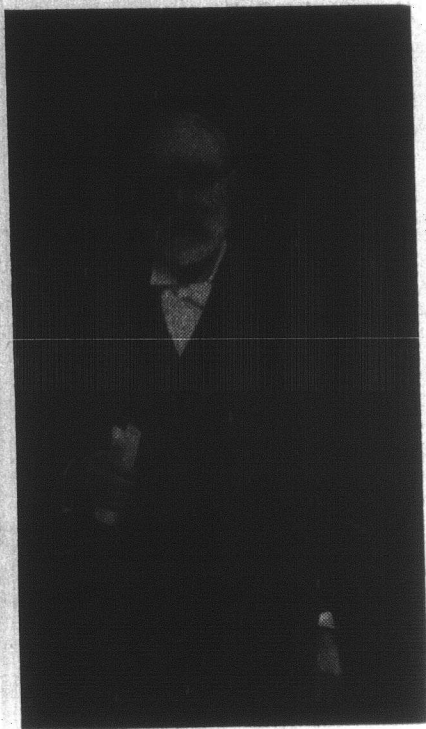


was born in Londonderry, Ireland, and his mother was a native born Canadian whose parents were Danes and were some of the first settlers in the township of Markham, near where Toronto now stands, called Muddy York in those days.

Mr. Eakin's boyhood antedated the inauguration of the school system in the Province of Ontario. In those days education was entirely a matter of local concern, the teacher boarding from house to house in the settlement. The only subjects taught were the three R's. Mr. Eakin was the firstborn of the family and at twelve years of age was taken from school to assist on the farm. When in his teens he was transferred from the farm to the shops, his father being a wheelwright. Young Eakin attended a night school during the winter months and received private instruction from a Presbyterian minister who was superintendent of education for the school in the townships under the system inaugurated by the late Dr. Ryerson, Minister of Education for Ontario.

On leaving home to paddle his own canoe the future Speaker resided near Newmarket, in the township of Whitchurch, for two years. Removing to the village of Unionville in his native township, he went into the business of carriage building and the manufac-



Ex-Speaker Eakin.

ture of doors, sash and blinds. In the years 1875 to 1879 young Eakin was elected as a councillor for the township of Markham and in 1880 was chosen Reeve, which position he held up to the time he left for the Northwest. In 1881 he was selected warden of the county of York, and was for some years county commissioner of the York roads, having charge of the stone roads and toll gates. In March, 1883, he resigned his position as Reeve and came to the Northwest as agent for the Saskatchewan Land and Homestead Co. On the eve of his departure from Ontario Mr. Eakin was given a public banquet at Unionville, at which he was presented with a valuable gold watch and chain, a sum of money and a testimonial nicely en-

graved and framed, as a slight token of his public service. He left the city of Toronto on the 28th of March, 1883, with a party of twenty settlers and ten carloads of settlers' effects, the destination being Crescent Lake, on the tract of land set aside for the colonization scheme of the company just mentioned. Mr. Eakin remained agent of the company for two and a half years. He was thus one of the pioneer settlers in north-east Assiniboia. On leaving the company, the doughty adventurer settled down to mixed farming on section 19, tp. 23, range 3 west of 2nd meridian.

There was a small Indian reservation north of Crescent Lake called Little Bones reserve. During the rebellion of 1885, being so far from railway communication (50 or 60 miles from Broadview or Whitewood), it was perhaps only natural that the Indians should be demonstrative toward the white settlers. Many of the women were frantic with fear that their lives were not safe, so much that the late Hon. Clark Wallace, who was president of the York Farmers' Colonization Co., prevailed on the Dominion Government to send up an officer to organize a company to protect the settlement from the Indians. The company was organized and stationed at old Yorkton, 19 miles north of Crescent Lake. Mr. Eakin declares, in his terse and direct method of speech, that the organization was a farce and did but little good. The depredations were done by the Indians during the time the volunteers were in the stockade built by the Government at old Yorkton.

Unknown to Mr. Eakin, a petition was forwarded to the Hon. Lieutenant-Governor Dewdney to have him appointed a Justice of the Peace for the Territories, which was granted. Having obtained the confidence of the Little Bones band of Indians, with whom Mr. Eakin had considerable dealings and by whom he was affectionately called the "big man," he succeeded in quieting them and inducing them to remain on their reserve. In consequence of his tactful behavior in this respect the white settlers ceased to fear.

During the time of the rebellion another band of Indians frequented the Little Bones camp and through their influence depredations were committed between Crescent Lake and Yorkton. Some of the settlers' cattle were driven off and slaughtered at Round Lake at a pow-wow. There was also feasting in the shacks and shanties which had been abandoned by the white settlers, who had congregated together for mutual protection. The Indians also stole the watches and provisions they found in these cabins; the watches were taken to pieces and the wheels worn by the young squaws as ear ornaments.

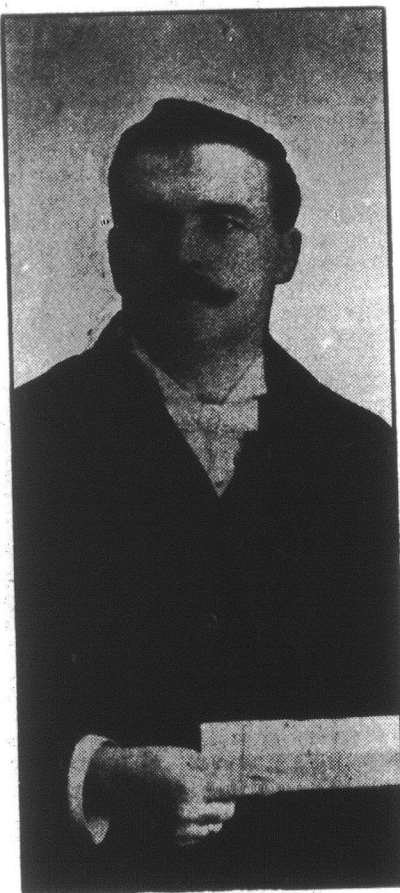
In 1894, Wallace, as the district where Mr. Eakin lived was called, was divided into two electoral districts, Yorkton and Saltcoats, and Mr. Eakin was elected for the Saltcoats district. In 1898 he was again elected and chosen Speaker of the Assembly. In the fall of 1902 he was again chosen as a candidate but three days after the campaign began he was taken with La Grippe and had to remain at a bachelor's house for three weeks. At the urgent request of his family he resigned during the first week of the contest.

Mr. Eakin is genial and popular. He is a man of sterling principles and stands on them as on a rock. No one has aught but good to say of him. In the chair he was a capable Speaker and his venerable appearance and advanced age caused him to be respected as the "father of the house."

Mr. A. B. GILLIS.

The present Speaker of the Assembly is a man who is popular wherever he is known. Among his constituents he has the support of the leaders of both political parties; in the Assembly he is a great favorite, and with his neighbors and friends he is always the genial "Archie Gillis." He is Scotch from his boots upwards, of the clan Macleod, a Gaelic-speaking Nova Scotian, having been born forty years ago at Whycoomag, county In-

verness, N. S. His father, still hale and hearty at 88, is McDonald Gillis, and even he is but young as the Gillis family goes. One member of the family died a short time ago aged 106, and another went fishing regularly at the age of 95. Mr. Donald Gillis, with



Speaker Gillis.

wife and family—four daughters and seven sons, of whom Archie is the fifth—came to the Northwest twenty-six years ago, so they are veritable old-timers. The sons were railroad contractors, but eventually settled to farm at Whitewood, where they are extensive land-owners.

Speaker Gillis was but sixteen when the family came to the Northwest, just old enough to get his hand in at pioneering, and he has thus thorough and practical acquaintance with prairie life and conditions. In 1893 he was appointed postmaster of Whitewood and has held the office ever since. In 1894 he was first elected to the Assembly after a hard fight against Walter Thorburn, both of them Conservatives. Dominion party lines not then being even dreamed of in Territorial politics. His majority was only 19. So highly are his public services appreciated that in 1898 he was returned by acclamation and again in 1902. In 1898 he was made Deputy Speaker, succeeding Mr. S. Spencer Page, who had lost his seat, and was subsequently made Clerk of the House. On the retirement of Mr. Wm. Eakin from the Assembly, Mr. Gillis became the unanimous and popular choice of the Assembly to preside over its deliberations and conduct of business.

The chief characteristics of Speaker Gillis are his excellent principles and his clean record, both public and private. He has a level Scotch head, good physique, manners pleasant and friendly. For two years he was chairman of the Whitewood School Board. He is a Freemason, was W.M. of Ashlar Lodge, Whitewood, in 1885, and has been D.G.M. In politics Speaker Gillis is a Conservative, but of very moderate views and tolerant of the opinions of those that differ from him. He is unmarried.

W. TRANT.

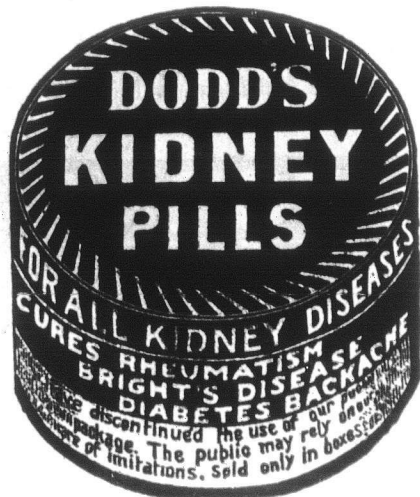
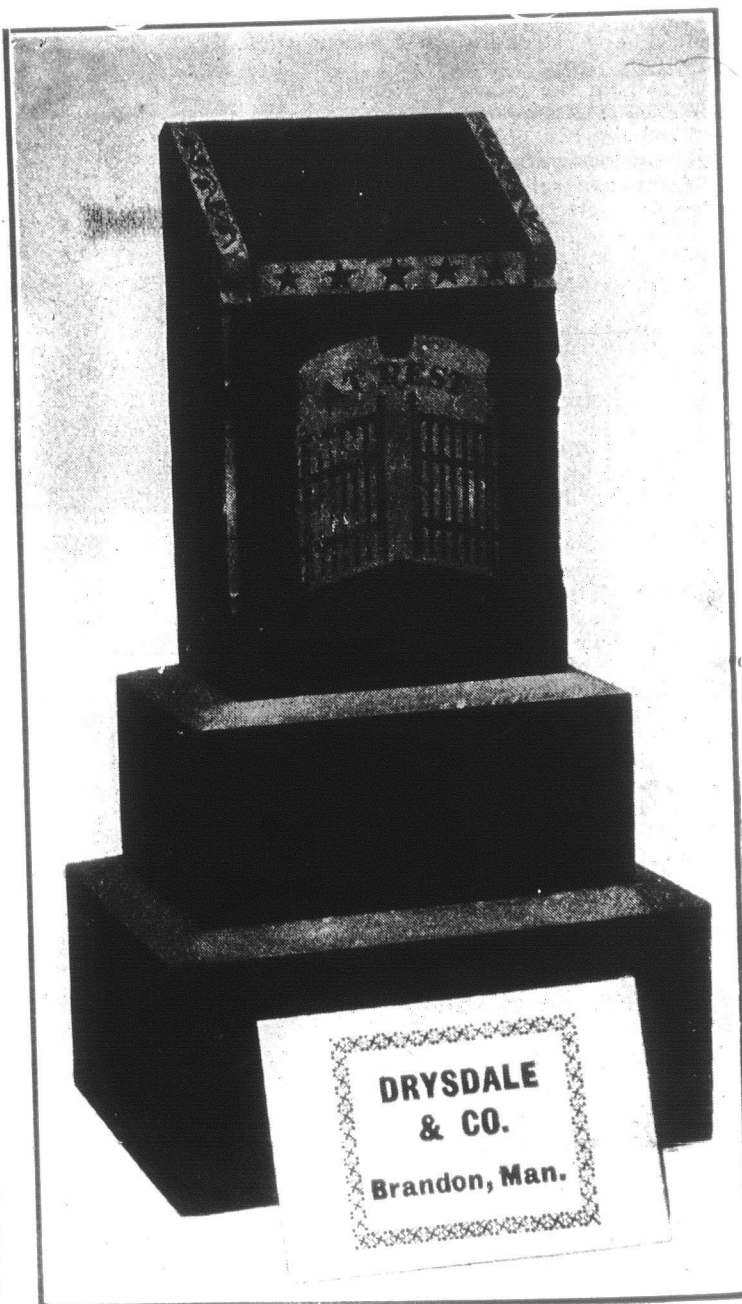
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