



Sir William McMillan (1850-1926)

Member for Wentworth (New South Wales) 1901-1903

Born in Londonderry, Ireland, William McMillan migrated to Sydney, Australia, in 1869 to join a merchant business. After travelling around New South Wales and a few years in Melbourne, McMillan returned to Sydney to manage the firm's Australian operations. He became recognised as a leader of the Freetrade movement and an authority on commercial matters. He was elected to the New South Wales Legislative Assembly in 1887, where he was Treasurer 1889-91 and Deputy Leader under Henry Parkes.

Initially nervous of the tariff implications, McMillan came to be a keen supporter of federation. He was a vocal and influential delegate at federation conventions during the 1890s. He was elected to the Australasian Federal Convention of 1897-98, where he chaired the Finance Committee. He was knighted in 1901 for his work on this committee.

In 1901 McMillan was elected to represent the federal seat of Wentworth in the House of Representatives at the first federal election. The Freetrade members in the House elected him as deputy leader and he was called upon to act as leader during Reid's regular absences. Business interests forced him to retire from federal Parliament in 1903. He unsuccessfully contested the state seat of Willoughby in 1913.

McMillan's business interests were wide-ranging. He was a director of the National Bank of Australasia, chaired and directed numerous companies, and was a popular and accomplished public speaker.

The electorate of Wentworth was named after William Charles Wentworth (1790?-1872), noted Australian explorer.