

Backgrounder: Teddy Waste Awards 2023

Federal

Governor General Mary Simon (Winner)

Nominated for: Racking up a nearly six-figure tab on fancy airplane food during a week-long trip to the Middle East.

Cost: \$99,362

You know what's hard to do? Outspend Prime Minister Justin Trudeau.

But Governor General Mary Simon said hold my beef Wellington. Simon managed to outspend Trudeau's [annual grocery bill](#) on one-week to the Middle East when her and her 29-person entourage spent \$99,362 on in-flight catering, according to [flight receipts](#) obtained by the Canadian Taxpayers Federation through an access-to-information request.

Simon [told](#) Canadians the "meals are not very extravagant on these trips" and "they're pretty much like airline meals."

You be the judge.

The flight menus included "beef Wellington with red jus" and "pan fried chicken scallopini in creamy mushroom wine reduction sauce." Buttery chicken tikka masala, apple and cranberry stuffed pork tenderloin, beef carpaccio and about \$190 worth of "VIP sliced fruit" were also on the menus. That's not exactly "like airline meals," as Simon claimed.

But don't worry taxpayers, the government is taking this issue very seriously.

The bureaucrats tasked with trotting Simon around the globe promised to [reduce future flight costs](#). They say they will reduce meal options, limit special requests and offer "minimal" snacks.

"Drink garnishes will be eliminated from service," the government's chief of protocol Stewart Wheeler said.

No more drinks with twist? Oh, the sacrifice.

Sources:

<https://nationalpost.com/news/politics/beef-wellington-230-flowers-more-details-on-how-the-governor-general-spent-99k-on-a-middle-east-trip>

Global Affairs Canada (Nominee)

Nominated for: Organizing shows where seniors tell their sex stories.

Cost: \$12,520

Global Affairs Canada spent \$12,520 organizing shows where seniors talked about their sex lives in front of a live audience.

Through Global Affairs' Mission Cultural fund, the Canadian government gave funds to the Toronto-based group Mammalian Diving Reflex to organize live stage performances in Austria, Australia and Taiwan.

The show is called "All the Sex I've Ever Had," and stars senior citizens who are invited on stage to recount "everything they can remember and care to share about their romantic and sexual lives."

Sources:

<https://www.taxpayer.com/newsroom/government-funds-senior-sex-story-shows>

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau (Nominee)

Nominated for: Spending \$6,000 per night on a hotel room during the Queen's funeral in London, England.

Cost: \$30,000

The next nominee was the biggest mystery in Canada for months.

Some mysterious person spent \$6,000 per night on a hotel room in London for the Queen's funeral. And nobody knew who it was – except for 38 million Canadians.

The room was booked for five nights for a total cost of \$30,000, [according](#) to the *Toronto Sun*.

"Several top-shelf hotels including The Four Seasons, The Langham, The Savoy, even the Shangri La all offer lower prices than the Corinthia," the *Toronto Sun* reported.

Bureaucrats bent the rules trying to hide the truth about the hotel room. They even said it would be a security risk to reveal who stayed in the room months prior.

Was the government worried about the Terminator travelling back in time to that room?

The CTF launched a legal fight and, magically, the government managed to admit who stayed in the \$6,000 room: Prime Minister Justin Trudeau.

Sources:

<https://www.cp24.com/mobile/news/trudeau-stayed-in-6-000-london-hotel-suite-for-queen-elizabeth-ii-s-funeral-1.6326403>

<https://nationalpost.com/news/taxpayers-federation-legal-action-hotel-suite>

The Canada Border Services Agency (Nominee)

Nominated for: Spending \$54 million on the ArriveCan app when tech experts estimated the development costs around \$250,000.

Cost: \$54 million

The federal government spent \$54 million building the ArriveCan App.

Techies couldn't believe it cost so much. So, over the Thanksgiving weekend, two independent techies recreated the app and were done before Thanksgiving dinner on Sunday.

Techies said the cost to develop the app should have been about \$250,000.

Instead of months and months and \$54 million, the federal government could have bought a couple of nerds a case of Red Bull.

Sources:

<https://www.theglobeandmail.com/politics/article-arrivecan-app-spending-government/>

<https://nationalpost.com/news/canada/in-two-days-a-single-programmer-duplicated-arrivecan-an-app-that-cost-ottawa-54-million>

Isabelle Hudon, CEO of the Business Development Bank of Canada

Nominated for: For flying her personal driver from Montreal to Vancouver ... twice.

Cost: \$8,100

What do you bring if you travel to Vancouver? An umbrella? A rain coat?

You probably don't bring a personal driver unless you're Isabelle Hudon, the CEO of the Business Development Bank of Canada.

Two times she travelled to Vancouver and brought her own personal driver, costing taxpayers \$8,100.

This included a two-day trip to make a surprise visit to employees gathered in Whistler, B.C.

Apparently, Hudon has never heard of hailing a cab.

Sources:

<https://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/business-development-bank-canada-hudon-mckinsey-1.6720914>

Volkswagen (Nominee)

Nominated for: Taking \$13 billion from taxpayers to build a \$7-billion factory.

Cost: \$13 billion

There's stiff competition for the worst corporate welfare deal in Canadian history. You're up against Quebec spending \$55 million on zeppelins. Or Loblaw getting [\\$12 million](#) for some fridges. And then there's always Bombardier.

But Canadians may have just witnessed the biggest single example of corporate welfare.

Trudeau's giving Volkswagen \$13 billion to build a \$7-billion electric vehicle battery factory. We don't know too many people who would brag about paying twice the sticker price for a Jetta.

Sure, the government will talk about the 3,000 jobs the corporate welfare will create. But that means each job will cost taxpayers more than \$4 million.

A better jobs program would be to hand each worker a winning lottery ticket.

Sources:

<https://www.theglobeandmail.com/business/article-new-volkswagen-ev-battery-plant-in-ontario-to-create-3000-jobs/>

Provincial

Société de l'Assurance Automobile du Québec (Winner)

Nominated for: Launching an online software to reduce the number of bureaucrats, then hiring an extra 150 bureaucrats to fix the mess the app created.

Cost: \$458 million

Normally, apps are awesome because they let us order everything from socks to sushi without leaving the couch.

In Quebec, a government app forced drivers to line up around the block trying to get their licence renewed in person.

Société de l'Assurance Automobile du Québec launched an online program to make it easier for Quebecers to renew their licenses and reduce the number of bureaucrats.

But the software created so many problems the province had to hire an extra 150 bureaucrats. The app cost taxpayers \$458 million.

All they had to do to reduce the number of bureaucrats is what everyone else does: Nothing. Quebec is the only province that forces drivers to renew their license every year.

The government can't even do a job like cutting bureaucrats without hiring more bureaucrats.

Sources:

<https://ici.radio-canada.ca/nouvelle/1957791/saaqclic-societe-assurances-automobiles-sherbrooke>

<https://policyoptions.irpp.org/magazines/march-2023/duration-drivers-licence-provinces/>

Saskatchewan Finance Minister Donna Harpauer (Nominee)

Nominated for: Paying for a chartered flight to go to North Battleford.

Cost: \$8,000

If you had \$8,000 to take a chartered flight, where would you go?

Vegas? Los Angeles? New York? Saskatchewan Finance Minister Donna Harpauer decided to go to North Battleford.

North Battleford is only four hours away from Regina by car. If you leave Regina early, you can stop at Timmies, still get to North Battleford before lunch and be home in time for dinner.

We're not sure what's worse: The \$8,000 tab or the fact that Harpauer used a charter plane to go to North Battleford, which she could probably see from her house.

Sources:

<https://globalnews.ca/news/9000671/sask-minister-harpauer-defends-north-battleford-flight-cost/>

Government of Ontario (Nominee)

Nominated for: Giving political parties a payday advance.

Cost: \$50 million

A lot of people complain that politics is too divided and there's too much arguing.

Breaking news: Something all parties in Ontario agree on.

It's taking more tax dollars to fund political attack ads.

Premier Doug Ford promised to [end](#) political welfare. Instead, he gave political parties \$50 million, including a \$10-million payday advance, to make more election attack ads.

Ontario's political parties finally set their partisan instinct aside, buried the hatchet and bellied up to the trough.

Sources:

<https://www.taxpayer.com/newsroom/ontarians-footing-the-bill-for-election-attack-ads>

Quebec Ministry of Economy and Innovation (Nominee)

Nominated for: "Investing" in Zeppelins.

Cost: \$55 million

Politicians always talk about "investing" in innovative technology. They talk about synergy. About progress. Carbon capture. Electric batteries. To infinity and beyond.

The government of Quebec just discovered ground-breaking technology to “invest” in.

Wait, sorry, this *was* ground-breaking technology a hundred years ago.

The government of Quebec is dumping \$55 million into Zeppelins. Yes, those flying gas balloons.

Rumour has it Quebec’s next big investment is in steam engines.

Sources:

<https://www.tvanouvelles.ca/2022/06/30/aerospatiale-quebec-investit-55-m-dans-flying-whales>

Municipal

Charlottetown councillor Alanna Jankov (Winner)

Nominated for: Building her driveway around a telephone pole then sticking taxpayers with the tab to remove the pole.

Cost: \$4,600

Where’s the worst possible place to build your driveway?

Charlottetown Coun. Alanna Jankov has the answer: Around a telephone pole.

“The landowner ... has proposed to move his driveway to an area where this pole has been for decades,” wrote Allan Meston, a field construction supervisor with Bell.

Who should’ve paid to remove that telephone pole? If you guessed the person who decided to build their driveway around the pole that’s been there for years, you’d be wrong.

Jankov stuck taxpayers with a \$4,600 bill to remove the pole.

Taxpayers have a legitimate question for Jankov: Did you notice the pole before you built the driveway? If not, then maybe driving isn’t for you.

Sources:

<https://www.taxpayer.com/newsroom/charlottetown-taxpayers-paid-4,600-to-remove-utility-pole-outside-coun.-jankov%E2%80%99s-house>

City of Saskatoon

Nominated for: Trying to attract tourists with bright lights in back alleys.

Cost: Almost \$100,000

There are many beautiful getaways in Canada.

The mountains in Banff. The wineries in B.C. Niagara Falls.

Saskatoon wanted to attract some visitors to its city.

Their bright idea to attract tourists: Spend \$100,000 putting up lights in a back alley behind a bar right next to a dumpster.

“This one-of-a-kind lighting project invites residents and tourists to visit spaces less travelled,” said the city’s press release.

Silly Saskatoon, instead of going to a back alley to go down on one knee and propose, you’re going back there to hold someone’s hair if they need to barf.

Sources:

<https://saskatoon.ctvnews.ca/decorative-alley-lights-cost-saskatoon-taxpayers-nearly-100k-1.6286797>

City of Calgary (Nominee)

Nominated for: Flushing money down the toilet while the toilet is closed off from the public.

Cost: \$5,000 per year

We often point to politicians flushing money down the toilet. Unfortunately, the city of Calgary took us too literally.

Calgary spent \$250,000 to build an outdoor toilet downtown. It cost \$50,000 a year to keep the toilet running. The city shut the toilet down and confirmed it would cost \$5,000 annually to keep the facility closed.

You know what they say: when you gotta go, you gotta go.

Unless you’re in Calgary. You can’t go, but you still gotta pay for it.

Sources:

<https://calgary.ctvnews.ca/business-owners-area-residents-raise-concerns-as-public-toilet-sits-closed-for-repairs-1.5940353>

City of Montreal (Nominee)

Nominated for: Copying Calgary and wasting money on a giant ring of its own.

Cost: \$2 million (\$500,000 from the city and \$1.5 million from the provincial government)

If there's one thing the city of Calgary is good at, it's blowing taxpayers money on crappy public art.

But Montreal said: Tiens ma bière.

After Calgary spent [\\$470,000](#) on its big blue ring, Montreal decided to build a giant ring of its own which cost taxpayers \$2 million in total.

Sources:

<https://www.journaldemontreal.com/2022/04/26/une-nouvelle-installation-artistique-de-5m-au-centre-ville-de-montreal>

City of Winnipeg (Nominee)

Nominated for: The traffic light fiasco.

Cost: Millions of dollars

Something funny's been happening on the streets of Winnipeg.

Take the intersection of Osborne Street and St. Mary Avenue, for example.

In 2013, work crews dug up the crosswalk and swapped out the traffic lights. Three years later, in 2016, they were back, swapping out the poles and lights once again. And three years after that, in 2019, they were back for a third round of unnecessary work.

And this has been happening at dozens of intersections all over the city.

It would be cheaper to change out the bureaucrats behind these make-work projects instead of continuously swapping out the traffic lights.

<https://www.winnipegfreepress.com/featured/2022/02/23/red-light-green-light-no-oversight>

2023 Lifetime Achievement Award Winner: The Canada Revenue Agency

Nominated for: Giving pandemic subsidies to ineligible businesses, people in jail, teenagers and hundreds of dead people.

Cost: Potentially more than \$32 billion

The Lifetime Achievement is our most prestigious award.

Past recipients have included everyone from premiers and prime ministers to Bev Oda and Bombardier.

This year's winner gives us the answer to the question: What do inmates, dead people and teenagers all have in common? They all received the Canada Emergency Response Benefit.

The Canada Revenue Agency gave the CERB to:

- 190,254 people who quit their job instead of losing it due to the pandemic;
- 692 people who received a duplicate payment benefit;
- 1,522 people who were in jail;
- 704 people who did not live in Canada;
- 434 people under the age of 15; and,
- 391 dead people.

The feds handed out potentially more than \$32 billion in ineligible or suspicious payments, according to the Auditor General.

Usually, if you take money that doesn't belong to you, you might end up in jail. In Justin Trudeau's Canada, we got the reverse: first you go to jail, then the government sends you money you're not supposed to have.

This year's winner also puts a scary twist for taxpayers on M. Night Shyamalan's *The Sixth Sense*. In Canada, we don't see dead people, taxpayers subsidize dead people.

Here's the strangest part: If you owe the CRA a toonie, they'll send the hounds after you. They'll shake down a waitress because she forgot to carry the one when she was doing the taxes on her tips. But the billions of dollars sent out the door to ineligible recipients? Suddenly the CRA's too busy to get it back.

Because it sent buckets of cash to dead people, inmates, ineligible businesses and teenagers during the pandemic, and can't be bothered to fully investigate it, the CRA is a worthy recipient of this year's lifetime achievement award.

Sources:

https://www.oag-bvg.gc.ca/internet/docs/parl_oag_202212_10_e.pdf

<https://www.theglobeandmail.com/politics/article-covid-wage-benefits-cra/>