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Press release - Australasian Public Service Commissioners' Conference

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PRESS RELEASE FROM THE PREMIER, MR. DUNSTAN.

AUSTRALASIAN PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSIONERS' CONFERENCE. 27/9/71.

Between now and the end of this century governments the world over will be required to make fundamental decisions affecting the very question of survival of mankind, the Premier (Mr. Dunstan) said today.

He was opening a conference of Australasian Public Service Commissioners in Adelaide.

"This is because of two basic areas of concern which encompass all the subsidiary areas in which governments will be required to take action.

"They are the current familiar and fashionable ones of population and pollution.

"They will become less fashionable, more horrifying, relentlessly and more politically demanding.

"For governments the ramifications are immense," the Premier said.

"For instance, for population read birth control programmes, health and housing, city planning or the lack of it, education, employment and the environment; for pollution read, for instance, the effect of large human populations on the environment and the pollution caused by industrial economies designed to serve such populations.

"The two areas of concern are inextricably commingled", the Premier said. The process of change was gathering speed.

A period of consolidation could not be predicted.

"And because of this it is my belief that now and in the immediate future our public administration will need to have built into it a capacity for constant flexibility and increasing intellectual competence", Mr. Dunstan said.

The range and complexity of governmental administrative structures that will be necessary to implement a rapidly growing list of specific policies will be quite staggering.

"The staggering part will be qualitative rather than quantitative. It will not be a matter of getting a large bureaucracy, but rather a matter of making sure that we are capable of handling the tasks that will not allow for rigidity of thought or organisation, or elaborate hierarchies in which communication is diffused, or for empires of authority in which the capacity for objective and effective decision-making is diminished."

The Premier said that, given the increasing range, of governmental interest in both the publicly and privately organised parts of the community and the constant meshing of governmental and private sectors of the community, there was an ever increasing number of potentially critical matters upon which a government might be required to act with skill or speed.

"It is essential that it have working for it a Public Service which is capable of tendering the most carefully considered advice and putting the most subtle of policy decisions into effect.

"In fact, many of the areas requiring future action by governments have not until now been considered its province."

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