

CHRISTIANA MORRISON, examined, stated :—

188. I am over eighteen years of age. I am a mantle-maker ; sewing. I get 23s. a week. I have been over five years at this work. The hours are from 9 to 6, with an hour for lunch. I stay in the place during the hour. There are conveniences for making tea. We get the half-holiday on Saturday. Sometimes we have been kept half an hour after 2 o'clock on Saturday. I have never seen the Inspector visit our workroom. I work by the day. There is no work taken home. I do not wish the Act altered. I came here as an apprentice. There are more girls working here now than when I first came. I do not think the inspection is sufficient. Once or twice lately, to get an order finished, we have come at 7 and 8 o'clock in the morning ; but Mr. Ewing objected to it. It was the forewoman who asked us to come. We got paid once or twice for extra time. My father is a gardener, and mother is at home. I have two brothers, one a traveller, the other a clerk. We are all staying in the same house. I have six sisters, three of whom are married ; two of the others older, and one younger, than myself. I give a portion of my earnings to my parents. I have no suggestions to make with regard to any alteration of the Act. I should not like the holidays done away with.

*At the Mosgiel Woollen Factory.*

THURSDAY, 16TH MAY, 1878.

JOHN DRYDEN, examined, stated :

189. *By the Chairman.*] I am the manager of the factory. There are different hours for commencing work in the factory. The factory is opened at 6 o'clock in the morning. The females commence work at 8 o'clock just now, and leave off at half-past 5 in the evening. Some of the machines are kept running till 9 o'clock at night. Girls attend to these through the day, and when they leave off work men attend to them. None of the women work after half-past 5. There are about twenty-five females employed altogether. There are no females under fourteen, but there are two boys under that age. We have no apprentices under fourteen. There are five or six between fourteen and eighteen years of age. The women do not come at 6 in the morning ; the young persons do. We work shifts with the young persons, three of whom come at 6 in the morning. All the young persons live in the neighbourhood, and go home to their meals. The machines always commence work at 6, whether in winter or summer. The young persons earn from 10s. to 13s. per week. There are twenty men employed on different machines. They earn much higher wages than the women. It is different work they are employed on. The men who have served their time keep the machines in order.

190. *Hon. Mr. Reynolds.*] How many men do you employ altogether ?—Something like seventy.

191. *Mr. Bradshaw.*] What do the females earn ?—Those paid by the day, old hands, get 20s. a week. Those paid by the piece average 25s.

192. *Hon. Mr. Reynolds.*] Do any earn 35s. ?—Some have earned more than that occasionally, but only in exceptional cases.

193. *Mr. Fulton.*] In the interests of the factory, have you any complaints to make about the working of the Act ?—Yes, specially with regard to the holidays. I want them so that we can take them when we like. I object to their being specified. The New Year is regarded by our people, being nearly all Scotch, as the principal holiday, and the one they value most. We are only bound by the Act to give one day at the New Year, but we like to give more.

194. Have you any other complaint ?—No further than this : that it would be to the advantage both of the Company and those employed on piecework if, instead of eight hours, the females could work to something nearer the Home hours. They complained when the hours were shortened.

195. *The Chairman.*] What I understand is, that the machinery costs more money here, and, to enable you to realise a proper interest on the outlay, it is necessary that the working hours should be lengthened ?—Yes ; there is just a medium required between the Home hours and those out here. I consider eight hours too little. It would not be too little if we had not to compete with people who work longer. If we cannot sell at the Home market prices we must shut up. If the Home people were only to work eight hours then we could work eight hours too.

196. *Hon. Mr. Reynolds.*] How many hours do they work at Home ?—I used to work sixty hours a week, but before I left it was brought down to fifty-seven. They scarcely work that now, as provision has been made for Saturdays, when they stop at 1 o'clock in the afternoon. I am referring to Scotch factories. I do not know anything about the English factories. I regard this in the light of a Scotch tweed factory.

197. *The Chairman.*] I understand, then, that the machinery would not pay unless working for more than eight hours a day ?—Yes ; I clearly state that it would be better both for the employers and the workers if they were allowed to work an hour a day longer. Some of them would earn 3s. or 3s. 6d. a week more. The work is not hard, but simply requires attention.

198. *Mr. Fulton.*] You think they could work extra time without injury to themselves as regards health ?—Yes ; they would not be hurt by it. In my experience of ten years, where they have been working fifty-seven hours a week, they have always been healthy. Indeed, I have known persons who have been sent to the mill to improve their health, and with satisfactory results.

199. You have no complaints as to the Saturday half-holiday ?—No ; we always keep that, and appreciate it.

199A. You are not under the impression that you are compelled to keep any other holidays than those prescribed by law ?—No.

200. *The Chairman.*] If the females could be employed fifty-four hours per week, how would you divide the time ?—Nine and a half hours per day, except Saturday, when they would leave off, as now, at 2 o'clock.

201. *Mr. Fulton.*] Is there anything else oppressive ?—Nothing.