

= John Neild =

John Cash Neild ( 4 January 1846 ? 8 March 1911 ) was an English @-@ born Australian politician who served as a Senator from New South Wales from 1901 to 1910 .

Neild 's family arrived in Australia in 1860 , and he worked as an insurance agent and company manager before winning election to the New South Wales Legislative Assembly in 1885 . He served intermittently until 1901 and had a tumultuous career as a backbencher , eventually contributing significantly to the fall of the Reid government in 1899 . He also established his own volunteer regiment , which had a difficult and sometimes hostile relationship with military command .

Elected in 1901 to the Senate , Neild was a vigorous supporter of old @-@ age pensions , free trade and several other causes , but his ambitions of promotion were never realised . Passionately loyal to the British Empire , he questioned aspects of the White Australia policy and spoke in support of the children of Kanaka labourers facing deportation . His continued disputes with the military , including an attempt to have the commander of the Australian military forces found in contempt of Parliament , saw him lose respect among his colleagues and his later career was spent in comparative isolation . He lost his seat in 1910 and died the following year .

= = Early life = =

Neild was born in Bristol on 4 January 1846 to Maria Greenwood and John Cash Neild , a surgeon . He was named after his father . In 1853 the family moved to Taranaki in New Zealand , evacuating to Sydney in 1860 to escape the First Taranaki War . On 29 October 1868 Neild married Clara Matilda Gertrude Agnew , whose father Philip founded the New South Wales Free Church of England . Clara died in 1879 , three years after the death of the only child of the marriage ; Neild remarried on 19 February 1880 at St Paul 's Anglican Church in Redfern , to Georgine Marie Louise Uhr , daughter of a former New South Wales sheriff .

Neild had received a private education and was first employed at Montefiore , Joseph & Co . , an importing firm . In 1865 he set up as a commission agent , becoming an insurance agent by 1870 and later managing several companies . He was elected to Woollahra Municipal Council in 1876 and in 1882 unsuccessfully stood for the New South Wales Legislative Assembly seat of Paddington . He was successful at his second attempt in 1885 , when he was elected as a supporter of Henry Parkes ; remaining on Woollahra Council , he served as mayor from 1888 to 1889 , leaving the council in 1890 .

= = State politics and military career = =

Neild devoted his first speech to criticism of the Protectionist Dibbs government , and became known for pursuing causes such as free trade , old @-@ age pensions and law reform . He earned the nickname " Jawbone " on 23 June 1886 , after speaking for nine hours against the Jennings government 's introduction of ad valorem duties . He was narrowly passed over by Parkes for a ministry in January 1887 , but was given charge of Sir Alfred Stephen 's divorce extension bill , which passed in 1892 . Neild continued to be active in religious affairs , serving from 1891 to 1893 as Right Worshipful Grand Master of the Loyal Orange Institution of New South Wales , although he offended many extreme Protestants by praying for the recovery of the Pope .

Neild began to encounter difficulties in his political career towards the end of the 1880s ; his oversight of the establishment of the 1887 Adelaide Jubilee International Exhibition led to investigation by a Legislative Assembly select committee , which absolved him of accusations of extravagance and using his office for personal gain . In 1895 he began to agitate for old @-@ age pensions , but in 1899 he was investigated again after Premier George Reid paid him £ 350 for writing a report ; although Neild repaid the money , the incident was part of the pretext for a successful no confidence motion in September which brought down the Reid government .

In 1896 , in response to the establishment of an Irish @-@ Australian unit in the New South Wales citizen army , Neild raised a volunteer regiment that became St George 's English Rifles . He was

promoted major of the regiment in July 1896 and lieutenant @-@ colonel in April 1898 , and frequently led his men , dressed as British soldiers , around Circular Quay to the tune of " The British Grenadiers " or " The English Gentleman " . Despite his promotions , Neild had no previous military experience , and in 1899 Lord Beauchamp , the Governor , wrote that his organisation was " in a state of ridiculous insubordination " . He was suspended around Easter of that year for publicly criticising a staff officer and encouraging insubordination ; following unfavourable findings by a military inquiry , Neild avoided dismissal only by investing considerable amounts of money into the regiment .

= = Senate career = =

Neild contested the first federal election in 1901 , running as a Free Trade candidate for the Senate . Together with Senator Cyril Cameron , he was one of two parliamentarians to wear full dress uniform to the opening of Parliament . He introduced the Parliamentary Evidence Bill on 9 August 1901 , which aimed " to enable and regulate the taking of evidence by Parliament and Parliamentary Committees " . The bill was withdrawn and reintroduced several times over the next decade but never passed into law . Harboursing ambitions of becoming deputy President , Neild was active in many committees but failed to achieve his aim , although he did serve as Temporary Chairman of Committees from 1903 to 1910 .

Neild was not a supporter of party discipline , refusing to follow Sir Josiah Symon 's leadership of the Free Trade Senators . He spoke against the dictation test for non @-@ British immigrants and the deportation of Kanaka workers , and continued to advocate free trade and old @-@ age pensions . Having won the fifth position at the 1901 election , Neild faced re @-@ election in 1903 , and his impassioned support of the British Empire saw him elected at the head of the poll despite failing health .

In March 1904 Neild attacked the government 's military policy and the commander of the military forces , Major @-@ General Sir Edward Hutton , who had long wished to dismiss Neild from the citizen army . Neild had incited a near mutiny by destroying a well @-@ known sergeant 's military career , and was suspended from duty ; Neild responded by accusing Hutton of intimidation and infringing a Senator 's right of freedom of expression . In April 1904 the Senate formed a committee to investigate alleged contempt of Parliament by Hutton , which found that Neild had not been intimidated . In 1905 Neild retired from the militia .

Neild 's adventures had seen him lose respect in his political career , and he was now openly mocked in the Senate chamber , becoming something of a joke . He introduced a number of bills in his remaining five years in the Senate , all of which lapsed . He spoke in support of Muslim camel drivers and opposed military training for boys , and continued to oppose elements of the White Australia policy , raising concerns about Australian @-@ born children of Kanaka labourers : " They will have difficulties enough in front of them in a country that is so rampantly strong on the white Australia policy without our making their case worse . " Neild was defeated at the 1910 election .

Suffering from hepatic cirrhosis , Neild died at his home in Woollahra on 8 March 1911 , aged 65 , survived by his second wife and their two children . He received a military funeral before being buried with Anglican rites at Waverley Cemetery in Sydney .

= = Other interests = =

Neild published an anthology of his own poetry , Songs ' neath the Southern Cross , in 1896 .