If General Electric can build an electric tractor, why can’t they build an electric car?

General Electric is marketing a 14-horsepower rechargeable electric tractor capable of speeds up to 7 miles an hour. We think it’s a remarkable innovation. But an electric car is not. As a garden tractor for home use, Elec-Trak can take advantage of characteristics that would be distinct disadvantages in an electric car. The availability of fuel is no problem for Elec-Trak. It’s designed for limited use near electrified structures, making overnight recharging possible. The heavy weight of the battery, which would slow down a car, means greater applied traction for Elec-Trak.

Because Elec-Trak must travel at slow speeds to do its jobs, there are no aerodynamic energy losses to take into consideration.

Still, one might expect Elec-Trak to be the forerunner of a pollution-free automobile. Perhaps it is. But there are many crucial problems left to be solved.

The most important one, of course, is the development of a substantially better electric battery. Any car built today would be severely limited in range and performance, and probably prohibitively expensive. General Electric is making progress on new batteries, but there’s a long way yet to go.

We’ve experimented with zinc-air batteries. Sodium-sulfur batteries. Silver-zinc batteries. Lithium-halogen batteries. And others. There are problems with all of them. Problems of life-span, cost, practicality.

Despite the problems, General Electric scientists and engineers are working for the breakthrough that will make electric cars possible. Maybe the breakthrough is closer than we think. But we’ll continue to work and leave the predictions to someone else.

Why are we running this ad? We’re running this ad, and others like it, to tell you the things General Electric is doing to solve the problems of man and his environment today.

The problems concern us because they concern you. We’re a business and you are potential customers and employees.

But there’s another, more important reason. These problems will affect the future of this nation and this planet. We have a stake in that future. As businessmen. And, simply, as people.

We invite your comments.

Please write to General Electric, 570 Lexington Ave., New York, N.Y. 10022.