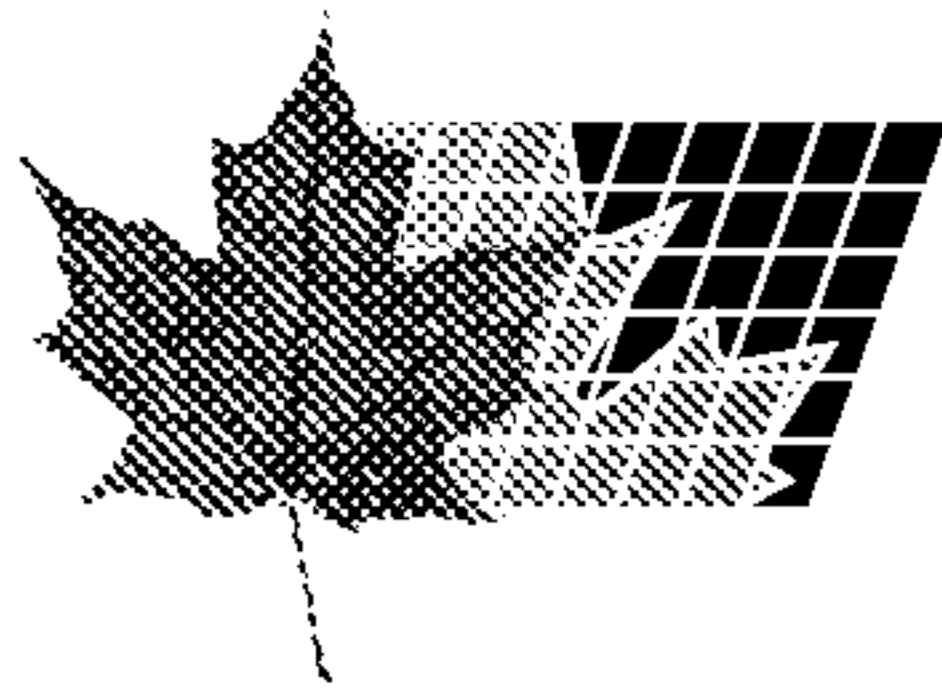




(11) (21) (C) **2,171,879**
(22) 1996/03/15
(43) 1997/09/16
(45) 2000/04/11

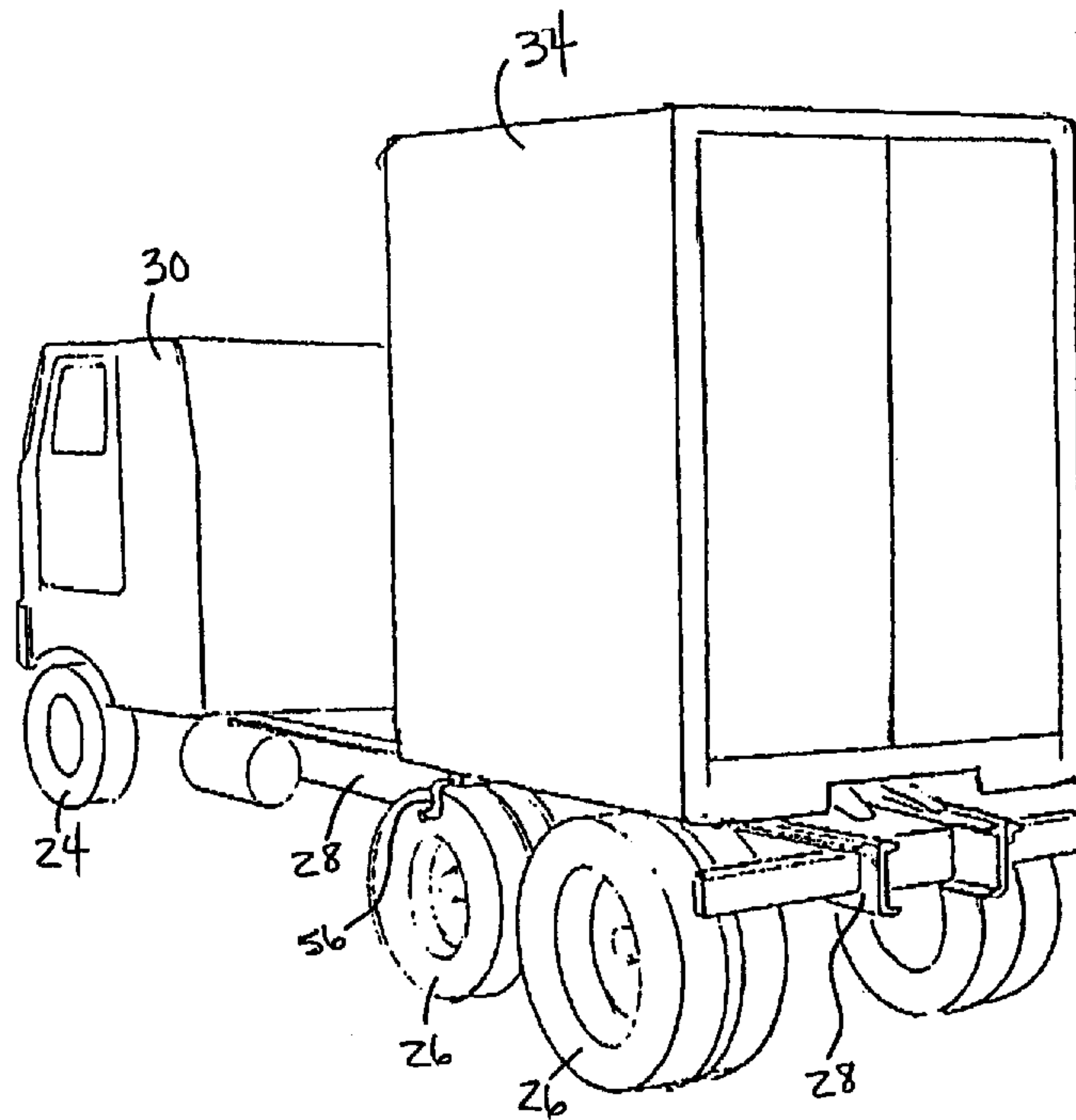
(72) Hall, Larry J., CA

(73) Hall, Larry J., CA

(51) Int.Cl.⁶ B65D 88/12, B62D 33/08

(54) **CONTENEUR DEPLACABLE**

(54) **SHIFTABLE CARGO CONTAINER FOR TRUCK-TRACTOR**



(57) A cargo container is fitted to the chassis of a truck tractor so as to be shiftable on rollers between first and second positions. The first position is adjacent the rear of the tractor cab, and the second position is adjacent a rear end of the tractor chassis. The bottom of the container is built with a centred longitudinal channel that allows the container to pass over a fifth wheel of the tractor when being shifted to the second position. The rear side of the container has one or more doors that can be opened when the container has been shifted to the second position and the tractor has been backed into a loading dock. This allows a forklift to be driven directly into the container from the loading dock, facilitating loading and unloading of cargo.



- 11 -

ABSTRACT

A cargo container is fitted to the chassis of a truck tractor so as to be shiftable on rollers between first and second positions. The first position is adjacent the rear of the tractor cab, and the second position is adjacent a rear end of the tractor chassis. The bottom of the container is
5 built with a centred longitudinal channel that allows the container to pass over a fifth wheel of the tractor when being shifted to the second position. The rear side of the container has one or more doors that can be opened when the container has been shifted to the second position and the tractor has been backed into a loading dock. This allows a forklift to be driven directly into the container from the loading dock, facilitating loading and unloading of cargo.

157P1CA

The invention relates to a container for increasing the cargo capacity of a tractor trailer, more particularly to a container shiftable between first and second positions on a tractor of the tractor trailer.

5 A tractor trailer is an articulated truck having a steerable tractor on the rear of which is mounted a 'fifth wheel' to which the trailer is pivotally connected. The fifth wheel is mounted on a chassis of the tractor to sit approximately above the rear wheels -- which may involve a single axle or a pair of tandem axles. The driver area of many modern tractor cabs has conveniences similar to those in automobiles, and some cabs have a sleeping compartment behind the driver
10 area.

In recent years construction of tractor trailers has been modified in various ways to increase cargo-carrying capacity. One modification has involved increasing the length of the chassis of the tractor, and fixing an auxiliary cargo container to the chassis between the cab and the fifth wheel. Sufficient room has to be maintained ahead of the fifth wheel to allow movement of the
15 front end of a trailer during articulation between the tractor and the trailer. One difficulty with fixing a cargo container to the tractor chassis involves loading and unloading of the container. Whereas a trailer may be easily loaded or unloaded by a forklift driven into it after it has been backed up to a loading dock, the loading or unloading of a cargo container fixed to a tractor chassis ahead of the fifth wheel is not as easily accomplished. Such cargo containers are usually
20 emptied through side doors, which often does not allow for entry of a forklift. It would be advantageous to be able to fill or empty such a container on a truck tractor in a manner similar to that used with a trailer.

According to the present invention, a truck tractor has a driver cab mounted on a chassis, a fifth wheel mounted on the chassis behind the driver cab for connecting a trailer to truck tractor, and
25 a cargo container mounted on the chassis behind the driver cab. Container supports mounted on the chassis permit displacement of this cargo container longitudinally of the chassis on the supports between a forward position, in which the cargo container is located adjacent the drive

- 2 -

cab and forward from the fifth wheel, and a rearward position, in which the cargo container overlies the fifth wheel. The cargo container has rear doors to permit loading and unloading of the cargo container through the rear doors and a drive is operable to shift the cargo container to and fro, longitudinally of the chassis, between the forward and rearward positions, a locking
5 device being operable to lock the cargo container in position relative to the chassis.

The height and width of the cargo container may be approximately the same as the height and width of a trailer connectable to the truck tractor.

The container may be provided with two sets of rollers, each set being mounted on the container adjacent a respective opposite side of the container and being adapted to sit on respective
10 longitudinal tracks of the chassis when the container is fitted to the truck tractor, the trucks thus comprising the container supports. In this arrangement, the container or the chassis has a flange means for preventing the container from moving laterally after being fitted to the truck tractor, and the container or the chassis has a retention means for preventing the container from moving upward more than a set distance relative to the chassis after the container is fitted to the truck
15 tractor. The flange means may comprise a flange on an end of each roller, the flange on each roller being on that end of the roller that is closer to the respective side of the container. The retention means may comprise a pair of laterally-extending longitudinal flanges on the chassis, and a series of hooked members connected to the container. Each of the vertical members has a vertical portion extending downwardly from the container, and has a lower hooked end
20 extending inwardly towards the chassis at a position below one of the longitudinal flanges. The hooked ends are adapted to catch on the bottom of the longitudinal flanges to limit upward movement of the container relative to the chassis.

The drive may be connected below the container and the chassis and may include a manually rotatable drum mounted on either the container or the chassis, and at least one cable extending
25 around the drum to maintain a friction engagement with the drum. If the drum is mounted on the container, the ends of the cable are secured to the chassis, and vice versa. The drum may

A

- 3 -

be rotatably mounted on the underside of the container to extend laterally there across.

The locking device may comprise a bolt mechanism fitted to the chassis between a withdrawn position and an extended position, and at least two brackets each extending downwardly from the container at a respective longitudinal position on the container and having an aperture
5 adapted to receive the bolt. The bolt is adapted to be extended through the aperture in one of the brackets when the container is in the first position, and is adapted to be extended through the aperture in another of the brackets when the container is in the second position.

An embodiment of the invention will next be described with reference to the accompanying drawings, in which:

10 Figure 1 is a front perspective view of a tractor and a connected trailer;

Figure 2 is a rear perspective view of the tractor of Figure 1, the container being shown in the first position;

Figure 3 is a rear perspective view of the tractor of Figure 1, the view being similar to Figure 2 but showing the container in the second position;

15

Figure 4 is a rear view of a lower portion of the tractor of Figure 1;

Figure 5 is a side view of a rear portion of the tractor of Figure 1, the shiftable cargo container being shown in the second position;

20

Figure 6 is an enlarged view of that portion of Figure 4 showing a portion of the fifth wheel, one of the rollers on the container, and a longitudinal track on the chassis on which the roller sits;

- 4 -

Figure 7 is a partially-sectioned perspective view of the container and the chassis on which it is fitted, the drive means being shown for shifting the container between the first and second positions; and,

5 Figure 8 is a sectioned view of a portion of the bottom of the container and an adjacent portion of the chassis, the view being taken along the line VIII-VIII of Figure 5 and showing the securement means for holding the container in either the first or second position.

A tractor trailer in Figure 1 has a tractor generally designated 20 and a trailer generally designated 22. The tractor 20 has a set of steerable front wheels 24 and a tandem pair of driven
10 rear wheels 26. A chassis 28 is suspended on the front and rear wheels. On the forward end of the chassis 28 is mounted a cab 30, and proximate the rear end of the chassis 28 generally above the rear wheels 26 is mounted a fifth wheel 32. A cargo container 34 is also mounted behind the cab on the chassis 28, and is shiftable to and fro longitudinally of the chassis 28 between a first or forward position shown in Figure 2, in which the cargo container 34 is located adjacent
15 said cab 30, and forward from the fifth wheel 32, and a second or rearward position shown in Figure 3, in which the cargo container 34 overlies the fifth wheel 32 and the rear wheels 26. The rear side of the container 34 has a pair of rear doors 36 for loading and unloading the container through the rear doors 36.

As shown in Figures 4, 5 and 6, the cargo container 34 has two sets of rollers 38 mounted to its
20 underside, each set being laterally positioned approximately halfway between a centerline of the container 34 and a respective one of the sides of the container. As best shown in Figure 6, each set of rollers 38 sits on a longitudinal track 40 that sits on a respective lateral extension 42 of the chassis 28, the tracks 40 and the rollers 38 forming a support mounted on the chassis 28 and permitting displacement of the cargo container 34 between the forward and rearward positions.

25 Each of the rollers 38 has an outer flange 44, the flanges 44 limiting lateral movement of the

- 5 -

rollers 38 on the longitudinal tracks 40. An axle 46 extending through each roller 38 has its ends supported by a pair of legs 48 extending downward from the underside of container 34. To an outer one of the legs 48 is secured a hooked member 50, which extends downwardly and then inwardly under a portion of the respective lateral extension 42 of chassis 28 to prevent the
5 container 34 from moving upwardly from the chassis 28. This construction prevents each roller 38, and thus container 34, from upward movement relative to the chassis 28.

As shown in Figures 3, 4 and 6, a central portion of the bottom of the container 34 sits higher than the rest of the bottom. This allows the container 34 to pass above the fifth wheel 32 when longitudinally shifted on the chassis 28. However, it would alternatively be possible to provide
10 the container 34 with a flat bottom, although this would reduce the interior height of the container 34.

Figure 7 illustrates a drive means for shifting the container 34 longitudinally on the chassis 28. The drive means consists of a drum 54 rotatably mounted to the bottom of container 34 to extend laterally there across. A handle 56 is connected to one end of the drum 54 to extend out
15 of the vertical plane of one side of container 34. A cable 58 extends from a first point 60 on the chassis 28, around a first pulley 62 on container 34, then several times around the drum 54 before passing around a second pulley 65 on the container 34 to a second point 64 on the chassis 28. With this arrangement, rotating the handle 56 causes container 34 to move longitudinally on chassis 28.

20 As best shown in Figures 5 and 8, two brackets 68 extend downwardly from the underside of each side of the container 34, approximately in-line with the inner legs 48 supporting the rollers 38. Each bracket 68 has a centred aperture 70. Pneumatic or hydraulic actuators 72 fitted to opposite sides of the chassis 28 reversibly move respective bolts 74 for engaging the holes 70 (depending on the position of the container 34). As shown in Figure 5, if the container 34 is in
25 the second or rearward position, bolts 74 engage apertures 70 of brackets 68 at a forward location on container 34 at each side of the container; if the container 34 is in the first position,

- 6 -

bolts 74 engage apertures 70 of bracket 68 at a rearward position on container 34. When the container 34 is to be shifted from either the first or the second position, the actuators 72 withdraw the bolts 74 from the apertures 70. Once the container 34 has been shifted to the alternate position, the actuators 72 move the bolts 74 through the apertures 70 of the brackets 5 68 that have become adjacent the bolts 74, with their actuators 72, and the brackets 68 thus form a locking device for locking the cargo container 34 in position on the chassis 28.

In the present embodiment of the invention, the container 34 is manufactured for installation onto a conventional truck chassis, which is modified as described above, the parts 28-32 being parts of the conventional chassis.

10 As will be apparent to those skilled in the art, various modifications may be made in the present invention within the scope of the appended claims.

- 7 -

PATENT CLAIMS

1. A truck tractor comprising:
 - a chassis;
 - a driver cab mounter on said chassis;
 - 5 a fifth wheel mounted on said chassis behind said driver cab for connecting a trailer to truck tractor;
 - a cargo container mounted on said chassis behind said driver cab;
 - container supports mounted on said chassis and permitting displacement of said cargo container longitudinally of said chassis on said supports between a forward position, in
 - 10 which said cargo container is located adjacent said driver cab and forward from said fifth wheel, and a rearward position, in which said cargo container overlies said fifth wheel;
 - said cargo container having rear doors to permit loading and unloading of said cargo container through said rear doors;
 - 15 a drive operable to shift said cargo container to an from, longitudinally of said chassis, between said forward and rearward positions; and
 - a locking device operable to lock said cargo container in position relative to said chassis.

- 8 -

2. A truck tractor as in claim 1, wherein said supports comprise a pair of mutually spaced tracks extending longitudinally of said chassis, said cargo container having rollers supporting said cargo container on said tracks and said cargo container thereby being shiftable to and fro along said tracks, between said forward and rear positions, by rolling of said rollers along said tracks.
5
3. A truck tractor as in claim 2, wherein said rollers have flanges engageable with said tracks for preventing movement of said cargo container laterally of said tracks.
4. A truck tractor as in claim 1, 2 or 3, further comprising retention means for retaining said cargo container against upward removal from said chassis.
10
5. A truck tractor as in claim 1, 2, 3 or 4, wherein said drive comprises a rotatable drum and cable means for winding said cargo container along said chassis.
6. A truck tractor comprising:

a chassis;

15 rear wheels and steerable front wheels supporting said chassis;

a driver cab mounted on said chassis;

a fifth wheel mounted on said chassis behind said driver cab and approximately above said rear wheels for connecting a trailer to said truck tractor;

a cargo container mounted on said chassis behind said driver cab;

20 container supports mounted on said chassis and permitting displacement of said cargo

- 9 -

container longitudinally of said chassis on said supports between a forward position, in which said cargo container is located adjacent said driver cab and forward from said fifth wheel, and a rearward position, in which said cargo container overlies said fifth wheel and said rear wheels;

5 said cargo container having rear doors to permit loading and unloading of said cargo container through said rear doors;

a drive operable to shift said cargo container to and fro, longitudinally of said chassis, between said forward and rearward positions; and

a locking device operable to lock said cargo container in position relative to said chassis.

10 7. A truck tractor as in claim 6, wherein said supports comprise a pair of mutually spaced tracks extending longitudinally of said chassis, said cargo container having rollers supporting said cargo container on said tracks and said cargo container thereby being shiftable to and fro along said tracks, between said forward and rear positions, by rolling of said rollers along said tracks.

15 8. A truck tractor as in claim 7, wherein said rollers have flanges laterally engageable with said tracks for preventing movement of said cargo container laterally of said tracks.

9. A truck tractor as in claim 6, 7 or 8, further comprising retention means for retaining said cargo container against upward removal from said chassis.

20 10. A truck tractor as in claim 6, 7, 8, or 9, wherein said drive comprises a rotatable drum and cable means for winding said cargo container along said chassis.

- 10 -

11. A truck tractor as in any one of claims 6 to 10, wherein said cargo container has a recessed underside for accommodating said fifth wheel on displacement of said cargo container into said rearward position

2171879

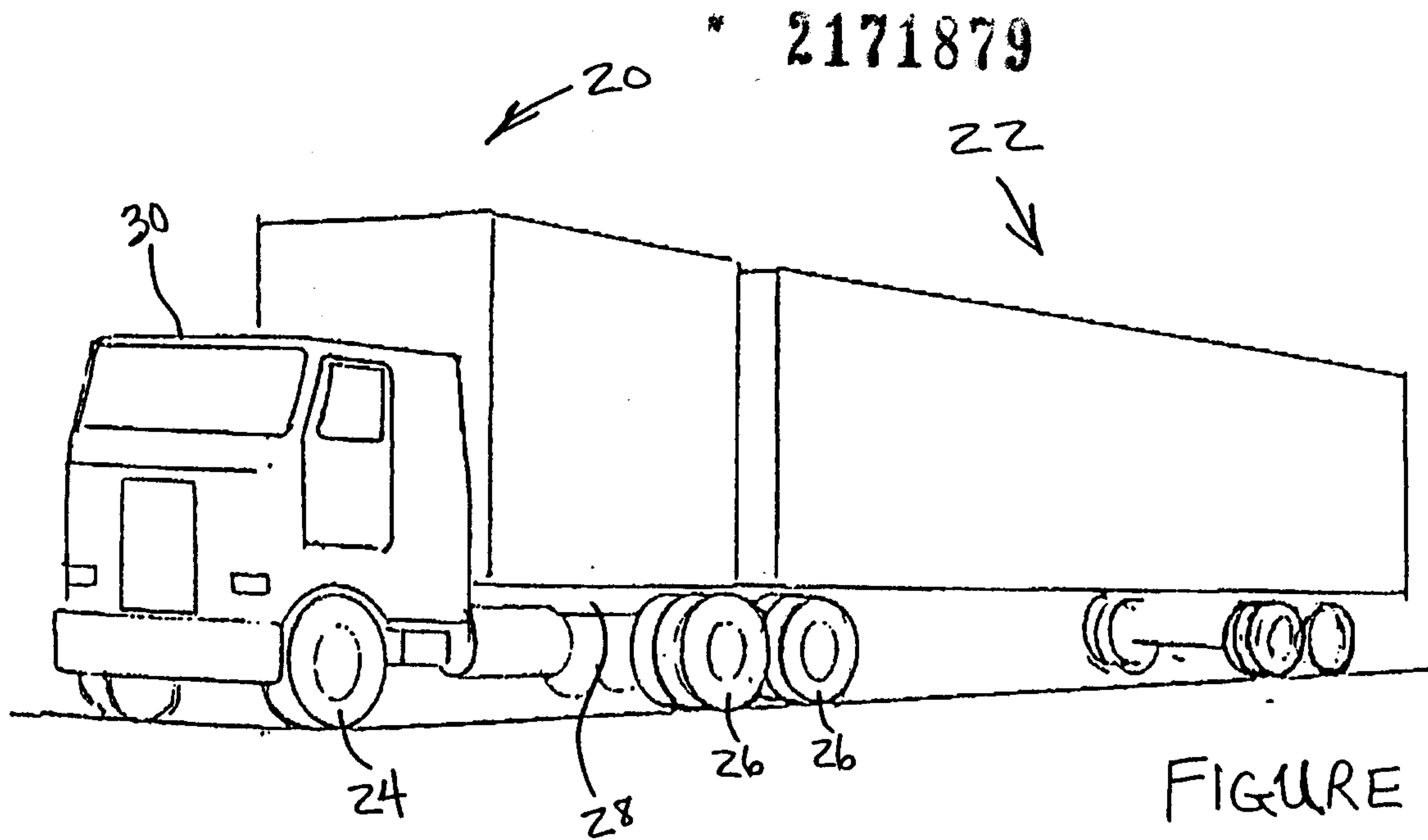


FIGURE 1

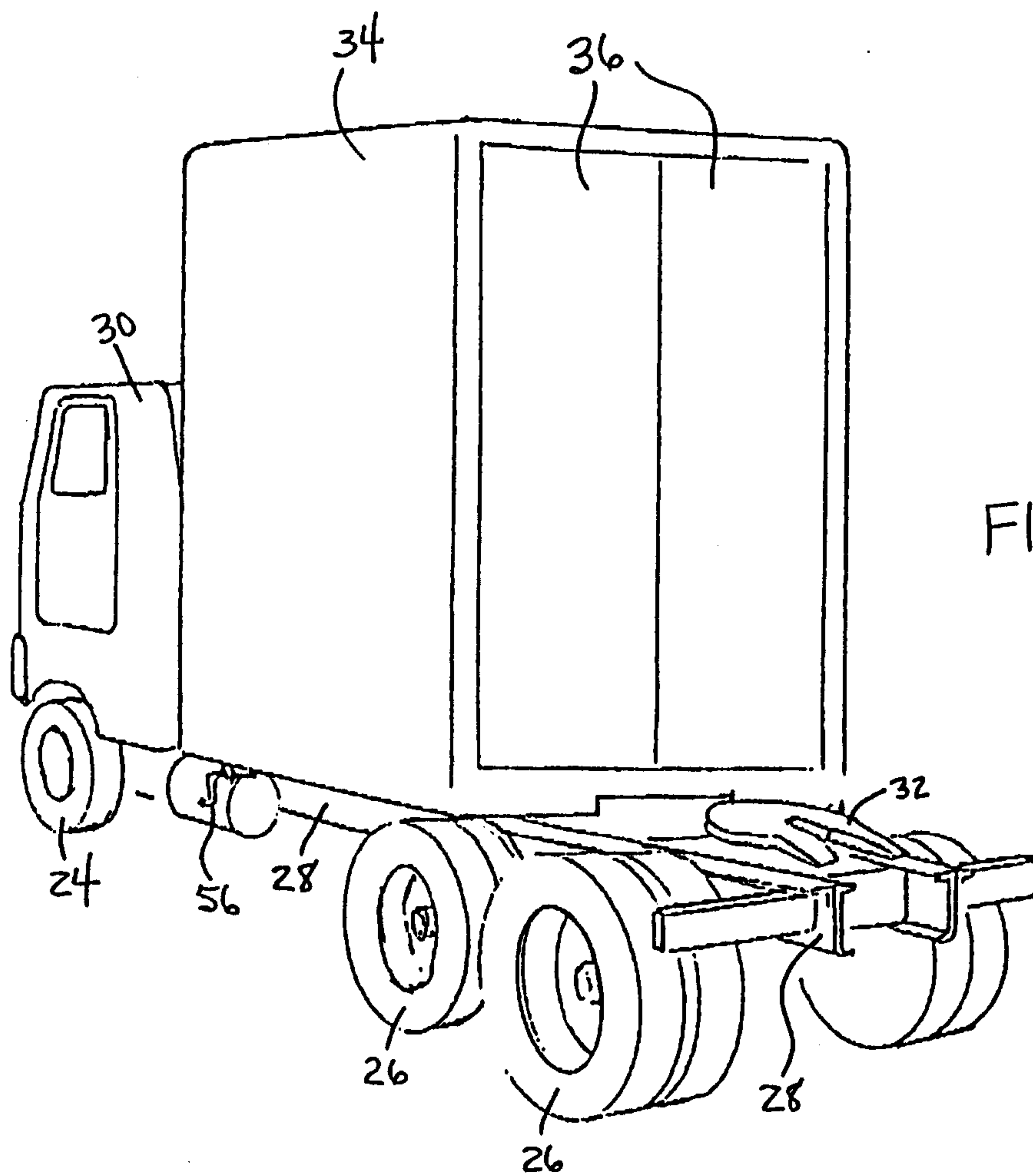


FIGURE 2

2171879

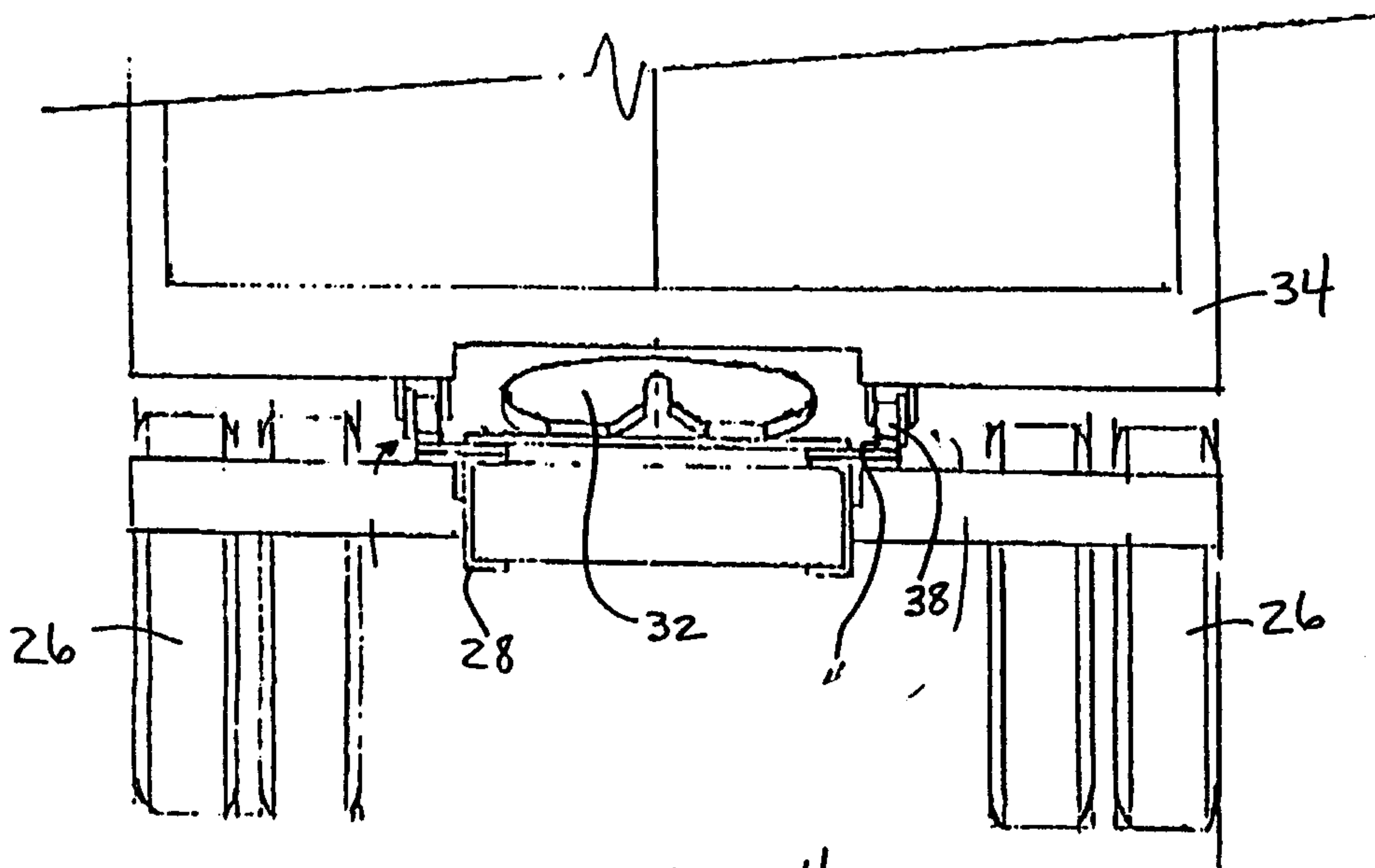
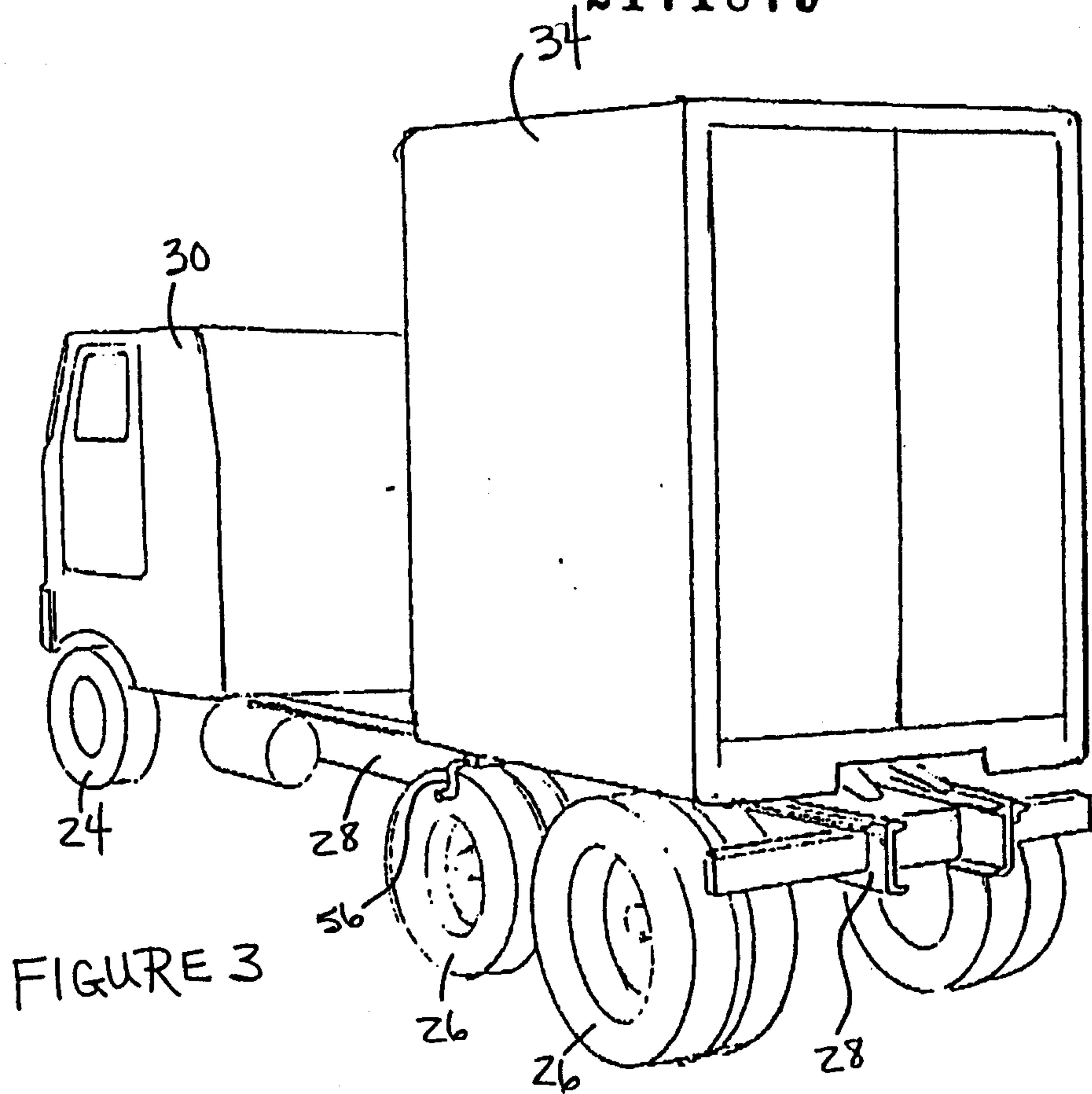
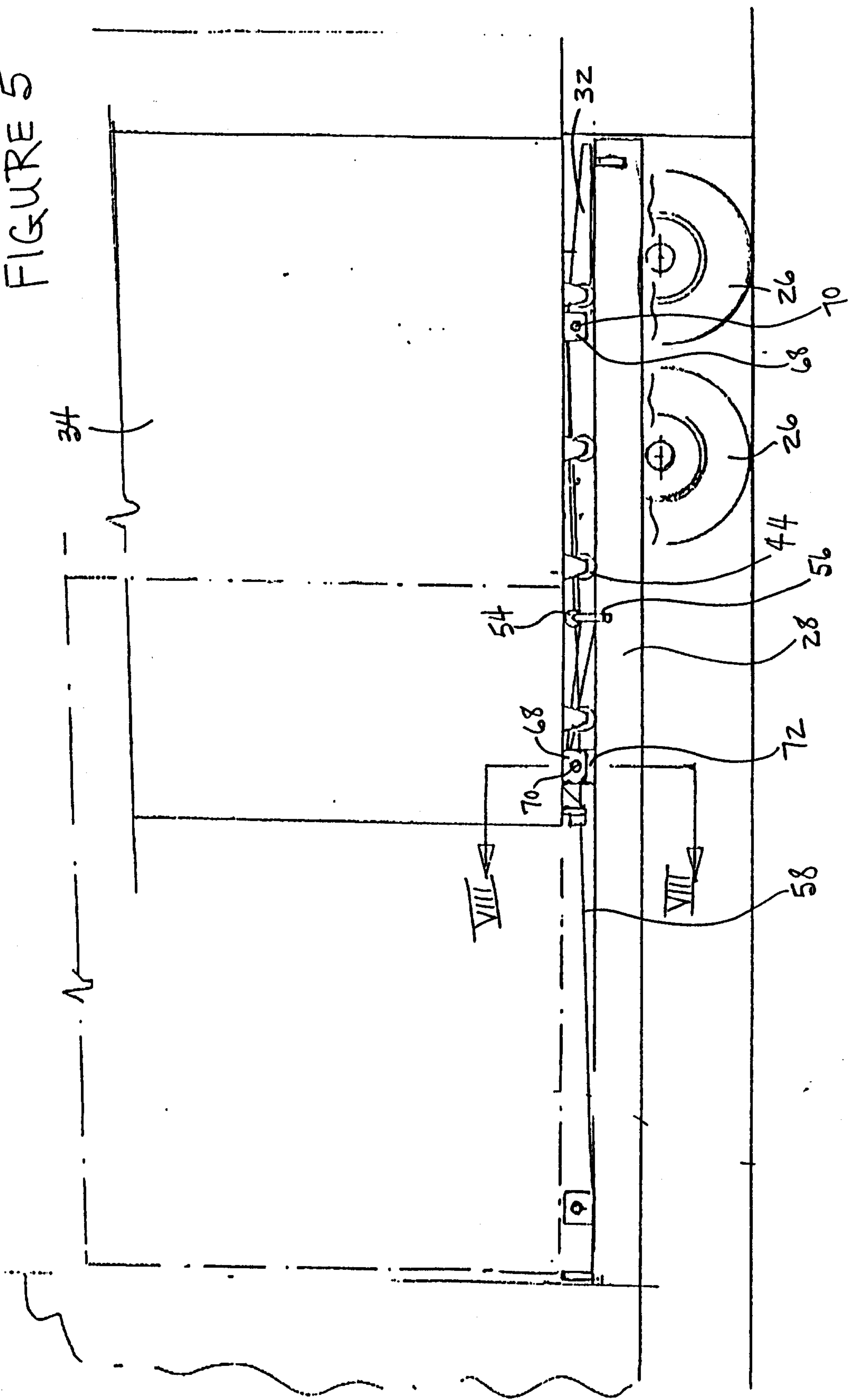
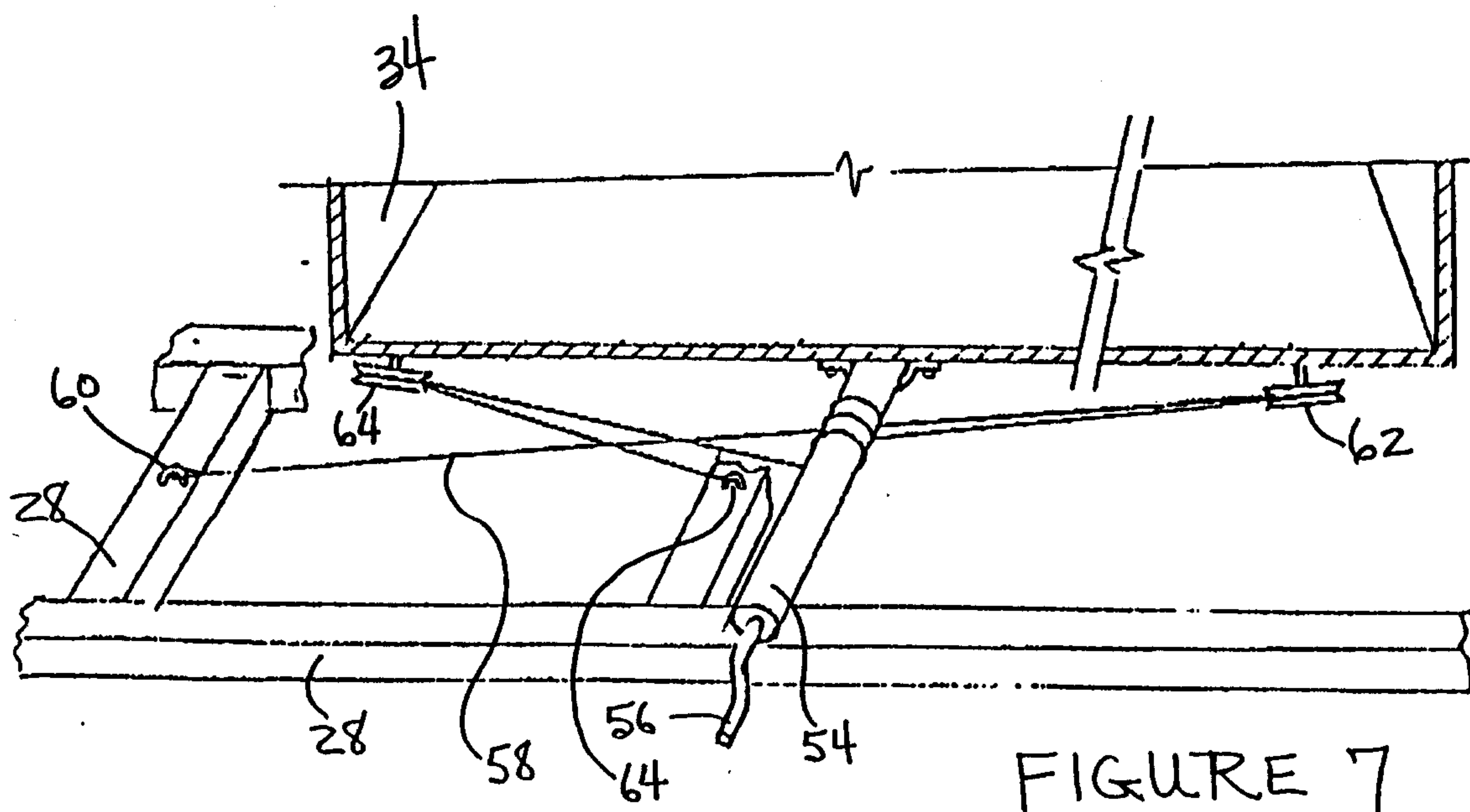
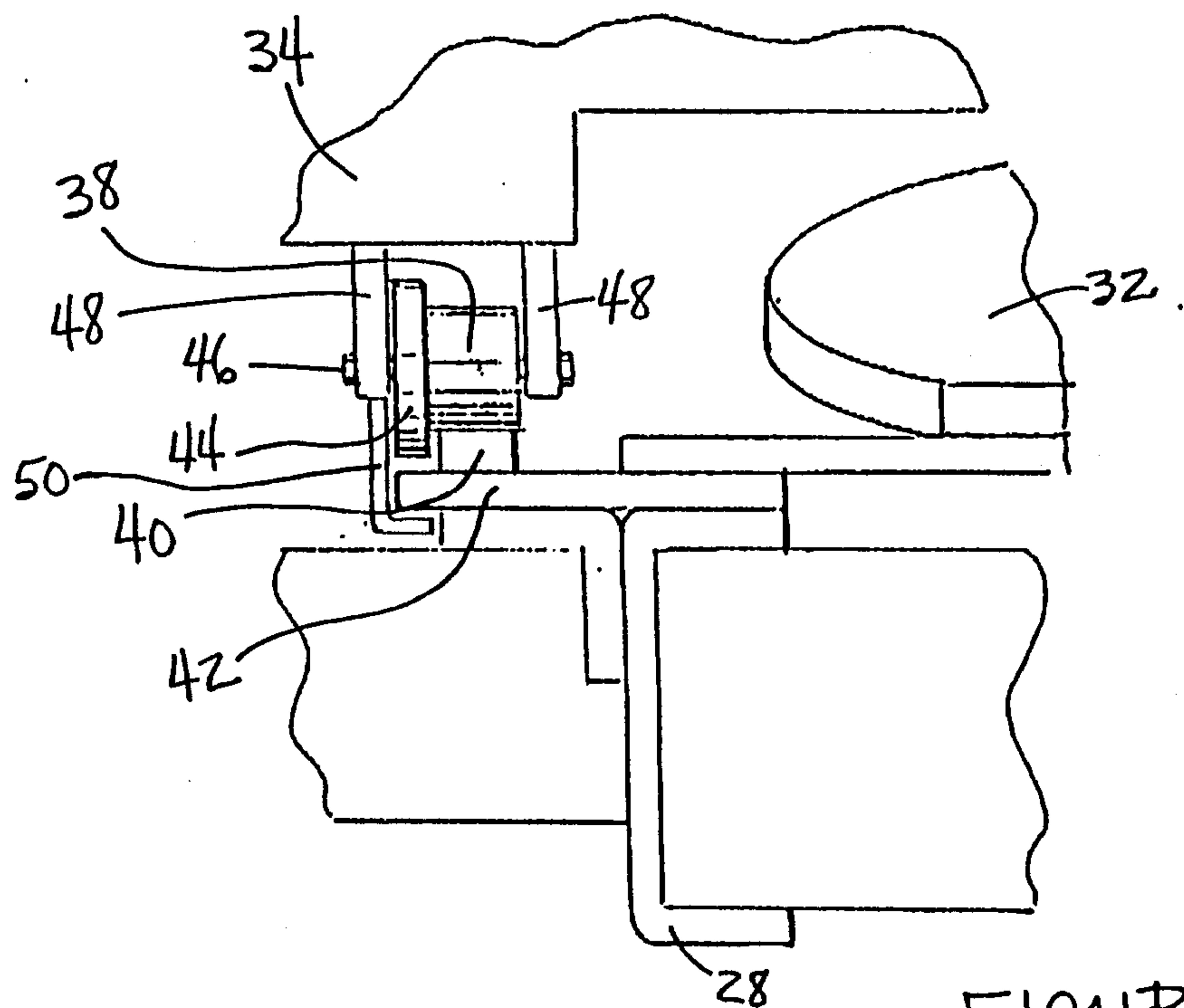


FIGURE 5



2171879



2171879

