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## No free lunch



The media jumped on the case of Miroslav Poche, who let slip to HN that he returned some of the money to ČSSD that he earned on the supervisory board of PRE utility, but reporters are dancing around the real issue. Whether tax laws were broken is a relatively minor matter. The real question is whether political parties - and not just ČSSD - are naming people to key posts in business with the expectation of kickbacks. If so, this is institutionalized corruption, of which possible tax evasion is just one element. We wrote about this phenomenon two years ago in "[Pass the hat for poor Martin](#)." Since then, the attractiveness of working at ČEZ has declined, which could help explain why its M&A chief, Vladimír Schmalz, is running in the Prague elections. There are rumors that ČEZ's foreign activities have made him richer than poor Martin ... but that he hasn't been remembering his political protectors enough.



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