

of a new Plymouth is straightforward but quite low. Space requirements for head room, foot room and leg room have been well met in this most modern of designs. There is, however, a notable lack of support beneath the legs, resulting in some driver fatigue on long trips. This is also noticed by the passengers, particularly in the rear seats of hardtop models. The seats are firm but fairly comfortable, except in the areas over the transmission and driveline "humps"; there they are downright hard. The steering wheel position is good, as are the locations of the brake and clutch pedals and throttle. All control and accessory switches are close at hand but there is no lighting to identify these switches and knobs at night and some of the switches are awkward to operate. The glovebox is hard to reach being at the far right side of the dash panel. Manual adjustment of windows and the small quarter-windows is both easy and convenient.

Forward and lateral visibility is excellent, except for some distortion at the corners of the wraparound windshield. Rearward visibility is equally good if one turns around and in either direction, both front fenders, the hood and, of course, the rear fins are in the line of normal vision. The dash-mounted rear view mirror is a devil's invention, being too small for complete rear window scanning. The mounting is also too flexible and is subject to vibrations. If anyone occupies the center of either front or rear seat, the view aft is almost completely blocked. This is a relatively minor point but it is in definite need of correction.

The dash and window rings of the standard Plymouth are probably the most unattractive features of the entire car. Normally, these are finished with a dull type of paint that leaves the surface more-or-less "cracked." Actually, the finish looks as though it were thin primer applied with a dirty spray gun. The optional padded dash which covers the center and right hand sections is not only a good safety feature but it greatly improves appearance as well. Our Fury had this option and chromed window rings. The grouping and location of the instrument cluster is very good, convenient and legible, but it's a mystery to me why the Chrysler Corporation can't develop instrument faces that are compatible with the modernism of the car's general design. The instrument group consists of a central odometer—120 mph speedometer (150 mph speedo on the Fury) flanked by a fuel level indicator and a combination oil pressure-ammeter (the latter with lights naturally, not gauges) on the left and an engine coolant temperature indicator and clock on the right. The instrument panel is contained in a hooded extension of the dash but the hood isn't deep enough to prevent very annoying reflections in the windshield at night unless the panel lights are turned off or dimmed. Conspicuous by

its absence on the Fury is a good tachometer, which would be more of a necessity on this car instead of a mere convenience.

The noise level in the cab is quite low at normal city and highway speeds. Above 70 mph or so, there are some shrill whistles that center themselves around the windshield posts and it doesn't seem to matter whether the windows are up or down or whether the quarter-windows are open or closed. The firewall was well-insulated from heat and most engine noises but with the standard Plymouth, there was a rather disturbing racket caused by a restriction in the air cleaner throat. On the other hand, the Fury engine was practically silent.

Thus, the biggest drawbacks of the new Plymouth are more physical discomforts and inconveniences rather than serious or even minor mechanical inconsistencies. In spite of such disadvantages, driving a Plymouth can be a real ball as compared to a more conventional car in design and execution.

BRAKES

The Plymouth brakes are of Lockheed design and use two leading or self-energizing shoes at the front and a leading and trailing shoe at the back. All shoes have effective brake lining dimensions of 11½ inches in length by two inches in width. Front and rear drum diameter is 11 inches. The drums are steel with centrifugally fused cast iron friction surfaces. Effective brake lining area is 184 square inches, which corresponds to a ratio of 20.75 pounds of car weight per square inch of lining area. This ratio is a bit high, particularly in the case of the Fury, which uses brake assemblies identical with the standard Plymouth. The one serious criticism of the Fury is the brakes; this car simply needs larger brakes in view of the performance potential. Both of our test cars exhibited rather severe brake fade after moderately hard but prolonged use. However, fade recovery was good. Braking effectiveness was 60 percent front, 40 percent rear, a ratio that is just right for either car. Severe braking caused some "nosedive," Chrysler Corp.'s contrary TV commercials notwithstanding. With the vacuum power brake booster on both cars, the required pedal pressures were light to moderate. The Plymouth continues to use its excellent auxiliary parking brake drum attached to the transmission output shaft and a contracting brake band.

PERFORMANCE ACCELERATION—ECONOMY

While our two Plymouths were generally excellent in the handling and roadability departments, they were certainly not the fastest in acceleration. The timed runs were made using our standard procedure of holding the brakes and flooring the throttle with the automatic transmis-

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Power pack mill with host of accessories and a single four-barrel carburetor. The V8 ran best with a slight spark advance.



318-cubic inch Fury engine with two four-barrel Carters. Two dry-mesh air cleaners are used here and are practically silent.

Rear torsion bar adjustment permits raising or lowering front end height of car.

