



COMMENT

Jean Charest's victory good news for Canada

Lost in the headlines of the fall of Iraq, Mike Weir becoming the first Canadian Masters golf champion and the frightening increase in SARS cases, was the welcome result of the Quebec provincial election.

Liberal leader Jean Charest, an unapologetic federalist, campaigned for a change in Quebec within Canada while Parti Quebecois leader Bernard Landry perfectly matched his party's philosophy — one that was both tired and beaten.

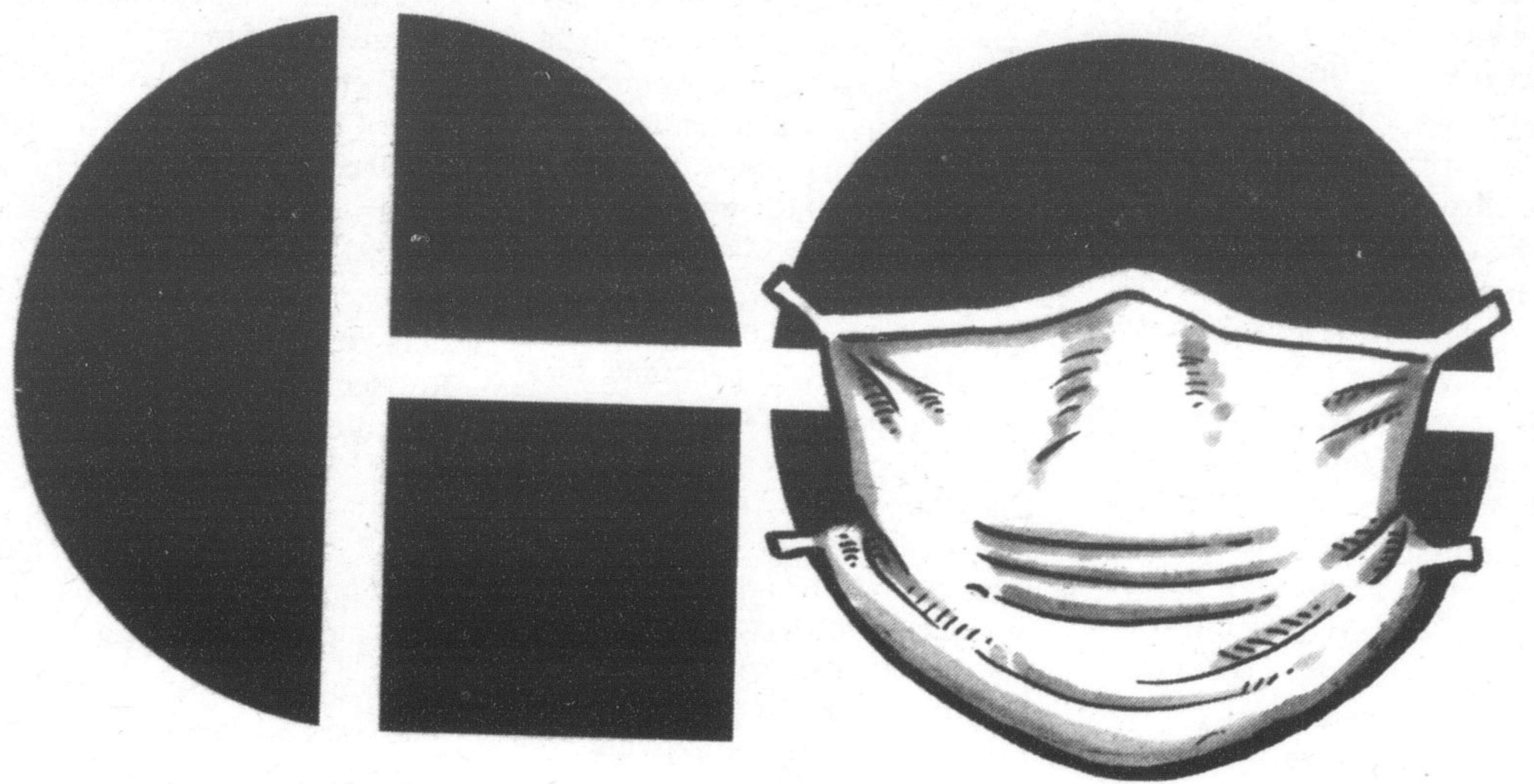
For Canada, Charest's win spells good news.

Surely it has broken the spirit of the sagging separatist movement and saved the country from yet another costly referendum. For the next five years there will, we hope, be stability in Quebec.

The federal government would be wise to listen carefully to Charest's concerns for his province (not to mention those of the other premiers) and not become overconfident that Quebecers have totally discarded sovereignty.

We've seen before in 1995 where that attitude almost took the country.

We don't want a repeat.



NEASE, '03



OUR READERS WRITE

Reader says most Canadians are behind America, only Chretien and Liberals aren't

Dear Editor:

I'm proud of Premier Ernie Eves, Halton MPP Ted Chudleigh and the entire Ontario Progressive Conservative Party for their backing of our American friends.

I even agree with Stephen Harper of the Canadian Alliance party that Prime Minister Jean Chretien has become an embarrassment to Canada along with the rest of his weak-kneed Liberal cohorts in Ottawa.

Mr. Chretien said he would only support a United Nations (UN) initiative, but

since when would defending the sovereignty of Canada become subject to UN approval?

U.S. President George W. Bush believes Saddam Hussein to be a threat to American sovereignty and needs no one's approval to protect his own country.

Canadians are there to support our American friends, only the Liberals in Ottawa are not.

Darryl Demille
Campbellville

Provincial government isn't doing enough to help low-income families, says reader

Dear Editor:

The picture on the front page of The Champion April 11 was delightful. It showed smiling students at J.M. Denyes Public School taking part in a balanced day project.

The rationale for this new project is described as "improving learning conditions for students." As a former teacher, who worked for several years at J.M. Denyes, I applaud this program. It's very important for people to realize and act on the knowledge that a child's success in school is strongly influenced by factors such as adequate physical exercise and a healthy diet.

This knowledge is one of the reasons why I've become more and more concerned about the well-being of children whose families face financial difficulties.

A family with both parents working and earning minimum wage would have an annual income of \$27,400 while welfare for a single parent with a child is \$13,871.

This isn't enough, in either case, to pay rent and feed a family properly. It's not surprising that there has been a marked increase in food bank use and requests for assistance.

It's my belief that we have a moral obligation to provide each child with the best possible start in life. Aside from that, there are also strong economic benefits from having a healthy, well-educated work force. We need to invest in children, all children.

That's why I find it particularly distressing that the current provincial government isn't taking advantage of money offered by the feder-

al government that would be of great benefit to children in families with low incomes.

Ottawa has made \$245 million available to Ontario to build affordable housing, but not one unit has been built. Because housing costs take such a huge bite out of the incomes of poor families, more affordable housing would better their financial circumstances considerably.

The current provincial government's policies in many areas, including education, childcare, the environment and housing, have been detrimental to the children of Ontario.

They should take their responsibility toward all the children of this province much more seriously.

Wendy Schau
Randall Crescent



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Box 248, 191 Main St. E.,
Milton, Ont. L9T 4N9

(905) 878-2341

Editorial Fax: 905-878-4943

Advertising Fax: 905-876-2364

Classified: 905-875-3300

Circulation: 905-878-5947

Ian Oliver **Publisher**

Neil Oliver **Associate Publisher**

Jill Davis **Editor-in-Chief**

Karen Smith **Editor**

Wendy McNab **Advertising Manager**

Steve Crozier **Circulation Manager**

Teri Casas **Office Manager**

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by Steve Nease

