

TREE PLANTING PAYS OFF

One "Golden Freight Car" award and many thousands of real freight cars loaded with pulpwood, woodpulp and paper came to the railroad in 1968 as a payoff from its "Green Gold" program. In the deep south, where the railroad vigorously encourages the planting of pine trees to make pulpwood crops, two big paper mills went into full production in 1968. The result: an increase of 37,449 cars of wood industry products.

The railroad received the Golden Freight Car award from the Railway Progress Institute for the most effective promotion of freight traffic.

There are now 449 wood-related industries in Mississippi alone. To serve them, the Illinois Central bought two railroads and built one new line.

A YEAR OF NEW TRAINS

A railroad's business is running trains—particularly freight trains.

In 1968 the Illinois Central Railroad figured out some fresh ways of running them.

Most exciting, according to knowledgeable transportation people, is the world's first Rent-a-Train, already described.

Another development is the unit train of 100-ton coal hopper cars running regularly from Madisonville, Ky., to the Grand Rivers, Ky. barge-loading facility. A unit coal train for a major steel company is now operating between Southern Illinois and Indiana Harbor, Ind. At full mine production a second train will be added. Two other unit trains are scheduled for an electric utility company. These trains will operate between Southern Illinois and Western Kentucky mines and Wisconsin power plants.

"Fastback" is another type of train. It moves piggyback trailers and containers between Chicago and Memphis at near passenger train speed overnight between these markets.

COMPUTERS WORK HARD FOR CUSTOMERS

During an average day some 45,000 freight cars travel over the Illinois Central. Thousands of others are in yards or at customers' loading docks. Some 2,000 loaded cars move off the railroad and another 1,000 come to us from other lines.

Keeping constant tab on these cars is as important as moving them. Customers need to know. So do the people running the railroad. Empty cars must be located and directed to where they are needed. A prodigious job that computers and high speed communications have now taken over. Car locations and other information feed into the computers from about 90 locations. Every car's location is available from the computer's memory within seconds at any traffic office from Boston to Los Angeles or at a customer's office via Telex or TWX. Perpetual inventories are kept on the cars in 42 yards.

This information helps the railroad run its trains with greater efficiency and get more days of useful work from equipment.

Centralized billing of freight and other tariff charges by the computer has been started for Chicago, Memphis, New Orleans and some other major points and will be extended over the entire system by the end of 1969.

The year saw completion of a design for a profit calculator which employs the computer to estimate costs associated with each shipment. It will subtract estimated cost from the revenue to determine