Gregor McGregor (1848-1914)

Senator for South Australia 1901-1914

Gregor McGregor was born in Kilmun, Argyllshire, Scotland and worked his passage to South Australia in 1877. A labourer, McGregor was an active unionist who was instrumental in the formation of the South Australian Labor Party. McGregor was a member of the South Australian Legislative Council 1894-1901.

In 1901 McGregor was elected to represent South Australia in the Senate at the first federal election. A fervent supporter of protectionist policies, McGregor was the first South Australian Labor representative in the Senate. He led the Federal Parliamentary Labor Party in the Senate in 1901 and was Leader of the Opposition 1913-14. In three pre-war Labor ministries he was Vice-President of the Executive Council. Although virtually blind, McGregor was assisted in his work in the Senate by a remarkable memory.

McGregor was universally respected and was renowned for being a practical rather than a theoretical politician. Ill health forced him to retire from the Senate in July 1914 and he died soon after retiring.

The state of South Australia was also represented in the first Senate by:

Sir Josiah Henry Symon

Thomas Playford

Sir Richard Chaffey Baker

Sir John William Downer

David Morley Charleston