Standard Plymouth gets off the mark on acceleration runs, beat Fury in first 100 ft. Although standard job had more lean on corners, both cars had excellent roadability.

PLYMOUTH FURY vs. STOCK continued

matic shift from second to high at about 70 mph, which reduced the available power somewhat. During all this, several important facts emerged. First, the Plymouth showed the best balance of chassis components of any car we have tested. Second, even when the car was "bent" into a full four-wheel drift, it was completely manageable and was quite sensitive to steering corrections, a point that just barely exists with some cars. Third, the slight amount of understeer is just about right for maximum controlability under most all conditions and makes the car a real delight to drive in this manner although it isn't recommended for a Sunday outing. Incidentally, the degree of understeer is caused more by the chassis roll angle than by a slightly heavier front end. The fourth point is that the Goodyear tires obtained an excellent "bite" on this particular surface although front tire wear was quite rapid.

The car literally breezed over some particularly awful washboard roads at speeds up to 65 mph with a minimum of thrashing about, bouncing, pitching, etc. At flat-out speeds, the car was predictable and controllable and cross-wind gusts had a negligible effect upon stability.

All this suggests that the Plymouth chassis is without faults. This is not true but the faults that do exist are of a relatively minor nature and difficult to pinpoint. For example, the suspension is a bit too soft all around, and in tight turns it gets a little mushy. The roll angle in a turn, while it doesn't seem excessive, is too much for a personal taste. The conclusions drawn from my observations boil down to one point: It would indeed be difficult to find a passenger car that would be more roadworthy and handle better than the Plymouth.

But we found one! What the standard Plymouth lacked in roadability, the Fury made up. This, as a statement, gives the Fury precious little to rest upon but when we examine and compare the detail differences between the two cars, the Fury comes out quite a bit ahead. With the stiffer torsion bars, rear springs and shock absorber calibrations, the ride of the Fury is firmer without being objectionably harsh and cornering is flatter. The reduction of roll angle tends to neutralize the steering slightly but there is still a certain amount of understeer. Where there was some rolling at high speeds on fairly rough roads with the standard Plymouth, the Fury was rock-steady. In the tightest turns, there was just a faint trace of mushiness. Through our test turn, the Fury reached a speed of 82 mph in a clockwise direction and 79 mph in a counter-clockwise direction, the difference again being attributed to discrepancies in carburetion. Another advantage of the Fury was that with the do-it-yourself gearbox, the turn could be negotiated in second gear and the available power was higher than with the standard model in high gear. Given the same transmission, it's a safe bet that both cars could hold to the same turn radius at very nearly the same speed but owing to a lesser amount of understeer of the more stiffly sprung Fury (which means greater sensitivity to steering corrections), the Fury could and did come out of the turn flatter and in generally better shape than the standard Plymouth.

After driving the Fury for over 1500 miles, I'll say that there isn't a more roadable car that can be purchased in "over-the-counter" form available in this country at any price.

CHASSIS IMPROVEMENTS

The most obvious answer to the question of improved roadability for standard Plymouths is to use the Fury front torsion bars, front and rear shocks and add a couple of fairly long leaves to the rear springs. Improving the Fury chassis would consist primarily of slightly stiffer shocks at all four corners. One item that should be seriously considered for any Plymouth model is the addition of a torque-dividing differential, such as the Hi-Tork or Spicer units. Of course, the front torsion bars can be adjusted in height to give the best results but the standard setting is pretty close to right. As far as roadability is concerned, lowering the front end by the torsion bar adjustments is to be discouraged because as the front end is lowered, the car's center of gravity is shifted forward, which is a step in the wrong direction. On the other hand, raising the front end a slight amount may very well bring about a noticeable improvement in overall roadability. It should be remembered that any change in front end height destroys existing front wheel settings of caster, camber and toe-in and wheel alignment must be reset. Front wheel settings should be approximately as follows: Caster—1½ degrees positive both wheels; camber—½ degree positive left wheel, zero degrees right wheel; toe-in—3/32 of an inch. A pressure of 30 psi (cold) for all tires worked out quite well for both cars during our tests.

STEERING

Both of our test cars were equipped with the optional Chrysler full time coaxial power steering unit. Although the basic design is the same as in earlier cars, detail changes have made this unit a practical accessory instead of a menace to life and limb. Both cars exhibited a healthy degree of "road feel" and a good "caster action," these features being totally foreign to previous Chrysler power steering equipment. Steering wheel turning effort remains relatively slight but at least it's now possible to tell which direction the front wheels are pointed and overcontrolling the car is not so apt to occur. It still takes a little time behind the wheel to become familiar with the fairly "fast" (for a passenger car) 19.8 to 1 overall ratio and the relatively small (17 inch) diameter of the steering wheel which, in itself, "quickens" the steering a bit. If our test cars were any example, the '57 power steering unit is worth its price as a labor-saving device, particularly for parking and other maneuvers where fast action at the wheel is necessary.

DRIVER COMFORT—HANDLING EASE

The seating position behind the wheel