



## **Sir Josiah Henry Symon (1846-1934)**

**Senator for South Australia 1901-1913**

**J**osiah Symon was born at Wick, Caithness, Scotland and migrated to South Australia in 1866. Symon had a distinguished legal career in South Australia, during which he became the colony's leading advocate and head of its most prominent legal firm. He was made Queen's Counsel in 1881. He was a member of the South Australian Legislative Assembly 1881-87.

Symon was a leader of the federation movement in South Australia. He was President of the South Australian branch of the Australasian Federation League, and played an active role at the Australasian Federal Convention of 1897-98, where he chaired the Judiciary Committee, and argued in debate for equal representation of the states in the Senate. He was knighted in 1901 for his services to the cause of federation.

A Freetrader, Symon topped the poll for the Senate for South Australia in the first federal elections. As leader of the Freetraders in the first Senate, he was unofficial Leader of the Opposition in that House until 1904, but was more concerned to facilitate the passage of foundation legislation than to simply oppose the government. He was Attorney-General in the Reid-McLean government 1904-05. Symon was defeated as an independent in the 1913 election after refusing to join the Liberal Union.

After leaving federal politics, Symon continued his legal career in South Australia. Highly respected in political, legal and social circles, he was renowned for his generosity to many worthy causes.

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

**Thomas Playford**

**Sir Richard Chaffey Baker**

**Sir John William Downer**

**David Morley Charleston**

**Gregor McGregor**