

SECTION 4

THE STRUCTURE OF THE SCOTTISH OFFICE

The Secretary of State is directly responsible for all the departments making up the Scottish Office. The Scottish Office consists of five departments and a number of "central service" units concerned with such matters as finance, legal services, information and personnel services. The five departments are of equal status and each is in the charge of a Secretary who is responsible to the Secretary of State for the work of his department. A Deputy Secretary (Central Services), who ranks equally with the Secretaries of the five departments, has special responsibilities for the co-ordination of work on devolution and the control of central finance functions, including responsibility for local authority finance.

The Permanent Under Secretary of State is the general adviser to the Secretary of State. Under his chairmanship the Heads of Departments and the Deputy Secretary (Central Services) constitute a Management Group to ensure the co-ordination of the work of the Secretary of State's Departments and to consider common problems across the whole field of Scottish Office responsibilities.

Department of Agriculture and Fisheries for Scotland

This department is responsible for the promotion of the agriculture and fishing industries. Along with the agricultural departments for England and Wales and Northern Ireland, the Department advises Ministers on the formulation of EEC and United Kingdom agricultural policy. The Department implements Government policy for Scottish agriculture by a variety of measures, including the maintenance of agricultural support policy, schemes for capital assistance to agriculture and horticulture, the improvement of livestock and crops, and (through the agricultural colleges and research institutes) the provision of educational, advisory and research services. The Department is also responsible, through the Crofters' Commission, for the development of crofting, and manages on behalf of the nation a large area of state-owned agricultural property. As regards fisheries, duties extend from international relations (including negotiation within the European Community and co-operation in international organisations concerned with the conservation of fish stocks) to domestic matters, such as financial support for the fishing industry, assistance for fishery harbours, scientific research into fisheries' problems and the protection of Scottish fisheries by the department's fleet of fishery cruisers.

Scottish Education Department

This department supervises the public education system in Scotland, in co-operation with the local authorities who are the direct providers of primary, secondary and certain further education within their areas. The Department makes money available for educational buildings, prescribes standards and advises on designs for these buildings, gives guidance on educational curricula and, with the co-operation of the General Teaching Council, is responsible for teacher supply. It exercises certain responsibilities for Scottish Universities, although these, like other Universities in Britain,

are primarily the concern of the Department of Education and Science: and its functions also cover youth and community services, adult education, sport, physical recreation and the arts. The Department is responsible for the Royal Scottish Museum and works closely with the National Museums and Galleries and the National Library of Scotland.

The Social Work Services Group, which forms part of the Scottish Education Department has responsibility for the discharge of the Secretary of State's functions under the Social Work (Scotland) Act 1968. These include the administration of grants to the List D (formerly "Approved") Schools, the discharge of the Secretary of State's responsibilities in relation to the children's hearing system and the giving of advice and guidance to social work authorities (the regional and islands councils) and voluntary organisations on the implementation of the 1968 Act. The Group is also responsible for the Secretary of State's functions under other statutory provisions eg. child care, including adoption and fostering. The primary duty placed on social work authorities by the 1968 Act is the promotion of social welfare, the main components of which at present are the care and support in the community of children, the physically handicapped, the mentally disordered, the elderly and other categories of persons in need, together with probation and the after-care of offenders.

Scottish Home and Health Department

This department has two main responsibilities. On the home side it is involved in the administration of the police, fire and prison services: it is concerned with criminal justice, the Licensing Acts and legislation relating to public entertainment: and it is responsible for the law relating to the conduct of parliamentary and local elections and the registration of electors and for a wide range of ceremonial and formal business. On the health side it is responsible for the administration of the National Health Service in Scotland. The Department also exercises on behalf of the Secretary of State, functions deriving from the latter's joint responsibility with the Lord Advocate for law reform and for legal aid.

Scottish Development Department

This department administers Government policy and subsidies in regard to town and country planning, housing, roads and environmental services. It is also responsible for general policy on local government administration, passenger transport policy (including shipping services to the islands), urban renewal, the administration of the community land scheme, conservation, historic buildings and ancient monuments, the rent registration service and the furnished houses rent tribunals service, building control and building standards regulations, public water supplies and sewerage, prevention of air and river pollution, coast protection and flood prevention and nuclear waste management policy. SDD is the sponsoring department for the Scottish Transport Group, the Scottish Special Housing Association and the Countryside Commission for Scotland.

Scottish Economic Planning Department

Set up in 1973, this is the newest of the departments of the Secretary

of State. It advises the Secretary of State on matters relating to industrial and economic development in Scotland, including the development of North Sea oil and Scottish aspects of regional policies both in a UK and EEC context. It also has responsibility for direct support to industry through the administration of selective financial assistance under the Industry Act 1972. In this task the department is assisted by the Scottish Industrial Development Advisory Board (SIDAB). It is through the department that the Secretary of State discharges his responsibilities in relation to the Scottish Development Agency, the activities in Scotland of the Manpower Services Commission (including its employment and training services), the generation and distribution of power by the two Scottish electricity boards, the work of the development corporations responsible for the New Towns and the development of tourism in Scotland. The Department also has a general responsibility in relation to Highland development including, in particular, responsibility for the Highlands and Islands Development Board.