

forced. If you wanted to put one in that position, to give him \$1,100, that there should be an intermediate class in which he might start at \$800, or something higher if he had special qualifications, and in which he could gradually work up. From \$800 to \$1,100 is too great a difference to start with.

Mr. FOSTER. The hon. gentleman has made unto himself graven images, and he bows down and worships them. He worships class, he is struck with a great reverence for first class, second class and third class clerkships.

The MINISTER OF CUSTOMS. That is the law.

Mr. FOSTER. That seems to be the pivot around which the hon. gentleman moves when he discusses this question. I am not looking at class at all, I am looking at grades of work. He says it is an unfair thing when a vacancy occurs in a second-class clerkship to take a third-class clerk at \$1,000 and move him up to fill that vacancy, and then to take a man at \$600, and put him into that place to do what the \$1,000 man was doing. That is the hon. gentleman's argument. I say that what you are to look at is the grade of work. When you take your third-class clerk out at \$1,000 and promote him to do a grade of work worth \$1,100 in the second-class clerkship, then you have a vacancy in the third-class clerkship, and a portion of the inferior work which was being done in the third class drops down to its proper level amongst the writer class, and is just as effectually done by the man or woman who is doing work in that writer class. The point of view from which the legislation started was this, that your third-class clerk was engaged largely upon work which was not of a sufficiently high grade to make it proper that salaries should be paid ranging up to from \$800 to \$1,000. We are just working that off, and in proportion as you promote a man into the higher class he is put into higher class work, and you are simply drawing down the work which was done by the better paid clerk to its own level where it is just as efficiently done by a writer for \$400 to \$600. The gravamen of the charge against the whole service was that you had hundreds and hundreds of clerks who were getting from \$600 to \$1,000 for doing work which was not of a quality and character which made such high pay necessary. The fact was that it could be done by what you may call a cheaper class of men, by the writers class. In a commercial establishment all the mere routine work is done by a low class of labour, and that class which requires responsibility and initiative is the class that the merchant puts at a higher grade, and pays higher salaries. Is there a grievance to a bright young man who comes into the writers' class? I think as a matter of course that you will have two classes

in that writers' class. You will have a class who are willing to go in for life at \$600 a year; you will have another class who will go in and do their best work, and pass that pilgrimage as a stepping stone to help themselves to something better in the outside world. You say those do not make the best class of clerks. I believe they make the best class for that kind of work.

The MINISTER OF CUSTOMS. To give them that promotion you have to give them the \$1,100.

Mr. FOSTER. Does not the Minister of Customs see that it is not simply the grade which makes the salary but it is the work, and if the work done in the second class is of that kind which is worth \$1,100, the leap is a proper leap. But if my hon. friend does not want to leap, he need not for the term of his natural existence. In the third-class clerkships in the service taking them all through, there are hundreds of men who are willing to be promoted to the higher class work. You can promote them, you need not make the leap.

The MINISTER OF FINANCE. The hon. gentleman speaks of what business men would do. I venture to think that any business man having clerks in his employ at \$400 per annum and rising to \$500 or \$600, if he found that he could not recognize their merit by regulations that had been made, perhaps, by his partners, without jumping them up to \$1,100, he would feel that that was a very unfair condition. He would say: Here is a bright young man whom I would like to advance. I do not think he is worth \$1,100, I am willing to give him \$600 or \$700, but here is a regulation made by my partners which prevents me from promoting him unless he jumps up to \$1,100.

Mr. FOSTER. If the hon. gentleman reasons in that way, let him follow out his argument to its conclusion. Let him simply resolve the service into a business matter, abolish all classes, and let each minister pay each clerk what he thinks he is worth.

The MINISTER OF FINANCE. My hon. friend (Mr. Foster) is proposing something which is absurd and which he knows cannot be done. There is, however, one portion of the hon. gentleman's argument with which I sympathize a little. He seems to be anxious to draw a wide distinction between those who are of the class of writers and the class who compose the permanent staff. He did not wish them to consider that they had a right to promotion, as their work is clerical and temporary in its character. To some extent, I sympathize with that view. I do not want the idea to get abroad that a man who has the rank of a temporary clerk has a good and just claim to promotion, unless under exceptional circumstances. But, let us see the effects of the hon. gentle-