

would have been awkward for the White House to refuse to send a routine message of greeting. Such messages frequently go to groups, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, for example, whose political views do not coincide with the Administration's. It is less clear why HEW should have let its name be used to give an aura of official sponsorship to the conference. A more serious problem, though, is the connection of these organizations with elements in the Defense Department, since it is not entirely inconceivable that officers indoctrinated by the Forward Strategists could arrange the triggering of a preventive war whether the civilian political leaders want it or not.

The Administration is faced with delicate and interesting problems in dealing with this whole situation, some of which will be discussed in this space next week.—H.M.

A Lack of Enthusiasm in Detroit

No industry—least of all the much-berated American automobile industry—likes to concede either that its product may be less than wholly beneficial to public well-being or that it is a suitable object for federal regulation.

Perhaps this explains the auto makers' curious reaction to suggestions that they take an inexpensive, and apparently effective, step toward reducing the contaminants that are deposited into the air by the conventional gasoline engine.

The industry is going to take the step, says a spokesman for the Automobile Manufacturers Association, but only, says the spokesman, because it is easier to do that than to convince the public that the industry is the victim of some well-intentioned but misinformed do-gooders.

Under pressure from a variety of sources, and an outright 1964 deadline from the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, the manufacturers are on the way to adopting as standard equipment so-called blow-by devices. These are designed to reduce substantially the quantity of unburned gasoline that slips past the piston rings and into the air through the crankcase breather. The devices vary, but, according to the industry, they cost \$4 to \$6.50, installed, in California, where the industry, under pressure from the legislature, has "voluntarily" made them standard equipment over the past year.

Basically, the devices consist of a

tube that routes crankcase fumes back to the engine, where they are burned.

Unaffected by this device is the exhaust pipe, which emits an estimated 70 percent of automotive fumes. Its control is a far more complex, and far costlier, task.

Governmental attention, at present, is directed to the crankcase fumes, for these are now considered to be manageable. The Department of Health, Education, and Welfare says it will not "blackjack" the industry into prompt efforts at control, and Secretary Ribicoff was willing to set his deadline for the 1964 models. At the same time, Senator Neuberger said that if the deadline is not met, she will introduce legislation to make blow-by control mandatory. HEW has conveniently drafted a bill for her, and it is on hand in her files as a warning to industry.

Without any apparent enthusiasm, the manufacturers concede that they are going ahead with plans to test and produce the device in time for the deadline, although the federal government is satisfied with currently available devices and requires them as standard equipment on all cars purchased for its civilian agencies.

For a group that has never hesitated in the past to tout production changes, real or imaginary, the auto industry has been strangely silent in public about the blow-by device, which, at extremely moderate cost, holds out the promise of considerable public benefit.

The industry has cited difficulties with one model that incorporated a blow-by device, but the California Motor Vehicle Pollution Control Board has been told that in Los Angeles blow-by devices have been found trouble-free after 2.5 million miles of testing.

The auto industry insists, however, that "conditions are unique" in California, and that the device will be of little benefit elsewhere. In addition, at even \$4 per car, the industry points out, the device will boost the retail price of a year's production by \$25 million.

In any event, this modestly priced device, beneficial or not, has stirred the industry out of proportion to its cost or the mechanical problems involved.

In view of various proposals for federal action to require manufacturers to put more emphasis on public well-being in their designs—for example, seat belts as standard equipment—it is not surprising that anything resembling an opening wedge would be coolly received.

Announcements

One of the objectives of the **Soviet Union's 1958-1965 Seven Year Plan for the improvement of public health** is a 350-percent increase in the production of drugs, medical supplies, and equipment for medical research. According to the Soviet report *New Technology in Medicine* (1960), now available in English, the U.S.S.R. has two institutes organized solely to coordinate these efforts, plus special bureaus to develop and modernize medical equipment. The report, translated by the U.S. Department of Commerce, discusses new developments in diagnostic procedures, modern therapeutic apparatus, "mechanized" surgery, prostheses, and new medical materials. (Office of Technical Services, USDC, Washington 25, D.C. \$1.25)

The following publications on the **nation's human resources** have been released by the U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare:

Health, Education, and Welfare Trends. Presents annual data on developments and needs for the several past decades and projections to the 1970's (\$1).

Handbook on Programs of the U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare. This includes program analyses and 5-year summaries of statistics showing the program dimensions and trends (\$1.75).

Grants-in-Aid and Other Financial Assistance Programs. Contains statistical and other information on all such programs administered by the department (\$1.50).

A group of Russian scientists have arrived in England to discuss **solid-state physics research** with their British counterparts. This is the first in a series of exchange visits between the two countries, being arranged under an agreement signed last May, for collaboration on peaceful uses of atomic energy.

A new **"literature-searching" service** in science and technology, initiated by the U.S. Department of Commerce, provides a subscriber with (i) a bibliography of current material in his field at designated intervals, or (ii) a bibliography of all pertinent material available at the time of request. The bibliographies are compiled from government research reports, unclassified and declassified AEC reports, technical trans-