

JANE THOMSON, examined, stated :—

202. I am twenty-one years of age. I come to work at 8 o'clock in the morning, and leave off at 5 in the evening. The dinner hour is from 12 to 1. I go home for dinner. I have parents here. Father works in the factory, and mother remains at home. I have two sisters working in the factory, and two at home, who go to school. I have no brothers. I get 20s. a week at day labour, and give part of it to my parents. I am satisfied with eight hours a day, and should not like to work longer. We get a half-holiday on Saturday. I would rather have the half-holiday on Saturday, even if we got more pay. If the hours were lengthened to fifty-four hours a week, I should have no objection, if the wages were raised in proportion. I do not think the work would be too much. I am in good health, as are also all the girls in the factory.

JANE RENWICK, examined, stated :—

203. I am over eighteen years of age. I come to work at 8 o'clock in the morning, have an hour for dinner, from 12 to 1, for which I go home, and leave off at 5 in the evening. I have a mother, two sisters, and a brother. My mother lives at home. My brother—eighteen years of age—works in the factory, also my sisters, both of whom are younger than myself. I am working on piecework, and average 25s. a week. I am aware of the provisions of the Act with regard to the number of hours for working. Of course, the longer we work the more we make, and for that reason the pieceworkers like longer hours. Before the Act, we used to begin work at 6 in the morning and leave off at half-past 5, with an interval for breakfast as well as one for dinner. We always had the half-holiday on Saturday, and we have no wish to do away with it.

204. *Mr. Fulton.*]—How long could you work without being injuriously affected, or how many hours would you like to work, so as to earn more wages?—We used to work from 6 to half-past 5, and had three-quarters of an hour for meals—breakfast and dinner.

205. *The Chairman.*]—You would like to work as you please?—Yes, those on piecework would.

206. *Mr. Strobe.*]—Would nine and a half hours a day be too much?—No.

207. *Mr. Fulton.*]—Would it not be too much for your younger sisters?—I do not think so.

208. *Mr. Bradshaw.*]—All the pieceworkers would like to work longer?—Yes.

209. *Hon. Mr. Reynolds.*]—You remember a petition being signed, and sent to the General Assembly, asking that the hours should be altered?—Yes, I signed the petition. It was asking the same hours as before.

210. Who asked you to sign it?—Some of the men said, if we wanted to work longer hours, we had better sign the petition.

210A. Did the girls all sign it willingly?—Yes.

210B. Who wrote out the petition?—I do not know.

JANE RIDDLE, examined, stated :—

211. I am over eighteen years of age. I am a weaver, working at piecework. I commence work at 8, and leave off at 5. I have an hour for dinner, for which I go home. I have a mother, two brothers, and two sisters. Mother stays at home, one brother is working, the other attends school. My sisters are working here. One is twenty-one, a weaver, on piecework; the other—fourteen—attending the machines, daywork, and gets 12s. a week. I earn, on an average, 25s. a week, and give the whole to my mother. I have been working here for three years. I did not come out from the Home country to work here. I know the provisions of the Act as to number of hours for working. I would rather have the nine and a half hours a day, because I should earn more wages. I do not think the occupation at all injuriously affects the health. I am perfectly well. I do not desire to do away with the half-holiday on Saturday. I signed the petition which was got up and presented to the General Assembly. I do not know who wrote it out. Mr. Dryden asked us to sign it. He said we need not sign it unless we liked to do so. He explained the nature of it.

WILLIAM PATUN, examined, stated :—

212. I shall be fifteen years of age in November. I am working at a "spinning jenny." I come at 9 in the morning, and leave at half-past 5, and have from 12 to half-past 12 for dinner. I get 10s. a week, daywork. I have been here nearly a year. I go home to meals. My father is a labourer. My mother stops at home. I have two brothers, thirteen and eleven years of age, both of whom go to school; and one sister, about seven, who also goes to school. I have not been to school since I came here. I can read and write. All know the number of hours for working. I am satisfied with the eight hours a day. I would not mind working a little longer if I got paid for it. I get the Saturday afternoon. I would not mind working all day on Saturday, if I got a little more pay. I give some of my money to my parents.

WEDNESDAY, 22ND MAY, 1878.

Mr. RALPH EWING, of Messrs. Brown, Ewing, and Co., Drapers, &c., examined.

213. *The Chairman.*] The Commission has been appointed to inquire whether any amendment is necessary in the Employment of Females Act. Have you any remarks to make, as an employer, that you would like brought under consideration?—The only suggestion we have to make is, that the Inspector should have power to grant us permission to work for a half-hour, an hour, or two hours, as the case may be, beyond the specified hours, when we have a pressure of orders, such as mourning or wedding garments, to finish within a certain time. At present we are bound to close at the exact hour, or run the risk of being fined.

214. Who is to determine the necessity of the case?—The Inspector, of course, would be able to find out whether or not the privilege was abused,