

Renovated Rest Rooms Draw Patrons' Appreciation

Erie rehabilitates facilities in Jersey City station, using modern wall and floor-finishing materials, fixtures and finishings



As Renovated, the Women's Rest Room Has a Restful Club-Like Atmosphere

WHEN the Erie recently undertook the renovation of the toilet and rest-room facilities in its station at Jersey City, N. J., it found that, with the aid of modern wall-finishing materials, floor coverings, fixtures and furnishings, it was possible, with only a modest expenditure, to achieve an appearance that is all that can be asked for by any standard of measurement. Today, after undergoing complete rehabilitation, the toilet and rest room facilities in this station present a highly attractive appearance and have an aspect of cheerful cleanliness that has drawn many expressions of appreciation or of a complimentary nature from the railroad's patrons. The materials that were used to advantage in this work included decorative and plain asbestos Flexboard for walls and ceilings, marbleized asbestos wainscoting board, ceramic and asphalt tile for the floors, and walnut Texboard for the walls in the ladies' rest room.

The Jersey City station of the Erie is situated on the west shore of the Hudson river, directly opposite New York City, where it serves as the eastern terminus of this company's Chicago-New York main line as well as of a number of branch lines serving suburban communities in New Jersey and New York. Hence, it is in intensive use by both through passengers and commuters, and serves primarily as a point of transfer between Erie trains and ferry boats or tunnel trains of the Hudson & Manhattan railroad. The present station was built in 1888, and is of frame construction, with a foundation consisting of brick walls carried on timber piles.

From time to time the public toilet facilities, which are located on the main floor adjacent to the waiting room, have been renovated or renewed in whole or in part, the last time being in 1916. By 1938, these facilities had again reached such a state of deterioration that it became necessary to give serious consideration to

the question of their renewal, especially in view of the approaching New York World's Fair. At this time, the existing interior finish of the toilet rooms consisted of wood walls and ceiling embodying beaded tongue-and-groove construction and concrete floors covered with asphalt blocks. The plumbing fixtures were likewise of a type that had been outmoded, while the furnishings in the ladies rest room, which consisted of over-stuffed arm chairs and sofas, were badly worn. To remedy the situation it was decided to renew the toilet and rest room facilities in their entirety with the latest types of fixtures and furnishings, and to replace the existing wall, ceiling and floor coverings with materials carefully chosen to secure the desired harmony of color schemes and the proper decorative effects.

Layouts Revised

Coincident with the improvement program, certain changes, mostly of a minor nature, were made in the floor areas occupied by the toilet facilities, with more extensive revisions being made in the arrangement of the respective facilities, particularly in the men's room. Originally the latter room was L-shaped in plan, the main portion being 23 ft. by 35 ft. in dimensions, and embodying a smoking room, which occupied a space about 22 ft. square. In the revised layout the leg of the L has been closed off and this space, 9 ft. by 15 ft. in plan, set aside as a possible future addition to the women's room. Also the smoking room has been done away with entirely, and the space that it occupied has been devoted to toilet facilities, which are arranged as shown on the accompanying floor plan.

In the original layout, the facilities for women occupied a total area slightly more than 30 ft. square, of which a space about 20 ft. wide and 30 ft. long was devoted to

the rest room, while the remainder of the space was occupied by toilet facilities. In the renovation program neither the size nor the shape of the total space or of the rest room was altered materially, but a portion of that part of the space occupied by toilet facilities was set aside as a powder room, this space being approximately 9 ft. by 10 ft. in plan.

In the renovation program the walls in the entire men's room and in the toilet section of the women's room were covered with green decorative asbestos Flexboard above a marbleized asbestos wainscoting 54 in. high, the background color of the latter being characterized as "verde antique" (dark green). The wainscots are surmounted by black asbestos caps, while the base strips (6 in. high) are of black ceramic tile. Gray Flexboard is used as the ceiling covering, and here as well as on the side walls, adjacent sheets of the covering material are joined with aluminum molding strips. The floors are of black and white ceramic tile laid in a wicker pattern.

Women's Rest Room

Treatment accorded the women's rest room in the renovation program was designed to impart a restful club-like atmosphere. Here the walls are covered for their entire height with walnut Texboard, which consists of a Celotex base covered with genuine walnut veneer with a natural finish. This material was supplied in planks 12 in. wide, which were placed vertically with beveled shiplap joints. The walls in this room embody a brown ceramic tile base and a cornice molding of walnut wood at the top. The ceiling, as well as the ceiling beams and a number of exposed supporting columns, are covered with decorative Flexboard in a buff color, the aluminum molding strips being used here also. Asphalt tile in a checkered pattern is used for the floor covering, the contrasting colors being dark brown and a light tan.

Not the least important aspect of the ladies rest room are the new furnishings that were installed as a part of the renovation program. These are of the modernistic type and include comfortable leather-upholstered arm chairs and a sofa, all of which have chromium-plated tubular frames and legs. Red is the predominating color in these furnishings, although a warm brown is used to some extent. Other items of furniture in the women's rest room include several small tables with chromium-plated legs and a number of stand-type metal ash trays, the color scheme for these being black with a chromium trim. A final touch is imparted to the room by the Venetian blinds with which the windows are equipped.



This View of a Portion of the Men's Room Is Illustrative of the General Character of the Improved Facilities

As a part of the project, all the existing windows in both rooms were replaced with double-hung sash glazed with Florentine glass.

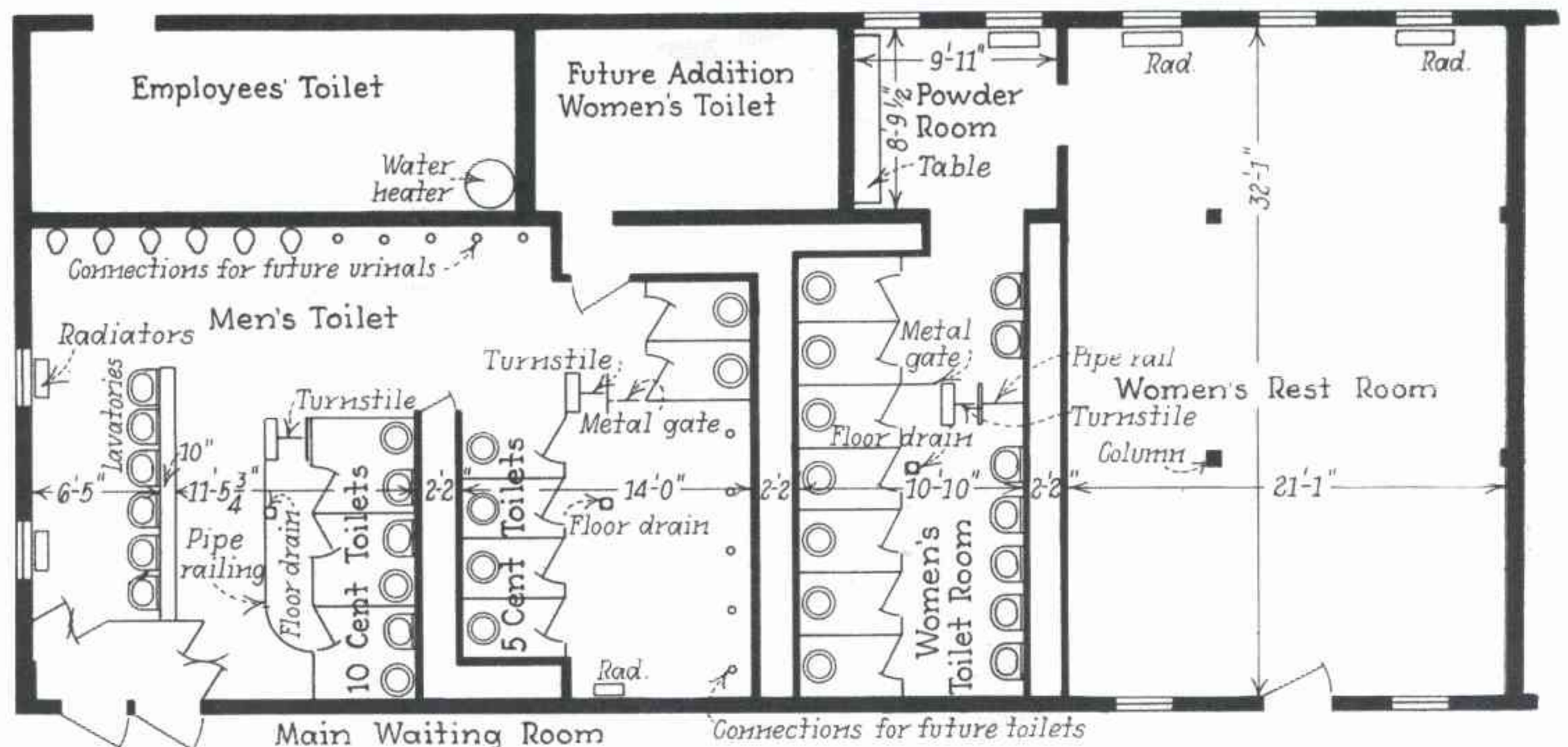
The powder room that has been incorporated in the facilities for women comprises something of an innovation. It is provided for the convenience of women patrons when applying make-up and embodies a bench at table height along one side, four wall mirrors in chromium-plated frames and a number of stools. In keeping with the general decorative scheme, the bench is finished on top in green Flexboard and is supported on chromium-plated metal legs.

Plumbing Fixtures

The plumbing fixtures and other appurtenances are of the latest and most modern type. The water closets are of vitreous china and embody flush valves and "saniblack" seats. Lavatories are of the pedestal type and are equipped with self-closing chromium-plated faucets and drains of the "pop-up" type. Mounted on the wall above each lavatory are a glass soap dispenser and a mirror in a chromium-plated frame. The urinals in the men's room, of which there are six, with connections provided for six more, are of the "Madstone" pedestal type.

The facilities in the men's room include four five-cent

Floor Plan of the Renovated Toilet Facilities in the Erie's Jersey City Station

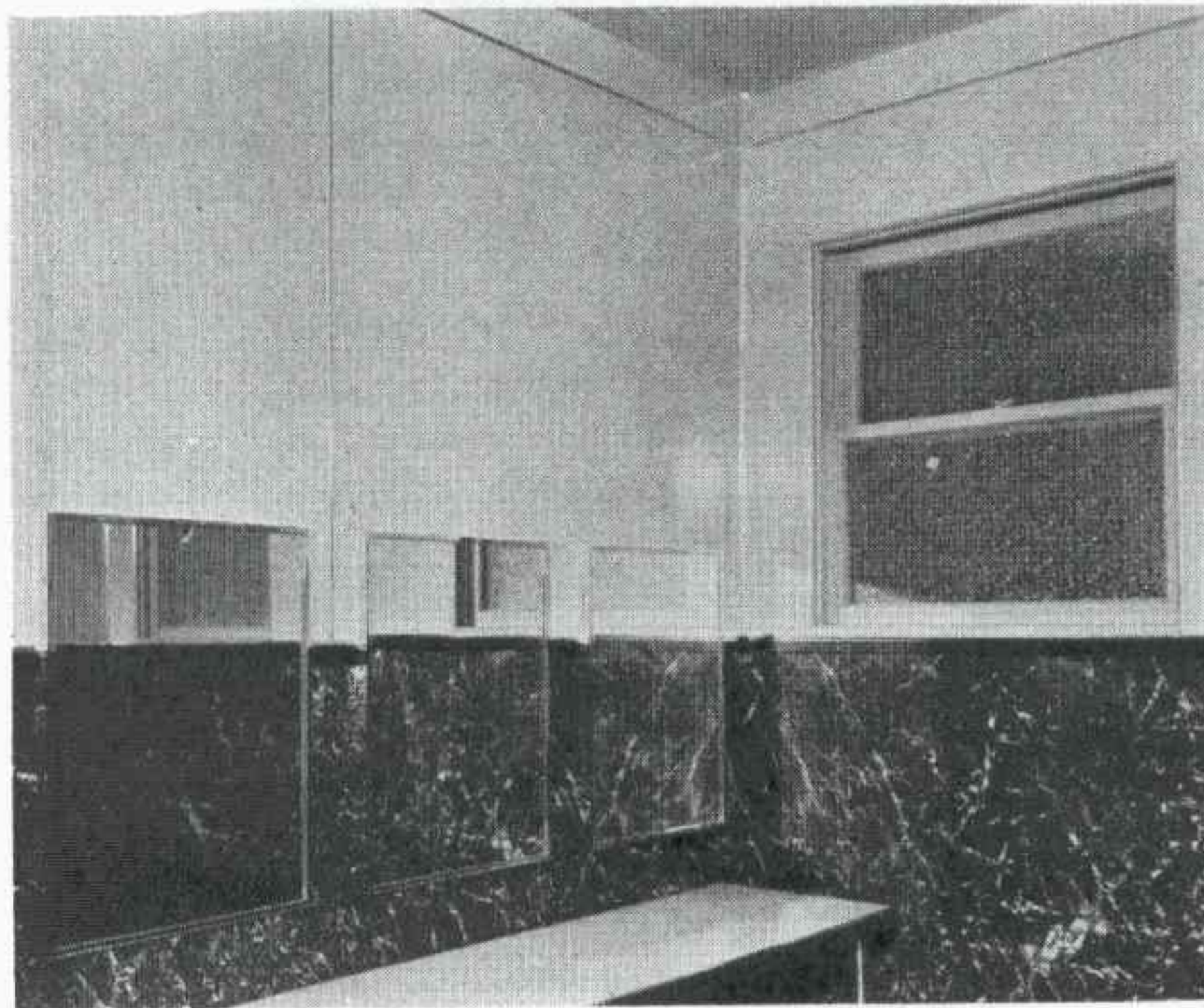


and three ten-cent pay toilets, each of the latter units including a lavatory and mirror. Sufficient space is available for the installation of four additional five-cent toilets if need for them should develop. Each of the groups of toilets is reached by means of a turnstile of the three-arm space-saving type. A similar turnstile in the women's room sets off a group of five pay toilets. All toilet partitions are of the metal flush type with chromium-plated trim, these partitions being painted black in the men's room and green in the women's room.

All lighting fixtures are of the ceiling type, embodying frosted glass globes with chromium-plated bases, and are controlled by individual switches. For purposes of ventilation each of the rooms is provided with air intakes at strategic points, which are covered with screens or grilles, depending on the location, and which are connected by means of metal ducts with a blower placed on the roof of the station. Both rooms are also provided with concealed sprinkling systems embodying chromium-plated fittings.

Construction Details

As a part of the improvement program, the existing floor-supporting structure under the two rooms was removed and replaced with 12-in. by 12-in. stringers, 4-in.



A Corner of the Powder Room Provided for the Convenience of Women Patrons

by 12-in. joists, and a sub-floor of 2-in. planks, all of creosoted yellow pine. In the toilet rooms the sub-floor was covered with a 4-in. reinforced concrete slab, which was overlaid with a 1½-in. cement bed course for receiving the tile floor.

Since the women's rest room is floored with asphalt tile, it was necessary to provide a somewhat different type of base than that used in the toilet rooms. Here the new two-inch timber sub-floor was first covered with a layer of plain asbestos paper, over which were applied, in succession, a layer of asphalt-saturated felt, a course of diamond wire mesh, and a leveling course of cement, sand and fibrated asphalt. Over the latter course the wearing surface was laid in tile cement.

In the renewal of the walls, the existing coverings were removed and 7/8-in. sheathing was nailed directly to the existing studding, the new materials being applied over this sheathing. In the ceiling areas the new Flexboard covering was fastened to 2-in. by 4-in. hangers that were nailed to the existing joists.

Other work undertaken in the Erie's Jersey City station coincident with the renovation of the toilet facilities included the replacement of the wall and ceiling coverings in the station barber shop with Flexboard, using decorative green for the walls and gray for the ceiling. Here also the aluminum molding strips were used for joining adjacent strips of the Flexboard. Also the windows in the barber shop were equipped with Venetian blinds and the lighting fixtures were renewed with units similar to those placed in the rest rooms. In addition the interior of the station was painted, a new newsstand was constructed in the waiting room, and certain other repair work was carried out, the general purpose being to prepare the station for handling World's Fair business.

This renovation work was carried out under the general direction of J. C. Patterson, chief engineer maintenance of way of the Erie at Cleveland, Ohio, and I. H. Schram, engineer maintenance of way of the Eastern district at Jersey City, and under the direct supervision of F. C. Kronauer, division engineer of the Terminal division, also at Jersey City.

Arthur Curtiss James Retires

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to the characteristic of giving all credit for accomplishment to his associates. As a directing officer, he has gained the reputation of selecting men who can perform their duties without his constant supervision and direction.

Another outstanding characteristic of Mr. James, and one that has played an important part in his career, has been his foresightedness. For many years he has been an advocate of the speeding up of passenger service, and in keeping with this vision, has demanded fast, and often record runs, while traveling 50,000 miles a year. Although he always remained in the background, he was a factor in the development of lightweight, high-speed trains. As early as 1933, before the first lightweight train had been ordered, his vision was expressed in a personal letter to D. A. Steel, associate editor of the *Railway Age*, in which he said, "It is my personal belief that this Fair (Century of Progress Exposition at Chicago) will be a splendid eye-opener to some railroad men, particularly along the lines of reducing weights of all kinds of equipment. The trend is evidently in that direction and the dead weight per passenger on the Royal Scot is just about half what it is on first-class American trains. The Pullman Company evidently is alive to this situation and its car of light weight and streamline design is the beginning of a radical change in our ideas in this country." A few months later the Burlington ordered the first of its nine Zephyrs.

While Mr. James has had a large financial interest in railroads, it has not interfered with his primary motive of developing the west. Even though he predicted the depression to a month, he would not dispose of his holdings in Western Pacific at a profit in 1930 for, as he said, selling would be directly contrary to his reason for buying in the first place. At that time he was the largest stockholder in the Western Pacific, the Southern Pacific, and the Great Northern.

He proudly calls himself a capitalist, and delights in refuting the notion that "absentee owners" are interested only in dividends. He has taken a particular interest in employee relationships and has done much to improve working conditions. In addition to being known as a financier, he is recognized as one of the country's outstanding philanthropists.