



# Memoirs of a Very Civil Servant: Mackenzie King to Pierre Trudeau

*Gordon Robertson*

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## **Memoirs of a Very Civil Servant: Mackenzie King to Pierre Trudeau** Gordon Robertson

Born in Saskatchewan in 1917, Gordon Robertson worked at the centre of government power from 1945 until his retirement in 1979. He worked directly with Prime Ministers King, St-Laurent, Pearson, and Trudeau, serving as senior advisor to the latter two. Commissioner of the Northwest Territories from 1953 to 1963, he also became the first Deputy Minister of the new Department of Northern Affairs under Jean Lesage. In this memoir he presents a first-hand account of the events and personalities that shaped Canada during the critical post-war period.

Robertson tells of Canada's development from colony to nation and the prime ministers who presided over the process. He provides an assessment of each prime minister in action: how they organized the cabinets, what their qualities were and how these related to their failures and successes. Himself influential in many areas of government, Robertson played a key role in the long debate on constitutional reform and national unity. Even after his retirement, he remained active as an unofficial constitutional networker.

Gordon Robertson has written no ordinary memoir. Along with the key events and personalities of his day he describes the development of his own ideas about the nature of Canada and its constitutional future. The result is a significant historical document, one that brings much insight to the history of post-war Canada.

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