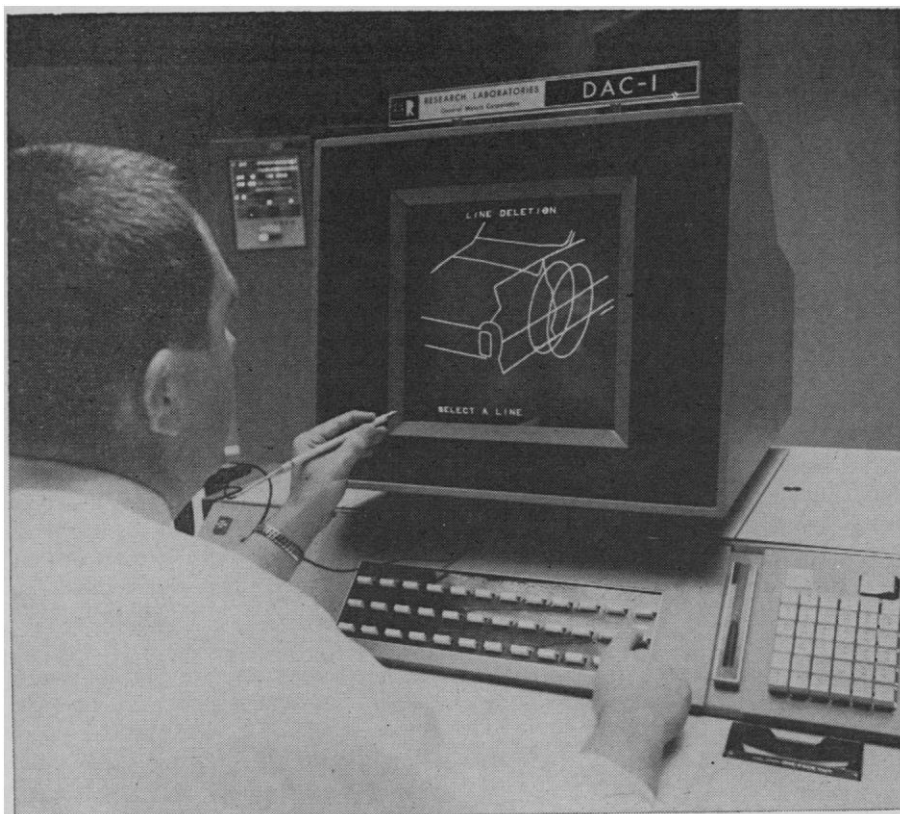## 29 December

Man-Machine Interactions and Their Implications for Society

Communication of automotive design information between man and computer at the General Motors Research Laboratories using the GM DAC-1 system (Design Augmented by Computers). A research engineer checks out a computer program that allows him to modify a "design drawing." A touch of the electric "pencil" to the tube face signals the computer to begin an assigned task where indicated—in this case, "line deletion."

There seems little reason to doubt that the machine is the cornerstone of modern society. However, this hypothesis has mixed blessings, as many citizens, besides being aware of the material benefits of a highly industrialized society, are becoming increasingly aware of and concerned about its problems and the dangers of such a modern society. Societal goals and values, as well as the events in our daily lives, are increasingly stressed by the impact of our machine-oriented society.

It is time to take an accounting of the effects of machines on the lives of men and the evolution of society. To this end we seek to understand, for example, whether the rapid rate of technological change in our society is really causing the malady of failure in human adaptation called future shock, and we accordingly need to question seriously whether we are really in control of machine technology and can hope to remain so.

The complexity of man-machine interactions and their implications for society will be discussed by a number of speakers who will bring to bear their different viewpoints and backgrounds, ranging from that of the scientist and engineer to that of the sociologist, philosopher, and theologian. Each will discuss from his own position what he sees as the most significant aspects of man-machine interactions; what present trends in science and technology indicate the quality of man-machine interactions in the future; and how these interactions are likely to affect the identity of man and the workings of society. The discussion will also be concerned with whether we can control the effects of man-machine interactions so as to ensure beneficial consequences. Perhaps from such a consideration can emerge the criteria for technological assessment and a better understanding of the role of the man and the machine in the future.

The format of the symposium is designed so that the speakers in the afternoon session will be discussants in the morning session and vice-versa, thus assuring a full interaction among the panelists. In addition, the audience will be encouraged to enter actively into the discussion with comments and questions.

CARL SANDLER

Seattle, Washington 98105

30 December

Can We Develop an Index for Quality of Life?

Wouldn't it be enormously convenient to have a single, generally accepted index for the economic and social welfare of the people of the United States? A glance at the index would tell us how much better or worse off we had become each year and each decade. We could then judge the desirability of any proposed action of governmental policy by asking whether it would raise or lower this index. There are some who espouse such an index and believe that it is possible to construct it, and others who are pessimistic about the prospects.

Many believe in the usefulness of multiple indices, such as social indicators which would measure the state of health, the state of the physical environment, the prevalence of poverty, the oc-