

□ BOOK REVIEW □

MY GRANDFATHER'S HOUSE

Written by Charles Ritchie
Toronto, Ontario
Macmillan of Canada, \$19.95
Reviewed by Peter Trueman
Global News, Ottawa

Finally, a few days ago I mentioned that I was looking forward to Charles Ritchie's new book, *My Grandfathers House*, to take the bad taste out of my mouth from less gracious writers. It was just what I had hoped it would be, and far too short.

If you have not yet discovered the delights of Charles Ritchie's writing, this latest book would be an excellent place to start. Mr. Ritchie was one of the most accomplished and effective diplomats this country ever produced. He served in a variety of key jobs, in the department in Ottawa, and in important posts abroad.

When he retired in the early seventies, he had earned the right to speak his mind, put his dinner jacket in mothballs, and sink gratefully into a leather chair at one of his clubs. Instead, he began the process of editing and publishing his diaries, and a delighted Canadian public began discovering the other Charles Ritchie, the engaging fellow behind the diplomatic facade.

This was particularly enjoyable for me because I'd known Ambassador Ritchie

in a professional way at the UN and in Washington. Some elegant Englishman once remarked about Vincent Massey that he "made one feel like such a savage". Ambassador Ritchie had the same effect on me. But the real Charles Ritchie, the Ritchie already known to his friends and revealed by the diaries, turned out to be warm, human, sensual, self-deprecating, totally approachable, and a skillful and sensitive writer. The latest book reveals that in London during the summer of 1931, when Mr. Ritchie was 24, his mother asked him what he proposed to do with himself. "I should like", he said reflectively, "to be an author". In the meantime, he took a job on Lord Beaverbrook's *Evening Standard*, which not surprisingly didn't work out.

Mr. Ritchie concludes that passage with a wry comment: "I have never been able to rid myself of the suspicion", he writes, "that it takes more to be a successful journalist than to be a successful ambassador". But I can say without fear of contradiction that Charles Ritchie would have become a brilliant correspondent, if only he'd started in the right newsroom. As it was, journalism's loss was diplomacy's gain, and he became a better writer than most journalists ever dream of becoming. Since the publication of his first book 13 years ago, Charles Ritchie has also been the author he idly dreamed of being in 1931.

If my arithmetic is right, he just turned 81 and published his fifth book at about the same time. He is an example to us all. I'm Peter Trueman, in Ottawa □

HOW TO CARE FOR YOUR PARENTS, A HANDBOOK FOR ADULT CHILDREN

Nora Jean Levin
Washington, D.C.
Storm King Press, \$4.95

Nora Levin's *Handbook for Adult Children* is an extremely useful and informative resource for concerned children who want to decipher those areas where they can be of help to their aging parents. The book gives step-by-step suggestions for creating personal and financial profiles, for utilizing community resources, and for taking measures to prevent emergencies from turning into disasters. Particularly helpful and important are the areas describing hospital and medical insurance.

The author recognizes the concerns and difficulties encountered by children living at a distance from their aging parents and offers important suggestions to help alleviate major problems. The book does not, however, deal with the many emotional issues connected with this situation. Still, it is an extremely valuable guide to knowing how and when to "step in" and start helping before adult children are faced with an emergency □

□ CIRCULAR DOCUMENT □

MEDICAL EXAMINATION PROCEDURES

Circular Document Admin.
No. 17, 1988 (ABB)

The purpose of this document is to clarify responsibilities in respect to medical examinations in order to promote a comprehensive approach for determining

and maintaining the fitness of employees and dependants.

The guidelines are intended to facilitate the administration of medical examinations prior to posting from Canada, on cross-posting, at unhealthy missions and on return to Canada.

Two major changes from the 1986 Circular Document on medical examination

procedures include mandatory medical examinations on return to Canada and, on cross-posting from missions lacking adequate medical facilities, Health and Welfare Canada may provide preliminary medical clearance □