

**Reference No:** E109/11/27;     **Date:** 03/06/1932

**Circular 21/1932:- Civil Servants and Politics**

A Chara,

I am directed by the Minister for Finance to state that he considers it desirable to convey to the Civil Service instructions as to the proper attitude of individual Civil Servants in regards to matters political.

The Minister is aware that it is the view of the civil Service itself that the action of an official who identifies himself actively or publicly with political matters is indefensible, and that such conduct is detrimental to the interests of the Service as a whole. The nature and conditions of a Civil Servant's employment should, of themselves, suggest to him that he must maintain a reserve in political matters; and not put himself forward on one side or another and, further, that he should be careful to do nothing that would give colour to any suggestions that his official actions are in any way influenced, or capable of being influenced, by party motives.

That is the attitude the Minister while not wishing in any way to interfere with or influence political views privately held, expects Civil Servants at all times to observe. Should any departure from official impartiality occur it will be followed by disciplinary action. If the Head of the Department (after such consultation as he may think fit with his Minister) takes the view that the official has overstepped the bounds of propriety, he should send for him, point out to him the gravity of his fault, and obtain from him an undertaking that there will be no recurrence of similar impropriety in the future. If more severe action is called for, its severity will be related to the time and place, the standing of the official concerned, and the degree of publicity, but the Minister will look to Heads of Departments to ensure that, where punishment is deserved, it will follow.

While the Minister appreciates that it would not be feasible to anticipate every occasion of the kind in question that might arise for consideration, he desires to lay down specific directions on the following points, namely,

1. An official shall not be a member of an Association or serve on a Committee having for its object the promotion of the interest of a political party or the promotion or prevention of the return of a particular candidate to the Dáil.
2. An official shall not support or oppose any particular candidate or party either by public speaking or writing.
3. An official shall not make any verbal statements in public (or which are liable to be published), and shall not contribute to newspapers or other publications any letters or articles, conveying information, comment or criticism on any matter of current political interest, or which concerns the political action or positions of the Government or of any member or group of members of the Oireachtas.

It will be understood that the views of the Minister and his directions conveyed in the Circular apply to the action of an official whether taken by himself alone or in association with others.

I am to request that all officials serving in or in future appointed to your Department shall be given the opportunity of noting the contents of this Circular and that its receipt in your Department shall be acknowledged.

Mise le meas

H.P. Boland