

Editorial ? Maybe drawing from the ranks of winners is the answer

It was something of a surprise to see Ontario's Progressive Conservatives reach outside the elected caucus to pick a new leader over the weekend, but we also think there's a very good chance it's all going to work out well in the long run.

Barrie MP Patrick Brown bested long-time party stalwart Christine Elliott, taking 61.8 per cent of the vote. While not quite a landslide, the mandate he received from the party faithful was solid.

And he might just represent the kind of fresh blood the party needs.

We have a hard time believing the Liberals have been in power going on 12 years because the electorate is particularly fond of them, nor do we think there was anything they hated about the previous leaders. Tim Hudak struck most people as a nice guy, but perhaps a little too naïve. He spent much of last year's campaign watching his message get twisted rather than applying himself to straightening things out again.

Previous leader John Tory didn't do much better, but evidence clearly indicates he's not a political slouch. He was elected Mayor of Toronto last fall, and by all accounts so far, seems to be holding himself well in that office.

Liberals, on the other hand, seem to have been holding onto office by sleight of hand. Opponents have been chomping at the bit for the next election, dreaming of the day when they can toss the Liberals back into Opposition, if not farther. Yet they are still in power, and likely to remain there for at least the next three years.

Perhaps the Tories at Queen's Park have forgotten what it takes to win elections. If that's the case, then they could probably use a new leader who comes from a proven winning team. Say what you like about Stephen Harper and company, they handily won a majority the last time they faced the electorate. They will likely have to go to the polls later this year. While it's premature to make predictions at this stage, we would say their chances of another majority are not out of the question.

Brown represents fresh eyes, fresh ideas, youth and energy, and perhaps a different line of attack to take against the Grits.

The fact he's not been in provincial politics until now should not be too much of a problem. He might be an obscure MP, but he's already been able demonstrate and ability to draw in votes from all over the province.

Good days might still be ahead for the party.