



William Henry Wilks (1863?-1940)

Member for Dalley (New South Wales) 1901-1910

William 'Bill' Wilks was born in Sydney, New South Wales, and owned a wood and coal yard at Balmain before entering colonial politics. At 23 he became a member of the Free Trade Association of New South Wales and was elected to its Council. In 1894 he was elected the Freetrade member for North Balmain in the New South Wales Legislative Assembly. Wilks was a strong supporter of Premier George Reid.

In 1901 Wilks was elected to represent the federal seat of Dalley in the House of Representatives at the first federal election. He was Government Whip during the Reid-McLean Ministry of 1904-05, Chairman of Committees 1905-07, and Chairman of the Royal Commission on Postal Services in 1908. As the acknowledged joker of the House of Representatives, it was said of Wilks that "there never was a more exasperating member for a Speaker to follow and discipline".

Following his defeat at the election of 1910, Wilks was appointed to the public service as a land valuer in Melbourne. He remained in this position until his retirement in 1928.

The electorate of Dalley was named after William Bede Dalley (1831–1888), barrister and politician.