

WASC 2049

WAI 531

'An Introduction  
for New Entrants'  
Min. of Supply



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# An Introduction for New Entrants

THE MINISTRY OF SUPPLY

## Preface

*This booklet welcomes you to the Ministry of Supply and introduces you to the organisation of this large and complex Government Department. It gives you a brief outline of the tasks of the Ministry, its organisation and the way it works. You will find as you read through it that service in this Ministry offers you an excellent opportunity of an interesting and worth-while career.*

*I am sure that as the years go by you will be able more and more to identify yourself with the achievements of the Ministry. Good luck to you and may you have a happy and successful career.*

*J. R. C. Helme*

*Permanent Secretary.*

## Introduction

THE MINISTRY OF SUPPLY belongs to the "Service and Supply" or "Defence" group of Government Departments with the Admiralty, the War Office, the Air Ministry and the Ministry of Defence. It is called the "Ministry of Supply" because its most important work is to *supply* the Fighting Services with what they need, except for such stores as food, fuel and warships and certain naval stores. The supplies cover a vast range—from aircraft, tanks, radio and radar equipment, guns and ammunition to clothing and personal equipment. The Ministry is the Government Department concerned with the aircraft, light metals and electronics industries and thus its activities extend into the economic field.

It will be immediately apparent that in order to satisfy the requirements of the three Service Departments there must be very close liaison between these "customer" Departments and the Ministry of Supply. Many Serving Officers from these Departments work in the Ministry of Supply. The staff of the Ministry, however, consists in the main of large numbers of scientists, engineers, ancillary staff and industrial workers in addition to administrative, executive and clerical staff. The success of the work depends therefore on the integration of the effort of all these different groups of people into one team working with a common goal, the efficient achievement of the jobs which it is the Ministry's task to perform.

If you are a new entrant to the Civil Service you will have been given a copy of the "Handbook for the New Civil Servant" issued by H.M. Treasury. If you are not, you will be able to borrow a copy through your Outstation library or from the Ministry of Supply Central Library. This handbook gives a broad outline of what the Civil Service is and how it works, and tells you briefly what will be expected of you as a Civil Servant. Read it carefully, especially the sections on "Methods of Work" and "Office Rules and Conditions of Service".

## Historical Background

The Ministry of Supply in its present form was set up in 1946 as a result of the amalgamation of the war-time Ministry of Supply with the war-time Ministry of Aircraft Production. Although it is a young Department compared with most other Government Departments, many of its component parts have a long history and their own traditions of service. The job of obtaining supplies for the Fighting Services is not a new one. If you have read the fascinating story of Samuel Pepys, the great administrator of the 17th Century and famous Secretary of the Board of the Admiralty, you will realise that then, just as now, the important duty of the organisation responsible for providing the supplies (in Pepys' case ships and naval stores for the Royal Navy) needed by the Fighting Services is to arrange for them to be available in the quantities, of the quality and at the time they are required.

There have been two tendencies, over a long period of time, in the organisation for carrying out the task of providing the supplies required by the Fighting Services. The first has been to combine on an inter-service basis the procurement of common stores—especially armaments and aircraft and more recently radio components. In the absence of a common Supply Department these combined arrangements could only be given to one of the existing Service Departments on the basis that the "major user" would arrange for the supplies required by other users. The second tendency has been that within each Service Department the supply responsibilities have been separated from the operational and personnel organisations leading to the setting up of separate Supply Branches or Departments within each Service Department. Thus in the War Office the Director General of Munitions Production's Department and in the Air Ministry the Air Member for Development and Production's Department became responsible for supply, whilst much earlier the Controller's Department in the Admiralty had been crystallised out.

Before the start of the Second World War it was considered that, as in the First World War when the Ministry of Munitions was set up, in periods when large supplies of armaments were required, it would be advisable to free the man who had to do the job from the worry of providing the things with which to do it. In August, 1939, therefore, a Ministry of Supply was set up and to this Ministry was transferred the Supply organisation of the War Office. This Ministry was made responsible for research, development, design and production of equipment, including weapons and ammunition, for the Army and for the similar needs of the Royal Air Force and for

some of the needs of the Royal Navy. In May, 1940, a Ministry of Aircraft Production was set up and to it was transferred the supply organisation of the Air Ministry. This Ministry was made responsible for research, development, design and production of aircraft and aircraft equipment required by the Royal Air Force and also by the Royal Navy.

During the War the responsibilities of these Ministries greatly expanded and they came between them to control most of the industry of the country—particularly the iron and steel, non-ferrous metals, light alloy, engineering and radio industries as well as the specific munitions and aircraft industries.

In 1945 the Government decided to combine the Ministry of Supply and the Ministry of Aircraft Production into one Department, to be kept as a permanent part of the machinery of Government with the responsibilities which the two Departments had at that time (except for some which automatically came to an end with the War and some which were transferred to the Board of Trade and other Departments). Thus the present Ministry of Supply was formed with the responsibilities outlined in the Prime Minister's statement on the 29th October, 1945, at Appendix A. You will see that the Ministry was also given responsibility for atomic energy research and development.

The long tradition of service of many of the component parts of which the Ministry of Supply is made up is well illustrated by the following examples. The Royal Ordnance Factories at Woolwich—which, with those at Enfield and Waltham Abbey, were the forebears of the large number of Royal Ordnance Factories which now exist—can be said to have originated nearly 300 years ago. The Gunpowder Factory at Waltham Abbey is known to have been in existence in 1560, although it was in private ownership until 1789 when the Government took the factory over. From then until the end of the last war it provided propellants and high explosives for the Fighting Services. In 1946 the site was taken over by the Explosives Research and Development Establishment on its formation out of the Armament Research Establishment at Woolwich which celebrated its fiftieth anniversary in 1953.

The Royal Ordnance Factories at Woolwich can be said to have originated in 1667 when Prince Rupert, the famous Cavalry Leader and a scientist of merit, was commissioned by his kinsman, King Charles II, to construct works and batteries as a protection against the Dutch fleet. It was, however, not until 1805 when King George III visited "Woolwich Warren" that the more dignified title of "Royal Arsenal" was bestowed. Since then they have continued to produce armaments and have also provided many of the key men for the new Royal Ordnance Factories which have been built since 1937.

Several of the Ministry's Research and Development Establishments have a



history dating back to the beginning of this century. The Royal Aircraft Establishment at Farnborough (R.A.E.) is the largest and undoubtedly the most widely known of the Ministry's Research and Development Establishments. It has been at Farnborough since 1905 and it was there that the first British heavier-than-air flying machine was flown in 1908. In 1912, on being transferred to the Royal Flying Corps, its title was changed from "Army Aircraft Factory" to "Royal Aircraft Factory" and until 1916 it was responsible for building aircraft as well as aeronautical research and development. However, since 1916 it has concentrated its activities on aeronautical research and development. In 1918 it was renamed the "Royal Aircraft Establishment". R.A.E. has now a number of large and important Outstations, for example the National Aeronautical Establishment at Bedford and the Rocket Propulsion Department at Westcott. A sister Establishment, the National Gas Turbine Establishment at Pyestock, originated from an R.A.E. Outstation which was first located there in 1942.

Thus, although the Ministry of Supply is a new Department, it has evolved from far older organisations and has taken on both their work and their traditions of service. Even in its short life there have been several changes in its responsibilities; these are illustrated by the following examples. In 1947 responsibility for the provision of medical supplies was transferred to the Ministry of Health. In 1951, on the formation of the Ministry of Materials, certain responsibilities for non-ferrous and light metals were transferred to that Ministry although responsibility for distribution policy and the metal fabricating industry remained with the Ministry of Supply.

In 1954 responsibility for atomic energy research and development was transferred to the Office of the Lord President preparatory to the setting up of the United Kingdom Atomic Energy Authority in August of that year. The Ministry of Supply remains, however, responsible for the provision of complete atomic weapons for the Fighting Services.

The last major change occurred in July, 1955, when the primary Government responsibilities in the field of engineering (except aircraft, light metals and electronics) and the general Government responsibility for the iron and steel industry were transferred to the Board of Trade.

## Responsibilities of the Ministry of Supply

The present functions of the Ministry of Supply are:

- (a) to furnish supplies to the Fighting Services and to undertake research on, and the design and development of equipment for these Services, principally

for the Army and Royal Air Force, but including aircraft, vehicles, some guns and ammunition and other classes of equipment for the Royal Navy;

- (b) to carry out the primary Government responsibility for the aircraft, electronics and light metal industries;
- (c) to provide complete atomic weapons to the Services; and
- (d) to undertake research on and the development of certain classes of equipment for civil use, e.g. civil aircraft and industrial gas turbines.

The Ministry is also responsible for the provision of certain supplies for Civil Departments (e.g. Civil Defence equipment for the Home Office, vehicles for other Government Departments including the General Post Office) and for Commonwealth and other countries.

## Organisation

The staff of the Ministry of Supply at the end of 1954 numbered some 112,000, of which some 34,000 were non-industrials and the remainder industrials. These figures included over 5,000 Serving Officers and Other Ranks. The Headquarters staff numbered some 10,000 located mainly in seven large buildings in London, and at Chessington, Mottingham and in Liverpool. The remainder were employed in the Outstations: in the Royal Ordnance Factories (some 50,000); in the Research and Development Establishments (some 28,000); in the Inspectorates (some 17,000) and in miscellaneous Establishments such as storage depots (some 6,000).

The chart on pages 10 and 11 gives in a simplified form the way in which the large staff of the Ministry of Supply is organised to carry out its functions. This chart is no more than a simple picture to help you to understand the description of the broad division of responsibility within the Ministry which is given in the following paragraphs. The organisation of the Ministry is not static. Indeed, as would be expected, it changes with the changes in the functions and with the changes in the load of work arising in carrying out each of the main tasks. You will find a much more comprehensive and up-to-date chart of the top level organisation at the front of the Ministry of Supply Directory. In the Directory you will also find a description of the responsibilities of the principal posts in each of the Headquarters' branches and at the Outstations.

It is convenient in our brief summary of the organisation to consider first the top level organisation at Headquarters and then the organisation of some of the main groups of Outstations. However, it must be emphasised that the organisation does not in practice work as two separate entities. As you will see, some of the people at

Headquarters are responsible directly for the work of the Outstations, others assist the Outstations or lay down the rules to be followed, whilst others have tasks of their own to perform.

The head of the Department is the Minister of Supply who is responsible to Parliament for carrying out the functions of the Ministry. He is assisted in the performance of his duties by the Parliamentary Secretary.

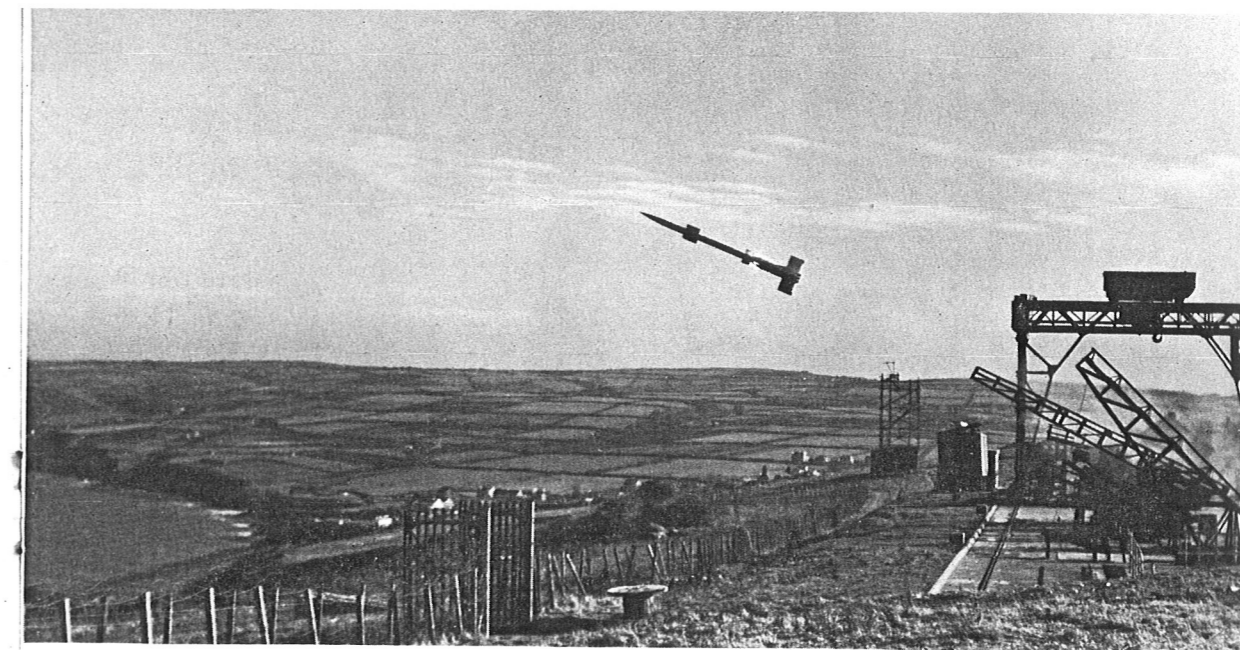
The official head of the Department is the Permanent Secretary who is also the Accounting Officer. He is responsible to the Minister for the overall supervision of the Department. He is assisted by the Second Permanent Secretary who is responsible on his behalf for the day to day management of the Department.

There are two Deputy Secretaries (Deputy Secretaries (B) and (C)) : each is responsible for a number of Divisions which are headed by Under Secretaries. They share between them responsibility for administrative and financial questions relating to the supply functions of the Ministry; Deputy Secretary (B) being concerned primarily with munitions supplies and Deputy Secretary (C) with aircraft and aircraft equipment, electronics, guided and atomic weapons.

The Under Secretaries may be classified into two broad groups. The first, which includes the Under Secretaries Munitions Supplies, Air (A), Air (B), Electronics and Guided Weapons, and Security and Atomic Weapons provide administrative, secretarial and financial services in connection with the work of the Controllers and the Chief Scientist with whom they co-operate in the formulation of policy. The second group provides services for the Ministry generally. This group includes the Under Secretaries Finance, Contracts, Royal Ordnance Factories and Labour, General, and Programmes and Research. Each of these Under Secretaries reports to one or both of the Deputy Secretaries.

Two other Under Secretaries also belong to the second group, viz. the Under Secretaries of the Establishment and of the Organisation and Methods Divisions; but as you will see from the chart, they report direct to the Permanent Secretaries, as does also the Under Secretary Security and Atomic Weapons on Security matters. You will find a fuller account of the duties of each of the Under Secretaries in the description of the top level organisation at the front of the Ministry of Supply Directory.

The Controllers of Munitions, of Aircraft and of Guided Weapons and Electronics are responsible for research, development, design, production and inspection in relation to a particular range of stores. In the case of Controller of Munitions the stores are guns, small arms, ammunition and explosives, tanks, wheeled vehicles, Royal Engineer equipment, clothing and general stores; in the case of Controller of



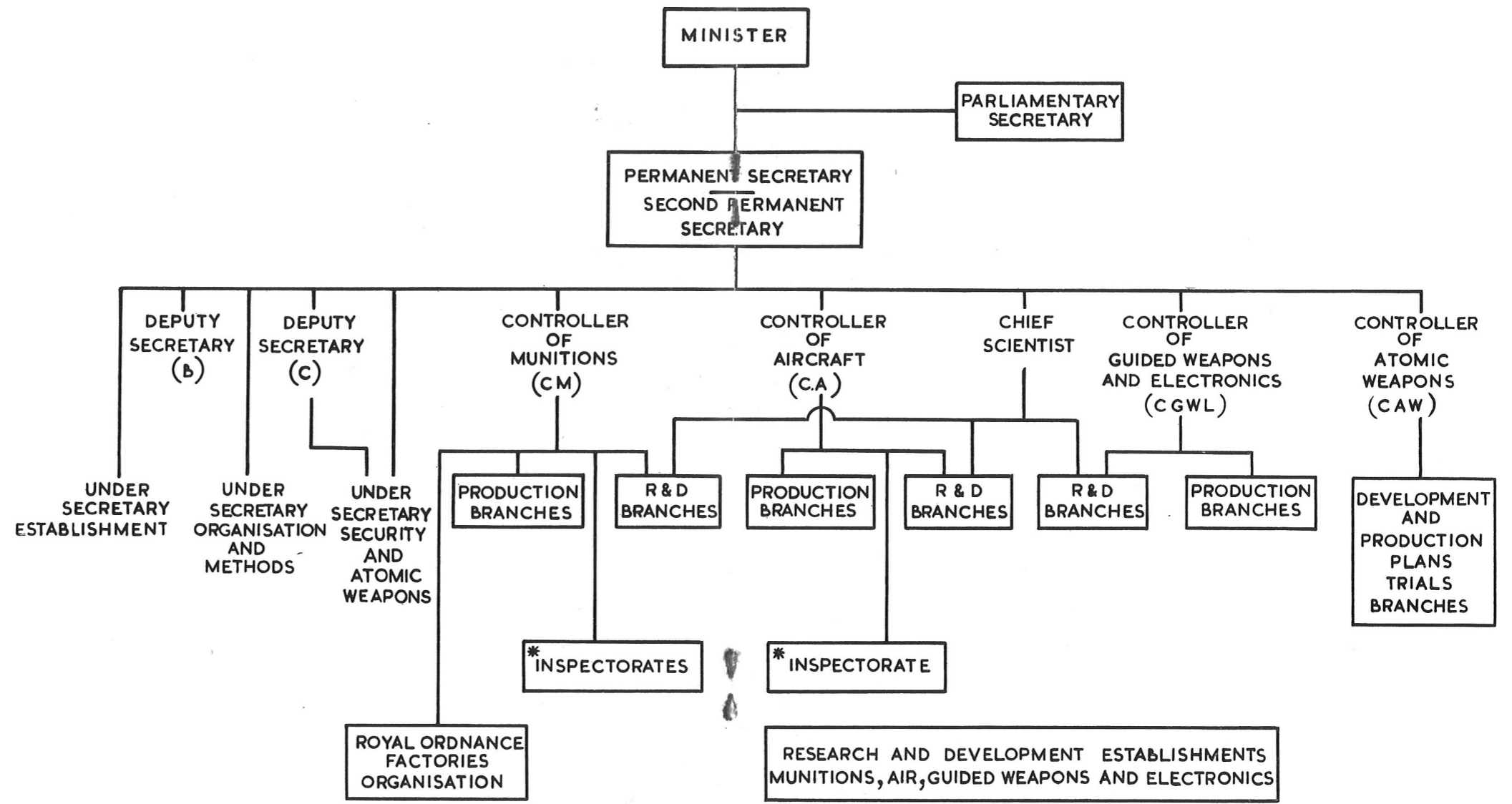
Guided rocket after launching at the Guided Weapons Trials Wing at Aberporth.

Canberra at R.A.E., Farnborough.





**MINISTRY OF SUPPLY**  
**HEADQUARTERS TOP LEVEL ORGANISATION**  
**JULY 1955**



\* CM'S AND CA'S INSPECTORATES ALSO SERVE CGWL'S ORGANISATION



Tanks leaving R.O.F., Leeds.

Aircraft, aircraft and aircraft equipment (but excluding guided weapons and electronics equipment) for all the Fighting Services: in the case of Controller of Guided Weapons and Electronics, guided weapons and electronic equipment. The Controller of Aircraft also has responsibility for the development of new types of civil aircraft. The Controller of Atomic Weapons is responsible for the provision of complete atomic weapons to the Services.

Whilst each Controller is concerned with research, design and development in his own field a general responsibility over the whole field (except for atomic energy) for longer range research work, and the provision of research and experimental facilities, rests with the Chief Scientist. He is also the "professional head" of the scientific staff of the Ministry and as such has a special concern with their conditions of service.

There are two main groups of Outstations shown on the chart on pages 10 and 11. The first is the Royal Ordnance Factories of which there are over twenty. The work of the factories is the manufacture and repair of tanks, guns, small arms, ammunition and bombs and manufacture of explosives to the requirements of the Service Departments and Commonwealth and other countries. They are controlled by the Director General of Ordnance Factories under the Controller of Munitions and together constitute one of the largest industrial undertakings in the country.

The second large Outstation group is the Research and Development Establishments. These are the Munitions Establishments, the Air Establishments and the Guided Weapons and Electronics Establishments. They include:

Royal Aircraft Establishment (R.A.E.) at Farnborough and its Outstations.

National Gas Turbine Establishment (N.G.T.E.) at Pyestock.

Aircraft and Armament Experimental Establishment (A. & A.E.E.) at Boscombe Down.

Radar Research Establishment (R.R.E.) at Malvern.

Signals Research and Development Establishment (S.R.D.E.) at Christchurch.

Armament Research and Development Establishment (A.R.D.E.) at Fort Halstead and Woolwich and its Outstations.

Military Engineering Experimental Establishment (M.E.X.E.) at Christchurch.

Fighting Vehicles Research and Development Establishment (F.V.R.D.E.) at Chobham.

Each of these large Outstations carries out most of its own administrative work, such as payment of salaries and wages, placing of local orders for the supplies it needs and payment of bills, subject to the rules laid down by the Headquarters administrative and finance branches. However, some of the services they need are



provided by Headquarters branches. These services include the placing of the larger contracts (placed by the central Contracts branches), and the provision of new buildings and plant.

Although the Ministry of Supply has such large research, development, design and manufacturing facilities of its own these can only provide a part of the resources which the Ministry needs to carry out its supply tasks. Thus, the Ministry places a large programme of research, development and design work with industry and some of the more fundamental research work with the Universities. In the year 1954/5 the Royal Ordnance Factories were to provide only some £46,000,000 of supplies needed by the customers out of a total of about £607,000,000. Thus much of the work involved has to be placed with industry. The scientific and technical and production branches in the Controllers' organisations progress the work and assist the contractors, and the large Contracts division places the contracts. There is also a large bill-paying branch (part of the Finance division) at Liverpool which pays the contractors bills.

One important stage in the provision of supplies which has not yet been mentioned is the inspection of the supplies to ensure that they conform to the contract specifications. There are seven specialist inspectorates responsible for this work with staff located throughout the country at test houses, the Royal Ordnance Factories and contractors' works.

## The Working of the Organisation

As we have already seen the main job of the Ministry of Supply is to supply the Fighting Services. But it would be an over-simplification to say that the customer states what he wants and the Ministry supplies it. The Ministry carries out a large programme of longer range research and development with the object of advancing knowledge in the many scientific fields from which knowledge is needed to meet the Fighting Services' requirements. For an existing equipment, the customer needs advice on delivery and price before he can decide finally what he wants and whether he can afford it. For a new equipment the Fighting Services say what they want the weapons to do and the Ministry advises on what can be developed to achieve the requirement.

Thus, from the very beginning of a new requirement to its delivery there must be very close liaison between the Ministry and the customer. And even after delivery the Ministry must often provide a post-delivery service, for the customer may discover unsuspected defects or require improvements to the equipment after it has been introduced into service (i.e. modifications may be required).

As we have seen, much of the equipment which the Ministry of Supply provides for the Fighting Services is made by private industry. Thus there have also to be very close working relationships between the Ministry and industry. Those branches concerned with the economic work of the Ministry are of course in very close contact with the industries with which they are concerned.

It will help you to understand how the Ministry works if we trace briefly the progress of a simple new requirement through its various stages—a new type of shell required by the Army. After discussion between the War Office branches concerned and the Scientific and Technical branches in the Ministry of Supply, the War Office places an operational specification on the Ministry of Supply (on one of the Controller of Munitions' branches). The administrative and finance branches in both Departments will also be concerned at this stage and indeed quite complex issues may be involved, but, for our purpose we will consider only the very simple stages through which the requirement passes. These are:

### (A) RESEARCH

The requirement is placed on the programmes of the Research and Development Establishments responsible for armament research and development (in this case the Armament Research and Development Establishment and the Explosives Research and Development Establishment). At the Establishments teams of scientists and engineers carry out the research and development work involved in meeting the new requirement. This may involve, in addition to feeding in information from the longer range research and development, research on new materials and on new techniques and the solutions to the problems arising may only be obtained after a comparatively long period of investigation and experiment.

### (B) DEVELOPMENT

Once the fundamental problems arising have been solved, the next stage is the development of a shell which will meet the requirement. This leads up to the design stage and a prototype.

### (C) DESIGN

During this stage a design is drawn up and orders for small numbers of prototype shells for further experiment and testing will be placed either with the Royal Ordnance Factories or in Industry. When the tests on the prototypes have been concluded to the satisfaction of the Ministry and then of the customer, the manufacturing specification of the new shell is fixed and the shell is then ready to go into production.

(D) MANUFACTURE

The customer will now be in a position to place, in the light of advice from the Ministry's production branches on possible delivery and price and of his own needs, an order on the Ministry for the quantities of the new shell which he will require. The Administrative and Finance branch (in this case one of those under the Under Secretary, Munitions Supply) will give financial sanction. The Production branch will advise on where satisfactory manufacturing capacity exists and the Contracts branch will place the order with the supplier. Several orders may, in fact, have to be placed, e.g. for the empty shell, for the explosives and for the filling of the shell. Part or all of the order may be placed with the Royal Ordnance Factories.

During manufacture the production branch concerned will assist the contractor in getting over any difficulties he may get into and will also watch the progress of the order. The Inspectorates will ensure that the components of the new shell are properly made and that the complete shell meets the requirements laid down in the specification.

(E) DELIVERY AND PAYMENT

The shells, packaged as required by the customer, will be delivered under the aegis of the Transport branch, which forms part of the Under Secretary (General's) charge and payment will be made for the supplies delivered (except in the case of the Royal Ordnance Factories) by one of the bill paying branches. Recovery for the value of shells delivered to the War Office will be arranged by the Administrative and Finance branch.

The Ministry recovers from the Service Departments the cost of supplies delivered to them on the basis of the price which the Ministry pays the contractor or, in the case of the Royal Ordnance Factories, the actual cost of manufacture. The cost of research and development is not charged to the Service Departments but is borne by the Ministry. Recoveries from other Government Departments include the cost of inspection and transport and from other customers (e.g. other countries) are the total cost including research and development, transport, inspection and administrative expenses.

The provision of a new shell, which we have followed in the previous paragraphs, represents a simplification of a number of very complex stages and transactions and you will of course realise that for more complex requirements such as new weapons, or tanks, or aircraft the procedure and the transactions involved are still more complex. Throughout all the stages great care is exercised to ensure that the finished product is safe to use in the hands of the troops.

## General Information

We now turn to a few important "do's" and "don'ts". In all your general behaviour you must remember that you are a public servant. The profession of a Civil Servant is one of some dignity. Your Minister is a member of the Government of the day and is responsible to Parliament for the work of the Department and, therefore, what you do must be in accordance with what he wants you to do. So you must serve him loyally to the best of your ability and carry out his decisions and the decisions of senior officers acting on his behalf.

In all Government Departments much of the information which the staff obtains is Confidential, but in the Defence Departments you will find that much of it is Secret. It is therefore essential that you don't talk about it to anyone who has not the right to know, and, of course, that you don't mention it at all to outsiders.

You will be expected to know the official regulations about conduct, hours, leave and conditions of service. These you will find in the "Ministry of Supply Staff Regulations" Handbook. The Section on Whitley procedure will be of particular interest to you.

Whatever place you may take in this large organisation, there are certain rules of behaviour which will help you. These are laid down in various handbooks: for example, at Headquarters in the "Handbook of Office Procedure" and in the Royal Ordnance Factories in the R.O.F. Manuals. You will be told about them when you attend training courses either at your Outstation or at Headquarters. However, two points are of sufficient importance to be emphasised at the outset; they are not peculiar to the Civil Service but are equally important in any large organisation, and, indeed, in small ones also.

The first point is that you must know thoroughly the methods for placing papers on Registered Files, Branch Folders and local files and for circulating files. Unless these methods are carefully followed delay and confusion will result and you, and other people, will be caused a great deal of unnecessary trouble. Loose papers in a Government office are about as welcome as wasps in a dining room.

The second point is that you should always avoid "jargon" and writing verbose and woolly papers and minutes. Be sure that you always say briefly and simply what you have to say and that you have answered any question which has been put to you. You should read "Plain Words" by Sir Ernest Gowers, a copy of which you



may obtain through your local Outstation library or from the Ministry of Supply Central Library.

The Ministry of Supply has a lot to offer you in the way of amenities. There is an active Recreational Society which is affiliated to the Civil Service Sports Council. At Headquarters and at most Outstations there are clubs and societies which provide facilities for all types of sport and recreation. There are plenty of opportunities for you to further your career or your interest by taking courses. Information about these may be obtained through your local Training Officer or from the Central Training branch.

The Ministry of Supply has a well organised Welfare section with its Headquarters at 66/72 Gower Street, London, and local branches at all Outstations. If you have a personal problem you will find the staff sympathetic and helpful. Full particulars about the section are contained in the Ministry of Supply "Staff Regulations".

### Conclusion

You will realise that in this brief introduction to the Ministry of Supply it has only been possible to give you a very broad idea of what the Ministry does and how it works. You may find a lot to confuse you in your early days. But once you have settled down you will find a lot to interest you and that there are many worthwhile jobs to be done. Get to know your own job thoroughly and make certain you find out how it fits into the immediate organisation which you are serving and, ultimately, how that organisation assists in performing the tasks which it is the Ministry's job to do. Always be on the look-out for ways of improving the job you are doing and always remember that any waste is a loss of taxpayers' money, and, in our particular case, means a limitation on the quantities of supplies which we can provide for the Fighting Services within the money which Parliament has made available to them.

## APPENDIX A

### Prime Minister's Statement on the Ministry of Supply

*(House of Commons, 29th October, 1945)*

"The primary duty of the combined Ministry will be the furnishing of supplies, and the carrying out of research, design and development for the Fighting Services, to the extent that these functions are undertaken by the two Ministries (Supply and Aircraft Production) at the present time. This duty will be carried out in close collaboration with the Service Departments in order to ensure that the 'user' interests are given proper weight. . . . The combined Ministry will, however, also be responsible for the supply and, in many cases, the design, of a large range of stores used by the Government, for which concentration of purchasing arrangements seems advantageous, and will retain the functions hitherto exercised by the Ministry of Aircraft Production on behalf of the Ministry of Civil Aviation. . . . The combined Ministry will carry the primary Government responsibility in the field of engineering; the Iron and Steel Control, the Non-ferrous Metals Control and the Light Metals Control will remain with the Ministry of Supply. . . . It has further been decided that in view of the importance of this work (i.e. on atomic energy) to the Service Departments, responsibility for research on this subject which has hitherto rested with the Department of Scientific and Industrial Research, should be transferred to the Ministry of Supply."

