

### Chronology for 1948

**January 20** – King calls for a national Liberal convention, announces plans for retirement.

**January 30** – Gandhi is assassinated.

**February 24** – Crisis in Czechoslovakia.

**April 1** – Beginning of Berlin blockade.

**April 20** – King has been Prime Minister longer than any other Prime Minister of any nation in the Commonwealth or Empire.

**May 15** – Israel is proclaimed a new state.

**June 30** – Prorogation of twentieth Parliament, fourth session. King's last speech in Parliament.

**August 5** – King resigns as leader of Liberal Party.

**August 5-7** – National Liberal convention, St. Laurent chosen as leader of Liberal Party.

**September 10** – Pearson is appointed to External Affairs portfolio.

**September 21 – October 5** - King leads Canadian delegation to UN Assembly in Paris.

**October 5** – Secret meeting with Ernest Bevin, British Foreign Secretary.

**October 11-22** – Conference of Commonwealth Prime Ministers, King unable to attend because of ill health.

**November 15** – King resigns as Prime Minister, St. Laurent sworn in as Prime Minister.

**December 17** – King's seventy-fourth birthday.

lity to further Canadian prosperity, but by May had grown wary of the possibility of its political implications.

While Mackenzie King was quite willing to consider military pacts and reciprocity agreements with the United States, he criticized what he regarded as U.S. dominance of the United Nations. Like the British, Mackenzie King was not sympathetic with the initial American positions on the Middle East or with their activities in the Berlin crisis.

#### Opposed to Korean Commission

The year began in the midst of a Cabinet crisis over commitments made in 1947 for Canadian representation on the United Nation's Korean Commission.



*Mary Pickford, Canadian-born internationally known film actress, sent this autographed picture to Prime Minister King, whom she met in 1948 when she came to Ottawa to appeal for funds for the United Nations Educational Scientific Cultural Organization.*

Mackenzie King adamantly opposed Canadian participation in a commission in which he felt Canada had no real interest. On January 6, he received a letter from President Truman requesting Canadian participation, and, as many draft replies show, he had difficulty in turning down Truman's request. He and St. Laurent devised a compromise solution. Throughout the year Mackenzie King was opposed to Canadian participation in the Palestine situation even though Pearson had been elected chairman of the United Nations' Palestine Commission. Interestingly, Mackenzie King expressed a concern over Pearson's activities at the United Nations and questioned his willingness to side with the United States.

In September, Mackenzie King was to lead the Canadian delegation to the United Nations Assembly in Paris, and the Commonwealth Prime Ministers' Meeting in London. However, as the Commonwealth meetings began, he fell ill and was unable to attend, although he managed to see Nehru, King George VI, and Winston Churchill. The meetings were being held to deal with the existence of a republican form of government in Ireland and India within the Commonwealth. Nehru seemed to have especially welcomed Mackenzie King's idea of a "commonwealth of nations" with the sovereign as a common symbol. Ironically,

as Mackenzie King was retiring from public life, the British Commonwealth was making the transition from a British Empire to a commonwealth of nations.

With his retirement in November, Mackenzie King abandoned the role of elder statesman with little regret. The diary records differences of opinion with ministers and civil servants over foreign policy, and Mackenzie King's dwindling enthusiasm for pressing his views.

*(Photos courtesy of the Public Archives of Canada.)*

### Telecommunications under review

An independent committee is to make recommendations on the restructuring of the telecommunications system to contribute more effectively to the safeguarding of Canada's sovereignty, Communications Minister Jeanne Sauvé announced recently. The Consultative Committee on the Implications of Telecommunications for Canadian Sovereignty has been asked to prepare its recommendations by the end of February.

The minister said there was growing concern about the extent to which the system might be falling short of expectations and opportunities. "At the same time, new technology, already on our doorstep, is precipitating radical new opportunities and new problems."

#### Terms of reference

The committee is to make its recommendations with particular reference to new technologies such as fibre optics, satellites, "interactive" television and computer technology. It will consider the need for Canadian manufacturers to meet foreign competition as well as the role of broadcasting in contributing to the preservation of the sovereignty of Canada, including:

- the use of communications satellites to the best advantage of Canadians;
- the importation of foreign programming;
- the status of cable companies in relation to broadcasting and to the common carriers in the provision of new services;
- the framework and timing for the introduction of pay television nationally.

Mrs. Sauvé noted that "both the problems and the alternative solutions [were] sufficiently well documented that the committee [would] not have to engage in formal hearings, in elaborate fact finding