

Liverpool Mercury 7 Oct 1875

THE FACTORY AND WORKSHOPS ACTS COMMISSION

Yesterday, the commissioners resumed their sitting at Abingdon Street, Westminster, Sir James Fergusson presiding. The commissioners have nearly closed the evidence necessary for the consolidation and amendment of the Factory and Workshop Acts. The first witness called was Mr Charles Patrick, assistant inspector of factories in Lancashire, Yorkshire and the midland counties, who said he visited sub-inspectors and directed officers in their duties, but he felt that his position was degrading, inasmuch as the sub-inspectors received their instructions directly from the inspector instead of coming from him. He suggested a central council of inspectors. Non-textile factories might be brought under the act of 1874, except as to the hours of labour. It would be a disadvantage to have the hours shortened. The half-time system had worked well. It was almost impossible for inspectors to enforce the act upon children employed in straw plait and pillow lace, and he thought local officers (under petty sessions or the sub-inspectors) might enforce attendance at school. The Agricultural Children's Act was a dead letter, and there was nothing to prevent children working in agriculture when they could not go into factories. He considered that all dangerous machinery should be fenced in places where women and children were employed. It was a mistake to reduce the hours from 10 1/2 to 10. He approved of half-time commencing at 10 years of age, and full time at 13. In the cotton and woollen districts children were kept at home to nurse, the mother going to the mill until the children were of age to work full time. If children of 13 could not pass the standard they should work half time until they could pass it.

Blackburn Standard 9 Oct 1875

The Factory and Workshops Acts Commission

On Tuesday the Commissioners inquiring into the consolidation and amendment of the Factory and Workshop Acts resumed their sitting at their offices in Westminster, having taken evidence in all the principal towns in the United Kingdom. A deputation from the counties of Derry, Down, Armagh, and Waterford, representing the largest owners of steam power in Ireland, stated their case. They were anxious for the repeal of the 10th clause of the Factory Act, 1874, which prohibited making up lost time. If it was not repealed obstacles would be thrown in the way of the development of water power, and this would be especially detrimental to Ireland, because they had no available coalfields. During floods the water wheels were often stopped one or two days at a time. They did not ask more than making up more than half an hour per day. If clause 10 were put in force water power in Ireland would gradually be superseded by steam, and an enormous source of natural wealth would remain totally undeveloped. A deputation from Macclesfield, headed by the Mayor, also laid their views before the Commissioners. They urged that children should be allowed to work as half timers at ten years of age, and full time at twelve years. They considered the work very light, and, in fact, educational in its tendency. At

the sitting on Wednesday of the Commissioners for Consolidating and Amending the Factory and Workshops Acts, Mr Charles Patrick, assistant inspector of factories, stated that in his opinion the Agricultural Children Act was a dead letter. He had found the half time system to work well, but thought it was almost impossible for the inspectors to enforce the Act upon children employed in making straw plait and pillow lace.