

**R**EADERS WILL recall our road test of the 1963 Studebaker "Super Hawk" (CARS, July, 1963) in which we found the car to be a most satisfactory GT-type vehicle with two important deficiencies. The first involved poor low end torque which resulted in what we felt was a disappointing 0-60 mph ET of 8.9 seconds given the optional, Paxton-supercharged R-2 engine which powers the company's Avanti.

What we claimed to be the car's other deficiency was the gear selection setup of the Super Hawk's optional three-speed "Power Shift" (console-mounted) transmission which, again, was first made available on Avanti's. We quote from our July road test:

*"... because Position 1, or Low, is a lockout gear entered by depressing a button atop the shift stick knob, and because this locks the shift in the position so that the button must be depressed to upshift into Position 2, a bit of thrust is required to move the stick out of Position 1. Since the non-locked-out Positions 2, 3, N and Reverse may be entered or left without the need for as much thrust of the stick, what can happen—and almost did happen to us—is that upon hard acceleration in Position 1 when the tach tine gets up near the 5,000 rpm red line, the driver tends to depress the button and move the stick forward as quickly as he can since any automatic has a tendency to lag a bit. A little too much forward thrust in the heat of a top rpm upshift and the stick might slide right through 2, D, N, . . . and into Reverse! (Luckily, when we faced this unpleasant experience, the stick halted at N)*

*How's that for an easy way of killing an engine and transmission plus 582 dollars worth of supercharger etc.? Ironically, Park position, furthest forward, requires the same safe entrance and exit procedures as Position 1. We would think that converting both Park and Reverse to lockout positions would be a wise move on Studebaker's part."*



## SUPER HAWK REVISITED

To be frank, the phone call from Studebaker which followed publication of the road test was not wholly unexpected; but the conversation was . . . we were told that the transmission lockout did, indeed, operate as we had said we thought it should (for Park and Reverse only) and that it could not possibly have functioned for Position 1! As for our acceleration times, the Studebaker representative said that they did not seem to stand up to those taken by factory personnel in our test car and others identically - equipped (3.73 rear axle).

Well, we said, impossible or no, this had been our experience with the transmission! As for acceleration times, we had clocked them as we always did by taking six corrected speedometer runs in each category on the same stretch of road surface (three in each direction), then discarding the best and worst and aver-

aging the remaining four.

We were then informed that the car was being located back at South Bend at the moment of the phone call—we had done our road testing in the New York area—and that the transmission and engine would be checked.

Shortly thereafter the representative called back apologetically and said that the car had been located and that we *were right!* Someone between South Bend and New York had managed to do what Studebaker transmission engineers said was impossible . . . switch the transmission lockout plates so that Position 1 locked out instead of Reverse. Further inspection had revealed that the test car engine's carburetor had not functioned properly and required an overhaul. Would we agree to a retest of the car set up as it should have been?

Certainly, we said, and took delivery of it in New York a short time later complete with overhauled carburetor and properly functioning transmission. The results listed on this page speak for themselves, so we'll add only the point that with improved carburetion we were able to upshift from Position 1 to Position 2 at 50 mph as opposed to under 45 mph during our previous test, and that in addition to negotiating 0-60 mph from a standing start a full 1½-seconds quicker than before, the same Super Hawk we had driven earlier exhibited much improved torque throughout its rpm range (we observed a 5,000 rpm maximum). And its transmission operated as smoothly as one could want without the need to overcome a Position 1 lockout.

But much more important to us than the actual outcome of the retest was Studebaker's willingness to acknowledge a "goof" and go to great trouble and expense to right it.

—HAL KEMPER

### REVISED SUPER HAWK ACCELERATION FIGURES

	FIRST TEST	SECOND TEST
*0-30 MPH	4.0 sec.	3.3 sec.
*0-40 MPH	5.3 sec.	4.4 sec.
0-60 MPH	8.9 sec.	7.4 sec.

\*Position 1 only.