

Quebec premier announces resignation

MONTREAL — Stung by defeat in the secession referendum, Quebec Premier Jacques Parizeau said Tuesday he plans to resign. He also apologized for blaming the loss on non-French immigrants.

Parizeau maintained staunch support, however, for the separatist cause that has been at the heart of his long political career. He said his Parti Quebecois would choose new leadership capable of achieving independence for the mostly French-speaking province.

Parizeau, 65, was elected premier last year after promising to hold a

referendum on secession. His side lost Monday, but only narrowly — 50.6 percent to 49.4 percent.

But at a time when the separatists could have been taking heart at their strong showing, Parizeau shocked even his allies with a bellicose speech at campaign headquarters, blaming the defeat on immigrants.

"It's true we have been defeated, but basically by what?" Parizeau said. "By money and the ethnic vote."

Parizeau's co-leader in the separatist camp, Lucien Bouchard, distanced himself from the ethnic remarks Tuesday, signaling that the

premier's position had become untenable.

Parizeau expressed regret for his phrasing, saying he used terms "that could have been much better chosen." But he reiterated his view that Quebec's French-speaking majority had, in effect, been thwarted by non-francophones.

About 90 percent of English-speaking and immigrant Quebecers opposed secession, while French Quebecers — 82 percent of the population — voted for independence by a 60-40 margin.

Earlier Tuesday, Bouchard scoffed

at an offer from Prime Minister Jean Chretien to negotiate a new status for Quebec.

"Never again will sovereigntists be begging for anything from the rest of Canada," Bouchard declared. He said Quebec would sit down for talks with Canada only after winning a future independence referendum.

Chretien, chastened by the razor-thin federalist victory Monday, said he would try to get other provincial premiers to support changes that would decentralize the government and recognize Quebec as a distinct society.

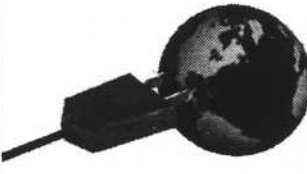
Bouchard described his reaction to

Chretien's offer as "boredom" and "big yawns."

"Nobody's going to get us sovereigntists involved in another 30 years of sterile discussions," he said.

Bouchard reiterated the separatists' promise to mount another independence drive.

Though most of Canada welcomed the outcome of Monday's vote, Quebec was uneasy. Montreal police reported 40 arrests after supporters of the rival sides brawled, and a homemade bomb was found at offices of the federalist Liberal Party.



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DEA secret operations revealed

BOGOTA, Colombia — U.S. drug agents operate more independently in Colombia than they've acknowledged, in one case searching a Cali cartel leader's farm for bodies, according to taped conversations between American officials.

On the tapes, which Washington privately acknowledges are authentic though possibly edited, U.S. officials also discuss efforts to have cartel figures and witnesses against them sent, or lured to, the United States for trial.

The revelations come as U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration operations are under increasing criticism by some Colombians.

Colombian Congressman Carlos Alonso Lucio released excerpts of the tapes in early October and later gave reporters complete copies. Although Lucio said the tapes indicate the DEA operates with too much autonomy in Colombia, U.S. officials have accused him of being an ally of the Cali cartel.

It would be in the interest of drug traffickers to diminish the DEA's role in Colombia, which supplies 80 percent of the world's cocaine and has a police force riddled with corruption.

Though the DEA officially claims its agents merely accompany Colum-

bian forces on missions and provides intelligence, the taped conversations, elements of which were confirmed by U.S. Ambassador Myles Frechette, show they sometimes plan and lead operations.

The tapes also suggest that U.S. officials are making plans to bring captured drug traffickers to the United States, even though Colombia's constitution bars extradition of its citizens.

One conversation alluding to this point is between Robert Nieves, director of the DEA's International Affairs office in Washington; Tony Senneca, the DEA chief in Colombia; and a woman identified on tape as Mary Lee Warren. Sources in Washington identified Mary Lee Warren as a deputy assistant attorney general who supervises international drug trafficking cases. Her office refused to comment.

DEA spokesman James McGivney said Nieves retired last Friday, but that it had nothing to do with the tapes.

Nieves introduces Mary Lee into the conversation with a warning that he and Senneca have been speaking cryptically.

NIEVES: ... I shared with you a

memo that Tony wrote a while back where he talked about doing some innovative and bold things, and possibly relaxing certain, um, prohibitions we are currently working under ...

They confirm they are on the same wavelength, then discuss ways they could proceed, in Nieves words, "if we actually get our backs against the wall on some individuals."

NIEVES: We can find creative ways of accomplishing some things, perhaps?

MARY LEE: I want to find — let me just be clear. First in my mind is finding creative ways of getting bodies here.

NIEVES: Yeah, okay, I'm with you (laughs). That's the goal.

MARY LEE: Bodies to help and bodies as targets ...

A U.S. official, speaking on condition of anonymity, said the three were not discussing plans to snatch traffickers to the United States but conceded they could be talking about luring them to America.

Colombia's drug lords are terrified of U.S. trials, where they face stiff sentences. Traffickers fought Colombia's government in the 1980s to force it to ban extraditions.

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Simpson makes appearance contract

TRENTON, N.J. — Collecting O.J. stuff? How about a signed photo of the infamous Bronco chase for \$159.95? What about courtroom pictures from his murder trial for \$99.95?

Simpson has his first post-acquittal contract to appear at a sports memorabilia show and is working on more appearances-for-profit, agent Mike Gilbert said Tuesday.

Gilbert wouldn't disclose the amount of the flat fee Simpson will receive.

The appearance, scheduled for Feb. 24 in Atlantic City, drew immediate protest from the city's mayor and women's groups.

"I hate to see New Jersey making a hero out of someone who's a convicted wife batterer, and I'd hate to see people come," said Bear Atwood, president of the National Organization for Women's

New Jersey chapter.

According to promotional fliers, Simpson will sign books for \$135 each and helmets, jerseys or footballs for \$185 each. The fliers note in small print: "Mr. Simpson reserves the right to reject any item for signature."

Autographed photos will be offered by mail-order, including the Bronco chase, signed by Simpson and A.C. Cowlings, for \$129.95 or \$159.95, depending on the size, and courtroom scenes, signed by Simpson and lead attorney Johnnie Cochran, for \$99.95.

Simpson was acquitted Oct. 3 of the slayings of his ex-wife Nicole Brown Simpson and her friend Ronald Goldman. Simpson admitted abusing her.

"It is shameful that (Simpson) is signing courtroom photos and Bronco photos," said Tammy Bruce, presi-

dent of the Los Angeles NOW chapter. "Maybe he should also sign autopsy photos."

Gilbert said the "Football Spectacular 4" show is scheduled for the Atlantic City Convention Center. It is sponsored by Triumph Commemorative Covers Inc. of Staten Island, N.Y.

Triumph was still negotiating Tuesday to lease the convention center. Noreen Bodman, spokeswoman for the center, said it has a tentative booking for the February show.

Another Gilbert client — Cowlings — also will appear. Cowling, Simpson's close friend, drove the white Bronco during their infamous low-speed chase on Los Angeles freeways.

Atlantic City Mayor James Whelan said in a statement that he wants the convention center authority "to turn down this exploitative event."

Williams

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motion that sent the case to the appeals court.

Deputy Lancaster County Attorney Joe Kelly said Tuesday that Williams' trial would automatically be assigned for the Dec. 4 jury term. It is highly unlikely the case will be tried that quickly, he said.

"As in all other cases, when it's been so long, you have to go back in and dust it off," Kelly said.

While the prosecution's investigation is complete, Kelly said, the defense is likely to file discovery motions.

The prosecutor was unaware of the appeals court decision until approached Tuesday afternoon by the Daily Nebraskan.

The 10-page court decision issued Tuesday does not rule out the possibility for the case to be reheard on appeal.

"It is possible that, in the event of a guilty verdict on both counts of the information, the trial court may have to confront the possible double-jeopardy implications," the judge wrote.

The Associated Press contributed to this report.

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