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James Rea Benson

James Rea Benson (January 21, 1807 – March 18, 1885) was an Ontario businessman and political figure. He represented Lincoln in the 1st Canadian Parliament as a Liberal-Conservative member until March 14, 1868, when he was named to the Senate of Canada for St. Catharines.^[1]

He was born in Ireland in 1807^[1] and came to Kingston in Upper Canada with his family in 1819. He later moved to St. Catharines, where he was a hardware merchant,^[2] also operating mills and ships in partnership with Thomas Rodman Merritt.^[3] Benson was president of the Niagara District Bank, the Welland Loan Company and the St. Catharines Gas Company.^[2] He served on the town council for St. Catharines and on the council for Lincoln County.^[1] He died in 1885 in Ottawa while still in office.^[4]

The city of St. Catharines purchased his residence and used it for some time as the city hall.^[5]

Benson married the daughter of Charles Ingersoll.^[2] His daughter Helen married Calvin Brown, the first mayor of St. Catharines.^[5] His son Sir Frederick William Benson was a British Army officer. His niece, Mary Benson, the daughter of his brother Thomas, married Thomas Rodman Merritt.^[6]

References

- James Rea Benson – Parliament of Canada biography (http://lop.parl.ca/sites/ParlInfo/default/en_CA/People/Profile?personId=10410)
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- Warwick, Peter D. A. (1994). "Thomas Rodman Merritt" (http://www.biographi.ca/009004-119.01-e.php?&id_nbr=6928). *Dictionary of Canadian Biography Online*. Retrieved 15 September 2009.
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- St. Catharines : Canada's Canal City*, JN Jackson, SM Wilson (1992) (<http://www.ourroots.ca/e/toc.aspx?id=6203>) Archived (<https://web.archive.org/web/20110516192008/http://www.ourroots.ca/e/toc.aspx?id=6203>) 2011-05-16 at the Wayback Machine

<div>The Honourable</div> <div>James Rea Benson</div>	
	
<div>Member of the Canadian Parliament for Lincoln</div>	
<div>In office</div> 1867–1868	
<div>Succeeded by</div> Thomas Rodman Merritt	
<div>Senator for St. Catharines, Ontario</div>	
<div>In office</div> 1868–1885	
<div>Appointed by</div> John A. Macdonald	
<div>Personal details</div>	
<div>Born</div>	January 21, 1807 Ireland
<div>Died</div>	March 18, 1885 (aged 78)
<div>Political party</div>	Liberal-Conservative

6. *The Canadian biographical dictionary and portrait gallery of eminent and self-made men* (1880) (<http://www.canadiana.org/ECO/mtq?doc=08545>)

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