

Queen's Park report

By Julian Reed,

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Twenty-seven countries from both sides of the Iron Curtain met from Oct. 3 to 1 1977, under the auspices of the United Nations to define and delineate what is now a commonly known "Energy Crisis" and to adopt and pool ideas and concepts which may ultimately lead to a new energy age in the world.

The importance of this conference cannot be over-emphasized since it is the first time the nations of the world have come together to discuss the problem and it might be noted that it has been the time of little or no political jockeying where all countries see a common problem and will probably approach the solution from a unified point of view. The quest for answers in the energy crisis will undoubtedly be a unifying force in the world and will tend to unite us in peace rather than divide us.

It was interesting to observe that with the exception of two countries, Sweden and Denmark, the rest of the world is still very much to the practical application of the energy answers which most countries now concur are necessary to lead us into a new age. For instance, it is universally agreed that the consumption of energy in its various forms should be put to its most efficient end use. That conservation is a vital part of our immediate future. That renewable energy sources must be developed and furnished as quickly as possible. The challenge seems to be to turn these universally accepted principles into nuts and bolts hardware to gain the favor of public opinion to bring about the necessary changes in societies who are not yet convinced of the necessity to do so.

At the date of this writing, the draft conclusion and recommendations are not finalized but they generally cover the areas of human settlement planning. They recognize the need for the assemblance of statistics and information on the use of the different forms of energy for different purposes and, of course, the need to disseminate that information and get it into the hands of the people who can best use it.

One of the most interesting recommendations concerns the inclusion of energy strategies into the official plan of municipalities. Such a move in Scandinavia has resulted in energy development that has never taken place in Ontario. Some of the electrical requirements of the National Grid are being supplied by municipally owned generating plants which are fired by municipal garbage. The waste heat is piped to new subdivisions for home heating purposes. The concept improves the efficiency of the thermal generating system, gets rid of the garbage, provides warmth for many homes, as well as a substantial dollar return for the operator.

Halton Region would do well to explore concepts of this kind rather than simply choosing landfill. It is increasingly evident that such concepts are not only realistic but rapidly becoming essential to a secure energy future.

The responsibility of governments were certainly not overlooked. It is obvious by the above recommendations that the Provincial Government through its energy medium, Ontario Hydro, must make some major changes in its attitudes towards the production and sale of its product.

The most interesting observation was the recognition and acceptance by all countries of the universality of our energy problems and, hence, our energy challenge. In fact the same difficulties seem to be experienced in all jurisdictions, whether in democratic or communist countries, when it comes to convincing the public at large, and promoting positive action. We have a long way to go since we must leapfrog out of an age of energy abundance, energy cheapness and, hence, energy waste, into an age of efficiency, conservation and new technologies. Will it ever become fashionable to turn off the lights; turn down the heat; insulate your north wall and ceiling to an optimum level; voluntarily curtail some business hours during winter; drive smaller cars; wear an extra sweater; pay a little extra for a house that is highly energy efficient and perhaps solar oriented; use the clothes line instead of the dryer; go to a theatre opening on public transit; separate your garbage at source; insist on more durable goods; form energy hobby clubs; fix that leaky hot water faucet or shower with a friend?

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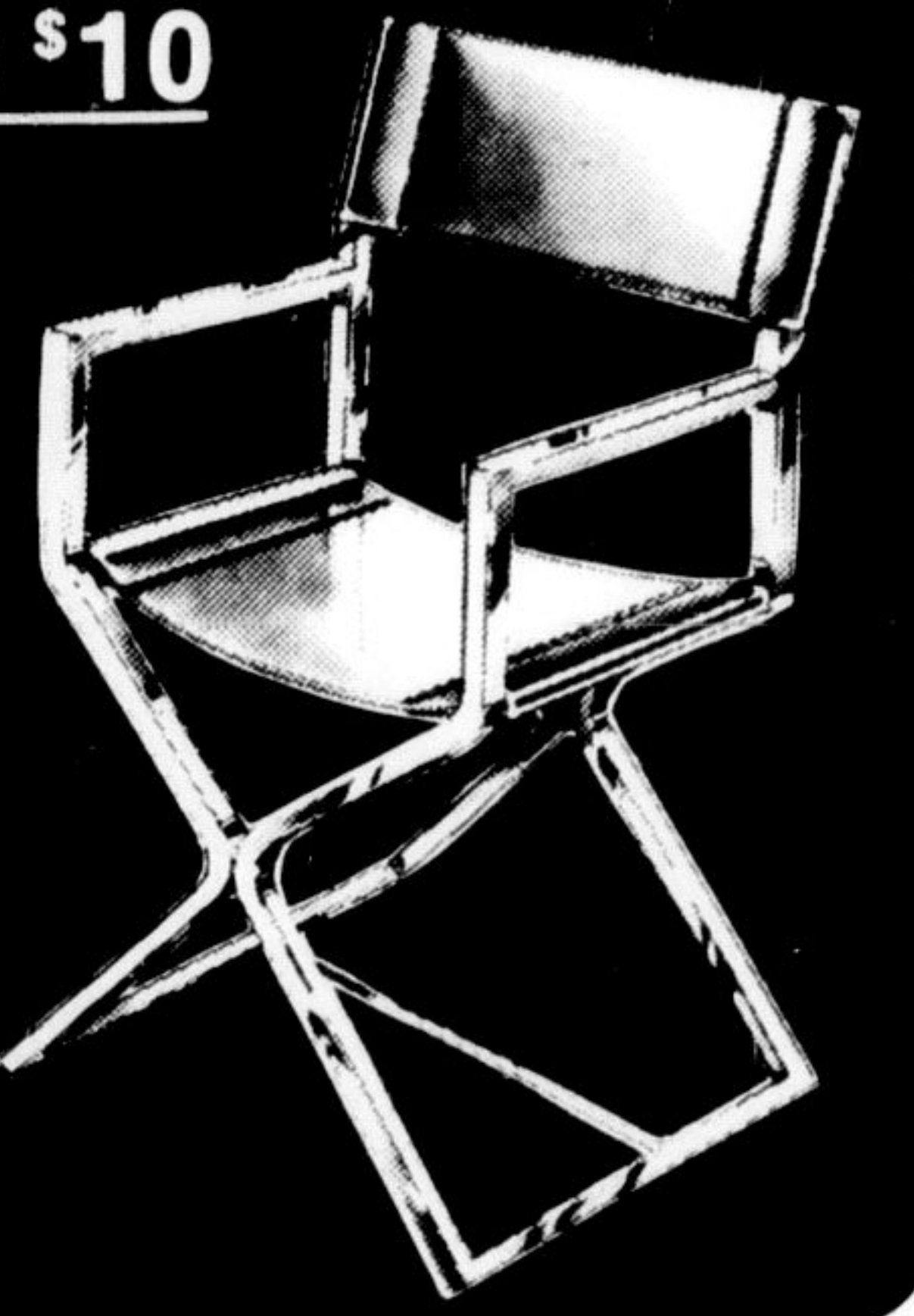
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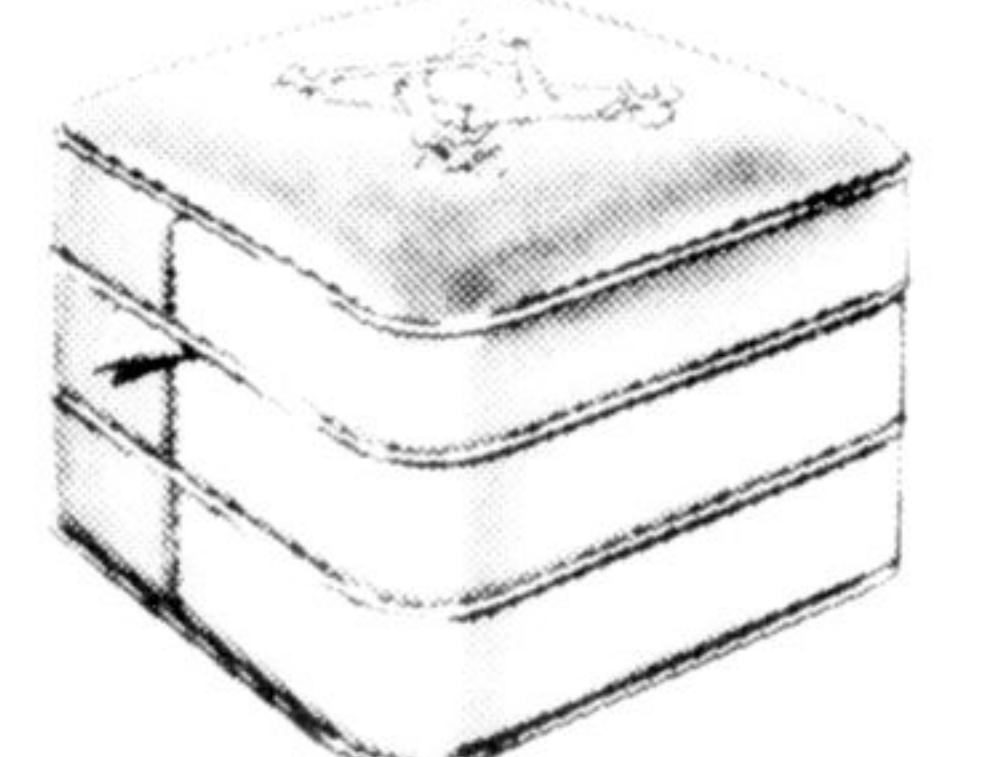
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