



Reverend James Black Ronald (1861-1941)

Member for Southern Melbourne (Victoria) 1901-1906

James Black Ronald was born in Scotland and educated in Edinburgh. He was a minister of the Presbyterian Church.

In 1901 Ronald, a Labor candidate, was elected to represent the federal seat of Southern Melbourne in the House of Representatives at the first federal election. Ronald was the only clergyman elected to the first Parliament and is believed to be the only Labor member to have graduated from university.

Ronald was defeated at the 1906 election. He joined the Nationalist Party in 1917 but failed to gain pre-selection for Melbourne Ports. He unsuccessfully contested the seat of Fawkner as an independent in 1929.

Ronald was known for his extreme views on the White Australia Policy, claiming that the Chinese “should be either poll-axed or poll-taxed in such a manner as would make the country too hot for them.” He advocated a “snow-white Australia if you will”.

The electorate of Southern Melbourne was named after its locality. The settlement of Melbourne was named after Lord Melbourne, a Prime Minister of Britain.