

BRYCE J. SAUNDERS

In 1842, William Saunders of Dumfriesshire, Scotland, with his wife emigrated to St. Lawrence County, State of New York, but in the following year he located at Buells' Mills in the Township of Yonge in the Province of Upper Canada. His wife



was Miss Jane McVittie, of Kirkcudbright, Scotland. There were five children, James B., the eldest, was born in New York State in 1843, and died at Athens, Ontario, in 1902. He was for many years a member of the County Council of Leeds and Grenville, and afterwards Warden. Agnes J., a sister of James B., married Z. R. Rowe, of Brockville, and is now living. Bryce Johnston Saunders, the youngest member of the family, was born at Lyndhurst, Leeds County, on October 17th, 1860. The two other children, now deceased, were Minnie of Athens, and William J. of Worcester, Mass.

For many years William Saunders and his son James B., carried on a milling business about a mile east of Farmersville (now Athens) in the County of Leeds.

Bryce J. Saunders was educated privately and at the Farmersville High School. He entered the School of Practical Science, Toronto, in 1881, but transferred to McGill University in 1882, and graduated in Engineering in 1886. He qualified as a Dominion Land Surveyor in 1884 and as a Provincial Land Surveyor in this Province on January 7th, 1885.

At the outbreak of the North West Rebellion in March, 1885, Mr. B. J. Saunders volunteered for service with the Dominion Land Surveyors' Intelligence Corps. He took part in the engagements at Fish Creek and at Batoche, and at the latter battle, his companion, A. W. Kippen, P.L.S., of Perth, was killed.

In March, 1888, he entered into general practice with Willis Chipman, then Town Engineer at Brockville, and that season they surveyed the Township of Stewart.

In 1888 he joined our Association and his name has appeared on the list of members since that date.

In January, 1892, he was appointed Town Engineer at Brockville in succession of Mr. Chipman, which position he held until 1896. When at Brockville he was also County Engineer and acted as Drainage Engineer for the United Eastern Municipalities.

In 1896 he removed to Fort William where he entered into partnership with A. E. Farncombe, the firm continuing for about two years.

In 1897 he was appointed by the Ontario Government as Provincial Commissioner to survey the Boundary between the Provinces of Ontario and Manitoba. The surveyor representing the Dominion of Canada on this work was Elihu Stewart, O.L.S., of Collingwood. They commenced the survey at the north west angle of the Lake of the Woods, and terminated it at the Winnipeg River, a total distance of about 58 miles. In 1921 and 1922, it was extended by Mr. J. W. Pierce, O.L.S. (see Report 1923), to a point 238 miles north of Lake of the Woods. (Also see 1896 Report, p. 108.)

In 1900 he acted as assistant to J. S. Dennis, D.L.S., on Irrigation Surveys, a position he held for two years, with headquarters at Regina.

In 1902 he was appointed Deputy Minister of Public Works for the Government of the North West Territory, and was also Chief Engineer and Surveyor on irrigation and public works.

In 1904 he removed to Edmonton where he practised Civil Engineering and Land Surveying until a short time before his death.

For three years he was in partnership with A. Driscoll at Edmonton.

Col. Saunders made the following surveys for the Ontario Government:—

Township of Hart	1885
Township of Brethour	1887
Township of Robillard	1889
Township of Dunlop and Ware	1891
Township of Booth	1892
Township of Purdom	1893
Township of Falconer	1896

For the Dominion Government he was employed as follows:—

Subdivision west of 4th and 5th Meridian ...	1898
Resurveys in Towns of Macleod and Banff	1898
Subdivision and outlines west of 4th and 5th	1899
Subdivision and removals west of 4th	1900
Subdivision west of 5th	1904
Base line west of 5th	1905
Base line east of Principal Meridian	1906-1907
Meridian and base east of Principal Meridian	1907-1908
Base line west of 5th	1909-1910
Base line west of 4th	1911

Mr. Saunders always took an active interest in the militia. In 1870 he was drummer boy in a small unit of Scouts at Brockville during the Fenian Raid scare.

In 1900 he volunteered for service in South Africa but was not called upon to go.

In 1906 he joined "A" Squadron, Canadian Mounted Rifles, Edmonton, of which unit he became captain.

Afterwards he became Major in the 19th Alberta Dragoons and was one of four officers chosen by the Canadian Government to represent Canada at the funeral of King Edward VII. in May, 1910.

At the outbreak of the Great War in 1914, he volunteered for service in August, at which time he was Commissioner of Public Works for the City of Edmonton.

He left Valcartier in September with the first contingent, and served in England, France and on the high seas until the conclusion of hostilities, returning to Canada in January, 1919. He was mentioned in dispatches and was a Lieutenant-Colonel since 1912.

On his return to Edmonton in 1919 he resumed practising in Alberta.

In 1891 he was made a full member of the Engineering Institute of Canada, and a life member in 1924.

In 1887 he married Miss Esther Kincaid, daughter of Archibald Kincaid of Athens.

At the time of his death he was President of the Alberta Land Surveyors' Association. He was an Anglican in religion and a Liberal in politics.

In 1910 he unsuccessfully contested the Mayoralty of Edmonton, but was defeated by the William Short, who died in January 27th, 1926.

Col. Saunders died at Edmonton on October 11th, 1926, after a long illness.

He was survived by his widow, two daughters, Marjorie (Mrs. R. M. Dingwall) of Calgary, and Beatrice (Mrs. R. P. Lefroy) of Edmonton, and by one sister, Mrs. Z. R. Rowe, of Brockville.

The following extract is from Edmonton "Journal" of October 14th, 1926:—

"Amid the befitting dignity of a military ceremony, the funeral of Lieut.-Col. B. J. Saunders, prominent Edmontonian and former city commissioner, who passed away on Monday last, was held from All Saints' Church on Wednesday morning, the body afterwards being shipped to Banff, where interment will take place.

"As Rev. Dr. D. G. McQueen, pastor of First Presbyterian Church, who officiated at the impressive funeral service, remarked in paying tribute to the memory of the deceased, Col. Saunders played an important part in the history of western Canada. His life, said Dr. McQueen, should serve as a fine example to the younger men who are living in the west to-day, and to those who are to follow. Col. Saunders had been ever ready to respond to the call of duty, whether that duty was the defence of his country or lay along other lines.

"With an escort consisting of members of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police and of local officers of the militia, the body of Col. Saunders was conveyed on an R.C.M.P. gun carriage to the C.P.R. depot, where it was shipped on the noon train to Banff.

"High government and city officials were included among those who attended the funeral. These included Lieut.-Col. Egbert, Chief Justice Harvey, Mayor K. A. Blatchford and others.

"Many beautiful floral tributes were received.

"Funeral arrangements were under the direction of Howard & McBride.

"The pallbearers, all officers of the militia, were: Lieut.-Col. P. E. Bowen, Lieut.-Col. T. C. Sims, Lieut.-Col. P. Anderson, D.S.O., Lieut.-Col. W. F. W. Carstairs, Major A. C. Gillespie and Lieut.-Col. H. H. Sterns."