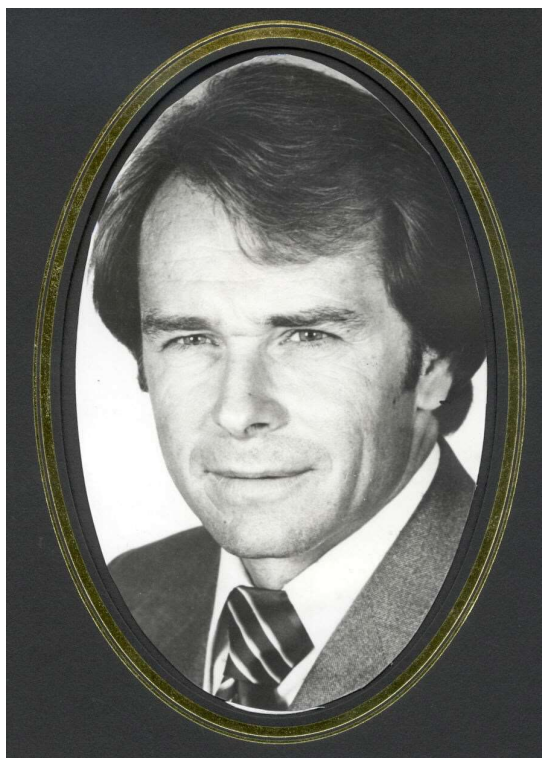




## **PARLIAMENT OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA**

### **INAUGURAL SPEECH**



**Mr Thomas Alexander Albert Herzfeld, MLA**  
**(Member for Mundaring)**

Legislative Assembly  
Address-in-Reply: Fifth Day  
Wednesday, 10 August 1977

*Reprinted from Hansard*

# Legislative Assembly

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## ADDRESS-IN-REPLY: FIFTH DAY

### *Motion*

**MR HERZFELD** (Mundaring) [5.46 p.m.]: In speaking to the Address-in-Reply which was so ably moved by my colleague, the member for Cottesloe, I indicate at this stage that my address will be directed to matters which affect my electorate and those which concern my constituents.

Before I turn to talk about those matters, I would like to offer you, Sir, my best wishes on your election to the Chair. I have known you as a constituent—in fact, probably technically I am still a constituent of yours. I acknowledge at first hand your dedication to the tasks required of a parliamentary representative. I am sure this style, applied to your present high office, will bring great credit to it.

I would like also to join with others in recording my thanks to the parliamentary staff and officers for the assistance and guidance so freely and patiently given in helping me to find my way around this place.

I have found my presence in this building to be a most humbling experience. Whatever his background might be, the newcomer cannot help but feel impressed by the wealth of ability, experience, and dedication he finds amongst his fellow members.

Despite some disparaging remarks which I have heard since I have been here about the role of back-benchers on this side of the House, it is my intention to show that a back-bencher does have a place here and can make a useful contribution even though he is on the Government side. Certainly I shall be trying to make a useful contribution.

It was, I think, the member for Balcatta who had occasion to refer to the seats occupied by the member for Subiaco, the member for Bunbury, and me, as the back stalls. The need for this new bench is visible evidence of the people's decision last February, and will no doubt continue to be a source of distraction to the members of the Opposition.

It is an exciting time in this State's history for a new member to be elected to the Parliament. Travelling around the State, as I have done for the last 30 years, I can see the achievements which have resulted from a century and a half of endeavour—the endeavour of past generations.

The last two decades have been particularly spectacular and indicate just what faith and dedication can achieve. They spell out just how great the potential of this State really is. I look forward to being part of the action which, in the next few years, will unlock this great potential and make it a reality.

I turn now to my electorate. Most members would realise it is associated closely with one of the most significant public works projects ever undertaken in this State. I refer, of course, to the goldfields water supply scheme which has contributed so much to the economic well-being of Western Australia. The fountain head, the starting point for the 370-mile journey for the water is, of course, the Mundaring Weir.

The Mundaring electorate was constituted for the election held in 1974. My predecessor, Mr James Moiler, held the seat for one term. I use this opportunity to recognise the dedication with which he served the electorate; because of this I wish him well for the future and in his new occupation.

The electorate is some 3 000 square kilometres in size and embraces rural areas of the Shires of Swan, Mundaring, and Toodyay. It contains a heterogeneous mixture of lifestyles, in the main semi-rural and rural.

The question of lifestyles is of extreme importance to people in my electorate particularly as it relates to a very attractive environment. Most would indicate they were persuaded to come to live in the area because it offered a peaceful refuge, in unique settings, free from the hurly burly of modern-day life.

They have a united desire to guard this very precious asset. They are very much aware of the changes occurring around them; aware of the pressures for change, socially and economically. Much of what they see they do not like. As are the rest of the people in this State and nation, they are at times bewildered by what they see. The people look at the last four or five years and see a continuous attack directed at the social fabric and economic well-being of this country. They ask, as well they might, "What has happened to Australia?" It was once a nation admired for its strength of national purpose, strength of character, and independence of spirit. It was a land of opportunity, a country where individual effort reaped individual reward; not reward for a few, but reward for all who set out to achieve it.

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When I came to Western Australia as a boy 30 years ago, the Australian had the image of a hard-working, hard-drinking, hard-playing individual. He worked to create a better future for his family, his State and his nation. He toiled under much more difficult conditions than he does today, but I believe he did so gladly because he had a sense of national purpose.

Today, working conditions and the material life of people are infinitely better. Is it any wonder, therefore, as I said earlier that so many of my constituents, and other people in this country, are bewildered by what they see going on around them and the disruptive activities of those supposedly working for a better life for Australians?

I would just like to quote one or two extracts from articles which appeared in the *Daily News* of Wednesday, the 20th July, to make my point. These are just chosen at random. One writer says—

It is becoming increasingly obvious that this country is slowly but surely being dragged down into the gutter by militant trade unions whose only thought is to cause as much strife as possible for the government and people of this country regardless of the consequences.

A further extract reads—

I voted and so did the majority of Australians at the last election for a government to use its power and authority if necessary to protect and uphold the law.

I did not vote for a union to try to cripple our state or nation.

I could read on, Mr Speaker, but many of them are in the same vein. I might add that even the Leader of the Opposition has recognised some of the feelings that are abroad in the community because in the *Daily News* of the 29th July he was quoted as saying—

I think people are getting sick and tired of confrontation.

I make no apology for drawing attention to the actions of the few who, either through ignorance or deliberately, are systematically destroying the economic well-being of this country. We had in this country a system of industrial conciliation and arbitration which was the envy of the rest of the world.

The member for Gosnells the other day used the phrase “politics of fear”. I would like to quote a couple of phrases out of a newspaper cutting which perhaps portray the other side of the coin as politics of fear that the honourable member was talking about when he used the term, and I refer to comments which are reported in *The West Australian* on the 11th May this year. The writer quotes the Federal Secretary of the Builders Labourers’ Federation, (Mr Norman Gallagher) as saying:

“We don’t intend to take the matter any further in the commission till we have tenderised the builders,” he said in Melbourne.

I repeat those words, “tenderised the builders”. In the same article his counterpart in Western Australia, Mr Kevin Reynolds, (Secretary of the BLF of Western Australia), said—

... the union would use whatever tactics were necessary for the campaign to succeed.

They could include stopping concrete pours and closing down sites.

No conciliation, Mr Speaker, no arbitration.

Those words smack somewhat of standover tactics and disruption. This type of action results in increased costs and inevitably more unemployment. If members do not believe me I will give a few examples. I believe it was mentioned the other day: there was a strike of refrigerated truck drivers in March of this year which resulted in 120 of their fellow workers being laid off, with the consequent loss of wages. At the same time the dairy industry, which had already been hard pressed by rising costs, lost \$350 000 as a result of overtime bans by the Miscellaneous Workers’ Union.

Earlier this year—and this has been referred to on a previous occasion—the State, according to the Minister for Labour and Industry, lost \$1 million of taxpayers’ money as a result of a six-week strike at the Perth Medical Centre. This strike resulted from the sacking of a worker: a sacking which was upheld by the industrial court.

Perhaps the most blatant example of industrial lawlessness has been the continuing dispute between the Transport Workers’ Union and fuel agents. I have a particular concern with this matter because one of my constituents happens to be a fuel agent and I shall refer to him a little later on.

I would like members to be quite clear in their minds as to what the dispute is all about. This dispute was created by the Transport Workers’ Union by placing bans on fuel supplies to agents because the agents would not submit to union demands to take over fuel deliveries to their depots. It was not as if the Transport Workers’ Union members were being denied work. After all the agents had been forced a long time ago to use union members to drive their vehicles.

In fact, it can be shown that the union's demand, if acceded to, would not create employment opportunities for its members; it would have quite the reverse effect. It is a fact that the agents use trucks which carry 2 000 gallons of fuel. The oil companies use tankers which carry 8 000 gallons of fuel. One oil company driver would do the work of four agents' drivers. What would happen to the other three if the union's demands were met?

I would like to refer briefly to the methods that have been used in this particular dispute. The constituent that I referred to earlier, who is involved in this matter, is a Mr John Kennedy, a fuel agent at Mt. Helena. In the *Daily News* of the 21st July, a report of Mr Kennedy's comments had this to say—

Mr Kennedy said he did not like the idea of "giving in" after spending 25 years building up his business.

"Overnight the union has been able to take over. It's not fair, but I can't do anything else except cave in to them" he said.

That gentleman had been going about his legitimate business which he had established over the past 25 years. I would think that a period of 25 years in the business would establish some right for him to carry on his business in the manner he wished to. But suddenly it was decided that he could not conduct his business as he had done during the last 25 years; that he must conduct it in a different way; in a manner which the union apparently felt would produce the results it wanted in the fastest possible time. The news article continues —

For nine weeks his men had been carting drums of fuel from Kewdale and bulk kerosene from Fremantle.

He was able to obtain fuel in drums from Kewdale, but he was not able to obtain bulk fuel. The result of this was that he had to spend at least 60 per cent of his time manhandling drums. He went on to say that he would be lucky to break even.

I was at his depot one day and I observed his men decanting drums into his tanker. it was a slow process. The observation Mr Kennedy made to me was that the truck had been in the process of being loaded for the past three hours, and that had he been able to obtain bulk fuel the truck would have been out, delivered the fuel, and been back again in that time. One can imagine what this is doing to the cost structure of his operation.

The Transport Workers' Union will not gain more jobs for its members if its demands are met. It is effectively creating economic hardship for this constituent of mine who, after all, was carrying out a job he had been doing for the last 25 years in his own way without harm to either the union or anyone else. The result is that it has become increasingly difficult for him to meet the demands of his customers. In fact, whereas in the past he would top-up fuel tanks before he was asked to do so, now he cannot do that. This was instanced in my household only yesterday when we ran out of heating fuel and had to ring Mr Kennedy and ask him to come down and deliver fuel. As a result of the limitations placed on his operation, he cannot properly serve his customers.

What then does the TWU leadership hope to gain? It must surely be quite obvious that if the union gains control of the last remaining independent link in the fuel distribution chain, it will have the power to bring the State to a standstill.

Let us not be fooled into submission. The Premier has warned on a number of occasions that the left-wing militants who are behind so much of the industrial strife that we are experiencing are part of an international effort to destroy our independence and freedom; and we spoke about this matter yesterday.

We now find the secretary of the most blatantly aggressive and militant union equipped with an international communications system, supposedly used for leisure and pleasure. Mr Cowles is reported to have said the radio equipment was not used for union business. Why then was the equipment set up in a caravan owned by the TWU? Why did the equipment have to be mobile? Perhaps Mr Cowles might like to answer why he needed to hide his hobby 50 miles from Perth in a secluded spot.

If the purpose of the equipment was to talk to truck drivers on the Nullarbor, as Mr Cowles claims it was, why did he hide it away in Wundowie at the back of my electorate? Why was another TWU organiser involved in the use of this equipment, because he too was convicted of using it? Perhaps he was just another amateur travelling from Mt. Hawthorn to Wundowie to enjoy playing with equipment capable of transmitting and receiving around the world, all just does not ring true.

This incident should not be dismissed as a simple indiscretion. Rank and file members of the TWU should question whether they are not being used by people whose loyalties lie outside Australia; whether perhaps their funds are not being used against their best interests or the best interests of the nation—perhaps even to undermine and destroy our way of life, our institutions, and our determination.

Scanning today's society we see a determined effort to destroy the very thing we on this side of the House cherish above all else; namely, man's freedom, his right to go freely about his business in daily life. The methods being used are designed for one end, and one end only, and that is to generate fear and mistrust, unease, and cynicism within the community, to confuse and to destroy hope.

The most subtle attack, and the least recognisable, is the way our highly developed Christian consciences of concern for our fellow man are being manipulated for other ends. Nowhere is this more evident than in the current so-called uranium debate. Nothing being said by the anti-uranium lobby has any relevance to fact. The arguments being put forward are emotive, designed to create fear and despondency.

Anyone who cannot recognise these underlying forces and their aims would do well to read Ayn Rand's book *Atlas Shrugged* to see graphically described just what might happen to the free world if those dedicated to destroy are not exposed and disarmed.

The Government can rest assured the majority of people in my electorate fully support its firm stand for law and order, and for government by the elected. Let us take heart from what the Minister for Labour and Industry had to say yesterday, when he predicted a change for the better in the industrial field; that is the hope and wish of everyone in this country today. I hope we can return to a common-sense approach to industrial relations, and use the facilities for conciliation and arbitration which are still available in this country today.

I wish now to refer to another matter. I said earlier that the people in my electorate had a great concern to see their life style maintained. They recognise the importance of town planning and in this regard are appreciative of the opportunities they have been given to participate under current Government policy.

With the personal encouragement of the Minister for Urban Development and Town Planning, the eastern corridor study currently in progress will benefit greatly from extensive contributions made by the public. I believe in this State we are fortunate indeed to have some of the best planners in Australia. I recently travelled to the Eastern States and looked at what was happening in the peripheral areas around the larger cities. I must admit that what I saw made me somewhat concerned for the people living in those areas, both now and in the future.

Certainly, we do not wish to see that type of planning in Western Australia, and I take great heart from the foresight which is being shown in the field of town planning in this State. Planning, as we know, is what creates the life style of the future, and the life style of the future should be a matter of great concern, so that future generations are not subjected to unsatisfactory living conditions.

I turn now to the subject of education. Education is a matter of importance and concern to my constituents, as I am sure it is to many people throughout Western Australia. With the Minister for Education, and indeed many others, I share a concern over continuing demands for ever-increasing expenditure in education. There is no way this one sector of public expenditure can continue to grow at the unprecedented rate of the last few years without adversely affecting other sectors or, indeed, the total economy. There is a limit to just how much of the tax cake can be directed to this one area. I believe it is high time a determination was made.

At the same time, there is a need to take a much closer look at how some of the education vote is being spent. I instance just one example which came to my notice recently. It concerns an in-service course which was conducted by the Education Department and which was attended by some 45 teachers. The subject for discussion at this course was "School-based curricula". I understand that "school-based curricula" are programmes for education which are tailor-made for individual schools. The course entailed 10 or 11 full days' attendance by the 45 teachers and, during their absence from the various schools those teachers were replaced by relieving teachers. It is my estimate that the cost of mounting the course and of providing relieving teachers would have been of the order of \$40 000, give or take \$5 000 or \$10 000.

Dealing as it did with intelligent people, one wonders whether there might not have been a less costly way of imparting the knowledge to the teachers concerned. In bringing this matter to the attention of the House, I am not being critical of the Minister because I and other members know that much of the funding for education comes from Federal sources, and those Federal sources dictate where it shall be spent.

However, it seems to me that perhaps our Government should be looking a little more critically at the way these funds are being applied in some of these peripheral areas. I would like to think that the money saved in this particular instance could have been better applied to higher priorities. For instance, in my electorate great pressure has been brought to bear on me for the Government to provide year-11 and year-12 classes at the Bullsbrook District High School, because of the distances pupils must travel.

*Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.40 p.m.*

Mr HERZFELD: Before the tea suspension I was referring to expenditure on an in-service course and suggesting that perhaps the money that had been used could be better used for other things, including consideration being given to the extension of years 11 and 12 at the Bullsbrook District High School, which is in my electorate, and to providing changing rooms at the Toodyay High School. I am well aware that the Minister and the Government are conscious of the need to reassess and re-evaluate expenditure on education, and because the matter is in good hands I shall leave the subject at that point.

I wish to deal with one other matter in the time allotted to me; that is, Aboriginal welfare. I was pleased to note that in his Speech the Governor made reference to the fact that the Government intends to upgrade facilities for

Aborigines. I wish to make it quite clear that I am not just another soft touch for promoting handouts, but in my electorate and those surrounding it there are major social problems for Aboriginal people including inadequate shelter. I do not believe that not enough is being done. I believe the record of this Government and the Federal Government during the last few years shows them to have been extremely generous with regard to expenditure on Aboriginal welfare. The most recent figures are not available to me but the latest report I have been able to obtain indicates that in the year 1974–75 expenditure on Aboriginal welfare by the Federal Government in this State was nearly \$17 million. This \$17 million was applied for approximately 34 000 Aboriginal and part-Aboriginal people in this State.

I do not get very excited either when I hear discussions about land rights because if one looks at the situation in this State one will see that those 34 000 people have approximately 19 million hectares of land, approximately 50 million acres, held in trust for them. If we work that out *per capita*, every man, woman and child has 1 500 acres. I do not begrudge them that land; it is a fact of life that they have it. But when I hear claims that their land rights are not being satisfactorily looked after, I become concerned.

We have not heard very much of what has been achieved to correct some of the injustices which have existed for a long time with regard to the Aborigines in this country because that sort of thing just does not make news. But there have been tremendous achievements during the last five or 10 years. I believe one must be fair in these matters and recognise what has been achieved. Judging by some of the agitation that has occurred in some quarters, one would think that nothing has been done. It has been estimated that 200 to 300 people around the Swan Valley are inadequately housed.

The point I wish to make is that perhaps some of our priorities are wrong. I condemn the actions of those Aborigines who continually become involved in demonstrations of various sorts, be they marches, tents on various public places, or anything else. I believe that if they analysed the situation they would realise that this continual agitation does nothing to help them and will only antagonise the rest of the community. Because I have spoken to many of these people in my electorate, the question I should like to ask is what, or more correctly, who motivates these actions because my impression is that the motivation does not come from Aboriginal people themselves.

It appears that there are people who have an interest in providing the motivation, for whatever purpose, to create these hassles and to draw attention continually to the negative aspects of the situation. I recognise that much still needs to be done, particularly for those Aboriginal people in my electorate. I have shown an interest in their welfare and I have spoken to many of them. But not once since I have been a member of this place has a single Aboriginal person approached me with his or her problems even though I have made it quite clear in a number of ways that I am concerned about their welfare.

Those on this side of the House are often accused of having no interest in the welfare of the ordinary person and of showing interest only in big business people. I believe the record shows that when in Government those on this side of the House have achieved more in welfare fields for the people of this State and this nation than has ever been achieved by those opposite; but we never get any credit for it. I for one, as well as many other members on this side of the House, am concerned about the welfare of people and I shall certainly show this while I am in this place.

Confrontation in any area does not achieve anything. I believe discussion does. Because of this I offer myself to chair or to organise any meetings that the Aboriginal people in my electorate and surrounding areas would like me to arrange so that they may use me as a pipeline to the Government and the Premier for any problems they have and so that they may get together with all the interested groups, be they friends of the fringe dwellers, the council, the Aboriginal people themselves, or any of their associations. I shall gladly call meetings on a continuing basis, if they like, to discuss their problems and to bring those problems to the place where something might be achieved. I have a feeling that this offer will not be taken up. I hope it will be and I repeat I am available for them to use whichever way they think fit.

The SPEAKER: The member has five minutes remaining.

Mr HERZFELD: Thank you, Mr Speaker. I believe there is a reason that the problems these people have are being tackled in the way we have seen over the last six months or more. I believe it stems from a sense of frustration and I offer some remarks in a constructive way to try to help in some of the areas which are a source of frustration and could be improved. The two areas I see that cause this frustration are the question of administration and the question of priorities of funding.

On the question of housing, I have been able to establish that there are nine Government departments and associated bodies that have a direct influence on housing for Aboriginal people. There may be more that I have not come across. It must become very frustrating at times for the Aboriginal people. Certainly I found it frustrating when attempting to get information and was pushed from one department to another. I guess it all comes about because of a decision taken in 1972 when legislation was introduced to change the system that we had of administering Aboriginal affairs. Up to that date there was one department that looked after Aboriginal affairs. Today there is a whole host of them.

Mr Speaker, the bulk of funding for Aboriginal people comes from the Federal Government. I suggest that a federalism policy, if I might call it that, should be adopted in connection with these funds so that the State would become responsible for the disbursement of funds and to become responsible also for the implementation of priorities that it establishes. Hopefully, it might be possible to review the administrative structure that exists today and to rationalise it so that something more of a cohesive structure is achieved, something akin to the old Native Welfare Department. I believe that if something can be achieved in this area a lot of the frustration that is felt by some of the Aboriginal people will be removed.

The other question is one of priorities. I find it somewhat incredible that there should be people who have no adequate shelter when we consider some of the projects that are undertaken with funds allocated by the Commonwealth Government for Aboriginal welfare. I instance one project mentioned in a report to the Aboriginal Affairs Planning Authority for the year ended June, 1975, and I will read from it as follows—

Reserve Improvements

Grant \$95 970—for the Beagle Bay Fencing project and to fence reserve No. 23345 Wyndham (Aboriginal Burial Ground). Both projects are continuing and expenditure has amounted to \$101 724. An application for an additional grant to cover the excess and to complete the projects has been lodged.

I wonder about priorities when \$100 000 is spent on fences. I believe if these priorities could be looked at at a State level instead of a Federal level we would achieve much more.

My time is running out and I would like to leave that matter for now. I started on a note of optimism and I intend to finish in the same way. In the 1960s this State bubbled with a great sense of purpose and direction. Men and women shared the feeling of excitement and achievement. The potential for a return to activity still is here. How quickly it comes and at what rate surely depends on a return to the sort of industrial relations which generate confidence and a climate conducive to investment.

Through my presence in this Chamber I pledge my commitment to the task.