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| 1. Record Nr. | UNINA9910148693503321 |
| Autore | Akers-Douglas Chilston, Eric Alexander |
| Titolo | Chief Whip / / Chilston, Eric Alexander Akers-Douglas |
| Pubbl/distr/stampa | Toronto : , : University of Toronto Press, , [2017] ©1961 |
| ISBN | 1-4426-5465-1 1-4426-5274-8 |
| Descrizione fisica | 1 online resource (397 pages, 11 unnumbered pages of plates) : illustrations, photographs |
| Collana | Heritage |
| Disciplina | 320.942081 |
| Soggetti | BIOGRAPHY & AUTOBIOGRAPHY / Political Electronic books. Great Britain Politics and government 1837-1901 Great Britain Politics and government 1901-1910 |
| Lingua di pubblicazione | Inglese |
| Formato | Materiale a stampa |
| Livello bibliografico | Monografia |
| Nota di bibliografia | Includes bibliographical references and index. |
| Nota di contenuto | Frontmatter -- Editor's Note -- Contents -- Plates -- Preface -- Introduction -- I. The Spell of Disraeli -- II. Lord Randolph Ramps: Akers-Douglas Arrives -- III. 'Politics Are Ireland' -- IV. The Unionist Alliance -- V. The Climax of Churchill -- VI. Reconstruction and Attack -- VII. Critics and Malcontents -- VIII. Churchill's Final Flings -- IX. Tory Attitudes to Reform -- X. The Stricken Leader -- XI. Close of a Chapter -- XII. A Dying Parliament -- XIII. In Opposition -- XIV. The Alliance in the Balance -- XV. 'Eminence Grise' -- XVI. Army Education and Home Office -- XVII. The Cabinet Crisis of 1903 -- XVIII. The Tariff Reform Imbroglione -- XIX. Last Battles -- Bibliography -- Index |
| Sommario/riassunto | The author's grandfather, Aretas Akers-Douglas (1857-1926) was in his day called "The Prince of Whips";. Starting in 1880 as a confederate of the brilliant but unorthodox Lord Randolph Churchill, he graduated in record time to the position of chief dispenser of the official Conservative party line and held it for ten exceptionally arduous years at the height of the Home Rule controversy with its complications, Liberal unionism, parliamentary sabotage and obstruction. This position was rendered all the more responsible through the distaste felt by the |

two great leaders whom he served-Lord Salisbury and A.J. Balfour-for the details of party management; and even after he had been moved to another office his advice continued to be sought on all questions relating to the party's domestic affairs. Out of the intimate and informal correspondence received in these capacities Lord Chilston has made an entertaining political biography, unravelling a most complex period of parliamentary history and revealing much about Lord Salisbury, Lord Randolph Churchill, Joseph Chamberlain, A.J. Balfour and lesser figures, like the loyal and endearing W.H. Smith, Walter Long and Richard Middleton.
