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Autore	Dawson R. MacGregor
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Sommario/riassunto	When William Lyon Mackenzie King retired in 1948, he had held office as Prime Minister of Canada for a total of 7829 days, a longer term of service than that of any other Prime Minister in the history of the British

Commonwealth. Like Roosevelt, his contemporary of many momentous years, he was greatly admired and greatly hated, but none dispute the tremendous influence he exerted on the history of his country, or, indeed, his place in world history. In this official biography, great days of Canadian history are given life and meaning, and at the centre of all the events is a phenomenal personality gifted with intelligence, intrepidity, and luck, with amazing insight into his times and the nature of his political occupation. The biography, based largely on sources hitherto unavailable, permits the reader to witness the unfolding of important events as a chief participant himself saw them and to view far-reaching decisions through the eyes of the man who made them, for Mackenzie King speaks in his own words through much of these volumes. They allow us to observe an extraordinarily complex and powerful personality at work. In this first volume, Mackenzie King's life and political career are traced up to the firm establishment of his first administration as Prime Minister. The forces in his background, education, and early interests which eventually led him into politics are brought out vividly. It is both fascinating and touching, for instance, to observe in letters and personal papers the intimate family relationships which so largely determined what Mackenzie King became. Once public service had been chosen, he displayed such talents that a leading role seemed almost inevitable to all who knew him. As the story unfolds, we watch the drama of achievements in the Civil Service, as Minister of Labour, and as head of Rockefeller Foundation's Department of Industrial Relations. Mackenzie King's connections with labour matters in Canada and the United States are especially revealing. They show the genuine humanitarian concern which he retained over the years combined with the political skills of a remarkably effective conciliator; here in small compass he is seen developing the superb sense of timing which was his most noteworthy characteristic as party leader and Prime Minister. A high point in this volume comes when the Liberal Party in 1919 chooses the young pupil of Laurier to lead it out of its divisions and defeats of the war period, and the story gathers steady momentum as King takes the measure of the new Progressive Party, wins the election of 1921, discovers the intricacies of forming a Cabinet for diverse nation, and then proceeds to such events as the Chanak crisis and the Imperial Conference of 1923 to demonstrate to the world Canada's new confidence that she should determine her own international role: 'The Imperial Conference of 1923 gave Mackenzie King one of the great personal triumphs of his career. This Conference was the decisive one in Empire relations; the turning point where the Empire reversed its tendency of the war and post-war period and moved towards a more stable condition based on the nationalism and dependence of the Dominions.' At the final session of the Conference, it was reported, Smuts turned to King and remarked: 'You ought to be satisfied. Canada has had her way in everything.' It was a remarkable tribute to a remarkable performance.'

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