



Monday » October
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We want our money back

The Edmonton Journal

Monday, October 08, 2007

Re: "Failure to collect royalties unforgivable: Don't make mistake of conflating auditor general's finding with review panel," by Lorne Gunter, Oct. 5.

Lorne Gunter states that as much as \$6 billion in royalties was not collected by our existing tax regime "due to inadequate bookkeeping and bureaucratic and political inertia." This amounts to \$2,000 per Albertan.

When \$7 per Albertan went missing from the federal treasury in the sponsorship affair, Gunter and every other Conservative developed paroxysmal symptoms and demanded a full inquiry.

Yet in this case, there is no such demand. Indeed, no one is asking for any kind of forensic audit.

It is easy to plead stupidity, sloppiness, laziness, inertia, bureaucratic malaise and many other syndromes to cover something that may be much more sinister. This situation demands a criminal investigation.

When such a huge amount of taxpayers' money vanishes, there must be an accurate determination of the circumstances and a full and determined effort to recover the loss. For the long term, would it not be useful to have a competent agency working under clear legislation to administer the collection of a revenue stream exceeding \$10 billion annually?

Emil Bizon, Edmonton

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