

Steady hand

SHORT EDITORIAL

Those who feared the Tory government of Ontario Premier Doug Ford would take the slash-and-burn approach to deal with the \$15-billion deficit inherited from the Wynne Liberals must be somewhat relieved that the machete and matches have not been hauled out.

In the fall economic update delivered last week by Finance Minister Vic Fedeli, it became obvious that no scorched earth policy would be adopted.

It was more slow as it goes.

In a few short months, the Tories have managed to chip \$500 million from the deficit with no visible wounding of programs most Ontarians look upon as essential.

This was no small task, but at least it is a step in the right direction when it comes to righting the books.

Instead of mass firings within the bloated public service, a hiring freeze has been imposed to allow the annual attrition rate to thin down the numbers.

Remember how OPSEU leader Smokey Thomas argued it was wrong to go after his union members without first looking at the bureaucracy?

He reminded us, for example, that for every five of his workers there is a bureaucrat overseeing them in middle-management nirvana making in excess of \$100,000 annually.

That's a lot of bosses for so few workers.

Progressives in the media are already decrying the absorption of the Ontario Child Advocate office into the provincial ombudsman's portfolio, and the elimination of the French Language Services Commissioner, a toothless optics-driven make-work project from its outset.

Neither bothers us a whit.

And nor does it surprise us that the Ford contingent axed the environment commissioner since it is the economy, and returning dollars to the taxpayers, that must be this government's main priority.

The result of Ford eliminating the Wynne Liberals' tax on carbon has already giving us some relief at the pumps, and will save us more dollars as we heat our homes this winter.

It was a long time coming.

Then there is the tax-credit for low-income families and the proposal to have minimum-wage workers pay no provincial income tax whatsoever.

It's an excellent start on the long road to long-overdue balanced budgets.