

done by the third-class clerks is not the highest grade of work; that it can be so arranged, if it is not now, that all the work which was formerly done by the third-class division can be done by the writers' class, running in salaries from \$300 to \$600 a year. You may talk as you like about what is to be done. I have been in the department, and I know what is done. I know that the vast majority of the work is simply clerical routine work. Here is a paper that requires to be copied, here is an account that requires to be run up, here is a piece of mechanical work that requires tabulation. Any one who thinks for a moment knows what all that class of work is. You do not want a man at a salary of \$1,100 or \$1,400 to do that class of work when you can have bright young men and women, who will do it quickly, neatly and well, and who are in the writers' class. Oh, but, says the Minister of Agriculture, those bright young men, the time comes when they do not want to stay any longer at a salary of \$600. If they do not, and there is no place to which they can be translated in the regions above, they entered the writers' class knowing the conditions, and if they can better themselves outside, I would advise them in heaven's name to do so. For if there is any class into which a bright ambitious young man or woman should not remain it is the lower grades of the civil service. Just come to the common-sense view of it, without any high faluting as to the great work that is to be done, and any one with practical experience knows that the vast majority of the work done in all the departments is simply this routine, mechanical, clerical work, which does not require any higher class of men or women than are getting from \$300 to \$500 per year. Suppose you come across a difficulty, suppose you want a special class of work done, and you cannot find, in all the unused remainder of the third class, one who is able to do it, and when you cannot find any one in those that fill the writers' class, at from \$300 to \$600 per year, fit to do it, what would you do? A special case can be specially provided for. It is much cheaper to provide for a special case now and then, when it occurs, than to establish a class, which you will be always tempted and urged to fill up more and more and keep filled up with men and women at a high salary. I do not think any good reason has been given why we should form another class of highly paid men and women to do what is really third-class work. But you say there is some high-class work to be done that you cannot get done by any of the third-class clerks. There is an easy solution of that. The ministers, looking over the departments, will find that some of the second-class work done by men who are paid second-class salaries, is a kind of work which could be just as well done by the

writers' class, so that by shifting that class of work to the writers' class, by weeding it gradually out from your higher grades, there will be less to be done in the second or first class, and you will not need to add to your force. The great merit of having the writers' class is to keep all that kind of work, which is simply clerical, down to that class, and the high grade work is none too highly paid for. I suppose my hon. friend is determined to push his Bill through, but I venture to hope he may see differently. These gentlemen are going to make some friends in the meantime by doing this. They are going to fill up this class during the short period of political life which remains to them, but when their political life ends, as it will soon, we will have an elephant on our hands—an expensive piece of machinery that we will be obliged to continue or take the onus and trouble of getting rid of it. If there is no other feeling dominant in these gentlemen's hearts, let them have a little pity for us who are soon to succeed them, and let this thing lay over a year or two, and I venture to say that when we attain office, we will do the service of the country with the writers' class at present existing just as well as it is now done, or as it will be done under this new Bill, notwithstanding the opinion to the contrary of the hon. Minister of Customs.

The MINISTER OF CUSTOMS (Mr. Paterson). I can understand the course taken by the hon. gentleman, who was one of those who established the writers' class, which, in my opinion, was not a change in the best interests of the service. The committee will agree in this opinion if they look at the matter in a broad light. You have the option now of bringing a man into the inside public service at \$400 per year, or \$1,100 per year. The mere mention of that fact ought to carry a great deal of weight, and it is that which carries weight to my mind with reference to this Bill. I think that the difference is altogether too great. It ought not to be necessary that we should give as high as \$1,100 to a person on entering the service to do a certain kind of work, but you must either do that or secure the services of one who values his services at only \$400. The distinction is too great, and the object of this Bill is to put ministers, when they require additional help, in the position of obtaining that help without having to pay \$1,100 per year at the start off or else employ some one who values his own services only at \$400. But, taking that \$400, the most he can look for under the law, is an advance of \$30 per annum; and when his salary reaches \$600 the increases absolutely cease—there is no further promotion for him. That is the difficulty that weighs with me. I do not know that there is the desire to create any large class. The object is to attain efficiency in the public service, and I think that under