

JUN 2 1960

Financial Gossip:

Science Helps Generate Year-Round Toy Appeal

By ELMER C. WALZER

UPI Financial Editor

NEW YORK — In the good old days — for parents — kids got their toys at Christmas time, and that was that.

Now, say the toy makers, toy buying is rapidly becoming a year round activity.

The Toy Manufacturers of the U. S. A., Inc., representing 450 toymakers, estimates that 35 per cent of their toys — 562-million dollars worth—is bought for boys and girls in the 10 months between January and October.

Toymakers sum up the reason for this change to one word—science.

Adults, they assert, are turning more and more to scientific pursuits. Children try to emulate their elders, hence the swing to science toys.

Science Boom Brought Demand

A. C. Gilbert Co., of New Haven, Conn., started production of science toys before electronics became popular. It now reports the science boom has brought a favorable change in demand for them.

"Year around sales of our toys has been rising rapidly with the popular appeal generated by science," says A. C. Gilbert Jr., president.

"American Flyer trains which contributed almost two-thirds of the company's volume as recently as four years ago, now account for only one-third."

Gilbert reports last year's sales rose more than a million dollars over 1958, and this year the 51-year-old company looks for a 10 per cent rise in sales over 1959.

"Unquestionably, science toys are the sales leaders," says Gilbert. "And the rise in their popularity on a year-round basis helps the others along too."

A. C. Gilbert Co. has increased the scope of its chemistry sets and physics sets and telescopes, and added a new electrical engineering line to meet demand from science-oriented youngsters.

New outlets are taking a big part in the sale of toys as the science boom generates new demand for this type of toy.

Sales of toys has spread to hardware stores, drug stores, supermarkets, stationery stores, auto supply stores, and even beauty shops.

Specialty toy stores which numbered 200 about 25 years ago now total 2,500, operating throughout the year.