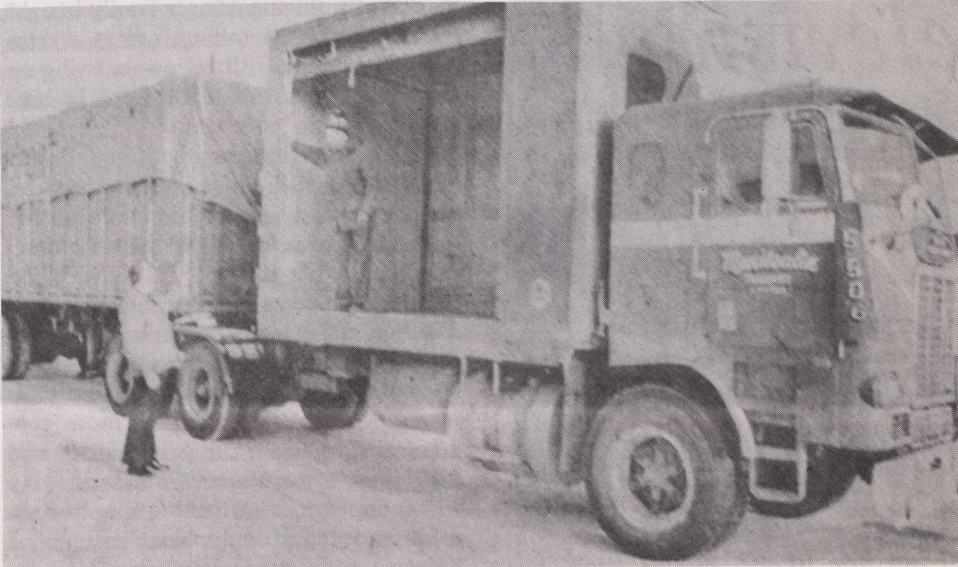


News of the arts

Supertruck a hot idea in the cold north



New truck with heated cargo carrying box is being used in Northern Ontario.

An Ontario company thinks it has come up with a super solution to the problems of trucking freight to and from Northern Ontario.

"Supertruck," a modified tractor-trailer, is being used by Manitoulin Transport Ltd., based on Manitoulin Island, southwest of Sudbury.

The truck is the brainchild of company president Doug Smith and vice-president Wayne Cumming.

What makes Supertruck different from other tractor-trailers is a 13-foot heated, cargo-carrying box attached behind the tractor's cab.

Unlike the majority of the province's trucking companies, the bulk of Manitoulin Transport's business is in Northern Ontario.

Cumming said the first problem Supertruck eliminates is frozen cargo. Winter temperatures in Northern Ontario are so

cold that when the windchill factor is added, even trailers equipped with portable floor heaters cannot prevent freezing.

So when Supertruck heads north carrying general freight from Manitoulin's terminal in Toronto, commodities that can be affected by the cold, such as drugs, are placed in the heated box.

The second and more important advantage of Supertruck begins when the truck starts loading in the North.

The majority of the freight picked up is lumber, steel, paper or precious metals. But the company also ships some general freight south, such as manufactured goods bound for the Toronto market or goods returned by merchants who have received the wrong order.

Before Supertruck, the company had to use a full-size trailer to handle the general freight, although sometimes it was only one-quarter full.

"Now we can put the general freight in the box and still haul a full trailer of lumber," Cumming said.

The box is heated by hot water from the radiator of the Cummins 350 diesel engine, which generates the heat of a forced-air furnace located under the insulated box. A flick of a switch from inside the cab will heat the box to 10 degrees Celsius.

Total cost of each rig is \$102,000. Manitoulin has eight of them now and two more on the way.

New bush camp features solarium-style comfort

In their crude, smoke-filled bunkhouses of the past, loggers could scarcely have imagined the comforts and hotel-like surroundings of a new type of logging camp recently opened by Great Lakes Forest Products Limited some 150 kilometres west of Thunder Bay, deep in the North-western Ontario forestland.

"It's the first of its kind in Canada, and to the best of our knowledge there's probably nothing quite like it in the forest products industry in the rest of the world," a company spokesman said.

The camp's 20,000 square feet of living space are spread over a two-storey structure built in the shape of a hollow square, which provides a fully-enclosed, solarium-style central courtyard where workers can gather after shift in spacious surroundings protected from the frigid cold of winter or the intense heat of summer.

Designed to house 100 workers and staff, the building is carpeted throughout and each employee has a single room with a comfortable bed, writing desk, bookcase and adjoining semi-private washroom facilities.

A professional cookery staff prepares meals in a modern stainless-steel kitchen. Attached to the cookery is the main dining room which is finished in a colour-co-ordinated decor and furnished with tables for four, a far cry from the long wooden tables and benches of past generations when the main staple was salt pork and beans.

Recreational facilities in the new camp include a games room with a pool table, TV room, card room and sauna facilities soon to be built.

A new feature of the camp is the centralized changing area where the workers leave their work clothes in lockers, take

showers and clean up before returning to their rooms. Modern laundry facilities are available in the changing area to enable employees to wash and dry their own clothes.

Practical concept

"While all this may sound fanciful, it is actually a sound practical concept for housing workers in today's highly mechanized and sophisticated woodlands operations," says Morris R. McKay, vice-president, woodlands, operations.

Woodlands operations have changed dramatically over the past 30 years from the old horse-and-sleigh methods to a modern industrial operation requiring new types of employees with mechanical, technical and administrative skills. The company says it must provide appropriate accommodation to attract people of this calibre.

(From The Forest Scene, December 1979.)