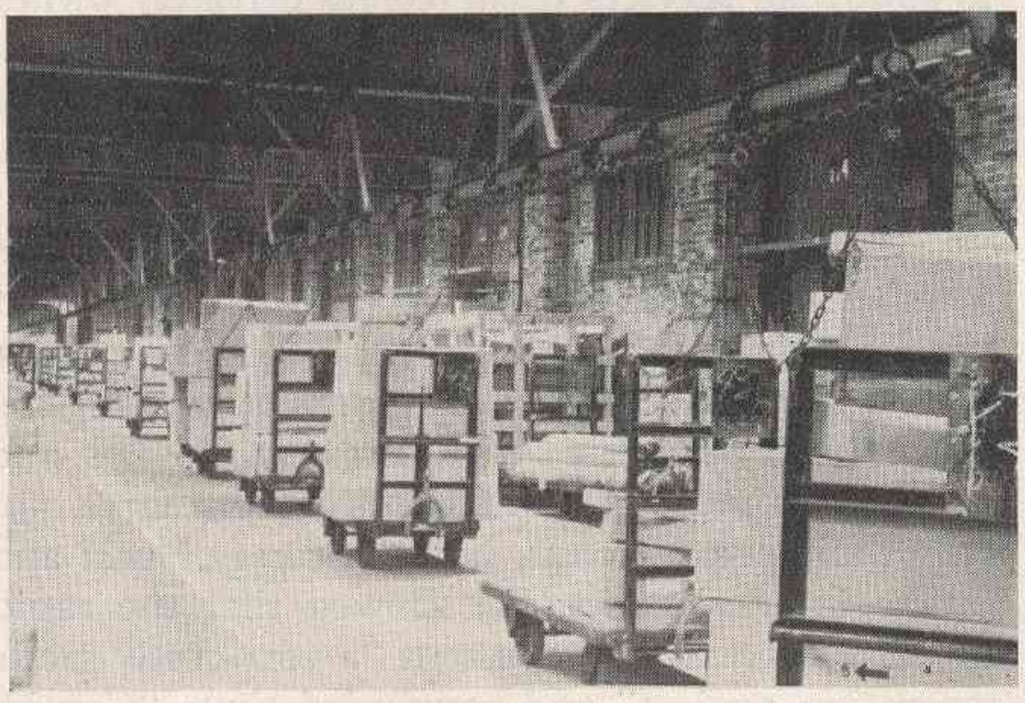
These Walls Were Bulging, So—

To get more capacity and efficiency from this Chicago freighthouse the Erie switched to mechanized operation



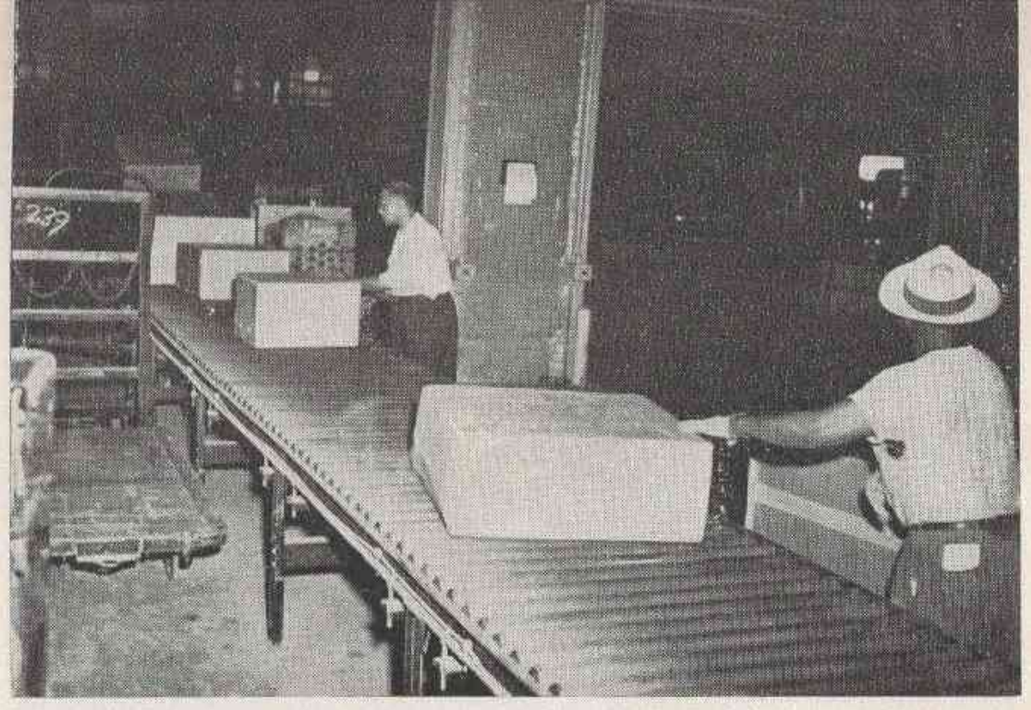
ON THE MAIN FLOOR, 80-truck capacity Towveyor moves freight from cars to various "zone areas" in the terminal at a speed of 120 ft per min. The zone destinations are chalked on the small metal plates.

FREIGHT IS SOMETIMES UNLOADED in the zones, but if volume permits it is left on the four-wheel trucks to avoid rehandling. The Erie purchased 800 house trucks for this operation; it already had 200.

Installation of mechanized equipment in the inbound house, and a plan of operation that makes the most of such equipment, has actually added new capacity to the Erie's 14th Street freight terminal in Chicago. New lighting has reclaimed some unused basement space, but the real gains have been on the first and second floors. There the road has installed a Towveyor system, a Lamson roller conveyor system, new lighting and a five master-station intercommunication system. One of three existing elevators was replaced and a fourth one added. Also new: A brick connecting house and center platform, giving the entire freighthouse a "W" shape.

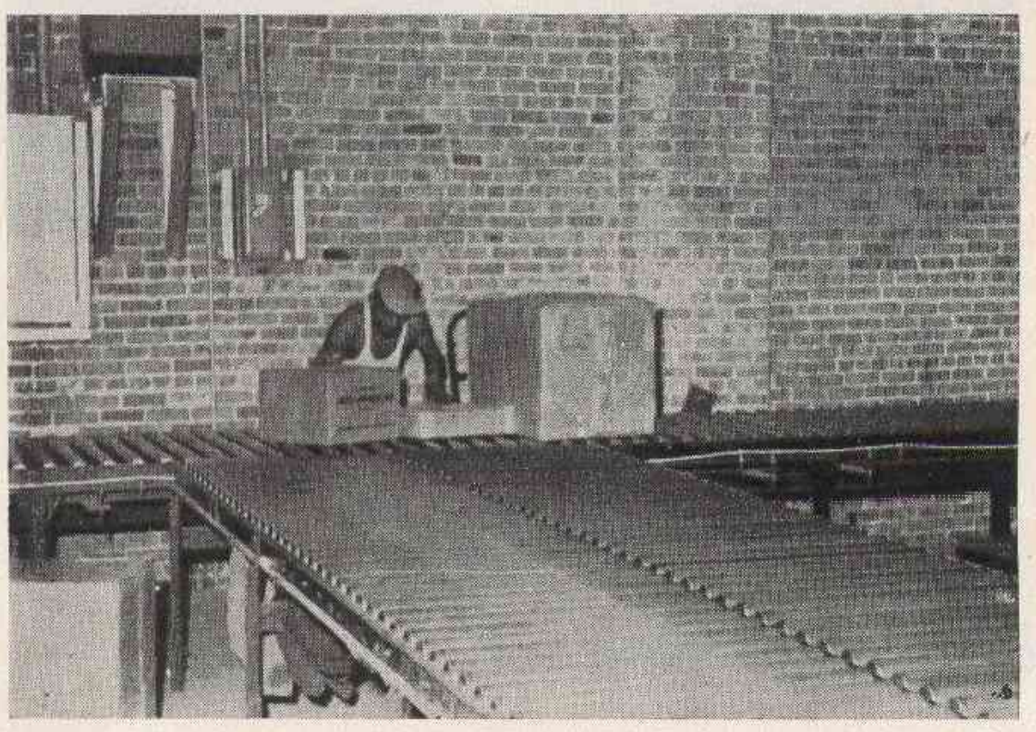
By these changes the road is improving service for its customers. The entire freighthouse operation is more efficient. During the first two months of operation there was realized a substantial reduction in time between unloading freight cars and loading highway vehicles. Fewer shipments are "Can't Locate," "Over," and "Short." Likelihood of concealed damage is less because of reduced handling. Both the railroad and its employees are benefiting because jobs are easier and safer and because labor turnover is lessened. The mechanized sorting of small shipments has been found to be a great improvement over the old system of manual sorting.

Before the new equipment was placed in operation last May, the Erie conducted training classes for about 20 key employees of the terminal. These extended over a two-month period. Among other things, 15 men memorized a new alaphabetical sorting guide which lists zone numbers for the Chicago delivery area.



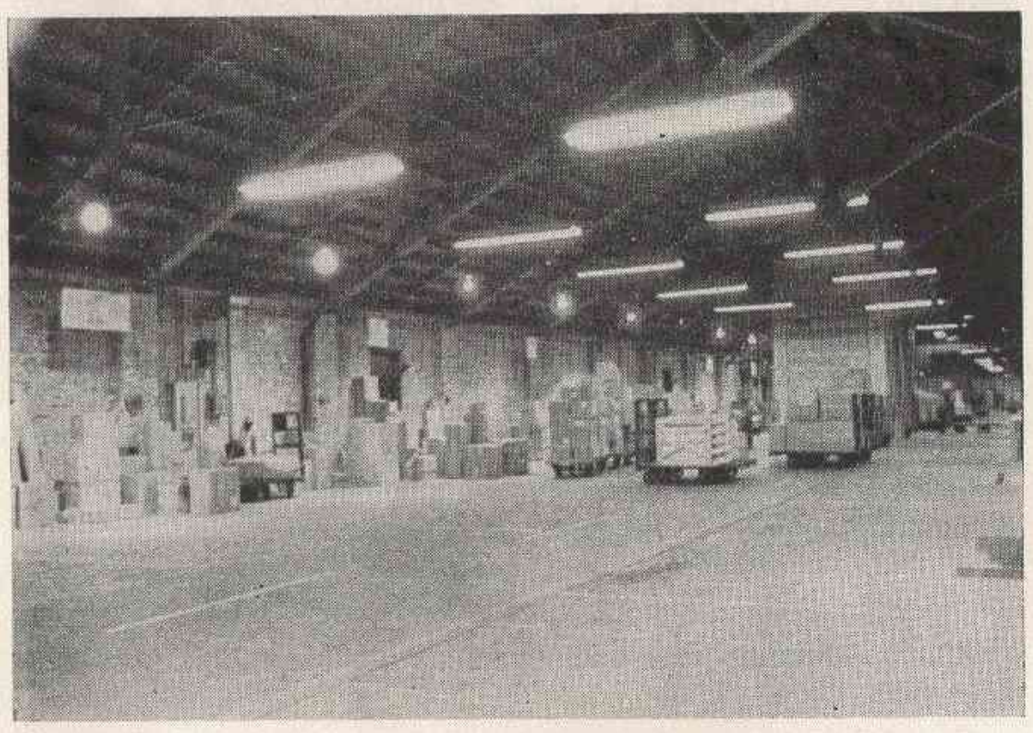
MISCELLANEOUS FREIGHT, called "soup," moves by Towveyor to the south end of the freighthouse where it is removed and placed on the 32-ft power conveyor loading table. Destination: upstairs, via the elevating conveyor.

MARKERS at the head of the elevating conveyor on the second floor check addresses and chalk on proper zone numbers as the packages start along the 157-ft powered assort conveyor.

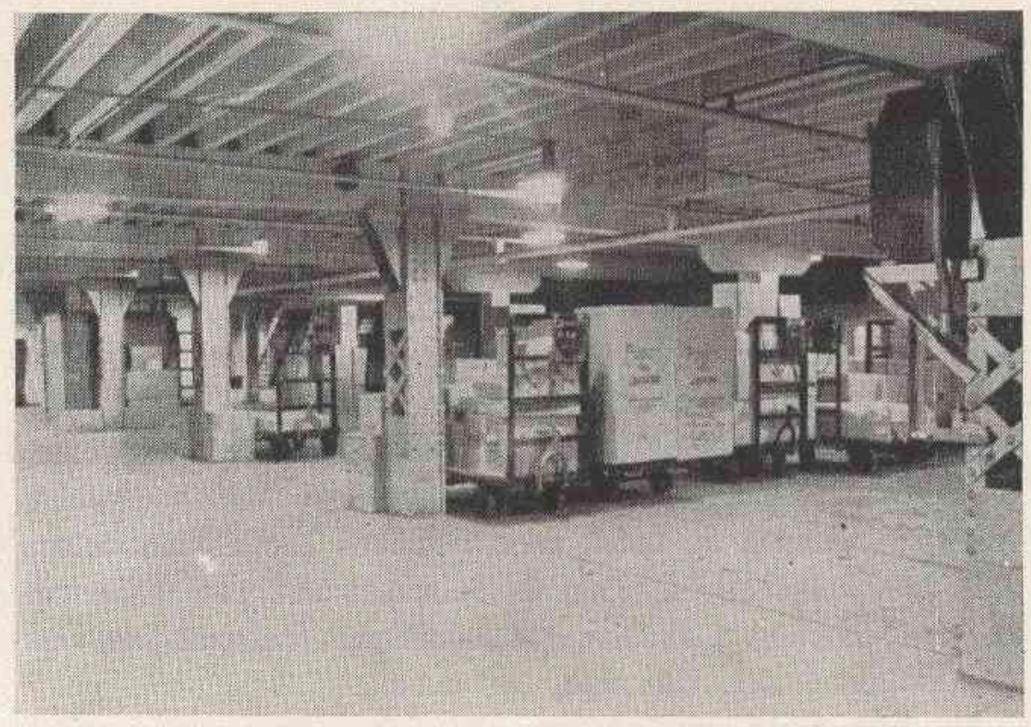


ALONG THE ASSORT CONVEYOR on the second floor are seven gravity conveyor "fingers." Pushers, at each "finger," sort freight by the marker's zone numbers—pushing the packages onto assigned gravity conveyors.

LOADED HOUSE TRUCKS move from the "fingers" to designated zone areas on the second floor. Yale work-savers, called "walkies," are used since there is no Towveyor on this floor.



UPSTAIRS, the freight is stacked in neat piles in the zone areas, ready for the delivery clerks. As on the first floor, 72-in. fluorescent lamps were coupled with 500-watt incandescents for overhead lighting.



THE BASEMENT was reclaimed and is now used principally for freight destined beyond Chicago. Such freight comes down by elevator, in house trucks, direct from inbound cars to be assembled in destination zones.

READY TO GO, house trailers from the basement are moved by elevators to the first floor, and thence by Mercury gas tractors to the loading platform. The station has four elevators, including one completely new one.

A FIVE-MASTER-STATION INTERCOM system, by Webster, is a time and step saver. A separate intercom setup, using two Webster Teletalks, connects the second-floor markers with first-floor loaders at the conveyor table.