

Department of Defence: Early Organisation

From 1922 to 1928 the work on the civil side of the Ministry for Defence/Department of Defence was divided between the Army Finance Officer and the Secretary. The staffs were distinct and were located at Portobello Barracks (now Cathal Brugha Barracks, Dublin), Griffith Barracks on the South Circular Road, Dublin and the Parkgate/Infirmary Road complex. The 1st Army Finance Officer (Mr Thomas Gorman) was formally appointed on 26 June, 1923 and he was also appointed Accounting Officer. A Deputy Army Finance Officer (Mr WP Blunden) and an assistant Finance Officer were appointed on 1 December, 1924. The Secretary, Mr CB O'Connor, was appointed on 1 July, 1923.

During this period the bulk of the work on the civil side fell to the Army Finance Officer's Branch; including the whole of the financial administration for the Forces, Regulations under Defence Force Acts, employment of civilian specialists and instructors and all cases and proposals to the Department of Finance, for example.

In many situations military officers and civilian staff worked side by side in the Ministry of Defence. In the Secretary's Branch proper the next highest grade after the Secretary was that of Higher Executive Officer.

On the retirement of the Army Finance Officer in July, 1928, Lieutenant General Peadar MacMahon, who had served as Chief of Staff of the Defence Forces and had been appointed as Secretary, Department of Defence on 31 March, 1927, became Accounting Officer and the staffs were amalgamated and located at Parkgate. The work was then redistributed; the former Deputy Army Finance officer became "finance officer".

In January 1929 the post of Chief Clerk was abolished and that of Principal was created. Under a re-organisation carried out in the Department at that time the responsibility for certain functions dealing with Contracts and Disposals, Officers Pay, Soldiers Pay and Marriage Allowances and lands administration, for example were transferred from the military side to the civil side in the Department.

In a subsequent re-organisation of the Department in 1930-1931, the Administrative Side was divided into four sections (S 1 Army Organisation Section, S2 General Section, S3 Establishment Section and S4 Contracts and Disposals Section), three under Higher Executive Officers and one under a Senior Staff Officer. On the Accounting Side four sections were also created, under five Higher Executive Officers. These were: F1 Accounts Section, F2 Stores Accounts and Audit Section, F3 Officers Pay Section, F4 Soldiers Pay Section. Lands administration was transferred at a later date to S 2.

The staff of both the Administrative side and the Accounting side was increased during the 1930's; additional posts being created by reason of the growth of work in payments to the Reserve Force, Contracts, Lands Administration, Pensions, Air Raid Precautions, Stores accounting and Auditing, for example.