



## **Thomas Playford** (1837-1915)

**Senator for South Australia 1901-1906**

**B**orn at Bethnal Green, London, England, Thomas Playford migrated with his family to South Australia in 1844. A successful orchardist and market gardener, Playford became involved in local and colonial politics, culminating in terms as Premier and Treasurer 1887-89 and 1890-92. From 1894 to 1898 he was South Australian Agent-General in London.

Playford was a strong supporter of federation. He was President of the third session of the Federal Council of Australasia in Hobart in 1889, attended the Australasian Federation Conference in 1890, and was South Australian delegate to the National Australasian Convention in 1891. He played a leading role at this Convention, where he was on the Constitutional Committee, and was credited with devising the “1891 compromise” in relation to the powers of the Senate, which enabled the Convention to agree on a Constitution Bill.

Playford was elected to represent South Australia in the Senate in 1901 at the first federal election. A moderate protectionist, he held a number of important positions including Vice-President of the Executive Council and Leader of the Government in the Senate 1903-04, and was Minister for Defence in the second Deakin Ministry 1905-07. Playford chose to stand as an independent Deakinite at the 1906 Senate election and was overwhelmingly defeated. He stood unsuccessfully for the Senate again in 1910.

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

**Sir Josiah Henry Symon**

**Sir Richard Chaffey Baker**

**Sir John William Downer**

**David Morley Charleston**

**Gregor McGregor**