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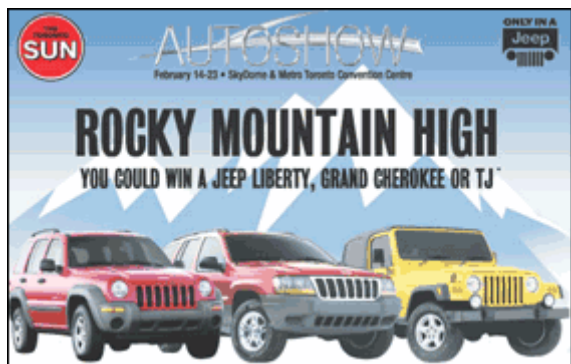
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Sunday, February 23, 2003

Canucks: Curtains for Chret**56% say it's time to go: Poll**

By BILL RODGERS, OTTAWA BUREAU CHIEF

Ottawa -- It's time to go, Jean -- 56% of Canadians want you to resign immediately following the national Grit leadership convention in November, according to a SES/Sun Media poll.

Chretien said last August that he would step down in February 2004 when he had served most of his third mandate.

The poll of 1,000 people conducted Feb. 3-11 asked: "Should Jean Chretien remain as Prime Minister until February 2004 as he prefers or should he resign in November 2003 once a new Liberal party leader is chosen?"

The survey showed that even those who identified themselves as committed Liberal supporters want the PM to pack up and leave town in November -- 52% of them prefer the earlier resignation date.

Support for a November good-bye is strongest in Atlantic Canada and Quebec at 58%. More than 57% agree in the West.

Only Ontario, which has voted overwhelmingly Liberal for the past three national elections, shows any reluctance and even then, 51% say Chretien should not hang around.

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In spite of Chretien, the Grits continue to enjoy a 30% lead over their nearest opposition rival.

The survey found 47% of Canadians said they would vote for the Grits. The three national opposition parties -- the Alliance, Tories and New Democrats -- remain in a virtual tie for second spot. The poll is considered accurate plus or minus 3.1%, 19 times out of 20.

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