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(Hansard)**

Jeudi 10 septembre 2009

**Standing Committee on
Government Agencies**

Agency review:

Royal Ontario Museum

**Comité permanent des
organismes gouvernementaux**

Examen des organismes
gouvernementaux :

Musée royal de l'Ontario

Chair: Julia Munro
Clerk: Douglas Arnott

Présidente : Julia Munro
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ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

STANDING COMMITTEE ON
GOVERNMENT AGENCIESCOMITÉ PERMANENT DES
ORGANISMES GOUVERNEMENTAUX

Thursday 10 September 2009

Jeudi 10 septembre 2009

The committee met at 0930 in room 151 after a closed session.

AGENCY REVIEW

ROYAL ONTARIO MUSEUM

The Chair (Mrs. Julia Munro): Good morning and welcome to the standing committee. I'd invite you to take a seat here and make yourselves ready. We certainly appreciate you taking the time to be able to join us here this morning as we look at the Royal Ontario Museum. For the purposes of Hansard, I'd ask that you introduce yourselves, and when you are ready you may begin.

Mr. Salvatore Badali: Very good. Top of the morning to us all, and thank you for inviting us. I'll introduce us now if that's okay. So good morning, everybody, and nice to be here on this great day. No windows, so you can't see outside, because it's nice out.

On behalf of our ROM boards, staff and volunteers, I'm delighted to be present at this committee hearing this morning to report on the activities and prospects of the Royal Ontario Museum. My name is Sal Badali. I chair the board of trustees there. With me this morning from the ROM's management team are William Thorsell, our director and CEO; on my right Dr. Mark Engstrom, our deputy director of collections and research; behind me, Glenn Dobbin, deputy director, operations; Bill Graesser, our chief financial officer; Chris Koester, our vice president, human resources and organizational development; Ania Kordiuk, our vice president, visitor relations and commercial services; and Tracy Ruddell, head of marketing.

I have a number of remarks, divided into five topic areas, that I'd like to share with you this morning. Let me start by first talking about the nature of the Royal Ontario Museum.

Nearly a century in age now, the ROM is Canada's largest museum and probably the best-known of Canada's museums internationally. The ROM is unusual in several respects. First, the museum is a universal museum of cultures. Its mandate is literally carved in stone on the Queen's Park façade of the building as, "the arts of man through all the years." There are few universal museums of culture left in the world today. Most museums specialize in a few cultures, in particular places and times. The British Museum, the Victoria and Albert, the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York and the

ROM retain their universal character, a reflection of 19th-century ideals that saw museums as encyclopaedias intended to expose local populations to the entire world.

Second, the ROM is a significant museum of natural history. Again, in words written in stone at the Queen's Park façade, "the record of nature through countless ages."

I'm sorry; I forgot to say to you that the nature of our universal culture is very important here because Canada's population reflects so many different cultures and places. The ROM's collections can speak to everyone, offering common ground consistent with the diversity we see in Ontario and Canada.

Our collections in natural history rank among the finest in the world, from minerals to the fossil record of early life to dinosaurs, early mammals and the world of biodiversity and life at risk. In most places, museums of culture and nature separated into distinct institutions many years ago. By chance of history, these mandates remain intact under one roof at the Royal Ontario Museum. We're much more aware these days that culture and nature are intimately related rather than separate realms. The ROM is perfectly suited to draw links between humanity and nature in this age of environmental stress and biodiversity. A globally respected, universal museum of cultures married to a major museum of natural history creates a rare institution of enormous breadth and authority in the world. That is the Royal Ontario Museum.

The ROM became an independent agency of the government of Ontario under its own board of trustees through the Royal Ontario Museum Act of 1968. Trustees are now joined in shaping the museum by the ROM board of governors, who provide robust philanthropic and sponsorship support, and by the board of the Institute of Contemporary Culture at the ROM, which focuses on issues of social and cultural change in the modern world.

I've spoken to you of the ROM's collections, but museums are also significant engines of research, education and conservation. The ROM grew out of the University of Toronto in 1912 and retains close links with it. Many of our curators are cross-appointed at the university and teach students attending there, especially given that the ROM maintains well-known programs of research in archaeology, art and natural history around the world. In addition, significant numbers of graduate

students carry out research and engage in study programs in our collection areas. Further in terms of education, you may be interested to know that the ROM serves as one of the largest non-school educational institutions in Canada, with more than 150,000 students a year attending its organized programs in culture and nature. We have a suite of classrooms and a number of teachers.

We first opened our doors in October 1914 on Bloor Street, and expanded in 1931 and 1982 to accommodate growth. We're here today after another decade of significant capital expansion—the largest museum capital project in Canada, and likely one of the largest in the world. Renaissance ROM, as we called it, had a number of goals, all intended to serve the public purpose.

First, as one of the world's great museums, the ROM is defined by its collections and research. Many of these collections became stranded in our vaults over time and were inaccessible to the public. Many of these collections lacked curators and technical staff to care for them. Thus, accessibility to our collections was a driving force behind Renaissance ROM.

Through RenROM, we aimed to display all the ROM's major collections in permanent galleries. We're now nearing completion of 27 new galleries, some of them rehousing famous collections such as dinosaurs and Chinese art, but others bringing stranded collections to public view for the first time in many decades. Further, and very importantly, we're now hiring new curators and technicians to care for and expand our knowledge of them. These formerly inaccessible collections include Canada's First Peoples, Canadian historical art, Japan, Africa, Oceania, the Americas, Cyprus and Bronze Age Greece, textiles and costume, South Asian civilizations, the early fossil record of life on earth, and much of our collections in mineralogy and biodiversity. In bringing all this forward to the public again, we are honouring the legacy of those who built these priceless collections over the last century as a public trust.

Second, we're housing most of these new galleries in the wonderful halls and wings of the original heritage buildings, which had suffered under various renovations over the years. RenROM has been the largest heritage restoration project in Canada over the past decade, restoring the values and dignity of these important historic buildings on Queen's Park and Philosopher's Walk. Nothing was destroyed and much was recovered of these buildings, which speak so eloquently to the vision of our forebears.

Third, we held a public, international search for an architect to create new galleries and public amenities on Bloor Street. This led to the appointment in 2002 of Daniel Libeskind, who proposed the crystal as the ROM's new entrance lobby, with seven new exhibition spaces and public amenities. This dramatic, not to say radical, structure fired the imagination of Toronto and beyond, and emerged as one of the icons of Ontario in the 21st century, described by Condé Nast magazine in 2008 as one of the seven architectural wonders of the modern world. I also recall that Time magazine did a

two-page colour article on us in their international exhibition and called us a gem.

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The rebuilding and new building of the ROM on Queen's Park and Bloor Street has sparked new life in that area of the city and the city as a whole, and created many jobs through construction, design and tourism. Last year the ROM attracted more than one million visitors, a record attendance, up 40% from its pre-project averages. We also posted record revenues earned from our own activities. I might just digress for a moment from my text and say that prior to our project, self-generated revenues were in the neighbourhood of \$11 million a year; they are now \$26 million to \$27 million a year.

In the service of programming and education, RenROM has added substantial capability to our new learning centre and public spaces. The museum has created a new department of programming and education to produce a vibrant and diverse menu of lectures, debates, symposia and unique learning experiences, such as ROM sleepovers for younger children and their parents.

Beyond the physical dimensions of our collections and buildings, the ROM will now play a much more conspicuous role in the intellectual life of Ontario on matters of environmental and social change. The government of Ontario provided the essential spark to set all this change in motion. Ontario committed \$30 million of capital funds in 2002 and a further \$12 million in 2005. This combined capital contribution of \$42 million assisted the ROM in raising an additional \$30 million from the federal government and \$213 million from the private sector as of June of last year. The ROM governors are committed to raising a final \$16 million in support of Renaissance ROM.

Among the ROM's 12 major individual donors in the RenROM capital campaign, half are first-generation immigrants to Canada, including Michael Lee-Chin, for whom the crystal is named. Moreover, more than \$14 million of the private sector funds were raised from sources beyond Ontario's borders.

The return on Ontario's capital investment in Renaissance ROM is in the order of five times the original sum, surely one of the highest returns for public infrastructure spending on record. In fact, the ROM's capital campaign has turned out to be one of the most successful in the history of Canadian cultural institutions, with contributions from many communities, individuals and sectors of society. Seventy-five per cent of the funds to rebuild the ROM have come from private individuals or corporations in Canada, powerful evidence, we believe, of the regard in which museums are held in this province.

Lastly on this topic, you may be interested to know that a total of almost 6,000 individual donations were made to the capital campaign, ranging from all of Canada's major banks and financial institutions to specific cultural communities—South Asia, for example, Japan, China—individual Ontarians and the ROM's own department of museum volunteers, whose members

personally donated a total of \$1.7 million, 70% higher than the original target.

While the ROM's capital campaign reached new heights, the government of Ontario has provided critical additional operating support to the museum in the past several years. Indeed, out of this year's provincial budget, the Ontario government increased the ROM's operating base for the first time in 15 years; the real value of the provincial operating grant had fallen by 50% over that period, and indeed, during that period, we suffered some cuts. This has put the museum on a more sustainable financial footing and allowed the ROM to offer Ontarians and tourists alike a powerful program of special exhibitions, lectures, debates and other events in its spectacular new facilities on Bloor Street.

Looking ahead, we're committed to vigorous annual programming across our mandates of culture and nature. This includes contemporary subjects through the ROM's Institute for Contemporary Culture, which recently hosted an exhibition on street art and homelessness in Toronto and which will host an exhibition on Vanity Fair portraits as well as Canadian celebrities, beginning September 23.

The ROM's education programs will expand beyond Toronto via the Internet, with added in-house family programming during weekends. And the ROM is now working more closely with the Ontario Ministry of Education and local authorities to create curriculum content related to special exhibitions such as the Dead Sea scrolls.

Our outreach programs across Ontario will grow beyond the 490,000 people who saw ROM travelling exhibits last year. Our innovative program of community exhibitions from local sources will continue, and we will expand our program partnerships, such as those with Earth Rangers, Caribana and the Blyth Academy, to better serve the public.

We will also build on our global contacts to develop more original international exhibitions such as this year's Dead Sea scrolls exhibition from Israel and last fall's Trypilia exhibition from Ukraine. As well, we have created special working partnerships with museums in Jordan, Beijing and Nanjing to share expertise and develop new public programs. Currently, we are working with museums in Montreal, Calgary and Victoria to bring major exhibitions from abroad to Toronto and then to the rest of Canada.

With capital fundraising almost complete and support from additional provincial operating funds, we are changing our focus from facilities to people. We are vigorously expanding our access programs for disabled Ontarians, students and families of limited means. We were honoured to receive the city of Toronto's Access Award last year for our accessibility initiatives for the disabled and this year the government of Ontario designated the ROM as an example of leadership in implementation of the Ontarians with Disabilities Act.

The ROM's admission prices are within the norm of similar attractions in Ontario. Nevertheless, to address

economic barriers that we know exist we created the ROM CAN program of targeted assistance to citizens with limited means, announced last year by our Premier. The ROM provided 50,000 free admissions, worth \$1 million, in the past year under this program. Under ROM CAN, the museum offers free access to all Ontario post-secondary students one day a week and free family passes to new Canadian citizens and users of various United Way agencies.

The ROM is also open for free admission to everyone in the last hour of each Wednesday and for half price on Thursday evenings. New school bursary programs, amounting to more than \$120,000 last year, are bringing 12,000 students from the GTA and beyond to the ROM; classrooms who would otherwise be unable to afford it. It's our dream that every Ontario school child should experience the ROM in some way each year, on-site or at distance, in a meaningful way. Indeed, having raised most of the capital required for RenROM, the ROM governors are now launching a bold new fundraising initiative called ROM access, which will extend the museum's reach into many more schools and communities that cannot otherwise afford to attend the museum.

To finance the museum of first international rank of arts and science in Ontario, the ROM must rely on a triad of public operating support, earned revenues and philanthropy, and to meet its social obligation to reach the various communities across Ontario, we're developing the most aggressive philanthropic and sponsorship programs in the country. As you may know, major museums in several countries, including the United States and Great Britain, are open at no charge to visitors as a matter of public policy. The rationales for this are public education, social integration and the promotion of tourism. We believe this option to be worthy of consideration in Canada as well, given similar goals here and the recent investment in museums as public assets.

The ROM belongs to everyone, and as our CEO says, is the new agora or meeting place in Toronto and beyond. More than a traditional museum, we provide common ground across cultures and interests and offer a forum to explore and debate cultural and environmental issues of our time.

On behalf of my board colleagues, management and staff, I thank the people of Ontario for their support of the ROM through the government of Ontario and through their patronage of the museum. We thank our donors and volunteers for their remarkable support over the past decade in re-creating the museum, and we express pride in the ROM staff who have so effectively enhanced this legacy for future generations. We're particularly grateful today to you for having asked us to come and talk to you. We're very proud of what we've accomplished, and the floor is now yours.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Most people don't say that when they come to this committee.

Mr. Salvatore Badali: Well, ask on the way out.

The Chair (Mrs. Julia Munro): Thank you very much. This morning we'll begin with questions. Ms. Albanese.

Mrs. Laura Albanese: Thank you for your presentation. I wanted to begin by asking you how you're planning to reach more people. You've mentioned how you're planning to reach more people in Ontario; you mentioned the outreach program and the Internet. However, there has been a decline in tourism, especially from the United States. How are you responding to that?

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Mr. Salvatore Badali: Great question, thank you. Chairs should watch themselves. I'm a governor. Good governance means management manages. I try to remember that, and my board tries to remember that too. So with many of the questions today, if they deal with operating matters I'll invite my colleagues to respond. William, why don't you take that one?

Mr. William Thorsell: It's true that the decline in American tourism, which has fallen about 50% since the beginning of this decade, visiting Ontario, has affected our business plan and the way we strategize and the way that we operate the museum.

Fortunately for us, we live in a province where about six million people are contiguous to the museum—they don't need a passport to come downtown or to go home. Ontario and Montreal are out there as well. We have a large domestic population where historically we rather took them for granted, I think, and we relied on the bump of tourism in the summer to carry us along.

We had a relatively low penetration of tourists who visited Toronto at the ROM before Renaissance ROM, so when we looked at the data when I first went there nine years ago, of the tourists who came to Toronto, quite a small portion went to the ROM. Larger portions went to other attractions. One of our goals was just to raise our proportion of the numbers coming here to come to the ROM.

Now, of course, half of them are missing. That's millions of people who are not here in the summers when we relied on them. So we've turned our attention as other institutions have—theatres—to Ontario itself and to Canada first of all, to say we need to address ourselves emphatically more convincingly to the people of our own province first. Therefore, we've reoriented our programming, our marketing, our group sales operations to southern Ontario first of all and then beyond into Ottawa and Montreal because this is a large and relatively unplumbed marketplace for us. There's an emphasis here on the family tourism market.

Fortunately for the ROM, our mandates are so broad that we can generate matters of interest for a wide diversity of people. We've done a lot of research into why people stay away from museums or go to them and what makes them happy when they're there. We do a lot of exit surveys to find out how the experiences have been.

We realize that we have a very strong traditional visitorship from Toronto itself who are interested in art and archaeology and science. But there's a large group of people with families and new immigrants with families who have never been to the ROM. So part of the whole

Renaissance ROM program was to generate, as I call it, a landscape of desire and motivation to go to that museum. That meant bringing out all of these collections, but it also meant, in the absence of these tourists, reaching much more aggressively beyond even 905 into 519 and 613 and so forth and realizing that we have the great good fortune of millions of people who should be going to museums like ours, who in the past we've kind of taken for granted because we had the tourism.

The second response to the tourism is that we have developed partnerships with Ontario Tourism Marketing, Tourism Toronto and OCAF to project the really high value of things that we're doing, to American cities where there is still a propensity and capacity to travel. These are called, in the tourism trade, travellers rather than tourists. These people tend to be cultural tourists. For example, we had a special OTMP grant this spring to advertise the Dead Sea scrolls in a major way through the New York Times and New York, Boston and Chicago because there are constituencies there that are more or less likely to travel, pick up and come to Toronto for something like that.

It's a combination and response of turning to our own backyard and doing much more aggressive work through media, marketing and group sales and partnerships here and then a more targeted attack on the American tourism market for a particular audience.

Mrs. Laura Albanese: Do you have a specific strategy to attract Ontario's diverse communities or young people, for example?

Mr. William Thorsell: Yes, and there we have numbers of programming and friends groups that we rely upon.

First of all, we'll do Muslim Heritage Weekend; we'll do Chinese New Year weekend; we're going to do Iranian New Year this year in March. We produce cultural weekends, often with the assistance of the community leadership in those communities. So for the Muslim weekend last spring, we worked with the Muslim communities, and through them, we were able to reach many more people. We do a special rate for them, we do a special programming that they often provide for us—music, dance—we bring out special artifacts, displays and films, and not only does that attract a large portion of that community, but other people who are interested in the Muslim world come at the same time. So we find that that's very important to us.

One of our pieces of research last year was to go into several communities and find out from those communities—South Asian and Chinese communities were the two we looked at—to see if there are certain things that we should be doing to reach them with our programming and what we're doing. Yes, they like their cultural weekends and so forth, but one very clear message came back to us: Those families who are living up in Markham or Brampton or out in Oakville or wherever they are, are coming to the ROM with their children for essentially the same reasons as everybody else. They want to see the dinosaurs, they want to see Egypt, they want to see

minerals. The South Asians want to see Canada's first peoples just like everyone else. And we found out, and I think this was a very happy discovery, that despite all the variation of these communities, the primary structure of what they want to do with their children and everything is the same. So, yes, we have to be on their turf to reach them, we have to communicate to them that we're here and all the values, but the Chinese community doesn't come to the ROM for the Chinese gallery and the South Asian community does not come for the South Asian gallery. They're proud of those galleries, but they come for the whole museum.

Largely what we do with our programming to communities is that we have some groups, like the Friends of South Asia group. There are 600 people in that group at the ROM that do several weekends of programming throughout the year and bring their communities in, and we do that with the Chinese community and others. For Caribana, every year we do the art exhibition in the summer. But I think it's more the communication about the whole museum finding them rather than isolating them through channels. To us, that really works.

Mrs. Laura Albanese: I also had a particular interest in the affordability aspect that you mentioned in your presentation. I represent an area where affordability is an issue, and I wanted to know more about that. I know that you offer one evening free a week. Is there any way that that could be expanded? Are you looking at any other strategy in that regard?

Mr. William Thorsell: We've done a lot of studying. We started off with a study: Can we make the ROM free completely? And we did a survey of museums all over the world, a very thorough survey, of all the ways that museums become free or are free or were free, and we looked at all the economics of doing that at the ROM. We consulted with some people in the business community and others on our boards to say, "How can we do this? How can we move in that direction?" And the answers came back that, of course, the cost of making the ROM free completely is something that we can't bear, and we don't believe that governments are in a position to bear.

So the idea came back to focus our "free" by groups, and expand each group as we move along. We do that in a number of ways, as Sal indicated. We're free to all post-secondary students in Ontario any Tuesday of the year. So all the colleges and university kids can come into the museum at any time on a Tuesday. We're free to everybody on Wednesday afternoons for the last hour and a half or so of the day, and, I must say, this summer, it was amazing to see how people plan their week for that opportunity. There would be a lineup going outside the front of the ROM and around the corner down to Queen's Park a half an hour before we're opening for free, filled largely with families and students—young people. So we started extended that time because it took us a half an hour to get the line into the building, so we had to open up even earlier so that people would actually have their time in there. You can see there's this large demand and interest in going to the museum.

Our access programs: We provide passes through the United Way and rely on them to distribute all those passes every month to various other agencies. We're part of the Canadian citizenship program, where we give family passes for a year to new Canadians in citizenship court; we go and actually hand them out to new Canadians. And our bursary programs for schools are really going to bloom. Just in the last year or so, we've had a couple of major donations, in the hundreds of thousands of dollars, from individuals and corporations to say, "How can we get those inner suburban school kids into the ROM for the organized school visit?" It costs money to come to the ROM, there's a bus often involved, and we charge for the students to come and we have classrooms and labs. So we have bursary programs, some of them based in Guelph, for example—there's one for Guelph school children—and now the governors of the ROM have identified this as a major goal. We're finding a lot of resonance for this when we go and visit corporations and individuals, who are saying, "I don't want bricks and mortar anymore; I want people in that place." So this is a very promising vein for us as we go forward.

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Mr. Salvatore Badali: I might add, we at the board level take access very seriously, and that's why my talk invited us as a society—not just here in Ontario but in Canada—to reflect on whether we should move in the direction of the Smithsonian Institution, the British Museum. President Sarkozy in France talked about doing the same thing there. There's a good public policy issue here—we've done the studies—because we know that when institutions go from charging to open access, the number of visitors increases dramatically. It's good for tourism, it's good for social integration, and it's good for everything.

I remember comments from Robert Bateman, for example. He came to the museum as a young child and we all know his paintings. He said, "I am what I am today because of my time at the ROM. I saw those animals and it inspired me." Margaret Atwood has said similar things, so access is very important to us.

Mrs. Laura Albanese: Madam Chair, I don't know if my time is up or—

The Chair (Mrs. Julia Munro): No, you have a couple of minutes, if you wish to continue.

Mrs. Laura Albanese: At this point, I would ask my colleagues if anyone has any questions.

The Chair (Mrs. Julia Munro): Yes, Ms. Pendergast.

Ms. Leeanna Pendergast: Good morning, and thank you for your time this morning. I just wanted to jump in on a segue to the youth reference and follow up. This is quite an opportunity for me this morning and I thank you for being here.

As an educator for over 21 years and a mom of three boys, I spent a lot of time in the classrooms at the ROM looking at the artifacts and understanding that all children learn differently—and the concrete materials, the way the ROM makes it real for students; it takes it out of the

textbook. I couldn't help but wonder every time I sat in those classrooms with those teachers, is the ROM thinking or looking ahead—which I know you are; you mentioned it in your speech—to build this relationship? It's such an important relationship to education, to look at how you can, in the future, build that so important relationship between the classroom and what the teachers are doing there and the real world that the ROM brings and the antiquity and the future and everything that you have to offer. If you could just speak briefly to that plan of moving forward, that would make me happy as a mom and as a teacher.

Mr. William Thorsell: Thank you. Right now, we have about 150,000 students who come in the organized programs. There aren't the ones that come with their parents, they come on their own with the school groups. This year, for the first time, with the Dead Sea scrolls exhibition coming up, we decided to start a year early and we involved the Ontario Ministry of Education and the Toronto school board to say, "Here's what's coming up at the ROM: the Dead Sea scrolls. It's a very interesting topic." So we worked with them and they developed curriculum in time for this fall for their students to come and exploit that exhibition as part of their curriculum. So instead of us trying to fit the curriculum, as we usually do, we worked with them to have the curriculum fit the exhibition, a special opportunity, in this case.

The second thing, of course, is access and getting more of these bursary programs in. We had a member of our board who had adopted a school up in Jane and Finch as sort of a philanthropic thing, and he said to us, "Can we get that school down for a visit?" We said sure, and he paid for that whole visit. So I went out and met the bus on the street as it arrived, and all of these kids and the teachers poured out of the bus, all excited. I was chatting with the teacher, saying "This is wonderful. These kids have never been down to the ROM." She turned to me and said, "Mr. Thorsell, many of these kids have never been downtown." They were standing at Bloor and Avenue Road, looking around at a city that they didn't know, which came as a tremendous surprise to me. So the bursary programs are absolutely critical and, as I say, we're very optimistic about them because everybody that we go to for sponsorship on these responds really quickly to that one. They want to help us with that.

Third, there's a cheaper way to reach students: through virtual classroom. We're part of what's called the ORION. It's a broadband network that links all the educational institutions in Ontario and beyond, where you've got a two-way classroom onscreen. We've examined one of these examples in Alberta. I'm just back from there. We have tested it out in our own building, and we are now looking at establishing a virtual classroom capacity at the ROM so that we could teach a live two-way to five schools at a time without them having to get on the bus and come from Sudbury or Sault Ste. Marie or somewhere, and we could charge them very little to do that, just to cover those costs. We're not in there to make

money on this. So the virtual classroom project, as we call this—we've got the hardware, we've got the broadband, we've done some testing. We're looking at what other people have done, and we are making some proposals now to potential donors for a permanent, long-term commitment to virtual classrooms, as well as bringing the students in that way.

Mr. Salvatore Badali: Most of us have been to the museum, but the classrooms, if you ever wanted to go, are very fascinating. I remember visiting one time. There was a class in there. They sit at tables of four, and we put real historical objects on those tables. Take medieval Europe: There's an object there. It might be an axe head and it might not be so valuable etc., but you can touch it. The ROM teacher will say, "What do you think that was used for?" Roscoe will say, "Chopping somebody's head off." Susie will say, "No, it was for chopping trees down because they needed to make their own furniture." Then they get a lesson—they're both right—talk about the society. Then they go into the galleries and move from table to table and see what we've got on medieval Europe. And they never forget it. I certainly didn't.

Mr. William Thorsell: In fact, we don't call them "classrooms," because they don't come on a bus to come to the ROM to go into a classroom with a board. We don't use blackboards. We call them "labs." They don't go into a classroom. They go into a lab, and they get to touch things.

The Chair (Mrs. Julia Munro): Thank you. We'll move on. Ms. MacLeod.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Mr. Badali, it's a real pleasure to have you here today and for me to be able to say thanks, because, like Ms. Pendergast, as a mom I've taken my little girl to the ROM every year, and it's a real pleasure to take her there. It's a real source of pride for me, as an MPP, to know that we have an institution in this province dedicated to higher learning but also to protect and create awareness of our natural history. So I want to thank you.

You've done a great job this morning communicating to our committee what your future plans are and what you've done in the past. I know that my colleague from Wellington-Halton Hills, who's also our culture critic, will have more to add.

I will ask some operational questions, if we could start with that right now. I'm just wondering if it's possible for you, as chair, to table with this committee in the next week the expenses of your board of trustees—the 18 trustees: the 15 who are appointed by the Lieutenant Governor in Council, as well as the three trustees.

Mr. Salvatore Badali: We can certainly do that. I hope you won't be shocked at how small they are.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: We're hoping that they're small after the recent couple of weeks we've seen with other government agencies in the province.

Mr. Salvatore Badali: You know what? It's a fair question. We will get you the information. I can say that you will not find any surprises. We're very cognizant of the public trust. Moreover, we're all donors—

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Great. You'll be a shining example, then, to other agencies, I'm sure.

With the growth in your plans, not only into creating new connections with constituencies which you've not normally had at the ROM, and speaking to that \$1-million program that you've announced and bringing kids from underserved areas or underprivileged families to the ROM—I'm wondering if with that came a new technology or a new database system. Could you speak to the expenses not just in opening up the ROM but also to needs assessments that may have occurred, communications programs that may have been delivered as a result?

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Mr. William Thorsell: We haven't done the whole research on the whole demographics of Ontario to say who is not coming because of economic issues. We sort of know who they are and where they are. Probably we should do a more thorough look across the whole system.

When it comes to the schools, we rely on the school board to choose the schools. We don't choose the schools. We'll say to the school board, "We have this amount of bursary funds available for the schools that would allow 35 classes to come during the school year." They will select those classes for us. So they know better than we do.

When it comes to certain communities, we rely on the United Way. We say to the United Way, "Here are 1,000 family passes for free. You're better at finding those people than we are." Or we give them to the Toronto library system. At the libraries in certain parts of time, we have free passes that you pick up at the Toronto library. We delegate those decisions to people who are closer to those communities. But I suspect that we could do more, now that we're focusing so much more on Ontario because of the tourism situation. Now that we're getting beyond the bricks and mortar, we can focus more on identifying and communicating with those demographics.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Two questions come out of your response. The first is, who does that demographic study? Is it done in-house or do you have an outside consultant?

Mr. William Thorsell: We do our own studies, for the most part. However, we do have a consultant who does our surveys. So when we survey, we don't just survey people who come to the ROM. We did a major survey last year of people, as a random sample in Ontario, asking, "Do you go to the ROM? Where does it rank in your thoughts about what you might do?" Are there variations in the groups that are thinking about the ROM? That's where I use some of this data. We broke that down to say, "Let's also ask some particular immigrant communities, or South Asian and Chinese communities, if they're different." So when we do that, we do get a general sense about where people are relative to museum-going and then the ROM and what's stopping them from coming and so forth.

But we need to do more detailed demographic analysis. I think you're right about that.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Who undertook that for you? Which consultancy firm?

Mr. William Thorsell: Strategic Counsel.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Strategic Counsel? Would you be able to table their expenses?

Mr. William Thorsell: Yes, certainly.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Thank you. The other question I had is in terms of inputs. From your output for this \$1-million program that goes to the Toronto library as well as to the United Way, do you know what your inputs are from that and what the percentage might be of the tickets or the free passes that are given out?

Mr. William Thorsell: Yes, because we can track the tickets and the use of those tickets.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Right.

Mr. William Thorsell: So we follow that very closely. We very closely follow postal codes of people so we can tell where they're coming from and so forth.

When it comes to the Canadian citizenship program, there's a relatively low take-up. It might be that 40% of the people who get the pass will use it in the next year.

When it comes to United Way programs, it's much higher, because I think they are reaching people who they feel are likely—

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Likely to attend—

Mr. William Thorsell: —and are frustrated at not being able to come. The virtue of working through United Way agencies and people like that is that they are so close to these communities that they can say, "Those families, if we give them tickets, will use them. They want to come."

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Mr. Thorsell, would you mind giving this committee, when we move into report writing—this sounds like something that we might want to celebrate in this province, that you're opening up education, and perhaps we might be able to cite some statistics. As we move forward with report writing on what the intake is on that output, if you could provide us with statistics, perhaps—

Mr. William Thorsell: Yes, we'll have those.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: —about who you're giving these passes to and how much is coming back, I think that might be quite relevant as we move forward.

One final question for me and then I'll defer to my colleague: I noticed in the background information that was provided to us that there was an audit done in 2008. Did the Minister of Culture initiate that or was that something that the ROM board of directors as well as the CEO undertook?

Mr. William Thorsell: I'm sorry—

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: The Ernst and Young audit.

Mr. Salvatore Badali: Oh, Ernst and Young are our auditors. They do an annual audit on the museum—

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Okay. So it wasn't directed by the—

Mr. Salvatore Badali: No, no. It's just an ordinary financial audit for our statements, which are all public.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: But I guess the minister has, within her mandate, the ability to direct an internal audit, but hasn't?

Mr. Salvatore Badali: I'm not aware. Bill?

Mr. William Thorsell: Yeah, we have.

Mr. Salvatore Badali: Every year, the auditors come and review us and report to the board.

Mr. William Thorsell: They audit our financial statements, and that's part of our annual report.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: I know my colleague has some further questions, but again I just want to say thanks. I'm very proud of that institution, and I think that—

Mr. Salvatore Badali: Come and visit more often.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: I do, I do. Listen, I spend more time in the children's part of the museum than anything else. So maybe I'll do that next summer. Thanks.

The Chair (Mrs. Julia Munro): Mr. Arnott.

Mr. Ted Arnott: Thank you very much for your presentation. I found it very interesting. Like my colleague from Kitchener–Conestoga and my colleague from Nepean–Carleton, I've had the opportunity to take my family to the ROM many, many times since our children were born. We've really enjoyed it. In fact, I was speaking to my 14-year-old son last night, who's now in grade 9, and he told me he's doing a project on the Royal Ontario Museum, at his request. So I was quite impressed with that, and I gave him some information from the binder that had been prepared.

Mr. Salvatore Badali: You did his homework for him.

Mr. Ted Arnott: Although he's in French immersion, so he needs it all translated into French. So I've got some more homework to do. But we do express our appreciation for the outstanding institution that has been created at the ROM and has put us on the map in a way that attracts tourists as well as demonstrates our culture to the whole world.

In this committee, of course, we have a scrutiny function that's very important and we have to ask some tough questions on behalf of the taxpayers with respect to the money that's spent, and so we certainly do appreciate your openness and your commitment to share those answers with us.

I wanted to ask a general question, first of all, about the state of the economy and how it has impacted on the ROM generally. Where have you seen opportunities in the last year that you've been able to exploit, notwithstanding the difficult economy that we've been facing?

Mr. William Thorsell: The effect of—

Mr. Salvatore Badali: The impact of the economy in general on the museum.

Mr. William Thorsell: We read a lot of stuff that's happening in the United States and elsewhere, and there has been quite a bit of talk about what will happen to museums at this time. We also have some information out of the United States on what's happening there.

First of all, the propensity of people to go to museums in darker economic time goes up. It's kind of a counter-intuitive thing. More people go to the movies in bad times, and the propensity to go to museums has gone up, according to the surveys in the United States, and we presented these to our board meeting in June. There's something about museums as being safe havens, places

of beauty, places nearby, the staycation phenomenon, places of trust and continuity where people who are often feeling uncertain about things will seek out the museum to go to as almost a refuge, as well as a high value close to home, if you want to put it that way.

We had one million visitors last year, which is substantially higher than anything we'd had before, about 40% higher than our norm before the project. We were making our business plan for this year and we thought we were going to hold it flat; because the economy is tanking, we were going to cut our sales and do that.

We're running a little ahead of plan right now. We had a very strong summer. I think the reasons for that are complex. The Dead Sea scrolls was a very powerful motivator and so forth, but we're also just finding that the museum seems to have a place in the life of the visitor and the family that ranks a little higher perhaps in tough times.

Where we see the impact is more on philanthropy and fundraising campaigns where all of the good-hearted people who have made such a big difference for all of us in Ontario, not only with the ROM but with all the other major institutions going on at the same time. It's astonishing that when you look at the "big eight" or something, including TIFF, the AGO, the Royal Conservatory of Music and so forth, probably \$1 billion has been raised in the private sector for these eight public institutions in the last seven or eight years.

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It's in the private sector, where we're looking at operational funds, membership drives and capital, that we see the impact, more so than on the attendance side from Ontario.

Unfortunately, the biggest impact for us of all of these things has been tourism. We've made great strides within our own province in reaching into communities and getting people to come. If those missing Americans weren't missing, we'd be way up here somewhere. But we're weathering this rather well.

The other thing that's different with the United States is that although people are starting to go, it's particularly the big museums that are holding their attendance. We used to envy their endowments. Now we don't envy their endowments because they lost—

Mr. Salvatore Badali: Well, we still like them.

Mr. William Thorsell: Well, okay. Thirty per cent on a billion-dollar endowment means that places like the Met and so forth are riding that crest to a degree that—we do have endowments, but we're not as dependent on them and we're able to carry on a little bit more consistently.

Mr. Mark Engstrom: I would just mention that places like the Field Museum of Natural History and so on had huge layoffs of staff because of the reduction in the value of their endowments and the ability to pay salaries. We did not have that impact at the ROM, or we managed to ameliorate it.

Mr. Ted Arnott: Many public institutions like universities are experiencing real challenges with respect to

their pensions for the employees. I notice you have a pension committee on your board. I assume your employees are paying into a defined benefit pension plan. That's the case? What is the state of your pension situation?

Mr. William Thorsell: We had a decline in our portfolio, like everybody else. We have stayed on top of that by increasing the contributions from our operating budget to our pension plan. We're moving steadily to correct that imbalance. I think we're at around 73%, 75% of where we should be. We used to be higher, we used to be lower, and now we're coming back up. We're having pretty good returns this year on our portfolio, with our money management team.

We are making a couple of changes in the benefits side of our pension plan in the area of early retirement. We're bringing the early retirement penalties, if you wish, into conformity with the norm—we used to be much more generous there—just to save a little bit of operating plan money. But there's nothing very substantial that would affect most of our retirees.

We have a plan to work back up and out of that situation and come into balance on that pension, and we're making progress on that.

Mr. Ted Arnott: I understand you to say that you're managing the issue. How long is it going to take to get you back to where you need to be in terms of ensuring that the pension plan is fully funded?

Mr. William Thorsell: It's a combination of three things: It's the markets; it's the interest—the long-term bond rate, if you will, which affects that calculation; and our own contribution rates. I would think that it may be about five years by the time we finally get back up there, depending on where the markets and the interest rates go. They will have a big effect on that. But we're—

Mr. Salvatore Badali: Interest rates, in particular, have a huge effect on defined benefit plans, more so than the market at times, so it's a bit of a guessing game. But I'll tell you, the board's pension committee is on this constantly.

Mr. Ted Arnott: But of course, there are laws and regulations that every pension plan—

Mr. Salvatore Badali: Oh, absolutely, and we have the actuaries in and we file all the reports and everything properly.

Mr. Ted Arnott: I heard this week that the University of Guelph, for example, needs changes to the pension laws by the end of this fiscal year or they're going to be in real trouble.

I'm looking at some of the information that was given to us by our research staff, and I certainly want to thank our legislative research for the fine work they do in this respect. It would appear that you received, in the fiscal year 2007-08, approximately \$31.7 million in operating funding. In the next year, the government grant went down to \$19 million—a huge deviation, year over year. Then in 2009-10, it appears to be going up to \$28 million. Can you explain or account for the huge deviations, year over year, and any challenges that—

Mr. Salvatore Badali: Sure, and I may turn to get some advice from our CFO.

The normal operating grant, prior to the increase that we got a number of months ago, thanks to the government, was about \$18 million a year. We had been running it at that rate for some time—it had been flatlined—so with inflation, of course, it was declining in real terms. We were running a deficit, and there was a deficit-reduction grant given to us, so I believe that, plus the normal \$18 million, accounts for the increase. And going forward—Bill, correct me—it's about \$27 million? So does that answer the question? Because we can—

Mr. Ted Arnott: Well, I appreciate the information. It still appears that you would have had a deficit in 2008-09, based on the information that's in front of me, of approximately \$5 million. Is that correct?

Interjection.

Mr. Salvatore Badali: Yes, that's right.

Mr. Ted Arnott: Okay. So next year you would hope to have a balanced budget, I gather? That would be the—

Mr. Salvatore Badali: Oh, yes. Absolutely.

The Chair (Mrs. Julia Munro): Thank you. We'll move on. Mr. Tabuns?

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Thank you, Madam Chair. Mr. Badali, gentlemen, thank you for being here this morning. Thank you for your presentation.

My colleagues have asked about attendance and your strategies there, and I won't belabour that point.

Energy costs: You're an agency of the province of Ontario, and the province has declared that it will take on climate change and do its bit. Can you tell me what the ROM is doing to reduce its energy consumption?

Mr. William Thorsell: We have an energy audit that we're doing and always do at the ROM. We have a big new building, of course, so there are energy implications to that. We've just done an energy audit in the last year. If you put everything on a computer, you can turn everybody's lights off, no matter whether they sit in their office or not, as we discovered.

We're very cognizant. It's a major cost to us. We built a large green roof, almost 10,000 square feet, on the west wing, partly to demonstrate what you can do with a green roof, but also to test to see whether—it's on the old wing—that will actually insulate us to some degree there. We're going to try to see whether we can measure that.

But the new building is designed, of course, for energy efficiency. It's a very well-insulated building. In the renovations of the old buildings, we're just finishing the renovation of the last wing of the heritage buildings. As we go into these buildings, we realize a number of things: The walls are not insulated. So for this room that we're just finishing this week, really, we had to go in and insulate the entire wing. We took out all the old windows that have been there since 1931 and put all new windows in that are energy-efficient. We've put extra storm windows inside those new windows, and then we put in a different heating system that's more efficient in those spaces.

So the renovation of the heritage wings has probably been the largest single contributor to the increased energy efficiency of the ROM. We have the usual programs of heating, lighting and cooling, but the renovation project has substantially increased the energy efficiency of the older buildings, because every one of those wings has had all new windows, all new storm windows, all new insulation, and in many cases, different heating systems that are much more efficient than we had before.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: So what were your targets for reducing energy consumption, and have they been met?

Mr. William Thorsell: You know, that's a good question. I don't think we've set a target, so it's a good thing we should do. I think we have reduced energy consumption, but—and maybe Glenn knows this better than I—whether we've set an actual target to reduce it further, I doubt. So that's something we should probably put in our business plan.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Yes, I think that would be very useful.

How do your energy costs compare with other museums in Canada or in Ontario?

Mr. William Thorsell: I don't think that we've looked at either, so that's probably a good thing to do.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: And have you considered using renewable energy technologies like solar hot water or solar PV for your building?

Mr. William Thorsell: We looked at, when we were building the crystal, the issues of solar and so forth, but the capital costs and rate of return on those investments seemed to be prohibitive in terms of what we could do with our operating budget. We haven't returned to an examination of solar, but we did look at it at the time.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Okay. I'd suggest that you take another look. With the province's feed-in tariff program, you may be able to get a return on solar power generation. That would be useful. Solar hot water is cost-competitive with natural gas. There are companies that will lease solar thermal to you now.

Mr. William Thorsell: Good suggestion.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Anyway, it would be useful for you to be fairly aggressive on it, because if energy's a big part of your operating costs, you can do something about that.

The crystal itself—have you done a replacement reserve analysis over the next 20 to 30 years for the major components of the crystal? Are you setting aside funds to deal with capital costs for the crystal and other parts of the museum in the years to come?

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Mr. William Thorsell: The way we deal with capital maintenance issues is on an annual basis with the ministry. We submit a capital request separate from the operating budget every year for capital maintenance or improvements, whether it's the heritage buildings or new buildings, anything that we're doing. So we're not like a condominium corporation that will set aside a rainy day fund. We go every year and make a case. There is a budget for capital care every year, and we make our case

along with everyone else to say, "These are our priorities this year for capital care."

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Do you have an analysis of what you see as your capital needs over the next decade to two decades?

Mr. William Thorsell: Yes. We're doing a series of analyses. One is collections and research. One of the most important things behind the scenes of course is our responsibility to conserve and protect six million specimens and objects. There's a great variety of environmental requirements there, everything from storing silver to bronze to lacquers to big freezer rooms for animals' coats and birds and so forth. So we have spent millions of dollars in the last seven or eight years on enhancing the quality of our storage and collections care. We purchased a property in Oakville and built a specialized offsite storage facility, first of all for our fish collection, because they're all stored in alcohol bottles, and as a fire requirement we needed to get them out of that building in downtown Toronto. So we now have plans to expand that building.

Mark perhaps can speak to the analysis he's doing with our head of conservation, a whole analysis of our future needs, largely for collections care, and of course there are many more specimens and objects behind the scenes than there are in front of the scenes. So that rather invisible part is sort of our global responsibility. We have 52,000 items in our costume and textiles vault, for example, that go back thousands of years. The preservation of things like textiles is a large challenge. Many of these specimens in, say, fishes, birds etc. are very important to us.

So we do have a long-term plan. We're just updating it and we are making some applications now to expand Oakville. We have upgraded our collection spaces within the Toronto building very substantially in the last seven or eight years, even as we've been building the front-of-house space.

Do you have anything to add to that?

Mr. Mark Engstrom: I would just say that we are doing an overall assessment of all the collections. Certainly the collections and the research that's done on the collections are at the core of what the museum does, and it's our responsibility to preserve all those collections for the people of Ontario. So we're doing an overall, very detailed assessment of all of our spaces, the space that's available for the collections, the quality of the storage equipment and so on that's available for the collections, where we rank relative to other institutions in terms of the state of the care and where we need to upgrade and where we need to invest to improve the collection areas, and where we meet industry standards. That assessment actually will be done in a month.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Have you had difficulty in the past with losing parts of your collection? Have there been situations in which the conditions in which they were stored didn't allow them to be preserved? I'll just say I've had, in conversation with people who have worked with the Ontario archives, complaints about papers and

other objects not being properly protected, thus losing parts of the archives. Have you had that kind of problem?

Mr. Mark Engstrom: Only in very minor cases. We've lost some specimens of minerals, for example, where mineral specimens were housed together with other minerals that were reactive. So sulphides give off sulphur gas and it may deteriorate lead specimens, that sort of thing. But that's been very minor. We are, though, looking at long-term issues—paper products is one, photographs is another one, which have special requirements for, in this case, wetter storage than others. Some collections require very dry storage, like silver. We have those actually in a room with 10% humidity. So we are not at the stage of having lost major collections because of improper care, but we do think it's a very opportune time to have that assessment done to make sure it doesn't occur in the future.

One of our biggest collections and an interesting one that you may not think about is that we have a very large collection of frozen tissues that are used for DNA analysis. As a matter of fact, I think we rank probably second in North America for the size of that tissue collection. It's a major source of information for huge projects like the Barcode of Life, which is sponsored by NSERC and international funding agencies, and for the Tree of Life project, which is a huge NSF-funded project in the United States. We have over 200,000 tissue samples. We keep them in ultra-cold freezers, but we're looking at converting that to a liquid nitrogen facility because it's an invaluable resource that you can never replace.

So we have a wide variety of kinds of collections, and no, we have not been in the position where we've lost any major segment of a collection because of the quality of collection storage.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Thank you. The James Ossuary: What happened? Why was that object designated or treated as a real artifact when in fact it turned out not to be? What was the story?

Mr. William Thorsell: The James Ossuary is an ongoing story; it's a fascinating story. It came to our attention I guess it was in January 2002, when *Archaeology* magazine had the James Ossuary on its cover and told the story of its accidental discovery in a private collector's apartment in Jerusalem by a leading French authority in this field, a French academic who was going through this man's collection, found this ossuary, read the inscription, and then examined the ossuary and said, "This is real." Then there were several other archaeologists who looked at it and said, "Yes, there's no sign that this is not real." But there was some debate about it.

It so happened that coming up that fall, there were three large conventions going on in Toronto at the same time on religion and archaeology, overlapping conventions. All of the world's people interested in archaeology and religion were going to be in Toronto overlapping in October/November.

We heard from the editor of *Archaeology* magazine, who was convinced of the authenticity but acknowledged

there was doubt about this, and who said, "What about bringing it to Toronto in the context of that convention and putting it out there for debate and analysis, because it's such a provocative thought, that 'James, son of Joseph, brother of Jesus.'" From what we know from a number of experts, it's legitimate, but we're not sure, so let's put it up for debate and let's have a debate about it."

So it was in that spirit that we went to our curators. They looked at it and said, "This is a credible claim of authenticity" for the James Ossuary. "Let's bring it here and then we'll have a number of events." We had a public forum during the display of the ossuary of people who were at these conferences, including the collector, but other people who were doubting, other people in the theatre who were doubting and saying, "Is this authentic?"

It got even more exciting because, of course, the ossuary arrived by cargo packed by the owner, not by a museum, in bubble wrap in a cardboard box, so when we opened it downstairs, it was broken into a couple of pieces. When they came to me that morning and said, "It's lying in a couple of pieces downstairs," my first answer was, "That's newsy. That's going to be news."

We went down and looked at it. What we did, with their permission, was put it back together. We had one of our conservators, who is very good in the area of pottery, ceramics, this kind of thing, actually put it back together under Mark's supervision and with their permission. In the course of doing that very intimate work, she'd looked at it. We discovered a number of carvings that weren't otherwise visible, and then we went into the actual language: "James, son of Joseph, brother of Jesus." We went in with microscopes. There was no evidence of tampering inside. There's a patina on these boxes, and the box itself had been cleaned, but getting down into the writing is harder. You can go in with your microscopes. There was no evidence that part was added later or that the whole thing was added later. It seemed to be contemporaneous with the box. So our own staff from the conservators through to the curators were, and I think still are, of the belief that this is an authentic artifact.

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Now, we went through the display; we went through the forum where you had people saying, "Well, the writing on this side is a little bit different style than the writing on that side. It looks like it was written by somebody else"—or not. All the academics debated that, and it was in the context of exploration that we brought this forward and the context precisely of those conventions of having everybody look at this and try to determine whether this was so.

Then, according to our contract, we sent it back to Israel, to the owner, who was subsequently arrested. The ossuary was taken from him by the Israel Antiquities Authority. They examined it, and after a number of months, they issued an opinion that this had been forged using new techniques that no one had ever heard of before to determine these things. So we looked at that and said, "Well, what is that technique? It's not a tech-

nical technique that we've ever heard of, and no one else has ever used." So our staff remains doubtful of their conclusion, because it wasn't based on any known way of evaluating these things.

Then Mr. Golan was indicted, not only for this but for other so-called fakes, and the trial has been going on for several years. We have made a deposition from our staff about their views of this, and just before Christmas, the judge in the case said to the prosecution, "Unless you've got more, I'm dismissing this case, because so far you haven't given me anything to justify the continuing prosecution."

I've lost track of exactly whether that's come back to court right now. It was an interesting and complex case, but it was done in the context of exploration of a credible claim. This is where I think the museum should do more of that. The museum should be questioning, posing questions, offering explorations as long as it's a credible claim—it wasn't a nutcase claim. So we'll see where it lands at the end of the day.

Mr. Mark Engstrom: I would add one thing, and that's that it has been examined recently by a team in Germany, and they've declared that it's authentic. So the debate is going on. Certainly our curators do remain convinced and our conservators remained convinced that at least there is no substantive reason to doubt its authenticity.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Thank you. I don't have any further questions at this point.

The Chair (Mrs. Julia Munro): Okay, thank you very much. Yes, Mr. Rinaldi.

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: Just a clarification: I'm delighted at the programs you have to distribute some tickets through the United Way. I think that the United Way, at least at my end of the world, does a fantastic job of support. You said 1,000 tickets. Is that split among all United Ways or how is that done? I'm just curious.

Mr. Salvatore Badali: The question is, how many tickets go to the United Way? We said 1,000, and how do they distribute them?

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: Or to what United Ways?

Mr. Salvatore Badali: Or to what United Way agencies? Do we know which? We give to the central one.

Mr. William Thorsell: We give the United Way 500 passes a month.

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: The United Way of Toronto or United Ways, period?

Mr. William Thorsell: I'm sorry I can't hear you.

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: United Way of Toronto or United Ways period?

Mr. William Thorsell: Yes, United Way of Toronto.

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: So what about the other United Ways?

Mr. William Thorsell: Right now, it's focused on the United Way of Toronto.

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: I'm disappointed. We have a major provincial attraction which we're all proud of, and Toronto is a great contributor, I'm not trying to take

anything away, but I know that—and I guess I'm being parochial—some folks from my part of the province contribute to this greatly. I would strongly encourage that maybe kids, families or interest groups from our communities would enjoy it, maybe not in vast numbers, but when I hear 500 a month for Toronto, which I'm sure are well taken up and used well, I would encourage you to maybe expand that or refigure that number.

Mr. Salvatore Badali: Sir, your question is a good question, and when this proposal was brought to the board, I believe the board did that—because I don't remember asking—"What is the goal?" And the answer was, "We're starting here because we want to see how it works." So I don't think the museum management has definitively said, "We will not do anything more in the future etc.," but this is new for us. We'd never done it. I give full credit to the staff for bringing it forward and going forward. We'll be examining that.

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: Oh, it's a great program. Thank you.

The Chair (Mrs. Julia Munro): Mr. Johnson?

Mr. Rick Johnson: You talk about the outreach that you're doing, the digital classrooms and stuff. I was on school boards for about 12 years, so I have a fair knowledge of the programs that have gone on, and I know that they're very much appreciated in schools across Ontario.

The school board that I represented was Haliburton, Kawartha Lakes, that area. I know for a school to come for a trip, it either has to be an overnighter or they get to spend an hour by the time they drive in from Haliburton because it's a three-hour drive down.

Many years ago, when I was growing up there was the centennial year. We had the centennial train which went across Canada and stopped. It was like a museum of Canada, and I still remember that vividly. Do you have something like that that goes out so that more students and people in the other areas of Ontario who don't get here—you talked earlier about the Jane and Finch area coming down and the impact it has. I know that for a lot of young people in this province and adults—and I recall something about a tractor-trailer years ago. Anyway, if you could talk a bit about that.

Mr. William Thorsell: We do have an outreach program that goes to schools, shopping centres and libraries around the province. School kits—they're great big crates that are like displays that can travel on a truck, you can take the kit apart and you can put it right in a school or you can put it in a shopping centre. We have something called the Starlab which goes out, which is an inflatable sort of Starlab that people go into.

Last year, by our count, we had about 490,000 people in Ontario who visited these outreach programs and these big crate kits. We have one, say, for example, on First Nations beadwork that goes on. It's a whole very well done exhibit on beadwork of the First Nations and it travels around Ontario. We have a Starlab, and we have others on Egypt and so forth. So this is the three-dimensional way of bringing the museum closer to classrooms and to communities, largely through shopping centres.

I think when we get our virtual classroom capacity up—and the schools have to be able to have that too, but many of them have it now or are getting it—what we'd like to do, if we're doing a piece on palaeontology, for example, where we can do the curator in the vaults, not just in the gallery but down in the vaults—and we've tested this out where he's got three kinds of skulls and shows you the different teeth and all this—we could then actually supply travelling materials so that the people in the classroom would have the materials that they're seeing from the vault in their classroom while we're doing the virtual classroom. So we can have both real and not real.

The fact is that the museum's competitive advantage, if you wish, is that it has stuff as well as ideas, so if we can get the collections and specimens into more hands outside of the museum itself as well as talk to them about it, that's the golden mean, I think.

So in our digital program within Ontario, we're going to try to match up, in the schools, travelling exhibitions that line up with their education programs so that if you're in your school and you happen to be doing Egypt, you can actually have some artifacts in the classroom there in Peterborough at the same time that you're listening to somebody in Toronto talk about them and show you things from the museum itself. I think it's a huge opportunity for us to extend the museum in a real way outside of Toronto.

Mr. Rick Johnson: That's great. In my past career, I had the fortune of travelling all over Canada and spending time in areas. I managed to get into most of the big museums in this country and several in the States, and the ROM is just a jewel. I visited it in the 1970s, the 1980s, the 1990s and just recently, and you're to be commended for what we have and how well it's preserved, which leads me to my final—this will be my silly question of the day. Somebody asked me this: "If there was ever a fire in the building and you could only grab one thing to take out—

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Mr. William Thorsell: I'm sorry, what was the question?

Mr. Salvatore Badali: If there's a fire in the building and there's only one thing we can take out, what do we take?

Mr. William Thorsell: I'd take something flammable first, because not everything is flammable, so I guess, something that you could actually get out quickly, right?

Mr. Rick Johnson: Yes, because it is such a valuable collection, and so much of the history of this province and this country is in there. I know it's well—

Mr. William Thorsell: Maybe I'd take out "The Death of Wolfe," just because it's a Canadian icon and there are only four of them in the world—a painting of the death of Wolfe—or something of that nature, because I could get it fast enough and get it out the front door fast enough, I think.

Mr. Rick Johnson: Okay. Thank you.

Mr. Mark Engstrom: I would take a different specimen. I work on mammals, so I would take a specimen of a deer mouse, the Maya deer mouse, from Guatemala, the only one in the world. It's the specimen from which the species was named, and it resides in the vault. So I'd be running down to grab a rat.

Mr. Salvatore Badali: But we hope we never have to do this. I mean, there are sprinkler systems, there is live security 24 hours a day, and plans with Toronto Fire. We do not want to have a problem.

Mr. Rick Johnson: I appreciate that. Like I said, it was my silly question of the day.

Mrs. Laura Albanese: Madam Chair, I don't know if I have time for one more question on our behalf.

The Chair (Mrs. Julia Munro): Oh, yes, certainly, Ms. Albanese.

Mrs. Laura Albanese: I, too, like many Canadians, have visited the ROM many times—when I first arrived, and then as a parent, and as a television reporter. One of the most interesting experiences was also going to the planetarium, which was then sold, I believe, to the University of Toronto. I'm wondering what the terms are about the planetarium, and why was the sale necessary?

Mr. William Thorsell: First of all, the planetarium opened in 1968, the McLaughlin Planetarium. It was closed in 1995, after the first round of cuts to the ROM's budget in the mid-1990s—1993, 1994 and 1995. It was closed for a couple of reasons, I think—I wasn't there, but I've read the history.

First of all, the attendance at the planetarium was falling off very substantially. The world had moved on beyond the technical thrills of the 1968 planetarium. We had had 2001 and Star Wars and all sorts of things that could communicate about space. The place of the planetarium in the lives of students, largely, was no longer there and required a substantial operating subsidy from the ROM to keep the doors open.

So when they were faced with their first round of budget cuts, they did what I think probably good management ultimately has to do and said, "What's the core mission? If we have to cut quite a bit, do we cut everything and just go down like this, or do we focus on the core mission?" They made, I think, a reasonable judgment at that time that the core mission was the museum, and they closed the planetarium. It was leased out for a number of years after that to other people and not used by the ROM, except for storage and leasing out.

When we started the Renaissance ROM project, we looked at that asset, which is a piece or property that's very valuable and useful to us in the future. We heard from a lot of people who said, "Reopen the planetarium." But actually, if you looked at that, you would realize that there's no way to sustain a building of that age and that technology in a marketplace where it would pay for itself, and no one was likely to give us the money to subsidize it.

We actually took a position, and we do have a position on this that we have communicated, that there is certainly room in Toronto for what we call a centre for cosmology,

based on the academic work being done in Waterloo at the Perimeter Institute and at the University of Toronto. There is certainly a possibility in Toronto for a centre for cosmology, using current technologies and display communication, that could capture what is happening with particle physics, cosmology and all the things that are happening with the Hubble and so forth that are way beyond what that planetarium could have done.

Nevertheless, we looked at that property and said, "We would like to redevelop that site to achieve a couple of things: one, to add space to the ROM for the future, so that in the future we can have additional space for education, for offices, for whatever the expansion needs of the museum might be; and second of all, to redevelop it in a way that leaves us with a contribution for the remaking of the older buildings and the new.

So our business plan foresaw what we called a joint development of the site. At the time, we thought it would be the University of Toronto, ROM and a private sector condominium, so we'd have a tripartite redevelopment, and then we would get our space, we would get cash for Renaissance ROM, and the university would use it for their own expansion. That was our first effort to redevelop, which didn't get very far because there was a huge amount of opposition to any kind of private sector condominium participation there, no matter the height, no matter the nature—just the idea that there shouldn't be any private sector participation in that property.

So we went back to the well and eventually, being left with our partner, the University of Toronto, which has major needs for expansion there for music, for law, and maybe for other purposes, we decided that the clean way to do this—because, in a sense, I suppose they had the money and we didn't—was to sell them the site for a very good return for the ROM, more than we anticipated getting from the actual condominium sale, in some ways, in terms of cash, and then have the ROM have the right to come back in the site up to 25,000 square feet in any development that they did there. So we've retained our options for expansion and our rights to expansion on the site in the future, but through a long-term lease arrangement. So we can build out the museum that will fit in the back of our building, but we've not given them the rights, over time, to redevelop the whole precinct as a unit with our interests involved.

We were able to make a deal with them where they paid \$22 million in cash to us. We closed last March. We used that, plus additional pledge payments, to reduce our capital debt by about \$29 million last year alone. We are going to be in there for the next three years at no rent or cost to ourselves, just the status quo—at least three to five years. We will be consulted on any plans the university has to develop the site. We have the right to work with them on design for ROM space that will be contiguous and fit into our building in the future.

It turned out to be another way to skin the cat, and I think it's turned out to be a very good outcome for both the university and the ROM, and I think, in the long run, for the city.

Mrs. Laura Albanese: Thank you for that answer and for all your explanations. It's been most interesting.

The Chair (Mrs. Julia Munro): Thank you. Any further questions here? Yes, Ms. MacLeod.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Thank you, Madam Chair. I'll be splitting my time with my colleague, the culture critic for the opposition.

I have a quick question for you with respect to your future financial planning. This time next year, the HST will be implemented. We've been contacted by several cultural groups across the province indicating that this is going to be devastating to their ticket prices. I'm also wondering about your input costs. Have you, at this point in time, done any planning on the financial impact on the ROM with respect to the HST?

Mr. Salvatore Badali: Thank you for the question. We are looking at that, and Bill and Glenn can correct me. Next year, assuming the HST is implemented on July 1 or whatever, our ticket prices will probably go up. In terms of inputs, because we get input tax credits back, it won't have an impact on our purchases, really. It's more on the ticket price.

We've looked at it. We don't think that there will be a dramatic change in our visitor attendance, for example. You know, the jury's still out; we're not sure. But we think we offer very good value for our visitors. We do a lot of exit surveys and independent work, and people say, "Hey, I get good value for my money here." Do any of us want to pay more? Of course, none of us wants to pay more for anything, but it's government policy. We're going to do our best to make sure that there's continuing access to the institution.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: We talked earlier about Strategic Counsel doing a demographic study for you. We looked in the briefing background material. We've noticed that North Star has done some work for you. Consultancy fees will rise by 8%. How can you control and curb those costs when those fees are going to be 8% higher?

I understand that you're talking about tax credits, but you'll also understand and appreciate that you're not getting a 100% tax credit. That should have about a 1.16 inflationary increase in your budgets, from what we're seeing from different organizations who have done these studies.

I'm just wondering if you've accounted for the—what is your tax credit? Is it 78%?

Mr. Bill Graesser: We have 100%

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Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Okay, so the ROM gets 100%. But with all of the increased costs, with your consultancy fees, when they charge you 8% more, if it's built into the cost, for example, you won't be able to recover that. Is it just on utilities?

Mr. Bill Graesser: I believe they would have to—

The Chair (Mrs. Julia Munro): Excuse me, could I ask you to come forward so that your comments are in Hansard? I'm sorry.

Mr. Bill Graesser: I believe the consultant would have to charge 8% separately as part of the GST plus

PST, and we would get 100% back. For GST purposes, we're treated as a commercial organization. Many not-for-profit organizations only receive 50% input tax credit. We receive 100%. So right now, we do not see any major impact on our costs. Where we see it is the admission prices that we have to pass on to our visitors.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: What's your admission price for a family of four?

Mr. Bill Graesser: Two adults would be \$44, plus \$30 for two children, so \$74. That includes—

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: It's quite expensive for a middle-income family, isn't it? So you increase the price by 8%?

Mr. Salvatore Badali: There's no question. But, for example, if I were to go with my family—I have a more expensive membership. What's our membership price, Bill?

Mr. Bill Graesser: It's \$130.

Mr. Salvatore Badali: It's \$130 for a membership, for a family of four to come as many times in the year as they want. So we try to be very conscious of the costs and the access. Believe me, we in the board challenge our management: How do our costs compare to everything else? We don't want to be an outlier. We're not there to make money. We're there to ensure that people—

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: But you certainly don't want to lose it, especially with unstable government funding, when we've seen it decline from \$31 million to \$19 million, then it's up to \$28 million. You certainly don't want to lose any of the funding from that ticket price.

The question I'm asking is, if you're looking at \$74 for a typical family of four, two parents and two children—let's say they're coming in from Barrie. It's \$74 plus the gas that they're going to have pay HST on, plus the Tim Hortons coffee on the way down from Barrie. I guess you get to a point, are parents going to reconsider going to the ROM?

With your \$1-million program where you go out to the schools, to the United Way and to the libraries, locally—is that going to have an impact on that very valuable program? Are you going to now have to move the threshold into what is unaffordable? And what kind of impact is that going to have on the ROM's operations after July 1, 2010?

Mr. Salvatore Badali: We don't have a crystal ball; none of us does. We think that as long as we provide really compelling value for money, people will continue to go. Will we see a drop in attendance? We hope not. We're not forecasting a major drop in attendance.

With respect to the government grants, we've been blessed this year with that increase. That's an increase to the base. I'll tell you, we are very grateful for that because it just provides us with some planning stability in the market.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: So you're expecting that this is going to be stable funding here on in?

Mr. Salvatore Badali: We do.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Will you drop your ticket price as a result of that, so that the 8% won't be impacted?

Mr. Salvatore Badali: Our management, at our next board meeting, will talk to us about that, but right now I'm not anticipating that we're going to drop our ticket price by 8%. Our funds from the government are not going up that we know of.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Before I give the floor to my colleague the culture critic, my final question is, is it possible for you to table an impact analysis on the HST with this committee for the purpose of report writing?

Mr. William Thorsell: To do what?

Mr. Salvatore Badali: Can we table an impact analysis on the HST?

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: On the ticket prices and what it might be on that \$1-million program.

Mr. William Thorsell: Yes, we will do that for our board. We haven't made our recommendation to the board yet on what to do with ticket prices next year, but when we do, we will do an estimate, some kind of judgment, on what effect that would have on attendance, if any. We do it in the context, too, of the family membership costs or individual membership costs. So where the price to come for one time—say, \$74 for four people—is equivalent—we walk the lines with our staff and say, "Why are you spending \$74 when you could spend \$139 to come all year round for—"

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: That's fair, but I think, to Ms. Pendergast's point, that if you're coming from Kitchener, or in my case, if you're coming from Ottawa or anywhere else in the province, people are penny-pinching in these tough economic times. Hey, you know, if I can spend \$74 rather than \$139, I'm gonna do it.

Mr. William Thorsell: Maybe; some do.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Because that's how we balance our budgets in the province. I would urge you to do an impact analysis. I'd also urge you to share it with this committee as we proceed in report writing. In order to help you achieve the sustainable funding that the ROM needs, it's best for us to make those recommendations to the minister.

Mr. William Thorsell: Yes, can do.

Mr. Salvatore Badali: Sure, we can do that.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Okay, thank you.

The Chair (Mrs. Julia Munro): Mr. Arnott.

Mr. Ted Arnott: I would like to now explore with you some questions I have with respect to your memorandum of understanding, upon which you operate your affairs vis-à-vis the government. It appears to me, from what I understand, that that memorandum of understanding that you've operated under since 2005 is about to expire in 2010. Is that correct, that it's a five-year memorandum of understanding?

Mr. William Thorsell: I believe that's so.

Mr. Salvatore Badali: Yes. Glenn, our memorandum of understanding, is it a five-year term normally?

Mr. Glenn Dobbin: I'll have to check.

Mr. Salvatore Badali: We'll have to check.

Mr. Glenn Dobbin: It's certainly due for renewal whenever there's a change in—

Mr. Ted Arnott: What consultation took place between the ROM and the government prior to the establishment of the first memorandum of understanding upon which you currently operate?

Mr. William Thorsell: We went back and forth with the ministry several times on the language in the MOU.

Mr. Ted Arnott: How do you feel that it has worked over the last four, almost five years?

Mr. William Thorsell: I think it has provoked more organized communication back and forth between us. We do make a practice of going with our chair to meet with the ministry, to update them, to inform them of what we're doing. They have installed new systems of working with the development of the business plan for all their agencies. In the last couple of years, we now consult with the ministry far earlier in the stage of developing our business plan, rather than just sort of giving it to them at a certain date. So there's a lot more consultation back and forth before we finally take the final plan to the board with the ministry. I think the communication both ways has strengthened. They have a lot more time to have input into the development of our business plan than they used to. I think it has been a very healthy relationship in that regard.

Mr. Ted Arnott: Do you feel that it has constrained you in any way, that it has made it more difficult for you to do your core business or do your job or—

Mr. William Thorsell: No. We have had a lot of trust, I guess is how I'd put it, from the ministry over the last number of years. At the same time as we went through all this construction, however, there were going to be new costs. We were running some operating deficits during construction. We never closed during construction. We were only half open, so our incomes went down. It has been a very healthy relationship with the ministry.

Mr. Salvatore Badali: Right. We truly try to operate formally and informally with the ministry on the basis of "no surprises." Staff have a very good working relationship with them. I know our CEO and I will sit down periodically with our minister, to bring the minister up to speed as to what's going on. Again, it's really "no surprises." We have an excellent working relationship at the staff level and at the ministerial level with the Ministry of Culture. We're very lucky that way.

Mr. Ted Arnott: My colleague from Nepean-Carleton earlier made reference to, and asked a question about, the audit requirement. I see, as point number 11 in the memorandum of understanding, there is a requirement for an annual audit of your financial affairs. But also it's my understanding that there is an opportunity for the minister or the Management Board of Cabinet to initiate a thorough review or program evaluation. But I gather that has not been done in the four and a half—or four years, I guess, almost five years of this current—

Mr. Salvatore Badali: No, I don't believe so.

Mr. Ted Arnott: Yet it's part of the memorandum of understanding, so the minister has the power to do this—

Mr. Salvatore Badali: Has the power to, yes.

Mr. Ted Arnott: —but has chosen not to. Do you find that somewhat puzzling?

Mr. Salvatore Badali: No. Our financial audit is a pretty thorough audit. The audit committee of the board sits down with the auditors in private—no management present—and we have, "Okay, you've given us a clean opinion on our financial statements. Now, is there something that you, the auditors, would like to tell us, anything about anything?" Every year, it's as clean as a whistle, which is a testament to the management of the institution.

We, in the board, do our due diligence, I believe. We probe hard, and the answers have always been very positive. Those of us who are on the board and have been volunteers there for many, many years tend to know the place pretty well. The walls talk. When I go in, I know a lot of the guards. I know what's going on. The receptionist guard at the staff entrance will say, "We've got these groups coming in tonight." We have a pretty good idea, but to the extent that if the ministry ever wanted to do a special audit on us, we have nothing to hide. We welcome everything. If anyone has suggestions for us that are good suggestions, we'll embrace them.

Mr. Ted Arnott: Okay. Thank you very much.

The Chair (Mrs. Julia Munro): Mr. Tabuns?

Mr. Peter Tabuns: I have no further questions.

The Chair (Mrs. Julia Munro): I think that concludes the questions from the members of the committee. We did everybody correctly here.

I want to take this opportunity to thank you very much for coming, and since it has been an opportunity for individual members to talk about their personal relationships with the ROM, I felt that it was an opportunity for me. I did a little work. I've been a member since 1979, so I want to thank you on behalf of not only myself, but certainly my family. We would fit that demographic of why people come to the ROM, and I want to thank you very much.

Mr. Salvatore Badali: Thank you, and we really appreciate the opportunity to be here to explain what goes on at the museum. If any of you want to come by, the chair's tour is a very special tour. You're more than welcome. We're very proud of the institution. Thank you for your support. Any recommendations, anything that we can do to improve, that's our mission and we'd love to hear from you. Thank you.

The Chair (Mrs. Julia Munro): Thank you very much. The committee stands recessed until 1 p.m.

The committee recessed from 1111 to 1301.

EARTH RANGERS FOUNDATION

SCHAD FOUNDATION

The Chair (Mrs. Julia Munro): Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen, and welcome to the Standing Committee on Government Agencies. We're going to continue our session on the Royal Ontario Museum with our stakeholders presentations this afternoon.

To begin, I'd like to invite Peter Kendall to come forward as the executive director of the Earth Rangers Foundation.

Interjection.

The Chair (Mrs. Julia Munro): Yes, choose where you'd like to sit. The microphone will be on automatically. Welcome to the committee. As you know, we have 30 minutes in which to discuss this agency. You have up to 30 minutes and whatever time is left over will be divided amongst the caucuses. Please begin.

Mr. Peter Kendall: Thank you. My name is Peter Kendall, and I'm the executive director of Earth Rangers and also of the Schad Foundation, and representing both organizations.

Just a little bit of background on Earth Rangers: We operate education programs in schools and at community venues across Ontario. The programs use live animals and stories of what's happening to these animals' habitats to communicate to the kids the importance of biodiversity and inspire them to adopt more sustainable practices. Our reach has been doubling every year, and this year, with the help of the ROM, we're going to reach approximately 350,000 children and their families.

The partnership with the ROM has been a fantastic one for Earth Rangers, and a natural fit. In the Schad Gallery of Biodiversity at the ROM, we combine the great messaging of the gallery and the rich collections and specimens with our live shows in the Earth Rangers Studio within the gallery, and we find it's a very effective way to communicate our core message.

Since the gallery opened up in May, we've seen near-capacity crowds through the studio and through the gallery itself. We really couldn't be more excited about our partnership with the ROM. As I mentioned earlier, it's going to help us extend our reach, through the shows themselves, to an additional 200,000 kids and their families a year and to the nearly one million visitors who are visiting the ROM each year as well.

The team at the ROM has been fabulous to work with as an external stakeholder. Really, when we first envisioned this gallery and started talking to them, I think that they'd said it would take about three years to build. We pushed that forward and asked if they could be done in about half that time, and not only were they able to do that but were able to produce what was really a world-class product. That's my opening statement.

The Chair (Mrs. Julia Munro): Thank you very much. Mr. Tabuns, we'll start with you.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Peter, thanks for the presentation. Where do you see this partnership with the ROM going in the next number of years?

Mr. Peter Kendall: This year we're adding a new program starting in October where we're actually doing our shows to school groups. It's a longer show than we're offering right now, but to the school groups visiting the ROM, so that will help us to extend the shows as well. We're also adding this year a larger community show, so this is a half-hour show in their large, 300-seat theatre. There has also been some talk at the ROM about creating

a new centre for biodiversity as well. If that moves forward, we'd like to see how Earth Rangers can fit within that.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Can you tell us how this whole program is promoted in the schools and how effective you think the program has been—the outreach program; I don't mean the program you're running.

Mr. Peter Kendall: The outreach program in general?

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Yes.

Mr. Peter Kendall: We measure effectiveness in a number of ways. First, we do a lot of exit interviews with the kids after the shows in the schools, and certainly we're finding that they are getting our core message. We used to run action programming in the schools as well, so composting, recycling and energy reduction programs. We found that about 10% of the schools that we presented to would get involved in those types of programs. In October of this year we're launching a new program in partnership with the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources called Bring Back the Wild, where we're encouraging kids to raise funds to help us to plant trees in Ontario parks and help to create habitat for animals that way. With that program, we'll start measuring uptake from the number of kids we present to with the number of kids that get involved in that program as well.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: In your program, you're focusing on biodiversity. Do you talk about climate change and its impact on biodiversity?

Mr. Peter Kendall: Yes, and certainly the show at the ROM right now, which is called The Power of One, is more focused on climate change than our school programs, which tend to be a little bit more heavily focused on the biodiversity issue. But the ROM show uses these two kids in a video presentation—we do the animal piece, then two kids talking to each other about their individual footprint, and we use an analogy where we fill up these black balloons with gas, which represents the amount of greenhouse gas the kid produces in a year, and then as they come up with ideas on how to reduce their footprint they start breaking the balloons with needles.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: What kid doesn't like that?

The whole question of biodiversity loss: Do you do much analysis of how biodiversity is being reduced? Do you talk about sprawl, habitat destruction? How do you talk about cause and effect?

Mr. Peter Kendall: Because our program, especially when we're moving into the Bring Back the Wild program, is about encouraging the kids to get involved with reclaiming and restoring lands in the south, we do talk a lot about the loss due to inappropriate development and also degradation of various habitats. It's a bit of a new program for us as well, so our messaging on that is still developing. It's something we're working with both the ROM and the Nature Conservancy on developing.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Thank you. I don't have any other questions.

The Chair (Mrs. Julia Munro): Ms. Albanese.

Mrs. Laura Albanese: Thank you for your presentation. I wanted to ask: How frequent are your shows at the ROM?

Mr. Peter Kendall: The new schedule starting now, we're running Tuesday to Friday for primarily school groups—and, when we don't have school groups, the general public—during the day, and then on Saturdays for pretty much the whole day as well.

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Mrs. Laura Albanese: You spoke about the number of kids you will reach. How many have you reached thus far?

Mr. Peter Kendall: I don't have that exact number at my fingertips.

Mrs. Laura Albanese: Okay. You also spoke about where you see the relationship, the partnership going in the future, but could you elaborate on the partnership as it is set now—what kind of partnership you have established now with the ROM?

Mr. Peter Kendall: Through the Schad Foundation, we helped to fund the biodiversity gallery at the ROM, and then with Earth Rangers we have partial use of the Earth Rangers Studio within that gallery to do our shows out of. The ROM will also be partially funding us in the larger community events that we're going to be offering out of the 300-seat theatre.

Mrs. Laura Albanese: One last question: You are encouraging, obviously, kids to think about the environment. In your words, how does Earth Rangers and its programming forward the museum's environmental education agenda?

Mr. Peter Kendall: I can only really speak to the gallery—it's the only one that I know—and the main message of that gallery is that life is diverse and that life is also in crisis. As you go through the gallery, you certainly learn about the incredible richness of life and how our actions are impacting that biodiversity. It's the same theme that we carry through our shows at the ROM, as well as encouraging the public to get involved and take on more sustainable activities to help make a difference.

Mrs. Laura Albanese: I have one more question. You mentioned you have live animals at the ROM during the live show. Can you illustrate to someone who has never participated in a show what kind of animals are there? What can one anticipate?

Mr. Peter Kendall: Yes. We have four different shows that we run there. One is with a lemur. Then we have an African serval cat, an American kestrel and snowy owls. We use each of those animals to talk about different regions around the world. With the lemur, for example, we do a lot of natural history about lemurs and about Madagascar, but then we talk about the incredible crisis going on in Madagascar: About 10% of the land is left now as workable habitat for lemurs, and pretty much all the species down there now are threatened. Really, nobody knows if any of the lemurs are going to exist in Madagascar with the political situation being what it is down there. Then we use that situation, basically, to say

to the kids, "Let's not let this happen here in Ontario and here in Canada." We've got an incredible wealth of resources here in Canada still and, really, a responsibility to ensure that we protect those and that they're around for the next generation.

Mrs. Laura Albanese: Thank you, Madame Chair, but I believe my colleague would have one further question.

The Chair (Mrs. Julia Munro): Mr. Johnson.

Mr. Rick Johnson: I know a lot of the school boards across the province now are running eco-school projects. Have you worked on the curriculum side of things, to be involved and link up with that?

Mr. Peter Kendall: We have curriculum resources that we leave for the teachers that are available on our website, which we developed with John Mighton out of Jump Math. They're sort of math-related environment activities. We don't get involved anymore in school-based action programming like an eco-schools program, but it's a fabulous program as well.

Mr. Rick Johnson: So when schools and classrooms come in, there are materials and stuff that teachers can access?

Mr. Peter Kendall: For sure. There are both hard copies, which we have available, and then they can download it all from our website.

Mr. Rick Johnson: Great. Thank you.

The Chair (Mrs. Julia Munro): Any other questions?

That completes the questions. Thank you so much for coming and telling us a little bit more about the relationship between the ROM and Earth Rangers.

ATTRACTIONS ONTARIO

The Chair (Mrs. Julia Munro): I'd now like to ask Troy Young, the executive director of Attractions Ontario, to come forward. Good afternoon and welcome to the committee.

Mr. Troy Young: Thank you. Madam Chairperson, members of the committee, thank you for giving me this opportunity to speak today on behalf of the ROM. I'm going to start out just by letting you know a little bit about who Attractions Ontario is, what we do and why we have a relationship with the ROM. Attractions Ontario is a not-for-profit agency that has been in operation for 26 years and whose purpose is to assist the various tourism attractions in Ontario in marketing themselves to the travelling consumer.

Tourism is a major business in Ontario, worth \$22 billion in receipts, responsible for 3.8% of Ontario's gross domestic product and employing 3% of the province's workforce, representing 200,000 direct jobs. It is the only industry in every riding in the province. The government of Ontario takes in \$2.6 billion in tax revenue from tourism-related activities; 3.7% of Ontario's tax revenues are derived from tourism. It ranks eighth in Ontario's exports, and Ontarians spend 7.1% of their disposable income on tourism.

Attractions Ontario is positioned to assist the provincial government and our members to promote their offerings to the travelling public. We are strongly focused on selling Ontario to Ontarians. We do this through a variety of avenues, the most effective being our annual Passport Magazine and Coupon Book, which has a circulation of 1.1 million copies throughout Ontario and parts of the United States. We have been publishing this guide for the past 20 years. Last year, by tracking the coupon redemptions from our book, we accounted for a minimum impact to Ontario's tourism receipts of \$20 million. This does not account for the additional value that the display advertising had, it does not take into account foreign tourists that used the guide, nor does it capture all the coupons used, as a number of members did not report. We estimate that our book's true impact on Ontario's tourism receipts is closer to \$35 million when all these external factors are included.

We also publish a field trip planner, *Are We There Yet?*, for schools and youth groups. We have a website where prospective travellers can view current special events, research attractions in an area and even purchase tickets or book hotel rooms. We also provide other assistance and research as well as aggregating interests of our members when speaking to government. We were one of the founding associations of the Tourism Industry Association of Ontario, our industry's main association, and I have the pleasure to serve as treasurer of that association.

We currently represent over 530 tourism operations in Ontario, including attractions, accommodators, destination marketing organizations, and tour operators and associations. All the major provincially run tourism and cultural agencies belong to Attractions Ontario, as do many of the federally run attractions. The Royal Ontario Museum is one of our biggest supporters and I am happy to be here to support them today. The ROM has been a big supporter of our association in the past and I believe it will continue to do so in the future. They are one of Ontario's premier tourist attractions and Ontario's most popular tourism destination.

I am open for your questions.

The Chair (Mrs. Julia Munro): Thank you very much. Mr. Rinaldi.

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: Thank you very much, Troy, for being here today. You mentioned in your presentation you represent over 500 groups—

Mr. Troy Young: Five hundred and thirty.

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: —across the province, and that's a mix of private and public sector attractions?

Mr. Troy Young: Yes.

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: Can you elaborate on that a little bit? Obviously, the ROM is a supporter or partner.

Mr. Troy Young: If it's a major tourism attraction in Ontario, it's our member, from Canada's Wonderland, the ROM, the AGO, Ontario Place, the National Gallery of Canada, Fort York, Fort George, Fort Henry, right down to small roadside zoos, like the Elmvale Jungle Zoo up in Elmvale; Scenic Caves up in Collingwood;

Blue Mountain resort. It's a true diversity, and we go right across the province. I've got members in Kenora, Thunder Bay, Ottawa, Windsor, Toronto—probably in your riding as well.

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: So in Attractions Ontario, it's driven by membership fees, I presume, to keep—

Mr. Troy Young: Membership fees and our advertising sales, yes.

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: Specifically to the ROM, then, you mentioned in your presentation that it's a big part, one of your main folks that's part of the association. Can you elaborate on that relationship a little bit more to the fact of—I guess where I'm trying to get is, obviously, you're supporting them with what your organization does, but having them as a partner helps Attractions Ontario be a bigger player—

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Mr. Troy Young: Oh, incredibly so. Our association derives its value by being able to represent the best that Ontario has to offer. Having the ROM as one of our members gives us instant credibility, of course, because the ROM is widely recognized worldwide as a major cultural and educational institution. So by having them as a member, it does benefit us as well, yes.

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: I don't have any further questions at this time, Madam Chair.

The Chair (Mrs. Julia Munro): Any other—yes?

Ms. Leeanna Pendergast: Thank you, Troy. Today's theme has been largely on education and reaching out to youth in the province and, in doing so, engaging families and communities. We heard this morning what an integral role the ROM plays in all of this and how important that is to us as a province. We heard a lot about education tourism. I'm interested in hearing more from you on how Attractions Ontario, in symbiosis with the ROM, strengthens that education tourism in the province, please.

Mr. Troy Young: Well, I'm glad you asked. We do an education field trip planner. We're actually going to print today. I'm surprised I even had time to be here, given that it was going to the printers and we were doing the signoffs this morning. But we do 25,000 copies that are sent directly to each school in the province of Ontario. In a number of cases, we actually have the school boards themselves do the distribution for us.

This field trip planner represents 56 pages of diverse product across the province. Now, the key to get into our guide is that you have to actually be offering curriculum-based programming. This is an opportunity to get in front of teachers so that they have an opportunity to see what's there and what they want to bring their kids to. When we first published it five years ago, we sat down with a focus group made up of teachers and educators to say, "What is it that you need? What information do you require to make this work?" and we've included it. Our guide is structured specifically to their needs.

I'm proud to say the ROM is one of our major advertisers in it. They've got four different programs that they're pushing in our guide this year.

Ms. Leeanna Pendergast: So, Troy, how would somebody access that field trip planner?

Mr. Troy Young: Well, it does get sent directly to each school. We do have a very limited number of copies at our office that we can send out, but we do have it on-line, a PDF copy that they can download from our website.

Ms. Leeanna Pendergast: Excellent. Thank you.

The Chair (Mrs. Julia Munro): Any other questions? Yes, Mr. Arnott.

Mr. Ted Arnott: Thank you, Mr. Young, for your presentation. I'm sorry I missed the start of it, but I'm pleased to report to the members of the committee that our leader, Tim Hudak, gave an outstanding speech at the Economic Club of Canada downtown over lunch. He was well received, and I'm sure that all the members would want to know that.

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: I was waiting for that report.

Mr. Ted Arnott: In terms of the issue we're discussing today, though, we certainly appreciate your advice and your involvement in the issue relating to the ROM and how it's managed.

I do want to ask you about the proposed harmonized sales tax and what your opinion is, what impact you think it's going to have as it relates to your industry if indeed the government proceeds with implementation of the harmonized sales tax next Canada Day.

Mr. Troy Young: While I'm not sure how that applies directly to the ROM, I'll—

Mr. Ted Arnott: I think I can address that.

Mr. Troy Young: Since the question has been asked, I will answer it.

Mr. Ted Arnott: It's an issue that was raised this morning with ROM and they discussed it, so I think it will impact—

Mr. Troy Young: The harmonized sales tax is going to have disastrous effects for our industry. As an association, yes, the different input tax credits that are out there will actually save my association some money, maybe about \$30,000 a year, which is significant. However, I'm worried that my members won't have the revenue to be able to participate in our programs, which means that \$30,000 in one-time savings is going to be easily lost.

Why is that? If people have less money in their pocket, tourism is one of the first things that's going to go. Discretionary spending being what it is, it's going to be difficult. As much as I've seen everything that's been out there about how this is going to be a good thing for jobs and there's going to be an offsetting income tax credit as well, a reduction in income tax usually means people end up saving more, as opposed to spending more. All they're going to see is the cost of the everyday items going up, which is going to have an impact.

I know our industry is very concerned, even more so due to the loss of the extra 3% in room tax availability and the different destination marketing fees that were voluntarily being raised across the province. We're losing about \$45 million in self-generated revenue that's being replaced with \$40 million that now is being spread

out further across the board. We're not quite sure yet how we can rationalize that loss. We're being asked to do more with less. There's a lot of uncertainty.

With the HST, the biggest fear our industry has is that room tax and destination marketing fee loss. I'm not yet sure how it's going to have a positive impact for us, not to say that—when push comes to shove, things will be manageable by us, but at this point in time, when we look forward, knowing the conditions of our industry, the conditions that our industry has been operating under with all the different issues—first SARS, then 9/11, the lack of Americans coming across the border; you have a bad summer and people stay away. With all the issues we've been dealing with over the past number of years, this is just one more obstacle in front of our industry.

Mr. Ted Arnott: Thank you.

The Chair (Mrs. Julia Munro): Thank you. Mr. Tabuns.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Mr. Young, thanks for the presentation and for being here today.

I apologize. As did my colleague, I missed the first few minutes of your presentation, and you may have spoken to this. The Royal Ontario Museum: What are its impacts on tourism in Ontario? How big a draw is it, in your calculation?

Mr. Troy Young: Well, the Royal Ontario Museum is one of the top six attractions in Toronto, Toronto being the number one draw in Ontario, and Ontario being the number one draw to Canada. Therefore, you have to assume that it's at least in the top 10 of draws to Canada.

You mentioned educational tourism. Another growing sector of the tourism industry is cultural tourism. Cultural tourism tends to attract more wealthy, more educated people, people who will spend more money.

If we are going to have any kind of recovery in tourism, key agencies like the ROM are going to be there.

Now, when we look at the top six attractions in Toronto, they're all owned and operated by one level of government or another. The CN Tower is owned and operated by the federal government. The Toronto Zoo is owned and operated by the city of Toronto. And of course the province owns and operates the ROM, Ontario Place, the Ontario Science Centre and the Art Gallery of Ontario. So our top six attractors for this city are all managed and operated by government.

When you look at great cities around the world, every one of them has a signature museum that goes along with it. Of course, New York has got more museums than we know what to do with, and it will take you a number of visits there to actually see them all. But Chicago, Philadelphia, Denver—Paris has the Louvre, London has the British Museum, Toronto has the ROM. The ROM is integral, both for that cultural tourism aspect and for others—just preserving our own history.

When you look at the world, the 2008 Global Cities Index rated Toronto the 10th city overall in the world. This was broken down into five categories: business activity, human capital, information exchange, cultural

experience, and political engagements. Toronto rated fourth overall in cultural experience, behind only London, Paris and New York. It was 16 spots higher than Chicago, 15 spots higher than Beijing, 19 spots higher than San Francisco, 11 spots higher than Rome. So if we are that important on the international landscape for cultural experiences, and the ROM is arguably our number one cultural attraction in this city, it kind of puts into perspective where the ROM's value is.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Okay. In the presentation we had this morning from the chair of the board of directors and senior management, they talked about their efforts to reach out to the United States to bring in those tourists who were willing to travel some distance. What do you see as the impact on the ROM of the passport requirements between the United States and Canada? Have you seen evidence of that causing problems so far? Do you expect more problems for attractions like the ROM?

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Mr. Troy Young: I couldn't speak specifically to how it has impacted the ROM, but I know that with a number of my members, it has had a severe negative impact, especially the border communities that rely heavily on that cross-border traffic. Niagara Falls is extremely hurt, as is Windsor. Any attraction that previously depended upon large numbers of American tourists is hurting because of this, because they are staying away.

But there are a number of reasons; it's maybe not just the passport requirements. I mean, we've seen a decline in American tourist numbers for a number of years now. We were hoping that, with the election of a new government in the United States, this would change, but of course, the passport requirements continued as was previously anticipated.

Yes, it is definitely having a negative impact. What we can do to change that, honestly, I'm not sure.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Okay. One of the things that came up in discussions this morning was setting up a system that would allow people to get into the ROM without charge. What impact would you see that as having on tourism?

Mr. Troy Young: Well, unless your party is willing to assist with a government motion to allow the ROM to be free and to provide them with the operating capital to offset any losses to that, I can't see that it would work.

Most museums around the world have a fee. If you want it to do something that was positive in that way, I would suggest having a certain day of the week where there is a greatly reduced rate. But if you're going to take from the ROM that potential revenue stream of the admissions, then it has to be replaced with something, otherwise they're going to have to cut back on their programs. It's a matter of dollars and cents. From a business perspective, I would say that it would be a poor decision to make. From a political position, I can understand why someone might want to make it, but it does come with a dollar figure.

Now, would it be a worthwhile investment by the province to do that, to give the ROM the money to offset

those lost revenues? Yes, given the amount of money that tourism generates for this province—\$22 billion a year; \$2.6 billion a year in tax revenues directly to the province. Surely there could be a couple of million hidden somewhere that could be used to offset it. I don't know the annual amount of money the ROM takes in in admissions. I'm sure the ROM would be able to answer that question a little bit better than I am. But if you're asking me, "Should we go that route?" Only if the government and the other two opposition parties are willing to support it, yes. Otherwise, it's going to be a minefield and best left alone.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: I have no further questions.

The Chair (Mrs. Julia Munro): Fine. Thank you very much.

Now I'm prepared to entertain a question, even though we've done the rotation. So if you wish to ask Mr. Young a question—

Mr. Rick Johnson: Yes, please. The member opposite asked about the effect of the harmonized sales tax, and you said it could have a negative impact, although you admitted that, for your business in particular, there would be savings.

Just a comment: You're involved in the tourism industry, and Quebec has had this harmonized sales tax for a number of years. Porter Airlines is flying four times a day to Mont Tremblant. It doesn't seem to have had an impact on their tourism. What are they doing differently for their tourism that it hasn't affected them compared to what you were suggesting could happen here?

Mr. Troy Young: The biggest issue with the harmonized sales tax and how it affects Ontario differently than other areas that have had harmonized sales taxes before, or even province-wide destination marketing fees, is the fact that, with the bringing in of the HST, we are losing that tax room. Those voluntary DMFs that were previously raising \$45 million across the province are going away. None of the other places that went with HST or a province-wide DMF had voluntary ones in place first. That's what puts us in a unique position, and that hasn't truly been addressed yet.

If this government is willing to step forward and help us come to some solution so that we can still self-direct those fees without pricing ourselves out of competition with all of the other jurisdictions around Ontario, then we can make it work.

When we did some calculations—and actually, it wasn't just us who did the calculations; it was in the Sorbara report as well—there was \$100 million of potential money there on that 3% cap room, the difference between the previous 5% and now the 8% that we're going to be charged. Well, somewhere along the line, that \$100 million has shrunk to \$40 million. If you can get it back up to \$100 million, we'll go away. We won't talk about HST anymore.

Mr. Rick Johnson: How much embedded savings are there going to be for your members?

Mr. Troy Young: For our members? Probably not a lot.

Mr. Rick Johnson: How do you know?

Mr. Troy Young: We don't, specifically. What we do know is, we're losing that \$45 million in previously generated marketing fees.

Mr. Rick Johnson: But you're saving—every one of your members is going to be saving all the way along the line. Ask any accountant and they'll tell you: You're saving money.

Mr. Troy Young: But it's not just our members that we're worried about. We can collect those input tax credits, but you're correct: It's the consumer that can't.

Mr. Rick Johnson: And then you'll be able to pass those savings along.

Mr. Troy Young: Perhaps. Some people will be able to.

Mr. Rick Johnson: Well, that'll be your decision.

Mr. Troy Young: Exactly. It'll have to be done on a case-by-case—

Mr. Rick Johnson: I would say it's incumbent upon—

Mr. Troy Young:—and I can't get into the individual business decisions by my individual members. Some of them will—

Mr. Rick Johnson: I would say it's going to be incumbent upon your members to pass along any savings that they get.

Mr. Troy Young: Well, some of my members are actually saying that HST will be a good thing for them. The majority of them are saying no.

Mr. Rick Johnson: That's what we're hearing, that the majority are saying yes.

The Chair (Mrs. Julia Munro): All right. Thank you very much. I think that concludes the questions from the members. Thank you very much for being here today.

LEAH SANDALS

The Chair (Mrs. Julia Munro): Is Leah Sandals here? Yes? Thank you. Please come forward. Good afternoon, and welcome to the committee. As you might know, you have 30 minutes. You can make a statement, and then the time remaining will be divided. So if you're ready, you can begin.

Ms. Leah Sandals: Okay. Thanks, everybody, for taking time to listen to me today. I know it's a lot of information that's being thrown at you. I just want to present briefly on one key mandate of the Royal Ontario Museum and its performance on it, and that mandate is to public access. My position is that the Royal Ontario Museum is performing at a substandard level in meeting this mandate.

To review quickly from the board's own policies on the matter, the ROM is "mandated to illustrate and make known to the public the natural and cultural heritage of Ontario, Canada, and the world," and it "views access to its collections ... as one of its primary and defining responsibilities." This is not a tertiary responsibility; it is a primary and defining responsibility.

Access is also promised in the board's policies to "the residents of Ontario, and to people throughout Canada and the world, whenever possible." The mandate continues: "In making its collections and information resources accessible, the ROM will ... minimize economic ... barriers and reach out to a broad range of interest levels, to the greatest extent possible."

Again, it's my position that the board of the Royal Ontario Museum, though performing well in a number of areas, is not meeting this primary and defining mandate of the museum.

Economic barriers to public access are the main barrier to public access I'm interested in at the ROM, and the main economic barrier to public access at the ROM or any other museum is, of course, admission fees, which I know you've already discussed a little bit today. What is the admission fee structure at the ROM? It's already been discussed a bit, but just to highlight it, it's \$22 for adults, \$19 for students and seniors, and \$15 for children aged 4 to 14. In my research—which, I admit, is not at a highly academic level, but in the research I've done, I can say that this is the highest museum admission fee structure in all of Canada and one of the highest museum admission fee structures in the world. What we can infer from this right off the bat is that the ROM is not minimizing economic barriers, as is mandated by its own policies. It is actually raising the economic barrier to the greatest extent possible.

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To be fair, many other museums, as you all know from having visited other cities, have admission fees.

There are certain standard means that museums use internationally, nationally and regionally to overcome economic barriers to public access.

According to the Canadian Museums Association's 2006 ethics guidelines, the one means that they note for fulfilling public service responsibilities and ensuring equality of opportunity for public access to collections is that some museums provide free admission at specific times.

There are very few museum associations that will mandate that free admission is required for specific times in order to continue being a museum. The reason I mention this practice of having free admission at specific times is because it's the most common practice for initiating public access mandates, or for enacting them.

Under item 3, I listed a variety of public access techniques that are in common usage at other museums. Again, the first one is free admission for one evening, which is three to four hours a week. This is the most common means of meeting public access commitments. It means there are guaranteed regular times when the museum collection is available to all regional residents, national residents and international visitors. Some institutions even have two free evenings per week, like the Art Institute of Chicago does in the summer. It's worth noting that free evenings are often funded by corporate or foundation sponsorships, not solely by government or by the museums.

Another option that many museums use to overcome economic barriers to collection access is family package admission fee options. This is a popular means of making museum-going more accessible to family groups. As somebody noted here this morning, to take a family of four to the ROM costs \$74 in one shot. But at many other museums, including the Vancouver Art Gallery, the National Gallery of Canada, the Canadian Museum of Civilization, the Canadian War Museum, the McCord Museum of Canadian History, the Australian Museum, the Art Gallery of Ontario, they usually set family price admission at—let's say it would be \$50 at the ROM instead of \$75, or even \$40.

I do have an appendix in here that lists details of the research I did and provides lists of the admission fee structures at all these museums that I've mentioned.

Another popular public access initiative is free admission for school-age children. This is practiced at the Montreal Museum of Contemporary Art; the Guggenheim Museum; the Museum of Modern Art, which is actually free for those under 16, not just for those under 12; the Louvre, which is free for those under 18; the Art Institute of Chicago, which is free for those under 14; and the New Museum in New York, which is free for those under 18. Again, my research isn't comprehensive, but it's a common-enough practice. Just to remind you, at the ROM it's only free for children under the age of four.

I'll just continue with one more of the common-practice access techniques that museums use, which is to have a ticket price that is around \$12 or less for general admission. I don't know how they decide upon this. To my mind, they're indexing it maybe to what movie tickets cost. The National Gallery of Canada, the Canadian Museum of Civilization, the Canadian War Museum, the Manitoba Museum, the Canadian Centre for Architecture, the Royal Tyrrell Museum, the Vancouver Maritime Museum, the Dallas art museum—all of them also implement the size of their free evenings or other access initiatives. They also have general admission pricing that is around \$12 or less.

There are other wonderful museums that have free or by-donation admission for all viewers, all the time, but I feel like that's a super long shot in this case so I'll just leave it for you to read about later.

The ROM's strategies for overcoming economic barriers to public access do exist. The ROM discussed some of them this morning. They're all involving partnerships with wonderful and highly responsible organizations like the United Way and the Toronto Public Library. However, the programs that the ROM has do not collectively or individually meet standard or common museum access practices. I can briefly go over why.

The museum and arts pass program that's in place at 32 Toronto public libraries is only available to Toronto residents and not to any other Ontario residents. The MAP program was expanded to all Toronto Public Library branches earlier this year, but the Royal Ontario Museum did not expand its participation to all Toronto Public Library branches, limiting it only to 32 branches

in high-priority areas. The majority of the museums involved in the MAP program did expand their participation to all branches of the library, but the Royal Ontario Museum did not, along with a minority of other museums.

The ROM does have one hour of free access on Wednesdays from 4:30 p.m. to 5:30 p.m., but one issue with access here is that it's during the workday for most Torontonians and Ontarians. Another issue is that in all my research, I could not locate a single other museum that only offers one hour of free access per week as their free access requirement. Two seems to be the absolute minimum, ranging up to four or five hours per week. Even the program of providing passes to the United Way, which, of course, is a wonderful organization, only distributes 500 passes per month through Toronto and does not in any way make a dent; it's less than 1%—even if they were used to their maximum extent, they would reach less than 1% of the 1.7 million people in Ontario who are living in poverty, not even mentioning the middle class and lower-middle class people who might have difficulty accessing the ROM in its current fee structure.

The half-price admission on Friday evenings is one of the ROM's most promoted public access initiatives, but given that its existing admission price is \$22, half price is \$11, which actually just brings it in line with what the standard practice admission fee is at many international, regional and national museums.

The ROM also occasionally puts coupons in the newspaper and makes an announcement that children are free when accompanied by a paying adult for a limited time. Unfortunately, these promotions are very inconsistent and do not meet any kind of reliable public access mandate.

Overall, the ROM performs particularly poorly on access when compared with other museums because it possesses the unusual combination of extremely high admission prices for all people over the age of three, nearly zero free admission hours, no family-package ticket pricing, and the access programs that it does initiate are focused mainly on Toronto and also consist of the release of relatively small numbers of free tickets to non-profit agencies, only enough to cover less than 1% of Ontario's poor at maximum usage.

It's my position that improving economic access at the ROM is both necessary and financially feasible. According to a 2007 report published by the American Association of Museums, "Despite the challenging aspects of free admission days, it is reasonable to conclude that they are vital to a museum's accessibility." In other words, many museums find it very painful to offer free admission hours in the range of three to four hours per week or to initiate other free-hours initiatives. It's painful for all museums, but it's also the job of all museums, in their mandates, to provide public access while maintaining their collections.

I've done a little bit of number-crunching in these notes to the effect that four hours of free admission at the

ROM, given its current 56.5-hour week, could only involve sacrificing 0.5% to 0.8% of total revenues. This translates, according to 10-year revenue averages, into a revenue loss of roughly \$300,000 to \$500,000 per year.

Again, there are many ways that museums worldwide deal with this intrinsic challenge that museums have of providing free hours, whether three or four a week, or for an entire week or an entire month, while being financially solvent. That includes corporate sponsorships. Free evenings at the Vancouver Art Gallery are sponsored by Sun Life Financial, while free evenings at the Museum of Modern Art are sponsored by Target. Target also sponsors free youth admission at the New Museum. There are other examples that could be brought up.

Foundation sponsorships include: Free Wednesday evenings at the Art Gallery of Ontario are sponsored by the Catherine and Maxwell Meighen Foundation, while free daily admission at the Museum of Contemporary Canadian Art is sponsored by the Hal Jackman Foundation.

Many other museums also use a combination of corporate and foundation and endowment funds. The Cincinnati Art Museum has free admission every day, sponsored by a variety of foundations and endowments, and the Baltimore Museum of Art has a similar structure, drawing on many different sources of funds to provide completely free admission to the public.

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Government supports and strictures are also an option, though not the only one. Of course, you may know that in London, UK, the national government decided to make five or six museums free, which boosted attendance by 80%. In some museums, of course, that costs a lot of money. But governments can also implement legislation. The Metropolitan Museum of Art and the Museum of Natural History in New York are legally required by their leases to be open free five days a week and two nights a week.

So, in conclusion—sorry to throw all this stuff at you guys; it's a lot to take in—I would recommend that in order to bring its performance on economic access up to a satisfactory level, just a satisfactory common practice level, the ROM should reinstitute one free evening per week, which it had in place as recently as 2002. I also suggest that it reduce regular admission fees to be in line with movie ticket pricing and also that it institute family ticket pricing.

While the board and the management may find it a challenge to implement these access suggestions, I'll just reiterate that this challenge is part of the package when it comes to running a reputable and respectable museum.

The Chair (Mrs. Julia Munro): Thank you very much. We'll begin with Mr. Arnott.

Mr. Ted Arnott: Thank you very much for your presentation here this afternoon. You've done a very thorough job of researching the point that you've made and you've given us many examples of museums around the world that make an effort to ensure that there is no economic barrier to access to their exhibits.

I suppose that in a perfect world we would hope that all museums would be free to access and enter. Unfortunately, we are in a time of severe economic constraint, probably for the next two years, on the part of governments at all levels in Canada, and it makes it all the more difficult to contemplate what you're suggesting, I would assume, because of course if the ROM were to lose the revenue that's associated with the admissions, it would have to be made up somehow, as Troy Young was saying.

Ms. Leah Sandals: Can I clarify that my suggestion is not to make admission free daily at the ROM; it's only to—

Mr. Ted Arnott: No, I understand that. I heard your conclusion and I understand. But I think there would have to be an economic analysis of what this would cost, first and foremost. I know that the ROM staff are here and they've heard everything you've said, and I'm sure they're very interested in working with you on it to see what possibly can be done. Obviously you are here because you support the ROM and you believe—

Ms. Leah Sandals: Yes, I want people to have access because it's so wonderful.

Mr. Ted Arnott: You want more people to have that opportunity even if they don't have the money to come in the doors. That's commendable. Thank you very much for your presentation.

The Chair (Mrs. Julia Munro): Mr. Tabuns.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: I'd like to thank you as well for the presentation and taking the time to come here today and speak with us.

Have you discussed this proposal with the ROM itself?

Ms. Leah Sandals: I'm a member of the media. My profession is cultural criticism and editing. My job is to point out when either an artist or a gallery or a curator or a museum is claiming to do one thing and is not delivering on it. That's what I see my role as being.

If I was in more of a consultancy role or a non-profit organizational role that was leading on arts accessing in Ontario, I would love to work with the ROM on this. But that's why I've taken the tack that I have.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Okay. So you haven't had discussions with them at this point. You've presented this to us.

Ms. Leah Sandals: I presented to you; I've written articles about it as well that have appeared in the Toronto Star and Now.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Okay. You did a calculation of what it would cost, essentially, to have one free night per week, if I remember, as I—

Ms. Leah Sandals: It's a calculation. I'm sure there are many other calculations people could make.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Have you had a chance to discuss this with others who are familiar with doing those calculations to see if there are weaknesses or particular strengths in yours?

Ms. Leah Sandals: No, unfortunately. Again, I do not have a consultancy background or an academic back-

ground. The study I'm presenting is purely from a layperson's perspective.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Right. And you noted that in the UK, where they've brought in free admission, attendance at museums where there was free admission had gone up by 80%. How did that lack of revenue get dealt with by the governments?

Ms. Leah Sandals: Well, again, I don't expect that to happen here because the government made a commitment to making admission free at those museums to the tune of hundreds of millions of pounds, probably even billions; I don't know. But I do urge people to look through this package because there are many other options. Some museums have free admission to the permanent collection only while charging ticketed prices to special and temporary exhibitions. That's another solution that's also in common practice that I haven't calculated cost for, but it could be affordable.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Okay. I should say I'm very sympathetic to the argument you're making. As a kid, we came in from Hamilton and went to the museum, and at these prices my family would never have gone to the museum. It just wouldn't have happened.

Ms. Leah Sandals: You also wouldn't have had access to free tickets unless you were involved with the United Way at that point, in this hypothetical situation. Your family wouldn't have had access to the passes available through the Toronto Public Library, nor, assuming you're a Canadian citizen, through the cultural access pass program.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: No, that's quite correct. When I was a kid I thought it was an extraordinary treasure house, and the thought that other kids aren't getting a chance to get in there now is a distressing one.

I don't think I have more questions, but I do want to say that I appreciate the analysis and the fact that you've taken time to advocate for this position, because I think people should have access to the common property of the public and this is part of our common property.

Ms. Leah Sandals: Thanks. I think an important point for me is not that this is just my wish, but that it's actually mandated by the museum's own policies, just as it's mandated in the policies of almost every museum in the world. That's what makes a museum a charitable organization, to provide public access to the collection as well as to take good care of it.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: I think it's a fair point. Thank you.

The Chair (Mrs. Julia Munro): Thank you very much. Ms. Pendergast.

Ms. Leeanna Pendergast: Thank you, Leah. This is quite an impressive presentation, and you've done your research. As a teacher, I'm trying to go through the document as thoroughly as I can, but there's a lot in here.

I have a very simple question. Looking at sections 4(a) to (g), you go through the ROM's strategies for overcoming economic barriers. And we heard a lot of good stuff as well; there's a lot of good stuff you have here in the document this morning: the ROM CAN program, providing free admission to the tune of over \$50,000;

tickets to the United Way, which you mentioned; bursary funds for school-age children, which is of course important to educators; free admission at specific times. You mentioned the hour and the ROM mentioned this morning that they did have to extend that time as well. They did mention the virtual capacity, the two-way classrooms, which is reaching out in another way. We're not talking admission fee; it's a whole new concept in the 21st century.

I'm looking at section 6, "Conclusion," and you do make three recommendations for common practice measures. I guess, looking at those, in a perfect world there would be lots of money to make all of this happen. In the world that we live in now, with economic constraints and a global economy that's struggling, I guess I really want to just get your input. If there was some sponsorship money or government money that did become available, what kind of incremental applications would you see in a prioritizing method? The ROM has made a clear commitment to minimizing economic barriers, but how would you prioritize that in a hierarchical way? And in doing so, could you also consider what other implications there would be, then, in reducing those costs?

Ms. Leah Sandals: Well, I would prioritize it in the way that I've outlined here. Priority A would be to bring in or expand free hours from one to at least three or four. That is the minimum. Then the others, I would hope, would come after that in priority. There is an article in the appendix here from the American Association of Museums that discusses these kinds of issues, like how museums grapple with it, because if they have more attendees, then sometimes costs for security go up or costs for maintenance. So those things do need to be balanced. I can recognize that.

But one thing that's very interesting is that the entire world is being affected by this economic slowdown right now, and yet we do not see admission prices or admission restrictions at other museums that are dealing with similar factors to the extent that we see them at the Royal Ontario Museum. The main question that occurs to me is, how come other museums can do it but not the Royal Ontario Museum, with all its ingenuity, connections and resources that already helped it raise \$272 million for a new building? I know it's much harder to raise that amount, and I wouldn't expect that amount to be raised for admissions, but it obviously has many resources at its disposal, and other museums have demonstrated that even in times of economic hardship, solutions can be found.

So I would actually suggest that the ROM or some other consultants or the government talk to those museums that have these standard free admission policies, or even better, and ask them how they make it possible. There must be some way and it's probably different for each museum, but maybe they can learn from each other.

Ms. Leeanna Pendergast: Thank you. When you say how other museums do it, what is the "it" that you refer to?

Ms. Leah Sandals: Well, that they overcome economic—that they make free admission possible; that they

overcome economic barriers in other ways; that they manage to keep their admission fees largely below \$15 and otherwise below \$20. I'm serious when I say that \$22 is one of the highest adult admission fees internationally for museums. So perhaps consulting with those other museums could be of benefit to the ROM. That's what I would suggest.

Ms. Leeanna Pendergast: Okay. You're clearly a supporter of the ROM and acknowledge that they are doing great things, and you're suggesting that your input would help them move even further forward.

Ms. Leah Sandals: Yes. The whole point of having access is because the collections in museums are so wonderful and so educational for people of all ages.

Ms. Leeanna Pendergast: Thank you.

The Chair (Mrs. Julia Munro): Thank you. Further questions? Okay. Since I indulged your side with an extra question, we'll do the same here. Ms. MacLeod.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Thanks so much, Madam Chair. I appreciate the opportunity to ask you one very quick question, Leah. Again, I think all of the members of the committee have recognized your desire to show the ROM to the world.

As you know, a year from now, ticket prices at the ROM will go up by 8% as a result of the harmonized sales tax being brought in by Dalton McGuinty's Liberal government. I'm wondering what you think the impediment to ticket purchase prices will be as a result of that new 8% tax hike.

Ms. Leah Sandals: Well, I've already made it clear that my position is that the admission fee structure at the ROM, with its extremely high admission fees for anybody over the age of four, is already restrictive. So 8% more is just going to make them even more restrictive. I already believe that they severely curtail who can economically access the museum, and I've hopefully made my position that the access programs that it has do not overcome the barrier it has set for itself for access.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Just a quick supplementary, Leah: Do you think that people attending the ROM, the number of people going to the ROM, will decrease as a result of this 8% tax hike on the ticket price? Do you think it will stay the same, that the same amount of people will attend, or will it decrease?

Ms. Leah Sandals: I can't say. I think already the attendance numbers, as I mentioned, are curtailed due to the \$15 to \$22 admission fees that are in place. So it could possibly reduce attendance, but the ROM has already reduced attendance for itself by setting its admission fees so high.

The Chair (Mrs. Julia Munro): Okay, thank you very much. We certainly appreciate you coming here and giving a very thoughtful presentation.

Ms. Leah Sandals: Thank you very much for your time, everybody.

TOURISM TORONTO

The Chair (Mrs. Julia Munro): I'd now like to call on Joel Peters, senior vice-president and chief marketing

officer of Tourism Toronto. Good afternoon, and welcome to the committee. As you may know, you have 30 minutes, during which time you can make a presentation and we will entertain questions from the members. So, whenever you're ready.

Mr. Joel Peters: Thank you, Madam Chair. Welcome and good afternoon to members of the committee. It's a privilege to address you today. In my role as chief marketing officer for Tourism Toronto, I'm most often presenting in other cities and in other countries, where I get a chance to really push what Toronto is all about and how surprising our offerings are in culture, entertainment, sports and across the board. So it is very much a unique thing for me to be able to do.

I thought I should begin with a few words about Tourism Toronto. Our organization is privately funded. We're an industry association. We have approximately 1,300 members, and we're the official marketing organization for Toronto. We operate in partnership with the city of Toronto, the city of Mississauga and the regional municipality of York, as well as others, to promote overnight travel to the GTA. We have numerous partnerships and relationships with the Ontario Tourism Marketing Partnership Corp. and with the Canadian Tourism Commission, all of whom sort of form the array of destination marketing organizations responsible for promoting the country.

I'm honoured to address you today on the topic of the Royal Ontario Museum. The subject of my remarks will be how the ROM contributes to our success as a city and as a tourist destination. I guess I should declare upfront that I was very fortunate; I served for six and a half years as VP of marketing at the ROM prior to the last three and a half years in my role at Tourism Toronto, so I do have some history with the organization.

There are three major factors that I would lead with in terms of my assessment of the ROM's importance and its contribution to where we're at as a tourism destination. With your permission, I'll try and use a few stories just to illustrate how important those things are. The first is their curatorial excellence, second is their architectural significance, and the third is the depth of their collections and the stories that those collections and artifacts represent.

The curatorial excellence may seem like an odd place for a marketer to start, but I'll illustrate my point with a story. It may be a bit of an apocryphal story, but back in the early 1990s at an international gathering of Egyptologists, we're told that in the discussion at the symposium when it turned to the subject of what might be the next great exhibit on Egypt and Egyptian artifacts, it led to a great discussion. Someone pointed out that there had never truly been an exhibition of artifacts from the old kingdom, the first great flurry of building of the pyramids in Egypt. As the conversation went on, the curators involved drew up a list of artifacts: "If we had a wish list of all the things that we could display to the public, what would be on that list?"

The ROM was very much in that conversation. As a result of Krzysztof Grzymski—Kris Grzymski is a senior

Egyptologist, at the ROM for over 20 years. He was included in the discussion, and the exhibit that was formed included partnerships with the Louvre in Paris, the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, and the ROM—three institutions only. That exhibit came to the ROM because of his stature as a curator. He started as a young Ph.D. student when he came to the ROM in the 1980s. By the time of this symposium, he was their senior curator, and with his depth of scholarship and research and the publications that he has done on Egypt, he was very much a natural part of that discussion.

It led to a very fine collection of artifacts that came to the ROM in February 2000, and over the next 100 days more than 455,000 people came to see that exhibition. So when you get to curators, when they have the background, the training and the support of their institutions, they're really the backbone of a successful museum. I can tell you from my six and a half years working there that the ROM has a very impressive lineup of curators and they command a great deal of respect in many, many diverse fields.

When you look at exhibits today like the presentation of the Dead Sea scrolls, these aren't exhibitions that you can rent. It's your reputation that brings you to the table and it's just scholarship that gives you the card to play to talk with people about lending precious artifacts between institutions. It's the relationships of those people one to the other that leads to the success. It's quite a great factor.

The second factor that is important to success internationally is the architectural significance to their public meetings. Love it or hate it, the ROM has been brilliantly expanded through the efforts of the Renaissance ROM campaign. I think we owe a great deal to the generous funding that was provided to launch the cultural renaissance in Toronto.

With the selection of Daniel Libeskind as the ROM's principal designer, we were blessed with an individual who more than perhaps any other living architect is able to capture the public imagination and translate the stories and the aspirations of the public into a building. He did that with the Jewish Museum in Berlin. It's an incredible monument to the Holocaust and it's an incredible experience to visit it. It really shakes you to your core. He also did it when he was selected for the master plan of the World Trade Center. He was the only architect who submitted to the World Trade Center competition that the actual families of the victims endorsed as their preference for what should happen on that site.

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When I make presentations to introduce potential meeting planners, tourism partners or the media, whether that's in Europe or South America, the United States, Asia or elsewhere in Canada, there are really two architects who are known to most of the people in the audience. One of those is Frank Gehry and the other is Daniel Libeskind: Frank Gehry by virtue of Bilbao in Spain and his work for the Disney performing arts centre in Los Angeles, and Daniel Libeskind for the two

projects that I've mentioned. When people hear that there's been a public and a private investment in cultural facilities across the city of Toronto that totals \$1 billion over the last seven or eight years, you start to get their interest, but you really don't get their full attention until they've heard that the architects include Daniel Libeskind and Frank Gehry. I've had the opportunity to make those kinds of presentations several times, and it's that piece, it's that human factor again, that just pushes it that much further along as to why the buildings are so important.

It wasn't just a commission for Daniel; he's married to Nina Lewis, a Canadian with deep roots in this country. His children were born here. He lectured at the University of Toronto. So when he talks about his projects worldwide, again, the ROM is part of the projects he's especially proud of.

With the completion of the project, I think one really fully appreciates with Libeskind that he's translated the mandate of the museum into its physical plan. I'm very much a fan—really, the essence of the museum is recorded in stone on those steps on Queen's Park Circle. When you read, "The Record of Nature Through Countless Ages, The Arts of Man Through All The Years," it's just such poetry. And now that they've done the expansion, the entire second floor is a very coherent story of life on earth, right from the rocks that were here in Precambrian times through biodiversity now. When you move to the third floor, there's the exploration of world cultures, and there are those wonderful galleries of Canadian history on the first floor as well. Those themes of natural history and world culture have come to life in a way that they just weren't doing for us in the 1980s and the 1990s, and it's really been a brilliant addition.

That brings me to my third factor, and that's the importance of the ROM's collections. Again, I'll do it by virtue of a story. One of my favourite artifacts in the ROM is Sitting Bull's headdress. When you talk to Americans in particular who remember Custer's last stand and Little Bighorn, and you're talking to them about what kinds of things they can find in the museums and the galleries in Toronto, you mention Sitting Bull and it kind of gets their attention pretty quickly. "Why is that at the ROM?" It turns out that after his battle with Custer, he gathered his fellow native population and they looked at their situation. The Dakotas were being flooded with gold-diggers. They were being pressured on all sides. They went up into Canada, and in that self-imposed exile where he led his people into Canada and spent several years, he grew to really respect the civility of the country and the respect that he was treated with by the Northwest Mounted Police. When he returned, again voluntarily, to the United States, he presented his headdress to the colonel who was in charge of the Northwest Mounted Police at that time.

It's one of many stories, but when you look at these artifacts, they're brilliantly conserved. It's great to have these pieces still be part of our heritage, but they are there for a reason, and they are there because of interactions between people. The ROM has found a way to bring that to life.

I can go on: Paul Kane's sketches, his portraits of life in western Canada. He was a Toronto resident, he lived on Wellesley Street, and on three or four occasions he ventured off into the Northwest Territories—the Northwest Territories at that time, which were Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta, all the way to the west coast of Canada—sketched things, came back and worked in a studio, and thanks to a former mayor of Toronto, William Allan, that collection passed to the ROM. Again, it's out on display. It's something that they can share with people.

The outstanding gems and minerals collection: If we didn't have all of these Canadian mining corporations that are headquartered here in Toronto and their importance in the world finance side of the mining industry—their mines would send them these great specimens, and a relationship developed with the ROM. That was the basis for their gems and mineralogy collection. Again, it's a world-leading collection thanks to the people of this province who have made those contributions.

So those three factors I think are the cornerstones on which we as an organization are able to promote the ROM and the way in which we tell Toronto's story to potential visitors. I've put together, with the help of ROM staff, some of the ways in which we handle promotions for the city as a destination. You'll see our Toronto Magazine there, the first two issues of it. It's a new venture that we undertook in 2008. The ROM was a natural for the cover, and I've always loved this photograph: It's a young woman, just her exuberance for being in that Michael Lee-Chin Crystal, dancing. I think she captures what a lot of us feel when you're looking at this building in terms of what it inspires.

There are some articles in there that we've had in terms of international media attention and there are a couple of examples, again, of advertisements that we've placed into the United States and into Europe and other markets too. You'll see again that the ROM figures quite importantly in those positions. It's a way to get people's attention and talk about this great city of Toronto which, for many of them, would just be another midwestern North American city. It's our cultural institutions, it's our entertainment offerings, it's the fabric of this city that really starts to make a difference.

I'd like to also move on to talk about the role we've seen the ROM take in the last several years, working with the major events that grace our season of festivals.

Luminato, June 1, 2007: Here's a new festival that aspires to be a world-leading cultural festival. It works with the ROM, and the opening day of Luminato was the opening day of the ROM. It's well captured in terms of imagery and street closings etc.—really a great way to launch that Luminato festival.

The Contact Photography Festival: This is the world's largest public festival devoted to photography. In the past year in working with the ROM, there's a series of photographs, fairly disturbing photographs, actually, of homeless people that were placed in the public areas in and around the museum and in the public galleries. Contact is an unusual festival; you kind of encounter it. It's not one that has a great gathering at Dundas Square,

but it's a great celebration of the image and what it can do and how it can move people, and it was great to see the ROM participate there.

In Pride in 2008, the ROM made arrangements for the world-renowned AIDS sculpture. It's just the four letters, AIDS, in a perfect cube, that are in red. That was displayed at the corner of Avenue Road and Bloor, and it was hugely symbolic for that corner and all of Canada to have that AIDS sculpture there for that period of time.

TIFF: The Toronto International Film Festival is just under way today for its 2009 version. The ROM used their buildings in a very innovative way in 2008. When you drove along Bloor Street after sundown, the images of the Darfur famine were projected onto the exterior of the building. Here's a building that's brought to life: It just is animated by their commitment to working with these festivals and doing things that are unusual and will provoke some thought in people.

Caribana: For the last two years, exhibits related to the West Indies and their cultural traditions have been especially developed during the festival.

With Nuit Blanche, the ROM has opened their doors. When a million residents and visitors take to the streets for an annual all-night arts thing—again, when we talk to people in other areas and other communities and they hear that a million residents, combined with visitors, can safely enjoy their city and be welcomed into their cultural institutions for a great celebration, it really makes a difference when we're talking about Toronto. This is an institution that's transformed itself into a vibrant force in our city's life and in our provincial culture, and I think that we're better for it.

Just a few facts: They're a long-standing member of Tourism Toronto. They're a member and participate in our Tourism Toronto Attractions Council. There's an alliance of G7 attractions; the ROM participates well. There's CityPass, which is a program that offers half-price admissions to visitors, and it's marketed through 10 US cities. Toronto is the only city that has it and the ROM is a participant. About 60,000 people buy a CityPass and visit up to six cultural institutions during their weeklong visits.

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We have a media alliance; again, the ROM is active in that. Over the course of 2009, our media relations team will host probably about 460 to 470 foreign journalists this year. Not all of them will visit the ROM, but the compelling images of the ROM that are part of our Toronto story, the role they play—they really help them take another look at Toronto, looking at it differently today than they would 10 or 15 years ago. It's an important part, as an institution, of how we surprise visitors and how we can continue to play a leading role in inspiring visitors to consider a first visit or a return visit to our city.

Madam Chair, I'd be pleased to answer any questions that you or your members would have today.

The Chair (Mrs. Julia Munro): Thank you very much. We'll begin with Mr. Tabuns.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Mr. Peters, thanks for the presentation. You made very clear the role of the ROM, both in terms of its collection and its physical presence, its importance to tourism in this city. Do you have recommendations for this committee or for the government of this province as to any policy changes or directions we could take to enhance the ROM or protect it in the long run?

Mr. Joel Peters: I can't say that I came prepared today to do that. I mean, we continue to expect it to remain well funded and a vibrant part of the community.

The kind of risks that the ROM will take with its major exhibitions, the visiting exhibitions—these are often \$2-million to \$3-million risks. The ways in which that risk can be supported—it brings the world to the people of Ontario, but it also allows us to do some very unique things on promotions. So that's certainly an area where I'd love to see the support of the institution continue and be strengthened.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Okay, thank you. I don't have any further questions.

The Chair (Mrs. Julia Munro): Ms. Albanese?

Mrs. Laura Albanese: Thank you for your presentation. You were just mentioning the risk factor in some of the blockbuster exhibitions that the ROM has been able to offer, like, let's say, the Dead Sea scrolls. How do you use those in your marketing? How do they benefit Tourism Toronto in stimulating cultural tourism for our city?

Mr. Joel Peters: That's a great question; thank you. When you visit our website today—seetorontonow.com—the Dead Sea scrolls is very prominently on the home page. We use it in newsletters. We use it in the campaigns we conducted this summer in terms of making people aware that it was on, whether that's throughout Ontario, to residents of the province or going further afield.

Again, the uniqueness of the exhibit really helps because it is only at the ROM. It is one of those where the people who have an interest in that subject matter, of all faiths, will look at how the ROM has put this on. We do an awful lot of online advertising.

Again, the fact that it is with us is something that becomes integral to our content as we tell the Toronto story. We haven't, in the case of the Dead Sea scrolls, done a specific campaign focusing just on the Dead Sea scrolls, but it has been integrated with the other things that we have done, and particularly as well with the media stories that we have been developing and promoting.

Mrs. Laura Albanese: I believe one of my colleagues has a question, Madam Chair.

The Chair (Mrs. Julia Munro): Yes. Mr. Johnson?

Mr. Rick Johnson: The use of the ROM in this promotional material is tremendous, and I notice your expertise is in marketing. As you're moving forward on marketing Toronto and the ROM, what are the plans, given the downturn in the economy, on the marketing side for this?

Mr. Joel Peters: Actually, I guess between last week and into next week, we're in a series of our business plan considerations and presentations to our board and to our various committees. It's very much on our minds as we look at 2010.

It's certainly one of the areas in which we've pulled back this year, because the US travellers, the US consumers—from their pension investments sinking in value to their home situations to their credit issues—really drew back. But we think next year is the year that we need to be back in front of the US consumer.

We're also talking very actively with Ontario Tourism. We do a great many efforts within Ontario. Interestingly enough, we haven't done a lot of promotions into Quebec and Montreal. We see, roughly, 525,000 overnight visitors from Montreal and about 675,000 from the province, and we're looking at how we can increase that number. It's probably the closest urban area that we haven't actively marketed in. It's a very tricky market for Ontario and Toronto to go into because of those rivalries between Toronto and Montreal, but we think next year is the year to take that on.

We've kept our commitments in place through our leisure trade department, which does international marketing, so that we're still active in the UK. Despite the economic downturn, there are segments of the population that continue to travel and they look at Toronto as a great city break, despite the six to seven hours. I think as long as air costs don't go off on us, we can continue to look to that market.

With respect to South America, we've opened up some new relationships in Buenos Aires and in Sao Paulo. Brazil, in particular, has an incredibly vibrant economy, and it's one, because we're in the same time zone, we think we can have some successes with it.

I guess with Asia, we're waiting—Canada does not yet have approved destination status with respect to China. It's a bilateral agreement that they've struck with more than 100 countries, but due to the diplomatic issues between the countries, it hasn't come up yet. We're hoping that Prime Minister Harper's visit this fall puts that back on track. With it in place, we could actively market in China; without it, we can work with them on incentive travel and we can work with their media, but we can't actually enter into partnerships with Chinese travel agencies and airlines that will promote travel.

We're cautiously optimistic. Again, the US, this last year, got passport regulations in place, but they've been buying up passports and applying for them at a pretty strong rate, a very good clip. I think when they started they were at less than 20%; they're somewhere around 25% now in terms of passport ownership. The people we're talking to as potential travellers who are an hour to two hours' flight distance from Toronto, they're travelling on business, they're going abroad on business—they own passports. The question is, does their entire family have passports? And so, the deepening of that will help a great deal.

Mr. Rick Johnson: I guess the impact of the dollar being high right now too will have an impact on that.

Mr. Joel Peters: With the US traveller, you're talking to high-value customers who—and I don't mean to sound callous by this—still have their jobs. The people who are travelling are still employed and they're still earning. So one of the ways we're looking at it is, we may pick up some travel from people that might have been bound for Asia or Europe but are still wanting an international experience, and we're close by. So there are a few bright lights and promises there, but it's measured.

Mr. Rick Johnson: Slight increases wouldn't have that much of an impact, then? Okay, thank you.

The Chair (Mrs. Julia Munro): Thank you. Ms. MacLeod.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Thanks so much, Mr. Peters, for coming today. I found your presentation fascinating. I also want to, again, commend the ROM, because this is going to be our last chance to publicly do that. What a great day it was to find out more about the Royal Ontario Museum and how it benefits not only the city of Toronto but our entire province and country.

I don't need to tell you that we've had tough economic times in the past year and a half. The tourism industry has suffered, and I know that if it's suffering in the national capital, it must be suffering elsewhere in this great nation, and this city would be no different.

On top of that, while we're looking at economic recovery, we're facing a massive tax hike on attractions—an 8% increase. I know the tourism industry has grave concerns about how that's going to impact them—in northern Ontario, in eastern Ontario, and right across the province. I'm wondering, because of the fact that there will be an 8% ticket increase at the ROM and other attractions throughout this city, has Tourism Toronto started planning for that eventual tax hike?

Mr. Joel Peters: It's a difficult question for me to answer. From the point of view of planning, we're expecting it, and in discussions with our members the realization is it's across the board.

For many people who have decided to stay closer to home, it's something they're going to encounter on any trip that they take, so I'm not sure that we can single out Toronto or Ottawa or northern Ontario as being more impacted than other places. I'm not certain I'm the expert on this, but one has to look at other jurisdictions and just do the comparison, and our customers will do that. It's not an exercise we've undertaken at this point in time.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: It's interesting because Ms. Sandals, who spoke just before you, indicated that right now, access for some Ontarians is a challenge, and I think the ROM understood that, with their million-dollar program to get out to schools, the United Way and libraries across the province.

When you're looking at access to probably one of the greatest jewels in this province—with a tax increase from \$74 to close to \$80 per family to travel into the city for a ticket price for a family of four, you have to wonder if it's good policy.

Right now you're speaking to the people who are going to write a report to the Minister of Culture. We're going to be able to make a recommendation in the Legis-

lature to her on fee structures and funding and things like that. Would you recommend that cultural events and cultural places be exempt from the HST so that we can preserve the lower costs, so people can go to our cultural centres across the province without facing a tax hike?

Mr. Joel Peters: It's a difficult question for me to answer. I guess the challenge we have is that in representing organizations that are involved in sports and entertainment, right across the gamut of entertainment, for us to single out culture as being more important than any of the others—

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Yes, we found out yesterday that hockey is even going to be increased by 8%, making it more difficult for kids across the province to play hockey.

Mr. Joel Peters: Again, my sense is that I would leave it to the ROM to balance out the ways in which—as you say, they've done some smart things already to provide targeted access to various groups. But on an issue of tax policy, I think I'll beg to—

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Just in general terms, then, and out of pure curiosity, with Tourism Toronto—you've done a remarkable job, and you did a great job here today—wouldn't that be something your own organization would be thinking about?

Mr. Joel Peters: We've had members raise it. Certainly, there are concerns. I think the thing we come back to, in terms of any discussions we've had, is that it is going to be universally applied, so people are going to be dealing with it, whether it's at a Tim's counter buying doughnuts, or on any expenditure. So I wouldn't want to sit here today and say that the panacea to it is to just target the cultural—

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Say you don't just target the cultural thing, but people coming in—and I'm only talking about Tourism Toronto, because I have some curiosity about this. People will be paying a little bit more to come to Toronto, with their gas, and a little bit more in their Internet access fees to search out different things on your website. Do you think it's going to have an impact at all, notwithstanding the cultural aspect, for the whole tourism sector?

Mr. Joel Peters: I think you're going to see our industry respond in creative ways, with packaging, where rates are blended, so that hotels with attractions, with other activities, in terms of one fee—there has been a tremendous level of value promises that have been put into pricing that has come into effect this last year. People are already responding. So I think you're going to continue to see that kind of creativity. But I wouldn't go across the board on things.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Thanks so much. I appreciate your attendance here today.

The Chair (Mrs. Julia Munro): Thank you very much for coming, Mr. Peters. We certainly appreciate you taking the time to be here.

I would just ask committee members to stay back for a moment or two as we consider any kind of responses, any advice to give to research. Otherwise, the committee stands adjourned.

The committee continued in closed session at 1433.

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