

ferred from the first-class to the class of chief clerkships, which will enable their salaries to be increased over the amount of \$1,800, although no first-class clerk can receive a higher salary by this Act than \$1,800. Now, you propose in one instance, I think, to make the salary of one of these gentlemen \$1,900 a year, and the other \$2,000, and you place them in a further list which the law says they cannot be placed in until they pass a certain examination. I would like to ask the Minister if they have become duly qualified to become promoted to chief clerkships? If not, I presume they cannot be appointed. Of course this Parliament can make any law, and can set aside any law. In these cases that we have under review now, you increase the salary of one man who was appointed in 1893, at the minimum salary that the law provided for, because the law provides that they should be appointed at a salary of \$400. This gentleman was appointed at a salary of \$500, or \$550, I am not sure which, because he is getting now \$650. He got an increase in 1894 to \$550; in 1895, to \$600; and in 1896, to \$650; and now you are proposing to give him a still further rise of \$200 in one year. I do not know anything of the merits of this gentleman, but only the fact that has been stated here to-day by the Minister himself, that he passed the civil service examination in 1893, and the Government of that day placed him upon the permanent staff. He was a temporary clerk, it appears, but they placed him upon the permanent staff and gave him \$100 more salary than those who go into the civil service are entitled to. The reason the Minister gave to-day was, in my opinion, no reason at all, and I think he should give us a sufficient reason when he asks this House to suspend the operation of the law and give this gentleman an increase of \$200 when the statutory allowance is only \$50. Now I remember very well when the hon. gentlemen, now on that side of the House, insisted that every clause in this Civil Service Act should be carried out; they went further than that, and made a declaration that this law was not sufficiently strict enough, that it was too favourable to the civil service, that it gave them too many advantages, that it was giving them too rapid promotion, and all the rest. Now these same gentlemen propose to this House, that this Act shall be suspended, that the law giving an annual increase to these clerks of \$50 should be suspended, and that an increase of \$200 shall be given; an increase that, according to the usual custom, would take four years to reach, is to be reached at once in the case of this man. Now what are the circumstances that justify that increase of salary from \$650 to \$850? It may be said that \$200 is not very much, that he is a very deserving man. But just look at the effect it will have upon other members of the civil service, more particularly at a time when you are saying to

others: You used to get your annual increase of \$50, but this year there is no annual increase in the whole of the inside service. I am told that there is no annual increase in any of the departments. Of that I am not going to make any complaint, because at this time when every branch of business, when every industry, and every enterprise, is economizing, cutting down their expenses, when the cost of living is lower, perhaps, than it has been in the recollection of any of us in this country—this is a time when the Government may fairly consider whether they should give this annual increase if the power is vested in them to refuse giving it. But in face of that, in face of the members of the civil service standing still all round, you take up one man, two men, three or four men, in one department, and without any reason that has been given to this House that will justify it at all, you have increased the salary of these four members of the civil service in the Department of Interior by \$200 and \$100 per annum, respectively. I repeat that the Minister is bound to give the committee a reason for his action—the reasons the hon. gentleman gave this afternoon are no reasons whatever. What did he say? He stated that one gentleman was a very worthy man. Is he the only worthy man in the Department of the Interior; is he the only man who has done his duty in that department? Again, is he, in conjunction with three other gentlemen, only deserving consideration? If such be the facts, the Minister is unfortunate as regards the staff with which to do the work of the department. There are no less than eighty-seven or eighty-eight clerks in the department. According to the hon. gentleman's statement, there are only four men worthy of promotion; the balance are not worthy of the ordinary increases, but the hon. gentleman has increased the salaries of four men by twice or thrice and even five times the ordinary increase. The effect will be to create great dissatisfaction not only in the Department of the Interior, but in all the departments, because the officers in the various departments will ask the Minister and any one who may be supposed to give the information, what are the reasons that four gentlemen are selected in one department for increases and the other eighty-four are refused the ordinary increase this year. The Minister of Interior is bound to give the committee full explanation of his action, which he has not yet given. The hon. gentleman has given no reason which might not apply to sixty or seventy clerks in his department. Before he asks Parliament to increase this vote, when economy should be practised, when salaries shall be reduced to the lowest possible point, when advantage should be taken of all possible means of retrenchment and every opportunity seized to reduce the staff, the hon. gentleman should offer further explanations, es-