

2010 Teddy Waste Award Nominee Background Information

Federal Nominees

Unused Hotel Rooms - Diplomats in Wonderland

Nominated for: "Best set that was never used"

Production Cost: \$1.5 million

Canadian organizers for the 2008 Francophonie Summit in Quebec City dazzled their guests with plenty of space to kick-back between confab sessions, spending \$1.5 million on empty hotel rooms. With 5,525 surplus rooms over the conference's duration at an average cost of \$271 per night, the government had enough space to host the entire National Assembly and Senate of France with more than 2,000 rooms to spare for their supporting cast. While the record number of 'extras' makes this government expenditure a sure nominee, taxpayers peaking through the keyhole may find themselves swept away by a flood of their own tears in a land where this kind of waste is acceptable.

Silver Buyback - Elizabeth, the Silver Age

Nominated for: "Best effects on the silver smokescreen"

Production Cost: \$100,000

In a royal display of waste, federal officials spent nearly \$100,000 of commoners' money to buy back silver and china antiques wrongly sold in an online auction for less than \$4,000. The silver and other items at the Governor General's residence were on loan from Buckingham Palace, but unsuspecting Public Works bureaucrats failed to pay \$500 for an appraisal and accidentally sold what did not belong to Canada. Subjects of the Dominion were left on the hook for \$1,500 in appraisals afterwards and more than \$95,000 to buy back the imperial decorations. For this year's nominations from the Silver Smokescreen, this buyback is in contention for gold.

More information at the [Ottawa Sun](#)

MP Junk-Mail - Inglorious Mailers

Nominated for: "Best children's comedy"

Production Cost: \$10 million

Appealing to younger audiences is not always limited to Question Period for many Members of Parliament. Using privileges known in Ottawa as "10 percenters," MPs shared their sense of humour with Canadians by blanketing doorsteps with junk-mail at a cost of \$10 million in fiscal year 2008-09 alone. These junk-mail flyers can be sent to other MPs' ridings – normally to try and win the seat for their party – and have no effective limit to their number. For adults not familiar with this genre of comedy, a Conservative flyer can be expected to show Michael Ignatieff hugging criminals, while a Liberal flyer might show Stephen Harper kicking a puppy. Even though the Conservatives have a head-start in dominating this category, opposition parties are also in contention and gaining fast.

More information at the [Ottawa Sun](#)

Royal Mint Investigation - Land of the (Not Really) Lost Gold

Nominated for: "Best visual auditing"

Production Cost: \$1.4 million

In a classic treasure hunt-epic, the Royal Canadian Mint spent nearly \$1.4 million on an investigation into \$20 million in missing gold. A twist ending where the gold turned out to not actually be missing all along. Fortunately, the Canadian Taxpayers Federation (CTF) exposed the investigation's costs through Access to Information (ATIP) requests. While the treasure-hunt costs do not include the totals of a police investigation, a PR contract with a consulting firm and polling research with *Angus Reid*, the \$1.4 million is more than enough to land it a nomination in this year's Teddy Waste Awards.

More information at Taxpayer.com

Peguis Band Council Pay - Last of the Millionaire Chiefs

Nominated for: "Best adapted scam-play"

Production Cost: \$3.4 million over two years

No expense was too great for the one Manitoba Band Council's bid to earn a Teddy this year. Nominated by band member whistleblowers that brought secret documents to the CTF, councillors paid themselves – in off-reserve taxable equivalent dollars – between \$265,000 and \$429,000 per year for the task of overseeing a reserve of 7,200 people. If the Prime Minister of Canada earned as much for each person he represented as one such councillor, then he would rake in \$2 billion per year. Since band councils are not required to disclose this information, this may not actually be the Last of the Millionaire Chiefs. Be prepared for a sequel.

More information at Taxpayer.com

Provincial Nominees

Ontario E-Health Scandal - He's Just Not Into Accountability

Nominated for: "Best romance with consultants"

Production Cost: \$1 Billion

To produce a Teddy-worthy nomination, waste needs to have plot twists, intrigue and of course, romance. The McGuinty government's E-Health scandal fits the bill, and the bill cost taxpayers \$1 billion. With government friendly consultants being handed untendered contracts worth \$16 million, consultants billing taxpayers to consult with themselves, firms artificially driving up each others' fees to charge more than contracts were actually worth and the program itself in the end being a total failure. While the consultant-courting scenes bring tears to taxpayers' eyes, it was the denials and cover-ups from the government, coupled with the premier forcing the wrong minister to take the fall that makes this nomination truly heart warming.

More information at CBC News

Nova Scotia MLA Expense Scandal - The Ugly Truth (About Politicians)

Nominated for: "Best supporting role for taxpayers"

Production Cost: Varies by politician

While taxpayers think about money with their heads, politicians think about money with their hands. This nomination explores the age old mystery about the different natures of taxpaying givers and politician redistributors, as the Nova Scotia auditor general discovers that politicians aren't always faithful in this relationship. While Nova Scotia's politicians were able to keep their late-night rendezvous secret for a time, the auditor general caught them in the act with expense claims such as \$8,000 for a generator installed in a politician's home, \$13,500 for luxurious office furniture, \$2,500 for a television and \$800 for an espresso coffee machine. According to the auditor general, Premier Dexter himself joined in the spending orgy with more than \$2,000 on a digital camera and \$5,500 a laptop. Perhaps the most promiscuous spender of them all was Len Goucher, who billed taxpayers for 11 computers, 12 printers, 5 digital cameras, 4 video cameras, 3 ipods and the "Dance Dance Revolution" game for xBox. The Ugly Truth About Politicians can be raunchy at times, but it's worth watching.

More information at [CBC News](#)

Newfoundland Minister's Cellphone Bill - Men Who Stare at Their BlackBerries

Nominated for: "Best & longest script"

Production Cost: \$30,000

Former Newfoundland & Labrador Health Minister Paul Oram stared at his BlackBerry long enough to rack up \$30,000 in bills in just one year, leaving taxpayers staring at their paystubs wondering why they are on the hook. In a single month, the unrepentant and now-resigned minister billed taxpayers \$4,300, meaning that even by the standards of a politician, his script runs a little too long for some to sit through.

More information at [CBC News](#)

BC's Paid Volunteers - Pay it Forward

Nominated for: "Best use of paid extras"

Production Cost: Priceless

This heart-warming story is nominated for the 241 selfless public servants at the Vancouver Olympic Games who volunteered their time in exchange for money. Their paid-volunteerism truly touched Canadians with their sacrifices, especially those real volunteers not working for the government and who were not paid for giving their time. Taxpayers should be filled with hope that the obviously non-critical jobs that these volunteers were filling outside of the Olympics are unnecessary and can be eliminated. Pay it forward Mister Premier.

More information at [Taxpayer.com](#)

Municipal Nominees

Toronto's Paid Fake Homeless - Slumdog Hundredaire

Nominated for: "Best acting"

Production Cost: \$10,000 (approximate)

A riches to rags story, the City of Toronto's Slumdog Hundredaire was nominated for its plan to hire extras at a price of \$100 gift cards each to fake homelessness for a day. The plan to help the poor required that homeless people need not apply for the jobs. The wastefulness of paying people to fake homeless is truly worth of a nomination for "best acting."

More information at the [Toronto Sun](#)

Edmonton's Extravagant Website - State of Play...ing with Other's Money

Nominated for: "Best graphical representation of government"

Production Cost: \$1.4 million

To make a nominee a serious contender in the 21st century, governments need the very best in technology. It was therefore with ease that the City of Edmonton landed itself a spot by spending a planned \$1.4 million on a promotion website aimed at those abroad. Meant to bring people to Edmonton, reports indicate that more than half of the website's visitors are in fact, Edmontonians. If this city's municipal politicians keep spending like this, property taxpayers may start leaving with the same frequency that tourists arrive. At 53,000 visits, it worked out to \$26 per visit.

More information at the [Edmonton Sun](#)

Winnipeg Councillor's Satellite Radio - Star Trick

Nominated for: "Best expense-fiction"

Production Cost: \$739

Triquarter readings by the CTF revealed one Winnipeg city councillor went boldly spending where few had spent before. Freedom of Information requests showed Mike O'Shaughnessy spent \$739 on a satellite radio and channel subscriptions at taxpayers' expense. Although this councillor can now receive signals on various frequencies from space, he cannot transmit any justification to taxpayers. When it comes to beaming money out of our wallets, let's hope that the remake is better than the original series.

More information at [Taxpayer.com](#)

Calgary Council's Dry Cleaning - Taken (To the Cleaners)
Nominated for: "Best costume"
Production Cost: \$6,700

Members of Calgary's City Council took taxpayers to the Dry Cleaners to the tune of \$6,700. While the world's oldest profession may not require clothing to function at work, the world's second oldest profession – politics – is like almost every other profession and does require clothing. Perhaps these politicians were not aware that wearing clothes to work is a regular job requirement.

More information at the [Calgary Herald](#)

Lifetime Achievement

MP and Senator Pensions - The Pension Hangover
Production Cost: \$120,000 (example)

The headache felt after politicians leave the rhetorical binge of Parliament is not felt by those who enjoyed the party, but by taxpayers forced to pick up the tab for their MPs' gold-plated pensions. While most workers in the private sector have no generous pension to look to – relying on their savings, CPP or small pensions – MPs and most of the public-sector guzzle taxpayers' money with extravagant defined-benefit pension plans. A backbench MP with absolutely no extra bonuses would need only to work 10 years to receive a pension today of \$46,000. Unfortunately, what happens in Ottawa, doesn't stay in Ottawa.