

Stoppin' talkin' and walkin'

By LORI TAYLOR
Herald Staff Writer
Halton Regional Police officers will be spending more of their time on foot beginning in May when the force launches a new program called "Stop, Lock, Walk and Talk".

Police Chief James Harding announced the program at a meeting of the police commission Thursday. The program will require officers, during off-peak periods, to leave their cruisers and walk along sections of their patrol zones on foot.

"We hope this program will make police officers a part of the community, not apart from the community," Chief Harding said. He said he spoke with the chief of police in Sarnia recently about a similar program and decided to draw something up for Halton.

Chief Harding said he hopes the program will make police more visible in downtown areas, around plazas and schools, and in areas which may previously not have received much attention, such as parks.

"For example, in summer we tend to forget about the greenbelt areas, but children are playing in the greenbelt areas," he said.

The chief said that because each member of the force is now equipped with a portable radio while on patrol, the officers can leave their cruisers and still maintain contact with the communications bureau. He said that while he hopes the foot patrols would form "a considerable part" of the officers' patrol time, the length of time the officer spends out of his cruiser would depend on the number of emergency calls coming in.

CONSERVE ENERGY
Chief Harding pointed out that the program would also help to conserve energy by cutting down on the amount of gasoline used by police patrol vehicles.

"I think this is a very commendable attitude for us to take," Commissioner Glenn Magnuson said. "We've had many requests for a beat policeman, which isn't feasible for us, but this will serve just as well."

Chief Harding said the officers have not been ordered to take part in the program, but Oakville Mayor Harry Barrett, chairman of the commission, suggested that it would be necessary to make the program mandatory. Otherwise, the officers would not be taking advantage of all the opportunities for foot patrol, he said.

Mayor Barrett said when the commission had been looking for new building sites in Halton Hills, they had received complaints from one of the regional councillors that he never saw police officers patrolling the downtown area.

Police also announced the appointment of three police officers to the position of crime prevention officer for each of the three police districts in Halton. Constables Jeanette Sykes, James Drennan and David Wallace have been selected as crime prevention officers and will work with Crime Prevention Officer Sgt. Wayne Jessop.

Mayor Barrett said the appointment of the crime prevention officers and the introduction of the new foot patrol problem will be of assistance in coming to grips with the problem of vandalism in the region.

Rural folk may get new rates

A commitment to reduce rural electrical rates by bringing them more into line with those paid by urban residents of Ontario was announced this week by Premier William Davis.

Mr. Davis said he has instructed Ontario Hydro to come up with new rate proposals, hopefully as early as this fall.

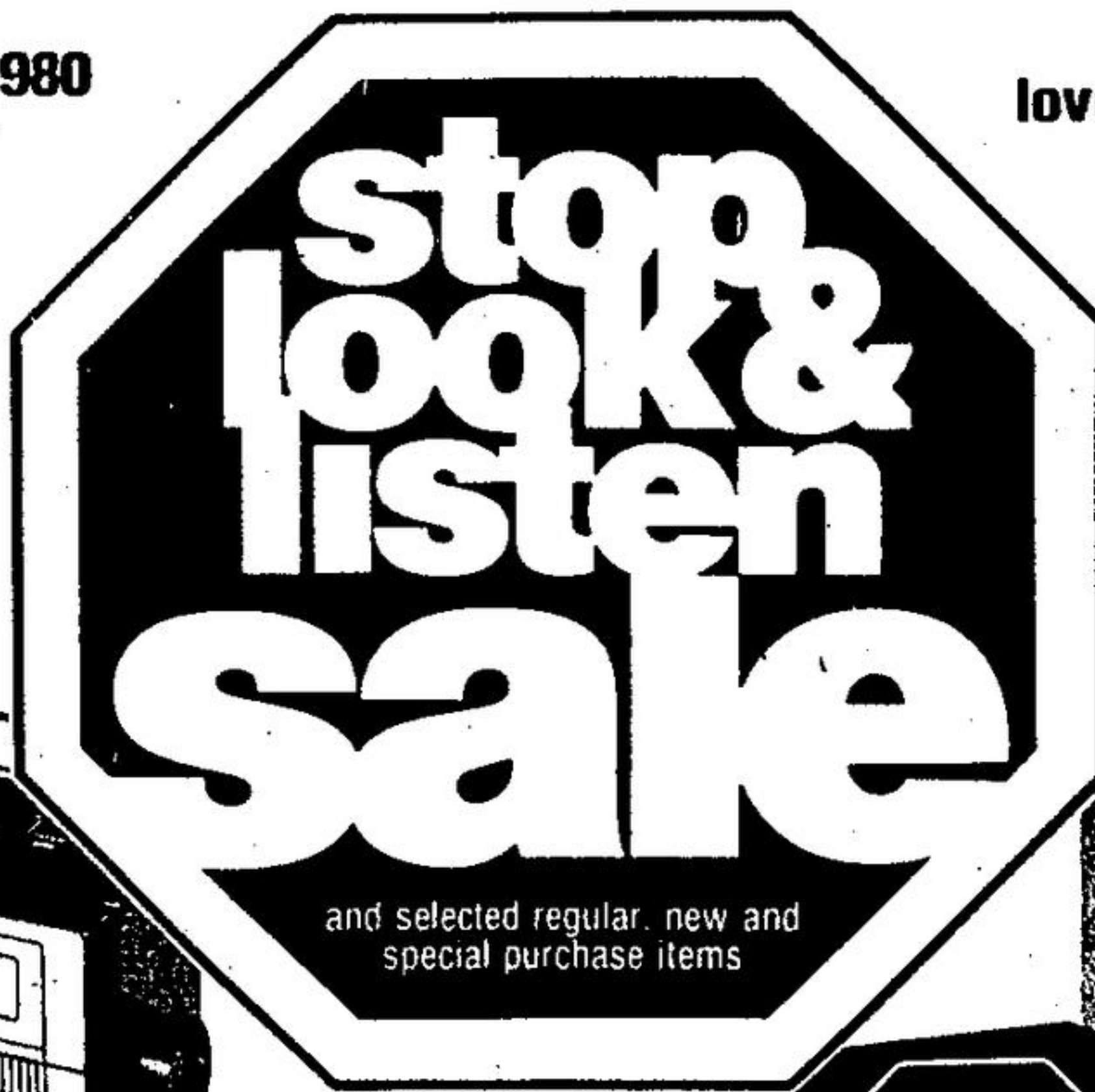
"It is quite obvious that under the new proposals, the lower rates will not recover all of the costs of the rural power system," the Premier said.

"However, the current inequity between urban and rural residents in the purchase of electrical power is going to become increasingly burdensome to our rural people and justifies the change in policy," he said.

The rural power district serves an area of some 250,000 square miles where there are an average of 14 customers per mile of distribution line. In the municipal system there are more than 100 customers per mile.

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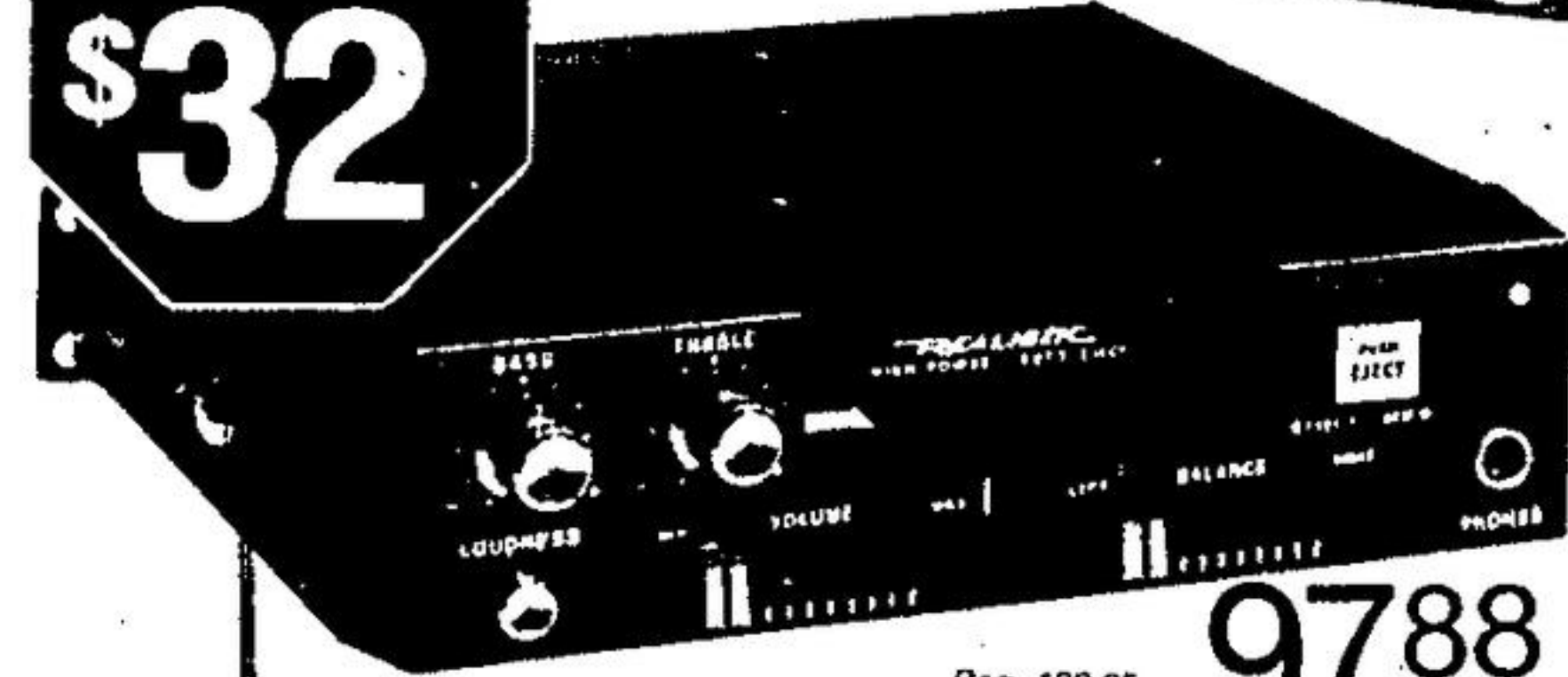
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