

Trailer Shipments Rise 23% in 1978

TRUCK trailer manufacturers enjoyed their second most productive year ever in 1978, shipping 195,248 complete trailers.

Based on preliminary figures published by the Bureau of Census, the industry came within 6% of matching the record 207,883 complete trailers shipped during 1974. The 1978 totals represent a 23% increase above 1977 truck trailer shipments.

The figures were obtained by adding the trailer shipment figures for individual months. The Bureau of Census will publish official totals for 1978 later this year.

The following lists the type of trailer or equipment, the number shipped in 1977 and 1978, and the percentage of change between the two years:

Dry freight trailers—98,113 in 1978, up 36% from the 72,262 shipped in 1977.

Insulated—17,661 in 1978, 15,868 in 1977—an 11% increase.

Drop frame—6,067 in 1978, 4,836 in 1977—a 25% increase.

Livestock—1,477 in 1978, 1,446 in 1977—a 2% increase.

Open top—4,270 in 1978, 4,275 in 1977—no change.

Tank—7,288 in 1978, 8,766 in 1977—a 17% decrease.

Bulk commodity—3,363 in 1978, 1,668 in 1977—a 101% increase.

Pole and logging—1,121 in 1978, 1,302 in 1977—a 14% decrease.

Platform—30,585 in 1978, 24,533 in 1977—a 25% increase.

Heavy haulers—5,657 in 1978, 4,655 in 1977—a 22% increase.

Dumps—9,340 in 1978, 8,614 in 1977—an 8% increase.

Auto carriers—1,761 in 1978, 2,461 in 1977—a 28% decrease.

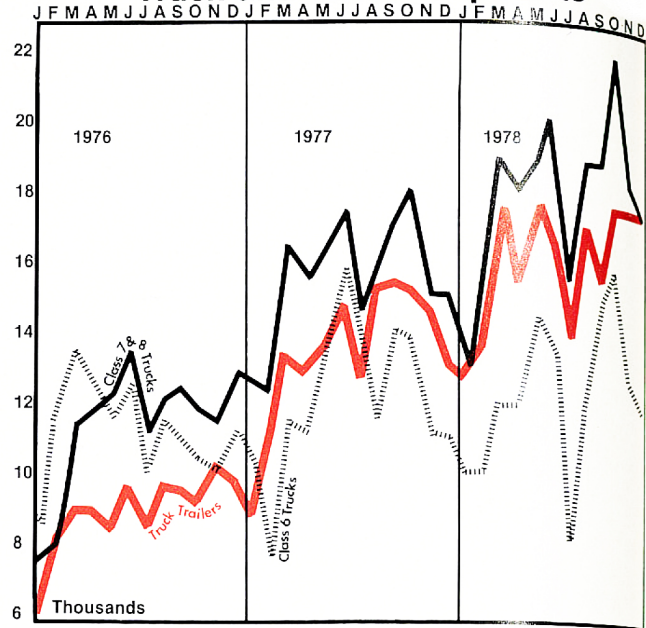
Containers—6,066 in 1978, 7,193 in 1977—a 16% decrease.

Container chassis—28,432 in 1978, 20,662 in 1977—a 37% increase.

Dollies and converter gear—2,223 in 1978, 1,390 in 1977—a 60% increase.

Trailer manufacturers ended 1978 on an unseasonably strong note with 17,584 trailers, the best December in in-

Truck and Trailer Shipments



dustry history. It marked the fourth consecutive month that trailer shipments exceeded 17,000.

Truck Sales Slip

Factory sales of medium and heavy duty trucks were not as fortunate in avoiding the typical year-end decline. Class 6 trucks (gross vehicle weight between 19,501 and 26,000 pounds) fell to 11,893 during December, a 6% decline from the 12,735 Class 6 trucks that factories sold in November. However, sales were 8% higher than they were in December 1977.

Factory sales of Class 7 & 8 trucks experienced a similar 5% decline in December. Sales fell to 17,473 for the month, compared with 18,351 for November. Nevertheless, sales of heavy duty trucks remained 20% above December 1977 levels.

Tonnage Index Down

Truck tonnage, as measured by the Monthly Truck Tonnage Index, also declined slightly at the end of 1978. Compiled by the American Trucking Associations, the seasonally adjusted index in November stood at 186.2% of the 1967 average, 2.3 points lower than its October level.

In spite of inclement weather, industrial production in January edged up by an estimated 0.1%, according to the Federal Reserve Board's index. The January index at 150.7% of the 1967 average was 8.6% higher than it was in January 1978. After a slight decline in January 1978, the index has now increased for 12 consecutive months.

Fixed investment, an indicator of long-term demand for trucks and trailers, was \$201.4 billion in the third quarter of 1978, the 13th consecutive quarterly increase. Fixed investment is the amount spent nationally on structures (both commercial and residential) and equipment. It is compiled quarterly by the United States Department of Commerce.