

The way we were



Pond hockey

For the love of the game, Ashgrove Hockey Stars in 1949.

Images courtesy of Esquesing Historical Society, Text Heritage Halton Hills

From our readers

A CHILLY BATH

Simone Garland sent in this photo of an icy bath in the Credit River near Norval.

Got a photo you want to share?
Email cgamble@theifp.ca



\$2 billion doesn't seem like much to the Grits

There's no question that a billion dollars is a lot of money. But it's such a big number, it's difficult for most of us to comprehend.

Here's one way to visualize a billion dollars: Imagine yourself in a big hall, standing alone on a stage. Imagine there are a thousand people in the hall. Imagine that each person you're looking at in this crowd is a millionaire, each with a net worth of a million dollars.

Taken together, the combined net worth of this imaginary, large, and well-heeled group of people would be a billion dollars.

Thinking about it this way, it's easy to see that a billion dollars is indeed a lot of money.

This year, the provincial government plans to spend \$118 billion of taxpayers' money, and \$12.5 billion of borrowed money.

But how much of that public money is being wasted?

Each year, the report of the Auditor General of Ontario provides an authoritative, non-partisan analysis of the money the government is wasting.

This year's massive report was dropped on MPPs' desks like a bombshell.

In it, we learned the government's "smart meters" program has cost nearly \$2 billion.

"Under the initiative," the Auditor General wrote, "ratepayers were supposed to use less electricity during peak times."

But what actually happened?

"Peak demand reduction targets set by the Ministry of Energy have not been

met, ratepayers have had significant billing concerns, and ratepayers are also paying significantly more to support the expansion of power-generating capacity while also covering the cost of the implementation of smart metering," the Auditor General concluded.

In short, the smart meters have been a failure and the money spent on them has been wasted.

To be fair, we are paying for the smart meters on our electricity bills, which is separate from the Ontario Government's Consolidated Revenue Fund. But it's still public money, and subject to review by the Auditor General.

In our parliamentary system of government, if \$2 billion of public money is wasted, you'd expect that a cabinet minister would accept responsibility for the

boondoggle, and resign.

To put \$2 billion into perspective, it would easily pay for several new bridges and road improvements along the Connecting Link roadways in Halton Hills and Centre Wellington, a new court house in Halton, a brand new hospital, the Hwy. 6 Morriston bypass, traffic signals in Guelph/Eramosa, and a sewage treatment system in Erin, with hundreds of millions of dollars to spare.

But of course, no one took responsibility for the waste of \$2 billion and resigned their cabinet seat. That's just not the way the Wynne government works.

To them, it's just another day at the office.

Wellington-Halton Hills MPP Ted Arnott welcomes your comments. He can be reached at 1-800-265-2366. His website address is www.tedarnottmpp.com.



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