

# Separatist win raises questions

*Issue of Quebec's independence may revive concerns in Washington*

By CHARLES J. HANLEY  
Associated Press Writer  
MONTREAL (AP) — The re-election of the separatist government in Quebec sets the stage for a possibly climactic showdown over keeping Canada whole.

The confrontation may take years to unfold, but the renewed prospect of a fractured Canada is likely to revive some old concerns in Washington.

## analysis

Premier Rene Levesque's Parti Quebecois, which advocates "sovereignty-association" for French-speaking Quebec, meaning political independence with continued close economic ties to English-speaking Canada, won 80 of the 122 seats in the provincial legislature in Monday's election.

The opposition Liberal Party took the other 42 seats. The popular vote was closer — with 70 percent of the vote counted, the PQ had 1,215,523, or 49 percent, and the Liberals 1,147,160, or 46 percent.

Political analysts here agree that the PQ was re-elected because of its "good government" appeal, not on the separatist issue. But the results nonetheless mean that the party dedicated to taking Quebec out of Canada is stronger than ever. When it first gained power, in November 1976 elections, it won only 41 percent of the vote and 71 seats in a 110-member legislature.

The pace of future events will be dictated by the PQ's own timetable and by the kaleidoscopic nature of Canadian politics.

Three of every five Quebec voters firmly rejected the PQ's separatist option last May, when the Levesque government asked in a referendum for authority to negotiate sovereignty-association with the rest of Canada.

Levesque has pledged that in its second term, which will probably last four years, the PQ will not hold another referendum on sovereignty-association.

One possible scenario: the PQ will fight a 1984 or 1985 election against the Liberals on the separatist issue; if it wins, it will try to force the rest of

Canada into negotiations; it will then present the final breakaway scheme to Quebec voters in a referendum.

Much now depends on events elsewhere in Canada.

Prime Minister Pierre Elliott Trudeau is fighting in Ottawa to push through a constitutional reform plan that is opposed by Levesque and seven of Canada's nine other provincial premiers, who contend it expands federal powers at the expense of provincial autonomy.

The outcome of that battle could arouse more anti-federal feeling among French Quebecers who have long chafed under English-Canadian domination.

In a way, the French Quebecer Trudeau may become a victim of Monday's vote here. He had planned to step down as prime minister when the constitutional reform was complete, possibly early next year. But his successor would probably be an English-Canadian of his own Liberal Party, or a member of the opposition Progressive Conservative Party, which has almost no support in Quebec.

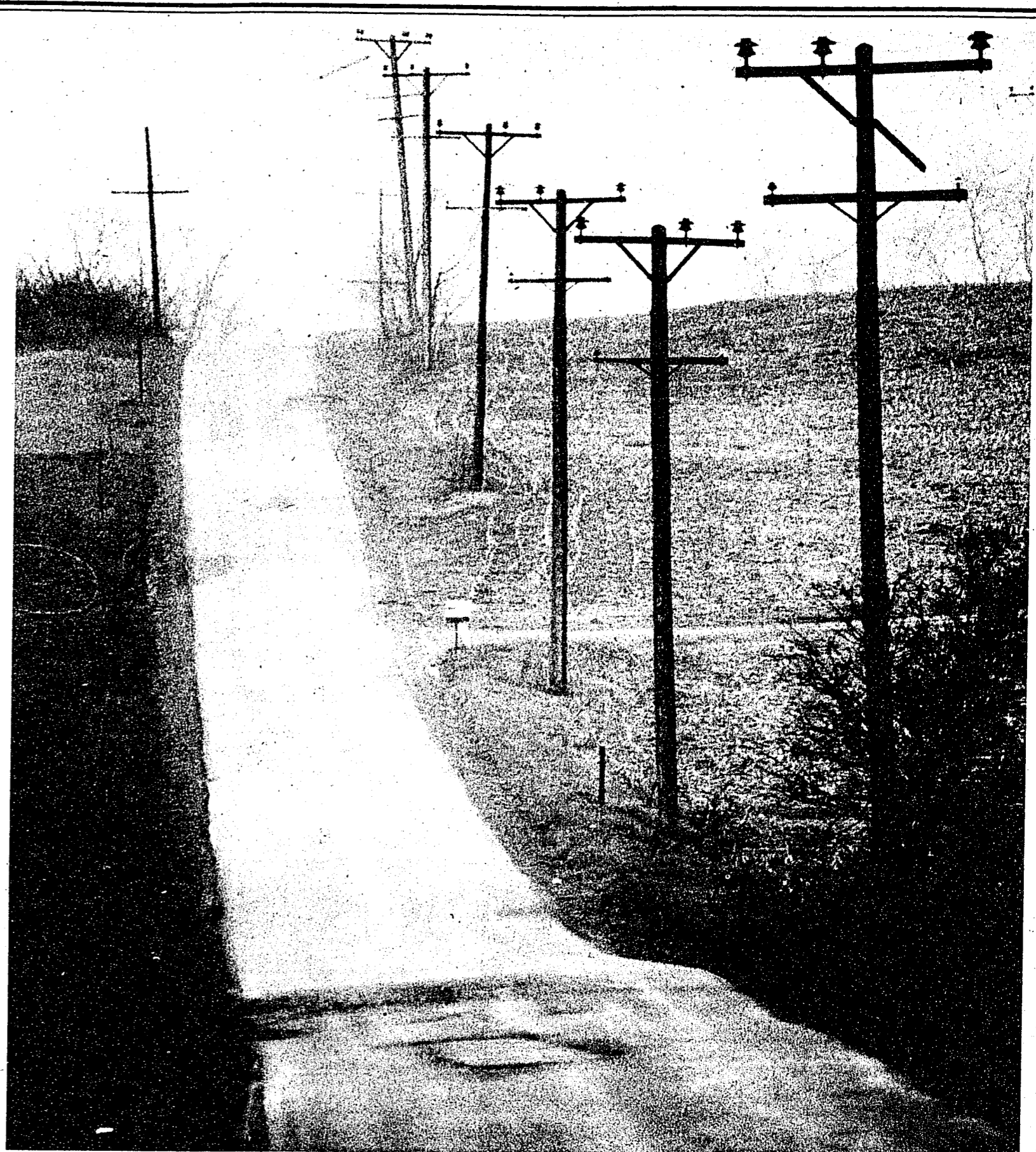
Since this would further alienate French Quebecers, Trudeau may be forced to stay on and continue his crusade to keep his home province in the Canadian confederation.

The U.S. interest in all this is deep. Quebec borders on four American states. U.S. business has an estimated \$7 billion in direct investment here. The province is an integral part of North American air defenses.

Some American commentators have suggested that a free Quebec could become a "Cuba of the North." There is little to back up such an assertion. French Quebecers are firmly in the sphere of American influence, and generally are comfortable with their southern neighbors.

But parts of the PQ's left-of-center program have made American business uncomfortable.

The Levesque government is trying to take over a major asbestos-mining firm owned by General Dynamics of the United States. The PQ program calls for closer regulation and direction of all foreign-owned enterprises in Quebec. A PQ law mandating the use of French in business and restricting English-language schooling here challenges the domination of the "Anglo" business elite.





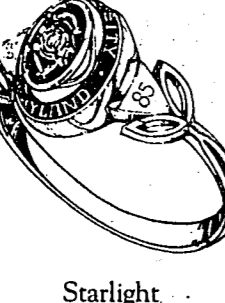





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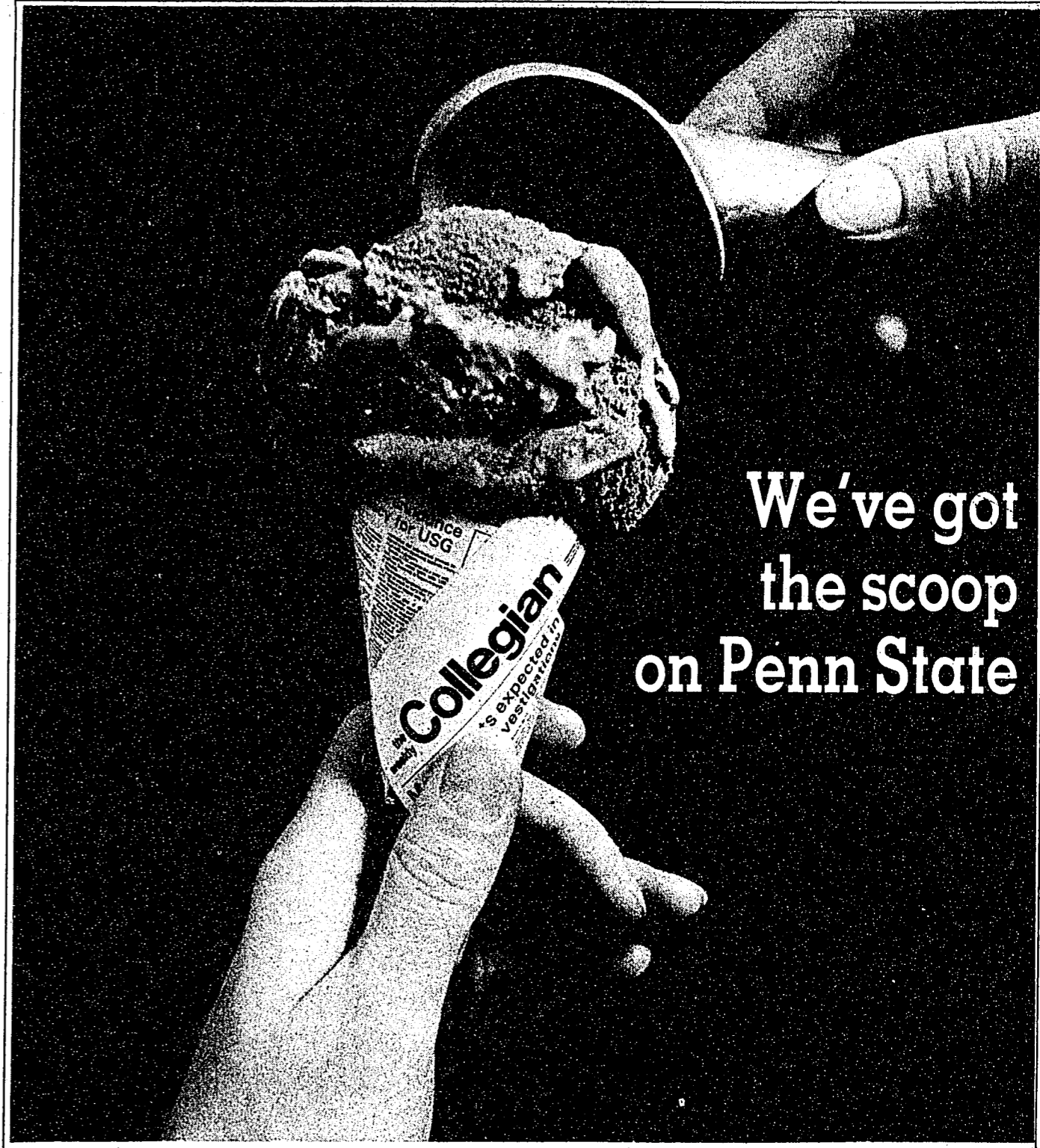
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