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Accountability is lacking 1

Nobody is overseeing spending by municipalities in B.C.

Re: Municipal auditor threatens lawsuit over firing, March 24

The current fiasco over the Auditor General for Local Government has deeper roots, all the way back to Premier Gordon Campbell. He scrapped the old Municipal Act and replaced it with the watered-down Community Charter and Local Government Act.

In the process of "empowering municipalities," the much-feared Office of The Inspector of Municipalities was disbanded. That office ensured that every municipality adhered to the provincial statutes and was an effective, ongoing and vigilant auditor of their finances.

Today, no one is policing municipalities. The Ombudsman's Office is not capable of any timely action and has no corrective powers. The minister responsible, Coralee Oakes, doesn't want to hear from any aggrieved victim of municipal shenanigans. The local auditors, required to produce annual audited financial statements, have become internal auditors rather than reporting to the public. Despite legislation requiring them to respond to public concerns, they refuse to do so because (as noted above), nobody is enforcing the statutes.

Rogue municipalities can and do flout the law and have been further protected from public accountability by the recently-extended terms of elected office. Campbell may have started the rotting of municipal governance, but Christy Clark, rather than fixing the systemic problem, is making it worse. JOHN ALLEN Former multi-term mayor and councillor, Harrison Hot Springs

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