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NEWS COLUMNISTS

Paul Jackson

Tue, November 27, 2007



Come clean on contracts

By PAUL JACKSON



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Premier Ed Stelmach --
- after capitulating to
the anti-oil industry
lobby -- now appears to
be able to take a stand.

But on the wrong issue.

Stelmach apparently
doesn't believe Alberta
taxpayers have the
right to know how and
why some of their
money is being spent.

Our premier is refusing
to release details of
government contracts
with two high-ranking
Progressive Conservatives.

He says the contracts given to Rod Love and Murray Smith are a "private" matter.

Ah, ah!

Love was a onetime adviser to Premier Ralph Klein, and Smith was minister of
intergovernmental affairs, who got the plum job of being Alberta's representative
in Washington.

The premier, in refusing to make public details of the contracts, was responding to
a ruling by the provincial privacy commissioner who said there was no impediment
at all to making the contracts public.

So, we must ask the premier why the secrecy, for surely there is there is nothing
to hide here?

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	Now, Love is considered by some to be a political whiz for successfully getting Klein elected as both mayor and premier, and making sure operations in both offices ran smoothly.
<b>Features</b>	
Auto Preview	
Calgary Flames	Yes, a truly smart political operator.
Know Your News?	That said, when he tried to get himself elected as an MLA, he lost embarrassingly.
Mike Drew	
Nurse of the Month	Then there was that time he backed the turncoat Belinda Stronach's bid for the federal Conservative leadership. Recall the Paris Hilton of Canada?
RV Living	
Snow Scene	Of course, this airhead lost, too, and later showed her true colours by joining Paul Martin's Liberals.
Travel	
UFC Blog	One guesses even the smartest of political strategists make a wrong turn now and again.
Wag Magazine	Smith, a congenial type, has a long political record.
Welcome to Calgary	
	First elected to the legislature in 1993, he did a stint as minister of economic development and tourism, then as minister of labour, and also as energy minister.
	He also chalked up a solid record as an entrepreneur.
<b>What's On</b>	So both these fellows have a lot of credibility behind them.
Club Crawl	Yet, why are Albertans not allowed to know details of the contracts given to them by the government, and how much of our tax money is involved?
Dine Out	
Concert Listings	It simply doesn't make sense.
Movie Guide	
At The Zoo	Indeed, this secrecy must be raising suspicions about the governments modus operandi to political insiders.
	Patronage can be good or bad.
	If it is given to competent individuals and there is a real need for the chores they have been assigned, that's fine.
<b>Classifieds</b>	
Canoe Classifieds	But if it's just to help out on the buddy-buddy system, it's a disgrace.
Jobboom.com	Every government gets involved in patronage, and, the longer in power, the deeper its patronage machine.
Autonet.ca	
Dating	
<b>SUNshine Girl</b>	
	The seamiest aspect of patronage occurs in the advertising and public relations area -- between elections, lavish contracts are handed out, paid for by taxpayers -- and when an election campaign goes into play, the admen and PR men work for the party for free.
	On the positive side, there are studies that need to be made in professional fields and, rather than having a permanent staff of professionals on the government payroll, it's a better deal to hire individuals when needed, particularly people who can be trusted.
<b>On Canoe</b>	Often solid party supporters.
Comics	All this said, Stelmach had better learn we no longer live in an era when the government could do what it wanted behind closed doors.
Crossword	
Horoscopes	Mr. Premier, Albertans are entitled to know the details of these and other similar contracts.
Lotteries	
TV Listings	Now, how about coming clean?
Max Haines	<b>Next story: Tories forsake their friends</b>
<b>Services</b>	
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