

WILSON, James R.



James Robert Wilson came to Saskatchewan as a teenager in 1883, when his family moved to the Dundurn district from Ontario. In 1896, Wilson moved to Saskatoon and, along with James Leslie, opened a general store and Saskatoon's first creamery. In 1900, he sold his interest in the businesses and moved to Moose Jaw, only to return to Saskatoon in 1902 to start a flour milling company, again with James Leslie, which they later sold to the Quaker Oats Company.

In 1903, Wilson was appointed Overseer of the Village of Saskatoon. This position combined all the duties of Tax Assessor and Collector, Police Chief, Chief Magistrate, Health Officer and Councillor. In 1903, Saskatoon became a town, and Wilson presided over the Council. In 1904, he was re-elected as Mayor of the town by acclamation. He was a Councillor when Saskatoon became a city in 1906, and in 1907, he once again became Mayor.

Wilson also spent many years as President of the Saskatoon Exhibition Board of Directors. It was under his guidance that the exhibition grounds were purchased and the buildings constructed.

In 1917, James Wilson, a Conservative, was elected to the federal government as Member for Saskatoon. In 1921, he entered the federal cabinet as Minister without Portfolio, but was defeated in the election of that year.

Mr. Wilson was also involved in many areas of community service, including the Local Government Board, the Community Chest and the Kiwanis Club, as well as being active in Knox Church.

James Robert Wilson passed away in a local hospital on April 3, 1941, at the age of 74.

The monument, where Wilson and other members of his family are buried, is a large stone with an elegantly engraved design, simply inscribed, "WILSON". The family members have individual grave markers similar to that of James R. Wilson.



Picture of J.R. Wilson from the *Saskatoon Star Phoenix*, April 4, 1941.