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PRIME MINISTER

FOR MEDIA

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 8 1983

REVIEW OF COMMONWEALTH ADMINISTRATION

The Government has indicated its broad endorsement of the recommendations of the Review of Commonwealth Administration.

The recommendations of the Review, chaired by Mr J. B. Reid, are a working blue-print for improving the performance of the Public Service. They involve placing greater management responsibility on departments, giving them clearer authority in staffing and financial matters to enable them better to cope with the challenges faced by public administration.

Alongside this greater devolution of responsibility, the central agencies of government are able to have a more active role in assisting departments, particularly in matters of staff development and financial management.

Among the major recommendations affecting the Public Service, which the Government supports, are:

- . an independent reassessment of the effects of the system of administrative review;
- . promulgation of guidelines for the creation and control of statutory authorities;
- . greater flexibility in financial management by grouping departmental administrative expenses into broad appropriations;
- . a new financial management improvement programme;
- . greater use of bulk establishment control system to give greater flexibility to departments in staff management;
- . devolution of appointment and dismissal powers to departments (with existing appeal rights)
- . early consideration of major Joint Management Review of ADP Management Issues;
- . consideration of use of Joint Selection Committees (including staff organisation nominees) in the staff selection process, with no appeal from their recommendation;
- . greater authority to Permanent Heads to deploy senior staff as they see fit;

- .. Public Service Board to participate in senior appointment decisions, to ensure wide field of candidates are considered and due weight is given to breadth of experience and managerial capacity; appeals to senior position to be abolished; greater access to senior appointments by talented people outside the Service;
- . PSB and departments to develop career development and training programmes for senior managers;
- . suitable consultative process and demonstrated policy of rotation in permanent head appointments;
- . each Permanent Head to submit annual Management Improvement Plan to his Minister.

Following the election, the Government will take all necessary action to consider the details of the recommendations and implement them as a matter of priority.

The Joint Committee of Public Accounts Report on the Selection and Development of Senior Managers in the Commonwealth Public Service deals in greater detail with some of the matters discussed in the Review of Commonwealth Administration, and contains many recommendations and suggestions which, in effect, amplify the Review. The Government intends to make a detailed response to that Report to the new Parliament, but to the extent that it is consistent with the Review, its detailed suggestions will be taken up as a part of the implementation of the Review.

The Government will also consider putting forward the Review's proposals through the normal Parliamentary processes relating to:

- . a reform of Parliamentary sitting times
- . a referendum to enable the appointment of members of Parliament to assist Ministers.

I would like to thank once again Mr Reid, Sir Ronald Elliott and Professor John Rose, together with their support staff, for producing a report which contains sensible, realistic but imaginative specific proposals to ensure that Commonwealth administration is better able, by building on its current achievements, to meet the challenge of rapid change, a necessary control over resources, greater public scrutiny and technological development.