

Editorial ? What do the Tories have to do to win?

A little more than a month ago, in this space in the Citizen, we wrote that the upcoming provincial election was Progressive Conservative Leader Tim Hudak's to lose.

And as events clearly showed us last Thursday, that's exactly what happened.

The campaign which we have all just come through was prompted by a budget that seemed to go to great lengths to appease the New Democrats. And NDP?Leader Andrea Horwath, on behalf of her party, refused to support it. With the Liberals under Kathleen Wynne and the NDP scrapping for the left of centre votes, we would have thought that left a wide opening for Hudak and his Progressive Conservatives. Yet Wynne and company were handed a majority by the electorate, meaning they don't have to worry much about opposition for the next couple of years.

It is a puzzle, especially considering the Grits have been plagued with scandals for the last several months. And it is a fact that their track record for keeping campaign promises has left a great deal to be desired. We think back to Dalton McGuinty looking into cameras in 2003, telling us he would not raise taxes. That promise went straight into the bucket with his government's first budget. And things have not greatly improved.

The fault does not entirely belong with the Liberals, we would argue. The electorate, meaning we the voters, keep returning them to power, despite the scandals like Ornge and gas plants.

And Hudak can take some of the blame too. He was trying to sell the electorate on the notion of trying to cut government expenditures by reducing the size of bureaucracy, largely through attrition. Yet the other parties, with help from unions, started telling public servants that their jobs were in danger. They were able to get that message out, and Hudak let them get away with it. We now look forward to four more years of Liberal government. There may be more scandals, although we will agree that Wynne deserves the chance to demonstrate whether or not she can stay out of trouble.

But considering the Grits' track record, we're not optimistic about seeing the line held on taxes, government spending being controlled or budgets being balanced any time soon.

We fear there might be more of a big mess created in the next four years. And it's the electorate that will have let it happen.