

= James Walker (Australian politician) =

James Thomas Walker (20 March 1841 ? 18 January 1923) was a Scottish @-@ born Australian banker and politician .

Walker was born in Scotland but spent his early childhood in New South Wales , before returning to Scotland with his family to study finance . Joining the Bank of New South Wales , he returned to Australia and held various financial positions in New South Wales and Queensland . Gaining a public reputation for financial expertise , he was active in the Federationist cause and was a delegate to the 1897 Constitutional Convention , where he was a significant figure in the development of Commonwealth finance schemes . After assisting the successful " Yes " campaign for the 1898 referendum , he was elected to the Senate in 1901 as a Free Trader .

As a senator , Walker continued to focus on finance , although his views on social policy sometimes saw him on the outside of his party . He supported the White Australia policy but disagreed with key elements , and was a leader in opposition to the dictation test , by which a potential immigrant was required to pass a test in any European language before their application was accepted . He also campaigned for a transcontinental railway and for a capital city to be located on federal territory . Attempts to guide financial reform through the parliament as a backbench senator led to frustration , and Walker retired due to ill health in 1913 with his legislation unpassed .

= = Early life and career = =

Walker was born on Leith Walk in Edinburgh to grazier John William Walker and his wife Elizabeth , née Waterston . The family migrated to New South Wales in 1844 and settled on Castlereads Station near Boorowa . In 1849 , John Walker sold the property to Hamilton Hume and returned to Scotland . James was educated at the Edinburgh Institution and King 's College London before returning to Edinburgh in 1857 . After several years in Scotland working first for the paper manufacturers Cowan & Sons , and then for stockbroker Robert Allan , he joined the Bank of New South Wales ' London branch in March 1860 ; his cousin , Thomas Walker , was one of the bank 's directors . In January 1862 he departed for Melbourne on Swiftsure and was posted to the bank 's Sydney office .

Walker was then sent by the bank to Rockhampton in Queensland , where he worked as an accountant until 1866 when he was appointed manager of the Townsville branch . In 1867 he was transferred to the Toowoomba branch , which he managed until 1878 when he was promoted assistant inspector in Brisbane . He married Janette Isabella Palmer on 16 April 1868 at Range View . In 1885 he resigned from the Bank of New South Wales to become the first manager of the Royal Bank of Queensland , but in 1887 he returned to New South Wales to manage the estate of Eadith Walker , the daughter of his late cousin Thomas .

= = Federation = =

Walker had a strong interest in Federation and was a member of the Australasian Federation League of New South Wales . In 1896 he attended the People 's Federal Convention in Bathurst , where he proposed a financial scheme that would provide savings for a federal government based on income from state taxes and federal spending . His reputation for financial expertise saw him elected to the Australian Federal Convention in 1897 . There he supported equal representation for all states in an upper house , Commonwealth control of railways , and a national capital on federal territory . He reiterated his financial proposals , but was overlooked for the finance and trade committee , having been described by Alfred Deakin as " a mere commercial man " .

Despite this setback , Walker continued to play an active part in the development of the Australian Constitution . He had the name of the federal upper house changed from the " States Assembly " to the Senate , although his proposal that the federated colonies adopt the name " Commonwealth of Australasia " , with a view to the future inclusion of New Guinea , New Zealand and Fiji , was not adopted . He also supported a minimum age for senators of twenty @-@ five , rather than twenty

@-@ one , and voted for Paddy Glynn 's proposal to include recognition of a " Divine Sovereign " in the Constitution .

The second session of the Convention took place in Sydney in September 1897 . Walker was appointed to a subcommittee on federal finance , which proposed a financial scheme based on Walker 's Bathurst proposal that was adopted by the Convention . He was active in the Federation referendum campaign , travelling around New South Wales to encourage a " Yes " vote . He mostly focused on financial issues , and in 1899 went to Western Australia , the most reluctant colony , to increase support .

Following the success of the referendum , Walker was encouraged to stand for the Senate by a petition of over 6500 signatures . A staunch free trader , Walker campaigned as part of the Free Trade Party 's endorsed ticket . He had resigned as president of the Bank of New South Wales in 1897 , but remained a director . At the first federal election in March 1901 , Walker was elected as a New South Wales Senator at the head of the poll .

= = Senate career = =

As a senator , Walker devoted his support to a variety of causes , including a transcontinental railway and equal pay for women . He opposed a federal old @-@ age pension scheme on the grounds of lack of funds , and also opposed the Immigration Restriction Bill , although he supported the White Australia policy in principle . He opposed the proposed form of the dictation test and supported James Macfarlane 's amendment requiring the test to be administered in a language known to the immigrant , moving his own amendment after Macfarlane 's was defeated . He also expressed reservations about the deportation of Kanaka labourers , supporting the reduction in their use but advocating that those resident in Australia for at least five years be permitted to remain . He vigorously opposed compulsory arbitration , and voted against the Conciliation and Arbitration Bill .

Re @-@ elected as an Anti @-@ Socialist in 1906 , Walker expressed the view that the three @-@ party system of the Australian Parliament 's first decade was dysfunctional , and implored electors to vote " for either socialism or anti @-@ socialism , and so end this triangular government " . He continued to support the transcontinental railway and lamented the slow progress of the decision on a site for the federal capital , and supported a higher rate of immigration and the watering down of the Immigration Restriction Act . In 1908 , he introduced the Commonwealth Companies Reserve Liabilities Bill , which permitted special reserve funds for banks to assist shareholders during a financial crisis , and in 1910 followed with the similar Commonwealth Banking Companies Reserve Liabilities Bill . He complained of the difficulty of passing private senators ' bills , and at the 1913 election he retired , suffering from ill health .

= = Later life = =

Walker maintained an interest in politics after his retirement , and remained a director of the Bank of New South Wales until 1921 . He had been president of the Australian Golf Club (1903 ? 19) , a director of the Royal Prince Alfred Hospital , and a member of the Presbyterian Church 's finance committee . A fellow of the Institute of Bankers in London since 1886 and vice @-@ president of the Australian Economic Association , he also continued as a director of the Australian Mutual Provident Society and a councillor of St Andrew 's College at the University of Sydney . Walker died on 18 January 1923 at Woollahra in Sydney , and was survived by his wife and five of their seven children . Buried at South Head Cemetery , his estate at his death was worth £ 27 @, @ 697 .