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AMAZING SCIENCE BUYS

for FUN, STUDY or PROFIT

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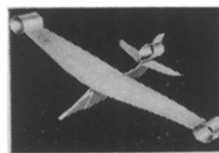
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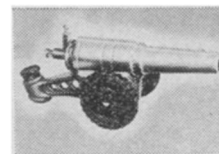
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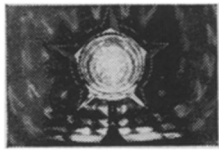
NEW \$99.50 HELIUM-NEON LASER!



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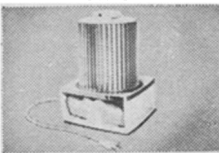
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AEC authorization

Legislation giving the U.S. Atomic Energy Commission authority to spend money in the fiscal year beginning July 1 was passed by the Senate last week and by the House this week. Both Houses accepted the bill as recommended by the Joint Committee on Atomic Energy.

The committee had made a few small adjustments in the Administration requests, most notably a decrease of \$8.5 million in weapons programs and an increase of \$4.8 million in Adm. Hyman Rickover's program of nuclear propulsion for naval ships. The sum of adjustments up and down brought the total authorization to \$2.29 billion, an increase of \$7.7 million over what the Administration had requested for the entire agency.

The bill as it stands envisions drastic reductions in high-energy physics research (SN: 3/7, p. 239) and a serious reorientation of the program in controlled nuclear fusion (SN: 4/11, p. 373). How much of the authorized money will actually be appropriated to the AEC is the subject of still-pending Congressional action.

Tax on lead

President Nixon this week proposed a \$4.25 per pound tax on lead additives in gasoline. The measure is aimed at both pollution abatement and the \$1.6 billion annual revenue that would be produced.

Although the tax would be imposed on the manufacturers and importers of the additives, it would inevitably be passed on to the consumer—who would pay an estimated additional 2.3 cents per gallon of gasoline.

Lead levels in the air are reaching hazardous levels, some researchers believe. Lead also renders ineffective the catalytic mufflers which have been proposed for removing other pollutants, such as carbon monoxide and hydrocarbons, from auto exhausts (SN: 2/14, p. 167).

NSF budget

The House last week authorized the National Science Foundation to spend \$527.6 million in fiscal 1971.

On the next day, however, the House came down well short of that figure when it passed the Independent Offices Appropriations Bill, which provided only \$495 million to NSF. The appropriation is \$16 million less than the agency's budget request (SN: 2/7, p. 144) and an increase of \$57 million over funds provided in 1970.

The Senate has not yet acted on either measure.