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**Report of the Secretaries of the Treasury, of the Interior, of War, of the Navy, and of the Postmaster General, made in compliance with a resolution of the Senate, in relation to the examination, promotion, classification and compensation of the clerks in the several departments**

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S. Exec. Doc. No. 69, 32nd Cong., 1st Sess. (1852)

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## REPORT

OF THE

SECRETARIES OF THE TREASURY, OF THE INTERIOR, OF  
WAR, OF THE NAVY, AND OF THE POSTMASTER GENERAL,

MADE IN COMPLIANCE WITH A RESOLUTION OF THE SENATE,

*In relation to the examination, promotion, classification and compensation  
of the clerks in the several departments.*

MAY 3, 1852.

Referred to the Committee on Finance, and ordered to be printed.

WASHINGTON CITY, May 1, 1852.

SIR: The undersigned, in compliance with a resolution of the Senate of the 7th of March, 1851, directing the Secretaries of State, of the Treasury, of the Interior, of War, of the Navy, and the Postmaster General to report to the Senate "some plan of classifying the clerks in the several departments; for apportioning their salaries according to their services, and for equalizing the salaries of the clerks of the same grade in each of the departments: also, some plan to provide for a fair and impartial examination of the qualifications of clerks, and for promoting them from one grade to another, upon due regard to qualifications and services," respectfully present the following separate reports touching the clerkships in the respective departments, with suggestions for effecting the objects supposed to be contemplated in the Senate's resolution.

The importance of securing, more uniformly, a high grade of qualifications, and a more permanent tenure to the clerkships in the several departments must be universally conceded; but desirable as the undersigned regard these objects, they have found it difficult to devise any plan for their attainment by legislation, without at the same time imposing restraints and limitations upon the discretionary power of appointment, now vested in the heads of departments in accordance with the provisions of the constitution. If it be conceded that Congress may subject the power of appointment to such restrictions as they may deem expedient, it may yet be doubted whether to do so might not impair, rather than promote, the efficiency of the clerical force of the several departments, and by increasing the existing evils, operate to the detriment of the public service. Leaving to the wisdom of the legislature to determine how far this power is by the constitution left subject to restraints or conditions, they suggest as the most appropriate means which they have been able to devise for bringing into practical effect the reformation proposed—That in case of a vacancy in any office of clerk, except that of chief clerk, a board shall be constituted by the head of the department in which the vacancy shall have occurred, to examine any candidates

to fill the same, who may be sent before it by the head of the department, as well as to their condition of health and physical energy, as to their education, skill, and other qualifications for the duties of the place in question; and that no person shall be considered eligible to such appointment, who shall not produce to the head of the department, to be filed in its archives a certificate of approval from such board of examination.

That every vacancy, except in the chief clerkship or in a clerkship of the lowest class, shall be filled from the next inferior class in the same department, or bureau, by the individual who shall receive from a board constituted for his examination, in the same manner as prescribed in the foregoing paragraph, a certificate that he is fully qualified. But if no person in such inferior class receive such certificate, then such other person may be appointed as shall, by the direction of the head of the department, be sent before such board of examination, and receive therefrom the requisite certificate of qualification.

That when such other person shall be so appointed without the previous presentment for examination of all the clerks of the class next inferior to that in which the vacancy is to be filled, the head of the department in which such appointment is made, shall cause to be entered fully on its records, the reasons for such procedure.

While several of the undersigned entertain doubts in regard to the *practicability* or utility of the foregoing plan of preliminary examination and of promotion by regular gradation, they have, with some hesitation, concluded to unite in reporting it as worthy of trial, and more likely to accomplish the desired object than any other upon which all can agree.

In regard to the classification of clerks, too, a slight difference of opinion exists among the undersigned, as will be seen by an examination of their several reports annexed. Most of them, however, are of opinion that though the number and proportion of clerks in each of the proposed classes required in the several departments and offices will be widely different, yet that all the clerks employed at the seat of government, as well by the two houses of Congress as in the several executive departments, may be usefully classified according to service and capacity, with uniform salaries to all clerks of the same grade.

The classification and arrangement of clerks submitted in the accompanying schedules for several of the executive departments, and the bureaus and desks thereof, are in accordance with the individual views of the head of that department for which the schedule is made.

The undersigned, however, unite in recommending that such classification and arrangement be established by law, as shall be found most nearly to fulfil these several recommendations, and that uniform salaries be established for all the clerks of each class, in whatever department of the government they may be employed, at the city of Washington.

We have the honor to be, sir, your obedient servants,

THO. CORWIN,  
ALEX. H. H. STUART,  
C. M. CONRAD,  
WILL. A. GRAHAM,  
N. K. HALL.

To the Hon. W. M. R. KING,  
*President of the Senate.*

Classification and compensation of the subordinate officers of the Treasury Department, submitted and recommended by the Secretary of the Treasury in reply to the Senate resolution of March 7, 1851.

	Annual salary.
Assistant secretary .....	\$4,500 00
1 chief clerk .....	2,500 00
11 clerks .....	2,000 00
2. do. ....	1,800 00
4. do. ....	1,600 00
4. do. ....	1,400 00
6. do. ....	1,200 00
<i>Solicitor's Office.</i>	
1 chief clerk .....	2,000 00
5 clerks .....	1,400 00
2. do. ....	1,100 00
<i>Register's Office.</i>	
1 chief clerk .....	2,000 00
2 clerks .....	1,600 00
10. do. ....	1,400 00
6. do. ....	1,200 00
3. do. ....	1,000 00
<i>Treasurer's Office.</i>	
1 chief clerk .....	2,000 00
1 clerk .....	1,600 00
4. do. ....	1,500 00
2. do. ....	1,400 00
1. do. ....	1,200 00
<i>First Comptroller's Office.</i>	
1 chief clerk .....	2,000 00
11 clerks .....	1,600 00
1. do. ....	1,400 00
1. do. ....	1,200 00
<i>Second Comptroller's Office.</i>	
1 chief clerk .....	2,000 00
10 clerks .....	1,600 00
2. do. ....	1,400 00
2. do. ....	1,200 00
<i>Commissioner of Customs' Office.</i>	
1 chief clerk .....	2,000 00
4 clerks .....	1,600 00
1. do. ....	1,400 00
1. do. ....	1,200 00
<i>First Auditor's Office.</i>	
1 chief clerk .....	2,000 00
10 clerks .....	1,600 00
6. do. ....	1,400 00
2. do. ....	1,200 00

*Second Auditor's Office.*

1 chief clerk.....	\$2,000 00
8 clerks.....	1,600 00
8..do.....	1,400 00
8..do.....	1,200 00

*Third Auditor's Office.*

1 chief clerk.....	2,000 00
10 clerks.....	1,800 00
11..do.....	1,600 00
16..do.....	1,400 00
12..do.....	1,200 00
15..do.....	1,100 00
4..do.....	1,000 00

*Fourth Auditor's Office.*

1 chief clerk.....	2,000 00
6 clerks.....	1,600 00
5..do.....	1,400 00
2..do.....	1,200 00

*Fifth Auditor's Office.*

1 chief clerk.....	2,000 00
2 clerks.....	1,600 00
4..do.....	1,400 00
3..do.....	1,200 00

*Sixth Auditor's Office.*

1 chief clerk.....	2,000 00
1 clerk.....	1,800 00
5..do.....	1,600 00
20 do.....	1,400 00
31..do.....	1,200 00
25..do.....	1,000 00

Statement showing the present classification and compensation of the clerks in the Department of the Interior, and that which is proposed and recommended by the Secretary of the Interior in answer to the Senate resolution of March 7, 1851.

## Present classification.

## Proposed classification.

## DEPARTMENT PROPER.

1 chief clerk, at \$2,000.....	1 chief clerk, at \$2,000.
1 clerk, at \$1,600.....	Neither the number of clerks in this department, nor their compensation is fixed by law—the appropriation being made in gross—thus leaving it optional with the secretary to increase the numerical force of the office, or the compensation of particular clerks as the exigencies of the service or their duties and qualifications demand. I think this organization an advantageous one, and recommend its continuance.
2 clerks, at \$1,400.....	
3 clerks, at \$1,300.....	
4 clerks, at \$1,200.....	
1 clerk, at \$1,000.....	

## GENERAL LAND OFFICE.

3 principal clerks, at \$1,800.....	3 principal clerks, at \$2,000.....
2 clerks, at \$1,500.....	13 clerks, at \$1,600.....
6 clerks, at \$1,400.....	17 clerks, at \$1,400.....
16 clerks, at \$1,300.....	20 clerks, at \$1,200.....
21 clerks, at \$1,200.....	18 clerks, at \$1,100.....
11 clerks, at \$1,100.....	25 clerks, at \$1,000.....
16 clerks, at \$1,000.....	
1 clerk, per diem compensation.....	

## INDIAN OFFICE.

1 chief clerk, at \$2,000.....	1 chief clerk, at \$2,000.....
3 clerks, at \$1,600.....	3 clerks, at \$1,600.....
6 clerks, at \$1,400.....	6 clerks, at \$1,400.....
4 clerks, at \$1,200.....	4 clerks, at \$1,200.....
2 clerks, at \$1,000.....	2 clerks, at \$1,000.....

## PENSION OFFICE.

1 chief clerk, at \$1,700.....	1 chief clerk, at \$2,000.....
1 clerk, at \$1,600.....	5 clerks, at \$1,600.....
12 clerks, at \$1,400.....	12 clerks, at \$1,400.....
8 clerks, at \$1,200.....	8 clerks, at \$1,200.....
45 clerks, at \$1,000.....	45 clerks, at \$1,000.....
1 clerk, at \$800.....	
77 clerks, per diem wages.....	

## PATENT OFFICE.

1 chief clerk, at \$1,700.....	1 chief clerk, at \$2,000.....
6 principal examiners, \$2,500.....	6 principal examiners, at \$2,500.....
8 assistant examiners, at \$1,500.....	8 assistant examiners, at \$1,500.....
1 clerk, at \$1,250.....	1 clerk, at \$1,250.....
6 clerks, at \$1,200.....	6 clerks, at \$1,200.....
	2 clerks, at \$1,000.....



WAR DEPARTMENT,  
WASHINGTON, April 30, 1852.

SIR: In compliance with the resolution adopted by the Senate on the 7th of March, 1851, directing the Secretaries of State, of the Treasury, of the Interior, of War, of the Navy, and the Postmaster General, to report to the Senate, at the next session of Congress, some plan of classifying the clerks in those departments, for apportioning their salaries according to their services, and for equalizing the salaries of the clerks of the same grade in each of the departments; and also, some plan to provide for a fair and impartial examination of the qualifications of clerks, and for promoting them from one grade to another upon a due regard to qualifications and services, I have the honor, herewith, to submit a plan for classifying the clerks of this department, and "for apportioning their salaries according to their services."

In regard to compensation, I beg leave to suggest that it is not only unequal, apportioned, but that in some cases is entirely insufficient. On this subject, I herewith submit an extract from a report made to me by all the heads of the bureaus of this department. The scale of salaries herewith transmitted, is considerably below that recommended by these officers, and the average exceeds by little, if anything, that of the present salaries in a majority of the bureaus in the other departments. Nearly all the salaries in this department were fixed by acts passed in 1818, or soon afterwards, and the scale of compensation is below that in the offices subsequently organized.

In regard to a preliminary examination of clerks, and their "promotion from one grade to another," these objects are already, to some extent, attained in this department. Every new applicant for a clerkship is subjected to a trial, and if the head of the bureau report him as incompetent, he is not appointed. I have also endeavored, as far as practicable, to carry out a system of promotion in the different bureaus; that is, whenever a vacancy occurs in a clerkship, I appoint the clerk in the same bureau whose salary is next below, and so on through all the clerks in that bureau, unless the head of the bureau report to me that some one of the number is incompetent to discharge the duties of the clerkship to which he would otherwise be promoted. Every inducement is thus held out to fidelity and strict attention to duty, and I have no doubt that if this system be adhered to, it will lead to the most satisfactory results.

There is one clerk attached to my own office, whose compensation is, in my opinion, entirely disproportioned to the importance of his duties, and to the qualities required for their proper performance. It is that of the first or claim clerk of the department.

Besides other important duties that devolve on him, this clerk is charged with the duty of examining all claims submitted to the head of the department, and preparing them for his decision and final action. The number of these claims (principally growing out of the late war) is very great, and their preliminary examination requires not only great industry, but a familiarity with the acts of Congress, military laws and regulations, not easily attained. In fact, the duties of this office are more analogous to those of an auditor than of an ordinary clerk.

I therefore recommend this pay be increased from \$1,400 to \$1,800.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

C. M. CONRAD,  
*Secretary of War.*

Hon. Wm. R. King, *President of the Senate.*

*Table exhibiting the present salaries of clerks in the War Department, and the rates proposed in the report of the Secretary of War, dated April 30, 1852, in reply to a resolution of the Senate of March 7, 1851.*

Secretary of War.			General in chief.			Adjutant General.			Quartermaster General.			Paymaster General.		
No.	Present.	Proposed.	No.	Present.	Proposed.	No.	Present.	Proposed.	No.	Present.	Proposed.	No.	Present.	Proposed.
1	\$1,600	\$1,800	1	\$1,000	\$1,200	1	\$1,400	\$1,400	1	\$1,600	\$1,600	1	\$1,700	\$1,600
2	1,400	1,600	.....	.....	.....	2	1,400	1,400	2	1,200	1,400	2	1,400	1,400
3	1,400	1,400	.....	.....	.....	3	1,200	1,200	3	1,000	1,200	3	1,150	1,200
4	1,400	1,400	.....	.....	.....	4	1,150	1,200	4	1,000	1,200	4	1,150	1,200
5	1,000	1,200	.....	.....	.....	5	1,000	1,200	5	1,000	1,000	5	1,000	1,200
6	1,000	1,200	.....	.....	.....	6	1,000	1,200	6	1,000	1,000	6	1,000	1,000
7	1,000	1,000	.....	.....	.....	7	1,000	1,000	.....	.....	.....	7	1,000	1,000
.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	8	1,000	1,000	.....	.....	.....	8	800	1,000
.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	9	800	1,000	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....



**STATEMENT—Continued.**

Commissary General.			Surgeon General.			Colonel of Engineers.			Col. Topographical Engineers.			Colonel of Ordnance.		
No.	Present.	Proposed.	No.	Present.	Proposed.	No.	Present.	Proposed.	No.	Present.	Proposed.	No.	Present.	Proposed.
1	\$1,600	\$1,600	1	\$1,150	\$1,400	1	\$1,250	\$1,400	1	\$1,400	\$1,400	1	\$1,200	\$1,400
2	1,200	1,400	2	1,000	1,200	2	1,200	1,400	2	1,000	1,200	2	1,150	1,400
3	1,000	1,200	3	1,000	1,000	3	1,150	1,200	3	1,000	1,000	3	1,000	1,200
4	1,000	1,000	.....	.....	.....	4	1,000	1,000	4	1,000	1,000	4	1,000	1,200
5	1,000	1,000	.....	.....	.....	5	800	1,000	.....	.....	.....	5	1,000	1,200
.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	6	1,000	1,000
.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	7	1,000	1,000
.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	8	800	1,000

This statement does not include the chief clerk of the department, whose salary is \$2,000 per annum.

WASHINGTON, *November 21, 1851.*

We have the honor to acknowledge your direction to report upon a resolution of the Senate of the 7th of March, 1851.

The resolution requires a report upon the following points :

1. Some plan of classifying the clerks of each department.
  2. For apportioning their salaries according to their services, and for equalizing the salaries of clerks of the same grade in each department.
- In reference to the first and second of these inquiries, we submit the following classifications for each Bureau of the War Department :

Principal clerk, compensation-----	\$1,800
Clerks of the first class-----	1,600
Clerks of the second class-----	1,400
Clerks of the third class-----	1,200
Clerks of the fourth class-----	1,000

We are fully convinced, on a careful examination of the expenses of living, that less than these amounts will not insure a support to a man and his family in any of these several classes, or the education, experience, and labor required of each class respectively.

The small salary of the fourth class is fixed from the consideration that this class will generally be occupied by young unmarried men; and the compensation, with the hope of advancement, is considered sufficient to ensure the services of properly educated and properly qualified single or unmarried men.

In presenting this plan, we take the occasion to offer the following remarks, showing why, in our opinion, the present rates of salaries are too low, and why we have adopted the scale presented in the plan.

The subject of clerks' salaries was investigated and reported upon by a Committee of the House of Representatives so long ago as 1837. In this report (Doc. No. 161, H. of Reps., 2d session 24th Congress, p. 1) the committee refer to the fact that the compensation to most of the clerks was regulated by the act of the 30th of April, 1818, and express the opinion that the increased price of every necessary article, since that time, justified in 1837 an increase of compensation greater even than they then recommended.

The salaries as fixed by the act of 1818, and others since, authorized upon that basis, may have been, and probably were, adequate to the support of a small family at that time; but it needs no argument to convince any one conversant with the gradual increase of cost of living here, of their total insufficiency for years past, and especially at the present time.

The rates proposed in the plan are not, in any sense, extravagant; but it is believed they would, in a great degree, relieve the clerk from the harassing embarrassment and care incident to inadequate means of sustaining their families, and enable the economical and frugal to afford them reasonable comforts, and to give to their children such education as will afford reasonable hopes of their attaining respectable positions in after life. These rates will, at most, do no more than this; and it is only just that faithful and zealous services should be thus remunerated.

The Honorable Secretary will please to observe that our proposed classification and compensation, refer only to the Bureaus of the War Department; the arrangement for the War Department office being one which,

it is presumed, the Honorable Secretary will himself devise, at rates of compensation adequate to its higher order and greater responsibilities.

THOS. S. JESUP,

*Quartermaster General.*

GEO. GIBSON,

*Commissary General of Subsistence.*

R. JONES,

*Adjutant General.*

JAS. G. TOTTEN,

*Br. Brig. Gen. and Col. of Eng.*

THOMAS LAWSON,

*Surgeon General.*

J. J. ABERT,

*Col. Corps of Top. Engineers.*

H. K. CRAIG,

*Colonel of Ordnance.*

BENJ. F. LARNED,

*Acting Paymaster General.*

NAVY DEPARTMENT,

*April 29, 1852.*

The undersigned, Secretary of the Navy, in obedience to the resolution of the Senate of the 7th of March, 1851, respectfully submits the annexed schedule of classification and arrangement of clerks in this department, and the several bureaus thereof, which he believes to be necessary in the present state of public business; with the compensations which should be allowed to equalize the salaries with clerks of like grades in other executive departments.

WILL. A. GRAHAM.

Hon. WM. R. KING,

*President of the Senate.*

## Classification of clerks.

	Annual salary.
<i>Navy Department proper.</i>	
1 chief clerk .....	\$2,000
1st class clerks, viz:	
1 principal corresponding clerk .....	1,600
1 register clerk .....	1,600
1 warrant clerk .....	1,600
2d class clerks, assistant corresponding and additional clerks .....	1,400
3d class recording and miscellaneous clerks .....	1,100
1 messenger .....	700
2 assistants .....	500
<i>Bureau of Construction, &amp;c.</i>	
1 chief clerk, first class .....	1,600
2d class clerks .....	1,200
3d class clerks .....	1,000
1 draughtsman .....	1,000
2 messengers .....	700
<i>Bureau of Ordnance, &amp;c.</i>	
1 chief clerk, 1st class .....	1,600
2d class clerks .....	1,200
3d class clerk .....	1,000
1 draughtsman .....	1,000
1 messenger .....	700
<i>Bureau of Navy Yards and Docks.</i>	
1 chief clerk, 1st class .....	1,600
2d class clerks .....	1,200
3d class clerks .....	1,000
1 draughtsman .....	1,000
1 messenger .....	700
<i>Bureau of Provisions and Clothing.</i>	
1 chief clerk, 1st class .....	1,600
2d class clerks .....	1,200
3d class clerks .....	1,000
1 messenger .....	700
<i>Bureau of Medicine, &amp;c.</i>	
1 assistant surgeon, passed .....	1,400
1 2d class .....	1,400
1 3d class .....	1,000
1 messenger .....	700

POST OFFICE DEPARTMENT,  
*March 3, 1852.*

In obedience to the requirements of the resolution of the Senate, adopted March 7, 1851, directing the several heads of the executive departments to report to the Senate at the (then) next session of Congress, some plan for classifying the clerks in those departments; for apportioning their salaries, and for equalizing the salaries of clerks of the same grade in each department; also some plan to provide for a fair and impartial examination of the qualifications of clerks, and for promoting them from one grade to another upon due regard to qualifications and services: I have the honor to report, that impressed with the importance of the object the Senate evidently had in view in the passage of the resolution, and sensible of the intimate connection of this subject with the strength and efficiency of the Executive Departments of the government, and their ability for the prompt and proper despatch of the public business, I have anxiously desired to aid in devising some plan likely to prove satisfactory to the two Houses of Congress, and useful to the country.

It cannot be denied that much inequality exists in the apportionment of salaries and duties among the clerkships in the several departments and offices of the government, and also among those of the same department; and that such inequalities are often invidious and unjust. They arise principally from errors made in the assignment of salaries on the original appointment of clerks; generally upon the recommendation of influential friends of the appointee, who have formed a wrong estimate of his qualifications for the place sought.

The mistaken idea widely prevails, that the duties implied in a clerkship are much the same in all departments and grades—requiring little more than that the incumbent should be able to write a good fair copy-hand, and, in an accounting office, possess a moderate knowledge of figures. Many, who thoughtlessly present for appointment to clerkships in the public offices persons whom they would not intrust with the less difficult and important duties of their own counting-houses or places of business, nor recommend to those of their neighbors, do not reflect that most of the complicated and extensive business of the executive departments and offices, requiring talents and acquirements in various branches of practical knowledge, must, from the necessity of the case, be performed principally by clerks, without more than very general directions from the heads of departments and bureaus.

Besides the chief and principal clerks, there is a large class in each of the departments whose duties cannot be properly performed unless they are not only well versed in the common forms and modes of business generally, but familiar with the laws and rules of practice applicable to the particular branch of the business of the department in which they are employed; with the decisions and settlements which have become precedents, and with the principles involved in them. It is necessary that every such clerk should be able to conduct a correspondence on the various subjects connected with his employment; to defend the acts and decisions of his office or department, and enforce the principles and rules which govern it, in a manner creditable to its chief, who signs and is responsible for the correspondence, but who cannot, except in the most important cases, do more than state, orally, and in general terms, his conclusions and the considerations which led to them, but must leave the structure and style of the necessary

papers entirely to the clerk who prepares them, or makes only such corrections as the most hurried examination will allow.

All the qualities just stated should, of course, be possessed, in a higher degree, by the principal and chief clerks, and ought, in both cases, to be accompanied with that versatility of talent which will enable any individual of one class to perform, when necessary, the duties of another, and the principal or chief clerk to discharge, properly, the routine duties belonging to the head of the office or department to which he is attached.

As it is absolutely necessary for the due performance of the duties of the executive departments that the qualifications of a very large portion of the clerks employed in them should be such as described, it is manifest that men fitted for these places cannot be readily procured at will from the various walks and pursuits of life, and be discharged and replaced, summarily, after perhaps a few months service, without injury to the business of the government. It is also apparent that if, from a mistaken estimate of their fitness for the places sought, men are appointed to the higher salaries, who prove to be qualified only for a low grade of duty, great inequalities must result in the apportionment of salaries.

It is true that in some of the public offices there are clerks who perform duties requiring a lower grade of qualification than has been described: mere routine duties, which a man may perform from year to year without becoming fitted for any other—though he may perform these very well. To such the lowest salaries should be paid; and the salaries of all others should be in proportion to the amount, responsibility, importance, and value of the service rendered.

A classification which would accomplish this object I suppose to have been contemplated in the resolution of the Senate. It may, in my judgment, be best effected by arranging all the clerks employed in the executive departments into six classes, as follows:

1. Chief clerks of departments.
2. Principal clerks or chief clerks of bureaus. This class of clerks employed in this department receive \$1,600 per annum. In the other departments of the government the same class receive salaries varying from \$1,700 to \$2,000. Clerks having charge of independent desks, established for the performance of important duties, under the immediate direction of the head of the department, should be embraced in this class.
3. Corresponding and accounting clerks. In this department most of the clerks of this class receive \$1,400.
4. Stating, registering, and miscellaneous clerks. This class is the largest employed in this department, and most of the clerks belonging to it receive \$1,200.
5. Recording and letter-book clerks, and assistants to corresponding clerks. Most of those in this department receive \$1,000.
6. Copying and filing clerks. This class, in this department, includes the clerks employed in opening dead letters and passing such as are valuable to a higher grade for registration. They now receive \$1,000.

I recommend that the salaries paid to the clerks of these several classes be fixed by law and made uniform in the several executive departments and offices, and that, whatever salary may be adopted for the highest class, the salaries of each other class shall be less by \$200 than that of the one immediately preceding it.

While it is no doubt difficult to establish any arbitrary system of classifi-



sation, which, without injustice to any, shall arrange into a few classes, with uniform salaries to each, all the clerks in the several departments, whose duties are, and necessarily must be, dissimilar in their details, yet I am, after careful examination of the subject, of the opinion that the classes and designations here suggested will sufficiently distinguish the several divisions of clerical employment, as they exist under the present organization of the several departments, and that to one or the other of these classes all clerks employed in the public offices at the seat of government may properly be assigned.

It may be proper to remark that in this department there are no clerks of the sixth and last mentioned class, described as copying-clerks.

Those in this department who are employed exclusively in copying, are the letter-book clerks, who transcribe from day to day all the letters written in the department. For the proper performance of this duty higher qualifications than those of a mere copyist are requisite. The letter-book clerk should be competent to detect and bring to the notice of the writer, for correction, any omission or error of construction or of statement which may, through haste or inadvertence, have occurred in a letter brought to him for record: he should therefore be qualified to write correctly himself, and possess a general knowledge of the business of the department. The grade of routine copyists to which reference has already been made in this report, who are employed in transcribing from printed and other established forms require less qualifications, and should, I think, be embraced in the sixth class, and receive less compensation than the lowest of the other classes herein proposed.

In view of the diversity of employment, and the different grades of capacity and degrees of intelligence required in conducting properly the duties of the Post Office Department, constantly and rapidly becoming more varied and extensive, and requiring a wider range of qualification for their due performance, I am of the opinion that true economy, as well as convenience, will be subserved by arranging its clerical force—below the chief clerk—in the following order and proportion among the several classes of clerks, as proposed in the foregoing scheme, to wit:

The principal clerks of the several bureaus, (correspondent to the chief clerks of bureaus in other departments;) the chiefs of the foreign and depredation desks; and the topographer of the department, to be embraced in the second class, (or first below that of chief clerks of departments.)

The clerks charged with the preparation of the correspondence of the appointment, contract, and inspection offices; those in the finance office in charge of the money and stamp accounts of that office, and in drawing and registering drafts and warrants; the principal clerks of the dead letter office and the bond room, in the third.

The clerks in the several bureaus engaged in registering the particulars of the mail service, and stating cases for preliminary reference to the respective chiefs of bureaus, and the ultimate action of the Postmaster General; the keeper of the journal, recorder and reporter of orders affecting accounts and changes of service, and the miscellaneous clerks, in the fourth.

The recording and letter-book clerks in the fifth, and the mere copyists, openers of dead letters and filing clerks, in the sixth.

There are now in the department a chief clerk (who is not, however, principally employed as such, but is, in fact, the head of a bureau) and

sixty-seven clerks. Their distribution among the several offices and their salaries, will appear from the following statement.

	No. of clerks at \$1,600 per annum.	No. of clerks at \$1,400 per annum.	No. of clerks at \$1,200 per annum.	No. of clerks at \$1,000 per annum.	Total.
In the Postmaster General's office.....					
In the Appointment office, in charge of the 1st assistant	1	4	5	4	14
In the Contract office, in charge of the 2d assistant....	2	9	8	3	22
In the Finance office (which includes the dead letter office) in charge of the 3d assistant.....		4	5	7	16
In the Inspection office, in charge of the chief clerk...	1	3	9	2	15
Total.....	4	20	27	16	67

Making (including the chief clerk) sixty-eight in all, with salaries amounting in the aggregate to \$84,000.

In consequence of the great increase of labor in this department, I recommended, in my last annual report, an increase in the number of clerks as absolutely necessary to the prompt and proper despatch of business.

The reports of my assistants annexed to my own, stated somewhat in detail the reasons for that necessity, and our experience since those reports were made has only confirmed the opinions then expressed.

In view of the facts, that ever since the re-organization of the department by Mr. Kendall, under the act of 1836, there have been, (and are now) from the imperative requirements of the service, four distinct and important bureaus in the department; that only three assistants had been provided for, and that the chief clerk was necessarily assigned to duty as chief of the Inspection office, leaving the head of the department almost entirely without the assistance which the law, in providing a chief clerk, designed to afford him. I also recommended that another assistant Postmaster General should be authorized, to be assigned to duty as chief of the inspection office.

If these suggestions be carried into effect, it is my design to detach the foreign desk from the contract office, and place it under the immediate superintendence of the Postmaster General, aided as he then would be by the chief clerk.

Although the foreign desk, which has but a single clerk, still remains nominally attached to the contract office, its business is now, in fact, wholly under the immediate direction and supervision of the Postmaster General, and has but little affinity to the ordinary business of the contract office; while in consideration of the magnitude of its details and its relation to foreign governments, it is deemed suitable that the Postmaster General should retain the immediate responsibility of its control and supervision, and that its correspondence should be conducted in his name.

The number, arrangement, and classification of the clerks of the depart-

ment which I would recommend, in case the suggestions of this report should be fully carried out, are as follows :

	Second class.	Third class.	Fourth class.	Fifth class.	Sixth class.
In the Postmaster General's office, clerk of foreign desk (besides chief clerk).....	1	.....	.....	.....	.....
In the appointment office.....	1	4	5	4	.....
In the contract office.....	2	9	11	1	.....
In the finance office (which includes the dead letter office). ....	1	5	6	5	4
In the inspection office. ....	1	1	11	2	.....
Total.....	6	19	33	12	4

If the above suggestions are adopted, the number of clerks in this department will be increased by the addition of seven, and the aggregate compensation, including the pay of such additional clerks, will be increased \$8,200 only, unless the general rate of compensation shall be increased.

I find it difficult to suggest any plan likely to secure a full and impartial examination of the candidates for clerkships, with an intelligent view to the various duties which they may be required to perform in the several departments. Nothing, in my judgment, short of trial, can determine a man's fitness for the higher classes of these duties; and, while I concur in the joint recommendation to which this report is intended to be annexed, as to a preliminary examination by a board appointed by the head of the department in which employment is sought, I think it important, further, that the appointment based upon such examination should be one of probation only, and should not extend beyond a period of three months, with the assurance, however, that if during that period of trial the probationer should exhibit the requisite qualifications for useful service, the final appointment should not be withheld from him.

In the joint recommendation referred to, it is suggested that the proposed board of examiners should give their attention to the "condition of health and physical energy" of the candidates presented for examination. This subject has not, I think, received from the appointing power the attention which it deserves.

Under the mistaken belief that the clerkships in the executive departments are *easy* places, where men feeble from disease, or with constitutions exhausted and shattered by over-exertion elsewhere may recruit their impaired energies, scores of such every year present themselves, or are presented by their friends for appointment.

Experience has shown that no class of occupations are more trying than those which are *sedentary*, and at the same time involve continuous mental exertion. Six or eight hours of unremitted labor at the desk, daily, in copying *merely*, with the mind at ease and the thoughts wandering at will

cannot, in this climate, be deemed light or trifling, for many strong men are found unequal to it. But when it is remembered that the higher grades of clerical service involve great responsibility and constant mental labor, and that many clerks do and must, in consequence of the inadequacy of the force employed in the public offices to meet the requirements often made upon them, labor at their desks ten or twelve hours daily for many days in succession, with the intellectual powers taxed to the utmost, it will, I think, be admitted that these offices are no proper retreats for the invalid, or suitable places of restoration for the feeble and exhausted.

So important do I deem it that the clerkships in the several offices should be filled by *sound men*, as well physically as mentally, that if it shall be found necessary, to accomplish this object, I would recommend that the board of examination should include an army surgeon, or some other professional man competent to decide the important question of physical ability and fitness.

I take leave to suggest, in conclusion, that probably no observing or thoughtful man has ever been long in charge of an Executive Department or Bureau, without becoming satisfied that the proper standard of clerical qualification and performance will not be established in them, and the public business performed in the best manner until the clerk can reasonably entertain a confident expectation of continued employment. If his continuance in office and his promotion be made to depend on his good behaviour and assiduity in the performance of his duties, a motive is offered him which uniformly produces improvement and excellence in all the other employments of life, and could not fail to do so in this.

Men originally qualified to perform properly the duties of a clerk become, with each year's experience, more competent and useful. Those of them, therefore, who by devotion and assiduity render their services valuable to the country, certainly should, if possible, be protected from arbitrary and capricious removal. This would, in my opinion, more than any other measure, tend to elevate the character of the force employed in the public offices, and facilitate the business devolving on them.

I am unable to recommend any plan likely to accomplish this object more effectually than to secure by preliminary examination and sufficient trial, under a temporary appointment, the employment of men whose acquirements, physical endowments and business capacity shall be fully equal to their position. When to these qualifications—with two or three year's experience—are added *industry and faithfulness*, the services of such a clerk will be found so necessary, not only to the proper despatch of business, but to the comfort and convenience of the head of the department or office in which he is employed, that the probability of his removal, except for cause, will be greatly diminished.

Thus relieved from the apprehension of removal from political reasons merely, the clerk will have no motive for becoming a political partizan; but on the contrary will labor with devotion and zeal to promote the public good without reference to party divisions, or to the hopes and fears which are often connected with them.

As I believe it to be important, in every point of view, that the clerks employed in the several departments of the government should be withdrawn

from active participation in the political struggles which so frequently agitate the country, I shall be gratified if the foregoing suggestions should promote in any degree that desirable object.

I have the honor to be, with great respect, your obedient servant,

N. K. HALL,

*Postmaster General.*

To the Hon. WM. R. KING,

*President of the Senate.*