

NOV 22 1961

Model Train Now Peeks Into Future

Back in the good old days, model railroading was largely confined to trains that traveled in a circle and emitted an occasional toot or two.

This Christmas, youngsters can have miniature trains that are transportation systems.

Remote control operation, still a goal for most railroads, is now an accomplished fact with model trains. By pushbutton control, young engineers can couple and uncouple cars, change engines, operate switches and control semaphores.

Ingenious accessories load and unload trailers automatically, deliver oil drums aboard freight cars and move livestock in and out of cattle cars.

The rolling stock has kept pace with this trend toward automation, too. One realistic freight car automatically ejects baled hay for hungry cows at trackside; others have little men who unload lumber, TNT cars that fly into pieces at the touch of a button, and hopper cars that discharge their coal into bins.

Missiles also soar off into space from rocket launcher cars, and there's a motorized rocket sled that races along the rails under its own power, ejecting the pilot electrically by remote control. In short, there's virtually no limit to what kind of trains a child can have under his tree.

The current interest in the Civil War has also manifested itself in trains this year. Boys who want to re-enact the strife between the Blue and the Gray can do so with an American Flyer Civil War Frontiersman freight. The colorful miniature wood-burning steam engine hauls a cannon car with removable cannon, an ammunition car and a troop car.

This piece of Americana, however, is the exception to the rule. Most model trains this year will reflect an ever-increasing trend toward modernization and the electronic age.