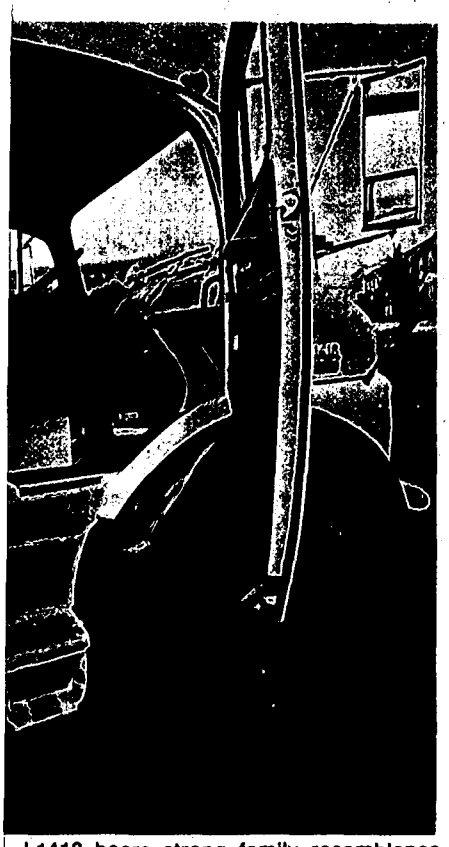

L1418 bears strong family resemblance to Mercedes-Benz trucks currently marketed in the United States.

booster with a 5000-cu in. air compressor, with spring loaded brake cylinders on the rear wheels. The total brake area is 832 sq in.

The front axle capacity is 11,023 lb while the rear axle has a 22,046-lb rating. Axle ratio is 4.875. The unit also comes equipped with an engine exhaust brake.

Access to the engine for maintenance can be had in two ways: from the raised-up engine hood or by removing the engine "doghouse" from inside the truck cab.

The conventional-type cab features roof-top ventilation, a driver's seat that moves forward or back as well as up or down, plus a large windshield that requires three individual wiper blades.

The L1418 will be the fourth model available to truck buyers in this country from Mercedes-Benz of North America. The other three are the L1113 and L116, both rated at 25,000-lb GVW, and the L1316 rated at 30,000-lb GVW. Bodack said all sales of the L1418, as with the other three models, will be made from dealer inventories. He said he foresaw no problems in obtaining adequate numbers of the L1418 from the parent company's largest foreign-based subsidiary in Sao Paulo.

At present, Mercedes-Benz trucks enter the country through two East Coast ports: Newark, N.J. and St. Petersburg, Fla. Bodack said consideration is being given to using Houston as a third port of entry now that a dealer organization has been opened in that part of the country.

In discussing his philosophy on the American truck market, Bodack said extensive market studies indicate a trend by U.S. truck buyers back to conventional type trucks. He cited improved driver environment, aerodynamic styling and easier access to engine and other running parts for repair and maintenance as the reasons for the trend.

"We're looking at the market, trying to understand it. Right now, we're staying with what we know. We're staying with a conventional-type truck. Besides," he added, "no cabover models are produced by the Sao Paulo plant.

"If we did nothing else since 1968," he added, "we did many studies to understand the U.S. buyer influences. And we know the operator's buying choices are different in Class 6 than in Class 8."

Obviously, Mercedes-Benz officials both here and elsewhere see a growing trend towards dieselization in all truck classes as gasoline fuel prices continue to increase. They do not, however, anticipate selling just their engines alone—at least not in the immediate future.

"It would not be to the advantage of the parent company to sell just engines. We would rather sell the entire truck," a company spokesman said.

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