

Biography of former State Representative E.J. Chilgren 1897-1972

Edwin J. Chilgren was born in Sweden on July 4, 1897 and grew up in Blackduck, Minnesota, where he was graduated from high school as class valedictorian in 1915.

In his youth, he was a printer's devil and worked during his high school days on the Blackduck American. He started his own newspaper in Overly, North Dakota, when he was 20 but soon returned to Blackduck as a lumber camp auditor.

Chilgren, known as "Big Ed" served with the marines in France in World War I and with his veteran's bonus of \$360.00, bought the weekly Littlefork Times in 1921. He published this newspaper for 43 years and sold it when he retired in 1964.

Chilgren was elected to the legislature in 1926 caucusing with the liberal faction and served continuously until 1964. He became the champion for northern Minnesota interests concerning conservation and highways.

He battled for supplemental aid for schools in poorer districts, helped originate the state gasoline tax and helped write the original state income tax law. He had been chairman of the House Tax Committee and the Legislative Research Committee and also had been the DFL floor leader.

Chilgren served as Speaker of the House in the 1959 and the 1961 session, only the 4th liberal ever to serve as speaker.

E.J. Chilgren died on August 31, 1972 in Littlefork Municipal Hospital, leaving 2 daughters, 3 sisters, 2 brothers and 3 grandchildren.

*from materials for a House Memorial
service held 4-19-1973.*

*Read by Rep. Erv
Anderson*