price movements of stocks and bonds over a long sweep of history indicates that popularity may ride with stocks for many years and then swing to bonds. Since 1949, bonds have been in the discard and stocks in the ascendancy. It is just possible that recent interaction between stocks and bonds may be making the foundation for the building of a new cyclical climb in bond prices.

### Auxiliary To Meet

The Daniel C. Roberts Fire Company Auxiliary will meet on Wed-esday evening, October 12th, at the fire house. All members are asked to attend.

#### Legal Notice —

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that Letters Testamentary have been granted in the Estate of Bertha Anderson, lete of Shavertown, Luzerne County, Pennsylvania, who died September 12, 1966. All persons indebted to the said decedent are requested to make payment and those having claims or demands against the estate to present the same without delay to Ruth Lamoreaux and Miners National Bank of Wilkes-Barre, Executors, 8-18 West Market Street, Wilkes-Barre, Penn-

Hourigan, Kluger and Spohrer 700 Miners National Bank Building Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania



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