

Joseph Hamelin, M.L.A. (1873-1947)

Hamelin was born on February 21, 1873 in St. Boniface, the son of Firmin Hamelin (b. 1848) and Clemence Breland. Hamelin's paternal grandfather, Salomon Hamelin, served in the Legislative council of Manitoba from 1871 to 1876. His maternal grandfather was legislator Pascal Breland who was an M.L.A. for St. Francois Xavier elected in 1870.

He was educated in St. Boniface and at the Juniorate of the Sacred Heart in Ottawa. He then returned to Manitoba and worked as a merchant, becoming manager of the Joseph Hamelin Co. general store in Ste. Rose du Lac in 1912. He served as Reeve of Ste. Rose du Lac from 1900 to 1914. In 1900 at Laurier, Manitoba, he married Parmélie Gamache. They had 10 children. Hamelin died in Niagara Falls, Ontario on August 29, 1947.

Hamelin was first elected to the Manitoba legislature in the 1914 provincial election, running for the conservative Party in Ste. Rose. After the election, he served as a backbench supporter of Rodman P. Roblin's government.

Hamelin's time on the government benches was brief. The Roblin government was forced to resign amid scandal in early 1915, and was resoundingly defeated in the 1915 election. Hamelin was one of only five Conservatives to win re-election. He was again returned in the 1920 election, in which the Conservatives won eight seats out of fifty-five. He was again re-elected in 1922.

He identified himself as an independent candidate during this campaign, although most political observers considered him to be a Conservative in all but name. He appears to have rejoined the Conservative caucus during the parliament that followed. In the 1927 election, he was defeated. Hamelin attempted to return to the legislature in the 1936 election without success in the La Verendrye constituency.



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