

FOR PRESS:

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CONFERENCE WITH STATE PREMIERS

Statement by the Prime Minister

The dates for the forthcoming Premiers' Conference would remain unchanged, the Prime Minister (Mr. Menzies) said to-day.

The conference will begin in Canberra on March 4, and is expected to last for three days.

Mr. Menzies said, "We have considered suggestions that the date of the conference should be changed because three State elections will take place in March.

"However, the conference will have some matters of urgency before it -- the position of the claimant States, for instance, cannot be too long deferred.

"Other matters, such as finance for roads, need to be considered as soon as possible so that arrangements flowing from policy decisions made at the conference can be worked out before the end of the financial year.

"For these reasons we have decided it would be impossible to postpone the conference until after the three State elections have been held.

"In effect, this would have meant postponing the conference until about the end of April, as we would have to allow time for newly-elected Premiers to brief themselves on their State financial affairs.

"I should add that I have not received a request from any of the Premiers for a postponement."

CANBERRA, A.C.T.  
19th February, 1959.