



Alexander Poynton (1853-1935)

Member for South Australia 1901-1903

Member for Grey (South Australia) 1903-1922

Alexander Poynton was born in Castlemaine, Victoria and worked as a miner, shearer and station-hand. Interested in conditions for pastoral workers, Poynton was foundation Treasurer and Secretary of the Port Augusta branch of the Amalgamated Shearers Union, and Treasurer of the Australian Workers Union for a number of years. In 1893 he was elected as an Independent Labor candidate to the South Australian House of Assembly, but became alienated from the United Labor Party in South Australia because of his opposition to Premier Kingston's policies on land reform.

Poynton was elected to represent South Australia in the House of Representatives at the first federal election in 1901 as an Australasian National League candidate, but joined the Labor Party in 1902. When South Australia was divided into federal electoral divisions, Poynton was returned in 1903 as a Labor Party candidate for the seat of Grey, which he held until his defeat in 1922. Poynton served on a number of royal commissions and was Chairman of Committees in the House of Representatives 1910-13. A supporter of conscription, Poynton followed W.M. Hughes out of the Labor Party in 1916 and subsequently held important ministries under Hughes in National Labor and Nationalist governments.

The state of South Australia did not divide into electoral divisions for the purposes of the first federal election. South Australia, as a whole, was also represented in the first House of Representatives by:

Sir John Langdon Bonython
Patrick McMahon Glynn

Frederick William Holder
Charles Cameron Kingston

Egerton Lee Batchelor
Vaiben Louis Solomon