

*The Address—Mr. Graftey*

the Prime Minister (Mr. Pearson) last July, I should like to place these additional recommendations before the House of Commons. First of all, a house committee on industry and research should be constituted immediately, and experts in automobile safety as well as officials of the automobile industry should be called to testify before this house committee.

Second, the automobile industry in Canada and in the United States should jointly agree to forgo needless and costly style changes in the next production year. Engineering and retooling costs would then be sharply reduced and the millions of dollars thus saved could be devoted to safety research and the incorporation of scientifically proven safety features as standard equipment in all cars.

The government of the state of New York has made a great beginning in the production of a prototype safety car. I would recommend as my third recommendation that the federal government of Canada should seriously investigate the possibility of immediate co-operation with the state of New York in this regard.

Let me now briefly restate the problem. It is merely this: Millions of Canadians have been and are going to be either killed or injured because the automobile industry has neglected to include scientifically proven safety features known to them in automobiles produced in or imported to this country.

I am very glad to see the Minister of Industry (Mr. Drury) in the house and I should like to take this opportunity to thank him for the co-operative attitude he and his officials have shown at all times in this regard. Before we are going to make any headway in this field we must have public interest and governmental co-operation. The officials he has appointed to draft a code of standards for the purchase of government automobiles certainly represent a beginning and a step in the right direction, and I congratulate the minister.

At this time I should like to deal briefly with a problem, mainly of jurisdiction, which we must nail to the mast as soon as possible. The condition of roads, the building of roads, the operation and maintenance of motor vehicles, the education of drivers—the motor car industry call them the nuts behind the wheels—are admittedly all under provincial jurisdiction. That is an obvious fact and it is important that we continue to implore the driver to be more sensible and more careful.

[Mr. Graftey.]

It is important to continue at the provincial level the proper maintenance and operation of vehicles. It is important to continue to build better and safer highways. However, in this house today I am talking about one thing and one thing only, and that is the building of safer cars in Canada and the importation of safer cars into Canada.

Who for a moment could pretend that there is no federal responsibility, and who for a moment could pretend that, circumstances being what they are at the present time, the provinces could get together to initiate beneficial action? The answer to that question was found in the United States by the United States Senate subcommittee last year. Let us move forward in co-operation with many United States state governments and the United States federal government on this problem.

As I have said, I know at this moment that the automobile industry is going to contact every member of this House of Commons. I know that the industry is trying to show directly and indirectly by every means it can command that this is a provincial responsibility. Let us not be fooled. We in the federal authority have jurisdiction over the construction of safe aircraft and the safe operation of aircraft, and I will have more to say about that in a few minutes. We have jurisdiction over construction of safe rolling stock on our railways, food, drugs and ships.

• (4:40 p.m.)

Just the other day in the question period in this House of Commons the Minister of Transport (Mr. Pickersgill) related to us in answering a question that certain ships were taken from the waterways because they were not safe. We should not expect the provinces to act in this regard. We should fulfil our own obligations and responsibilities.

Another excuse for lack of action as far as Canada is concerned might be the following. A lot of people have said to me, "Well, Heward, the Canadian automobile market is only between 7 per cent and 10 per cent of the total North American market. What are we going to do here, if production standards are more or less controlled in Washington?" Last year the General Service Administration told the U.S.A. automobile industry that they must make their cars meet certain safety standards within a very short time, and the automobile industry was shaken up; they took notice.