

**Queen's Park**

**Tourism a year later**

By ALF STONG  
MLA — YORK CENTRE  
A year has passed since the completion of the report of the Liberal Task Force on Tourism and it is interesting to compare our recommendations and the developments which have taken place.

With the growth rate in the tourism industry and the current intense competition for the tourist dollar we cannot allow our primary efforts to lag.

In May, 1978, we recommended that since tourist operators had the best idea of where their clients originated and what they were seeking, the increase of \$3,000,000 in the Government's advertising budget be allocated to local tourist organizations permitting individual tourist operators to have a greater say in provincial advertising decisions.

We also recommended that the province make available promotional material and road maps for tourist operators intending to set up booths at sportsman's shows in the U.S.

On March 5 this year the Minister announced a three-part co-operative program to enhance the marketability of resorts to feature 50 billboards strategically placed in the Southern Ontario market, a toll-free telephone line between Toronto and Orillia for reservation information, and an attractive sales brochure featuring our resorts to be distributed to travel agents in Ontario and the States.

Excessive gas prices at expressway service centres were a major complaint, our task force found, and we recommended that the Government prepare charts giving conversion details for our gallon and the U.S. gallon to be distributed to those service centres.

On March 5, 1979, the Government announced a program to correct an American misconception by placing special stickers at service centre gas pumps on Highways 400 and 401 to show the difference between the Canadian Imperial gallon and the U.S. gallon in size and price.

We advocated continuation of the sales tax suspension on accommodation while we try to reduce our travel deficit. In the budget brought down almost a year later, such a continuation was announced.

In October, 1978, we asked the Minister to promote the fact that out of Province tourists are exempt from retail sales tax if purchases are taken out of Province within 30 days as a stimulus to retail sales. On March 5, this year the Government announced they would be actively selling the sales tax rebate form distributing it to all "We treat you royally" participants and through all Ontario Government Information Centres.

We recommended in May, 1978, that the Province examine the information booths which welcome tourists to Ontario, upgrading the facilities. In March, 1978, the Government announced that our tourist information centres were simply not good enough and they were looking at the centres with a view to upgrading them substantially.

On May 10 the Government announced the construction of a \$350,000 travel information centre at Fort Erie as the first of four new centres and the Minister stated his intention of upgrading all the provincial information centres during the next 4 to 5 years.

Conventions being an important source of revenue and possessing the potential to produce far greater returns, we recommended in May, 1978, that the three levels of government finalize plans for a major convention centre in Metro Toronto which could provide information on tourist attractions throughout the Province.

We also proposed the establishment in the interim of a public information service to be located at convention sites. In March of this year the Province announced in recognition of conventions as a major source of revenue the publication of a convention and meeting guide detailing facilities offered by the Province.



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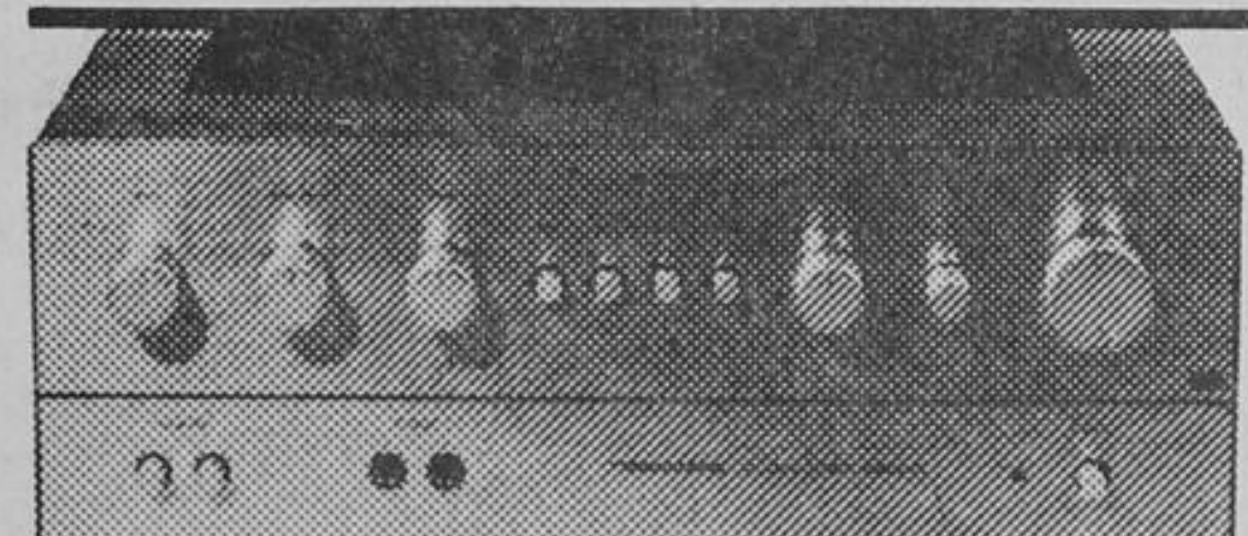


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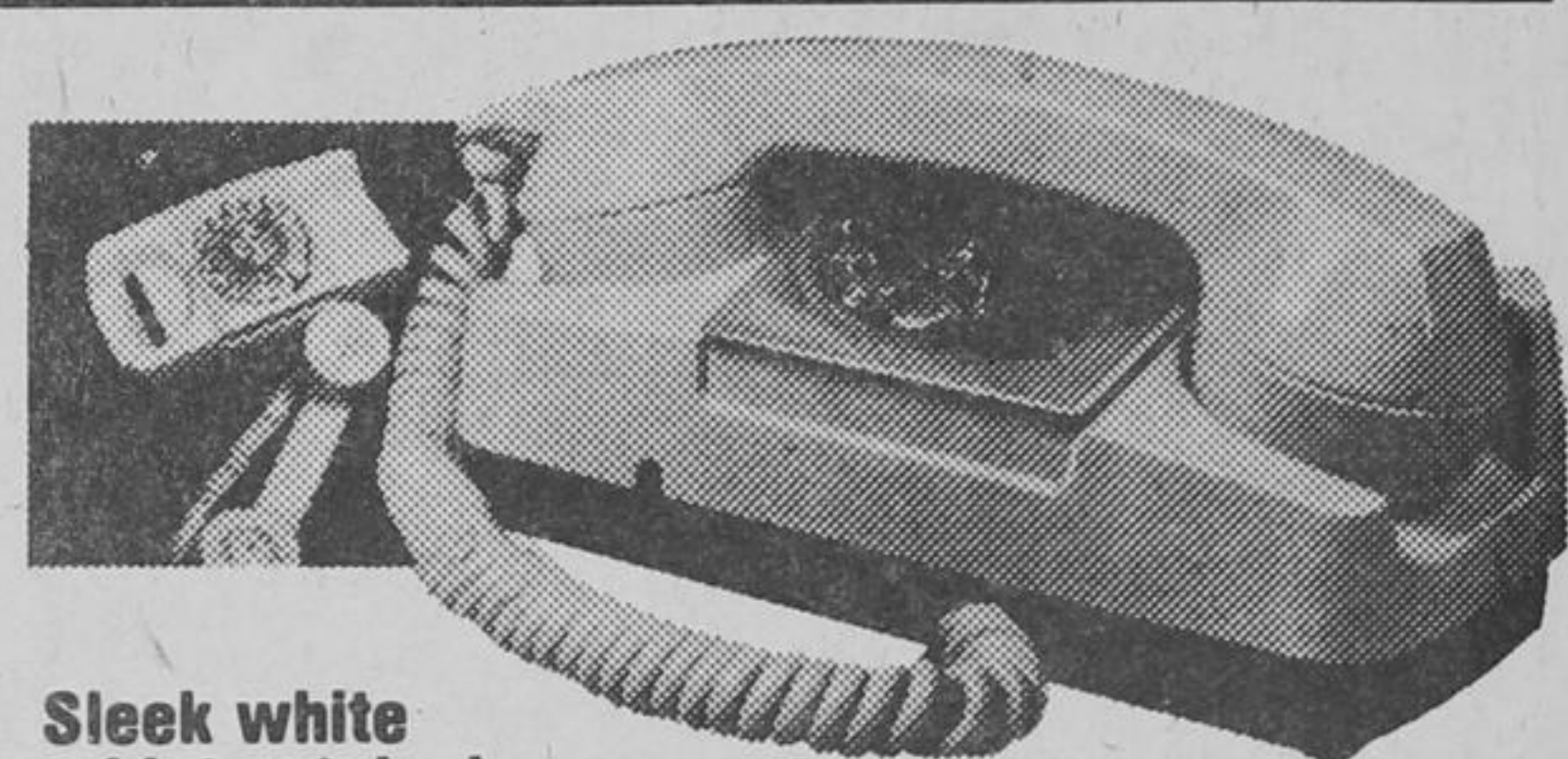


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