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# PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

## HOUSE OF COMMONS

### STANDING COMMITTEE A

## EMPLOYMENT OF WOMEN AND YOUNG PERSONS BILL

### OFFICIAL REPORT

TUESDAY, 18th FEBRUARY, 1936

### Second Day's Proceedings

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On Clause 1 (*Employment of Women and Young Persons in Shifts*),  
Amendments to reduce the permitted number of working hours were defeated.  
The Committee adjourned until Thursday, 20th February, at 11 a.m.

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**EMPLOYMENT OF WOMEN AND  
YOUNG PERSONS BILL.**

STANDING COMMITTEE A.

[OFFICIAL REPORT.]

Tuesday, 18th February, 1936.

[Major MILNER in the Chair.]

CLAUSE 1.—(*Employment of women and  
young persons in shifts.*)

The CHAIRMAN: The first four Amendments on the Order Paper standing in the name of the hon. Member for Cannock (Mr. Adamson) all deal with the question of hours, and I suggest that it will be for the convenience of the Committee if they are considered together.

Mr. KELLY: Can they be voted upon separately?

The CHAIRMAN: Yes.

Mr. ADAMSON: I beg to move, in page 1, line 12, to leave out "six" and to insert "seven".

I do not intend to attempt to survey all the possibilities there are in arranging shifts according to these stipulations and within the limits of the hours specified, but I should like to draw attention to some difficulties which are bound to arise in operating the two-shift system in these circumstances. We have to take into account not only the conditions of employment but what facilities exist for workpeople to get to their place of employment. In the Midlands large numbers of young persons living in districts outside the towns and cities there have to travel considerable distances in the morning to get to work. In the mining parts of the Cannock Division there are few industries apart from mining, and the girls and women have to go outside to find employment.

According to the terms of the Bill, a shift might start at 6 a.m. I have taken the trouble to look up the railway facilities in some of the districts round about

my own division, and I should say they are typical of many other urban districts. The first train from Cannock leaves at 6.26 a.m. My hon. Friend the Member for Walsall (Mr. Leckie) will know that many of these young women go into Walsall to work in the light leather and accessories trades. They might, in some cases, have to walk two or three miles before reaching Cannock, and then the train would not arrive in Walsall before 6.47 a.m. For those working further afield, say at Kynoch's in Birmingham, or Courtauld's in Wolverhampton, the position would be very much more difficult. That is one of the difficulties which would arise if orders for the two-shift system were granted allowing work to begin at 6 o'clock, and even if the hour were 7 o'clock there would be many difficulties to overcome. I note that, according to Sub-section (4), the Secretary of State, in granting an application: "May impose such conditions as he considers necessary for the purpose of safeguarding the welfare and the interests of the persons employed on the system of shifts."

I presume that would cover the making of representations to the railway companies to run earlier trains, or approaching the municipal authorities on the question of the road services. Wolverhampton's road passenger services cover the district of which I have been speaking, and while I have been unable to get details as to the running of the 'buses, according to my recollection the earliest does not start before about 6.30 a.m. I wonder whether the Secretary of State could make representations to the Road Traffic Commissioners for the road passenger services to be extended, and for vehicles to be run to suit the convenience of these workers. If we could have assurances on that point, we should feel that some of the difficulties could be eliminated.

Further, in many urban districts the local authorities provide continuation-classes and other facilities for extended education. In Cannock there is a mining college, which was opened within the last eight or ten years, and has been extended more recently, built out of the Miners Welfare Fund. Educational facilities there are not confined to those which interest workers in the mining industry. Recently I looked through the syllabus of the continuation classes for the eight

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[Mr. Adamson.]  
months covering the autumn and the winter, and I notice that not only were there classes for instruction in mining engineering, but that electrical engineers, carpentry, and kindred subjects were taught, and for the young women there were classes in dressmaking, embroidery, cookery, and a number of other domestic occupations. If this two-shift system is to be introduced, it will be a problem for the education authorities to arrange their syllabus of studies to meet the changed conditions.

Will the Under-Secretary of State tell us whether the Government have any idea of the type of application they will receive to work the two-shift system, whether they will be applications to work the throughout period divided into two shifts, or whether the two shifts will be overlapping, with work commencing, presumably, at the ordinary time of starting, say, about 8 or 8.30 a.m., and finishing at the ordinary time of 5 or 5.30 p.m. Specialization and the operation of the two-shift system are bound to lead to speeding up, and we are entitled to claim that the shorter working day shall operate in all cases. These are the main factors which we have in consideration in moving this group of Amendments to make the permitted starting hour later than that laid down in the Bill. There is equally the human aspect as to whether young persons ought to be asked to get up at five o'clock in the morning in order to reach their place of employment by six a.m. I have vivid recollections of my own early apprenticeship in the engineering industry, and of the scramble to work with a piece of bread in one hand and an apple in my pocket, in order to be checked in for six o'clock.

Fortunately, we have got away from those conditions in factory life, but there is a danger that, under the system that could be operated within this Measure, such conditions might be partially put into operation again. In the interests of young people we should safeguard the position. For instance, in the heavy frosts and the cold winds of last week it would have been a hardship to get up, perhaps with a quarter of an hour to spare to reach the station, and to spend half an hour in the train. Urban trains are not very comfortable even in daytime, let alone during a cold

morning. Such difficulties would have to be considered.

I should like the Under-Secretary of State to give us an assurance that representations can be made to the authorities responsible for transport, such as the railway companies, and that, in the case of hours being operated within the working of the two-shift system, representations can be made to the Road Traffic Commissioners. I hope also that the Minister of Education will be consulted how to incorporate continuation extension classes for the later education of young persons, and how to carry on those education classes in order to bring the fullest advantages of extended education to young persons. I therefore move the first of this group of Amendments, and I hope that we may elicit from the Under-Secretary of State a statement as to how they would operate.

**Mr. RILEY:** It may be for the convenience of the Committee, as well as for the Under-Secretary of State, if we state our case on this group of Amendments as fully as may be necessary, before a reply is made. I support my hon. Friend the Member for Cannock (Mr. Adamson), not only on the practical grounds which he has put forward and which will probably appeal most to the Government, but also on two grounds of principle. First, I would refer to the practical ground, namely, commencing work at six in the morning, which, in many districts under present systems of transport, is almost impossible. I, like my hon. Friend, represent an industrial constituency in the West Riding of Yorkshire, where groups of industrial towns are spread over an area of anything from 10 to 20 miles. The towns are separated from each other by two, three, or four miles at the outside, and they are all engaged more or less in textile industries. They may quite well be affected if the Bill comes into operation. If considerable improvements in trade take place and there is pressure of orders many applications may be made under the Bill, when it has become an Act, for the use of the two-shift system.

It is a common practice in the West Riding of Yorkshire for operatives to live in one town and to work in another, and day by day considerable numbers of them pass from the town in which they live to a town from four to seven miles away.

I represent Dewsbury, and numbers of people who live there work in Huddersfield, which is eight miles away. Others go as far as the Colne Valley, which is 10 or 12 miles from the place where they live. It is obvious that if the two-shift system were adopted and those people have to commence work at six in the morning, young persons would have to rise at half-past four or at five because, even if there were adequate transport facilities, it would take them until six o'clock to arrive at their destinations. At the other end of the day, it is also obvious that if they leave at 10 o'clock in the evening, it will be 12 midnight before those young persons can get home. Those are some of the obvious practical difficulties. I do not think any of us suggests that they cannot be met, but they are reasons why the Committee and the Government should face the situation. No one wants to impose upon young people the inconveniences which the facts I have mentioned undoubtedly make clear.

I now want to deal with the Amendments from the point of view of the two principles, the first of which is expressed in our view—I should think a view shared by every Member of this Committee—that seven o'clock in the morning is quite early enough for any young person to have to go to work. I cannot imagine that any hon. Member would want to bring about a condition of industry in which young persons are called upon to leave home before 6 or 6.30 in the morning, especially in cases such as I have mentioned, where the working place may be 10 miles away. If you have to get to work at 7 a.m., it means leaving home at 5.30 a.m. I cannot imagine that any hon. Member can defend that state of affairs, or, at the other end of the day, the advisability or desirability of young persons or of women being retained in factory operations up to 10 o'clock at night week by week, and having to travel distances of from five to eight miles to their homes. The concession envisaged in these Amendments of altering the commencing hour to seven a.m. and the leaving hour to nine p.m. should commend itself to every Member of the Committee.

I would suggest another reason. A strong case might be made out that if we are to alter by legal enactment the con-

ditions under which young people are to work, and thereby give a tremendous and substantial advantage to the employer by permitting him to run his plant with a double shift, with all the advantages which accrue in the way of the spreading of overhead charges and reducing managerial expenses, that change ought to bring a corresponding advantage to the people who are working. Therefore these Amendments propose to reduce the daily hours of labour from eight to seven for each shift. To commence at seven in the morning and to close at nine in the evening would mean two shifts of seven hours each instead of eight hours. That is not an unreasonable suggestion, in view of the advantage to the employer conferred by the change in system, the great reduction in overhead charges, and continuous running. Some recompense ought to be given to the people who work.

I do not want to cite the example of Russia, but it is well known that in all the trades in Russia to-day the seven-hour day is almost universal. That is pretty well the case also in the United States of America. All parties, I suppose, approve, within certain limits, of the policy developed at Geneva, to which we are all committed through the International Labour Office, of trying to bring about a reduction in the hours of labour. For all these reasons I hope that the Committee will accept these Amendments.

**Mr. HOLLINS:** I want to appeal on the grounds of the health of the worker. Numerous experiments have shown that unless you allow workers sufficient time to recuperate before they commence another week's work, they are not in a condition to carry out their duties in as effective a manner as they would have been had sufficient time been allowed. To work on Saturday afternoon until two o'clock would be injurious by preventing the worker from recuperating after working seven hours per day throughout the week. Under the proposed Amendments there would be a 40 or 42-hour week, and this would give the workers an opportunity to recuperate during a long week-end. The workers in England have always compared their position with that which exists on the Continent and even in the United States of America, where there is work on Saturday afternoon, and they have always been jealous in this country of their Saturday afternoons and Sundays.



[Mr. Hollins.]

The reduction of hours, so as to cease at 12 on Saturday, is one of the most important Amendments before the Committee. It is important to note that by this Amendment we should take off an hour at the beginning of the day and an hour at the end of the day. I have had practical experience of negotiations with a large factory in Worcester which was built during the last seven or eight years. This factory is right in the open country. In future, facilities and inducements will be offered to employers to build new factories—which will work on the two-shift system—in country areas, one of the reasons being the lower rates and cheaper labour available in those districts. This will mean that the workers will be some distance from their homes. In the factory to which I have referred, for instance, the workers begin at 8 o'clock in the morning and finish at 5.30 in the evening, and we know that workers who have to get to work at 8 o'clock in the morning must rise at 6 o'clock, while if they leave work at 5.30 in the evening, they get home at 7.30, which means a 13½ hours day home to home. If those same workers were brought under a two-shift system, beginning at 7 o'clock in the morning, they would have to rise at 5 o'clock, and those taking the afternoon shifts would not reach home until 11 o'clock at night.

I want to support the statements which have been made by the mover and seconder of the Amendment. If factories are built in the country areas, it means that they will be taken away from the train services, and I know that in the case which I mentioned there are no train services available. There will be many new factories built in country areas where the transport facilities will be very bad, and it is not an unreasonable estimate to say that it will take the workers two hours to get from their homes to their workplace. Therefore, I wish to plead that the reduction of hours so as to cease at 12 on a Saturday shall be given every consideration with a view to allowing the people to have a long week-end in which to recuperate before commencing work in the following week.

**Mr. W. JOSEPH STEWART:** I rise to support the Amendment. I agree with previous speakers that if there is no

alteration in the times as set out in the Bill, those times will militate against the best interests of the boys and girls who will be engaged in these particular industries. After having been identified with an industrial area for a number of years, I understand what a two-shift system means in thousands of the homes in this country. Rising early in the morning and going home late at night militates against the best interests of our young life, from both the physical and the educational point of view.

Another side of the question which has not been touched upon up to now is the effect which a two-shift system has upon the home life of our people. If the boys and girls have to commence the day at 6 o'clock in the morning and live long distances from the place where they work, it means that the mothers in those homes have to get up at 4 o'clock in the morning to see their boys and girls off to work. In cases where there are many workers in the home, this means that many of the mothers will be working in the home until 11 or 12 o'clock at night. I believe this to be a very serious side of the question, because, after all, in all the Acts that are brought forward and in all the changes that are made in industry and in factory life, we must to a certain extent take into consideration the home life of the people, and in every instance the mother ought to have some consideration. I suggest that in seeking to delete "six" and insert "seven" with a view to giving the young people another hour in their homes in the morning, and the mothers another hour's rest, we are serving the best interests of all concerned. On those grounds I support the Amendment.

**Mr. JAGGER:** Increasingly as there have been extensions of the two-shift system, the position has become very much worse. It will be within the memory of hon. Members that big firms—and what are called good employers—tried this system and voluntarily gave it up. They were forced to take that decision by circumstances which were then changing and which are now changing much more rapidly. Five years ago, in Manchester, Glasgow, Birmingham, and in every large city there were rabbit warrens of people living round hives of industry. To-day, especially since the development of the country areas, these people are

living four, five, and six miles away from the industries in which they still have to earn their living. Thank goodness, in many cases the rabbit warrens have gone and in many other cases are going; but the position has been intensified.

Then there are special circumstances, as in the case of Everton and Birkenhead, where thousands and thousands of people have every day to cross from Liverpool to get their living in the Wallasey peninsula, and thousands of people in the Wallasey peninsula have to go to Liverpool. The whole system of rail, road, and ferry transport has been built up on the assumption that, broadly speaking, people will start working at 8 or 9 o'clock in the morning and finish between 5 and 5.30 in the evening. Before there is any consideration of permanent legislation which will cause large numbers of people to start at 6 o'clock in the morning and large numbers to finish at 10 o'clock in the evening, there ought to be a complete reconstruction of the whole transport system of the country. If ever there was a case of taking a steam hammer to crack a nut, it would be to revolutionize the whole transport system of the country in order that a few employers might run their machinery in double shifts instead of single shifts. As the hon. Member who spoke second said, from the practical point of view the early hour of starting one shift and the late hour of finishing the other is a great mistake, and I think it is to a great extent impracticable in any but very small factories which have a limited number of workers who can be drawn from the vicinity of the factories in question. The remarks I have made would apply even against the 7 o'clock start and the 9 o'clock finish, but these times would make the system less difficult both for employers and employes and would humanise it so far as the employes are concerned. Therefore, I hope that at least we can amend the Bill so as to take out of it the worst feature, the six o'clock start and the ten o'clock finish.

**The UNDER-SECRETARY of STATE for the HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. Lloyd):** I think the whole Committee will agree that if it were possible, having regard to practical circumstances, to reduce hours under this system or under any other system of employment in this

country, they would all be in favour of it, but I think hon. Members opposite have really not been taking into account the practical industrial conditions under which this system and other systems have to operate at the present time. I would like to say a word or two about the point made by the hon. Member for Cannock (Mr. Adamson), who moved the Amendment. He spoke of the great difficulties there would be in operating the Bill, if it becomes an Act, with the hours that are at present in it. I would remind the hon. Member that this is not an entirely new proposal, and I think I am right in saying that it has been working in this country since 1918—at any rate, for the whole time during which the Act has been extended under the Expiring Laws Continuance Bill.

**Mr. JAGGER:** The fact that it has not grown shows that it was not needed.

**Mr. LLOYD:** That is a different point altogether. Of course, hon. Members have very naturally stressed the importance of transport, and that question, together with the question of the early start, is one which has to be considered; but we are not considering it for the first time to-day. It has been considered during the administration of the Act as it is at present on the Statute Book. In practice the Home Office have always paid special attention to the question of transport and have always provided in the Orders that transport conditions must be satisfactory. If the conditions are not satisfactory, the Home Office have power to revoke the Order, and that power has been used to ensure that transport difficulties are overcome as far as possible. Therefore, the extreme difficulties to which the hon. Member referred have, in fact, been dealt with on a practical administrative basis in the past and the hon. Member will notice that there is a Government Amendment on the Paper in which it is definitely specified that the question of transport shall be one of the subjects to be taken into account in granting the Order.

With regard to education, perhaps the hon. Member will allow me to deal with that question on the specific Amendment which comes later on. Then we were asked what sort of system could be considered in an application or laid down in an Order, whether, for example, we could



[Mr. Lloyd.]  
have two shifts that would overlap and would thus make it possible to work this restricted outside limit of hours which is proposed in the Amendments. The answer is "No." The real reason why we cannot except these Amendments is that you cannot in most cases work an overlapping system of shifts at all. There may not be plant capable of being operated at the same time by two shifts. The whole idea is that the plant should be operated for a long time by two shifts coming on one after another. Once it is granted that it is not practicable to have overlapping shifts, it follows that these shifts themselves would have to be definitely reduced in length of time and that the whole time of the factory's working would also have to be correspondingly reduced.

**Mr. HOLLINS:** I do not accept the definitely accept the position stated by the hon. Gentleman. I know numbers of cases where manufacturing can be done by machines and the finishers can come in and begin finishing.

**Mr. LLOYD:** I did not say in all cases; I said in most cases. Clearly, when we are considering an Act of Parliament, we must provide for all possibilities.

**Mr. HOLLINS:** I do not accept the fact.

**Mr. LLOYD:** If the hon. Member cannot accept it, I hope the Committee will. When hon. Members opposite talk about a reduction of hours, they ought to remember that the system in the Bill at present involves a considerable reduction of hours. The average would be 44 a week. Hon. Members opposite are well acquainted with the industrial conditions, and they know equally as well as hon. Members on this side that most workers work more than 44 hours at the present time. When one considers that there is great industrial activity in some centres, such as Birmingham, it will be found that a great deal of overtime is being worked and the hours are longer still.

**Mr. KELLY:** By young people?

**Mr. LLOYD:** By women. Under this Bill hours will definitely be limited to an average of 44, and that is a very considerable reduction. When hon. Mem-

bers talk about employers getting an advantage, it must be remembered that the workers get that advantage. In the majority of cases workers have been getting an adjustment of wages so that they get, for the reduced hours of 44 under this system, wages equal to those paid under the old system with longer hours. What hon. Members opposite are proposing in effect is to reduce hours further, so that instead of being 44 they will be 38½. That is what the proposal comes to, and I think that they will find that as a matter of practical working of a factory, although it may be possible to adjust wages to keep them at the old level with 44 hours, it is really more than industry can bear at the present time to maintain those wages if only 38½ hours are worked.

**Mr. McGHEE:** Would the Under-Secretary of State tell us how he makes it 38½ hours?

**Mr. LLOYD:** The effect of the Amendment moved by the hon. Member for Cannock (Mr. Adamson) is to limit hours on the weekdays other than Saturday to 7 a.m. and 9 p.m. instead of 6 a.m. and 10 p.m. It is on that basis that my calculations are made.

**Mr. McGHEE:** You are basing your calculations in the Bill on 6 a.m. to 10 p.m. during the week and 6 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Saturdays. That is 48 hours, not 44.

**Mr. LLOYD:** My hon. Friend seems to forget that only one Saturday is worked in a fortnight. When shift workers are on the morning shift they work on Saturday mornings, but when they are on the afternoon shift they do not work at all on Saturdays. That is an example of the advantages of the system which I hope hon. Members will appreciate. It has to be remembered also that there were compensating advantages which made the Departmental Committee decide in favour of these proposals. One was the fact that the workers will have longer daylight hours off work, and another point which hon. Members have apparently overlooked is that every other week workers have a complete Saturday free. That is much appreciated by young workers and by many women. Every other week they have the Saturday and Sunday completely free. In actual practice the Amendments would effectually hamstring the system. If they were

passed, it would not be possible to work it. As the House of Commons has accepted the general principle, I would put it to the Committee that it would not be right for us to accept a proposal that would have the effect of hamstringing the system.

**Mr. KELLY:** I have listened with great care to what has been said, expecting to hear some arguments brought forward to dispose of some of the points put forward by the hon. Members who have supported the Amendment. May I deal with one or two of the things stated by the Under-Secretary of State. He has said that this will mean the reduction of hours and is something new. In regard to that, I would like to state what is the position of men working two or three shifts in the engineering industry. When they are working on a three-shift system, it is recognised that they ought to have, and that they must have, in order that there should be good production, a shorter working week. Accordingly they only work 37½ hours. That is the case of men, and they work 37½ hours for more wages than they got for 40 hours.

**Mr. LLOYD:** Is that including meal times?

**Mr. KELLY:** No, there are no meal times included. If they are working on the afternoon shift, they have much better conditions than you are proposing for these children. They work a little over 40 hours with wages more than those paid for the 47 hours that are the rule in the engineering trade. Really, you are giving nothing here. In fact, you are proposing something worse than an agreement made between the engineering employers and the trade unions in regard to adult labour. I am amazed that the Government should be worse than an employers' federation. Why is it that you are proposing to treat young people worse than employers treat men?

**Miss HORSBRUGH:** Does the hon. Member think women and young people should be put on an all-night shift?

**Mr. KELLY:** I am not suggesting that, and I can assure the hon. Member that if that is proposed, I am ready for the fight at any moment. Any employer who attempts to work young people throughout the night can depend upon it that, so far as trade unions are concerned, he is going to have a pretty hefty time.

**Miss HORSBRUGH:** Does the hon. Member advocate that although there may not be night work for young people and women there should be the same hours of employment?

**Mr. KELLY:** It is evident that there is a great poverty of suggestions and ideas on the other side. No one has suggested that these young people should work the same hours as adults work. We have always tried in industries in this country to secure for young people a lesser number of hours in the week than those worked by adults. Efforts were made in trades which worked 48 hours a week to secure that young people should not work more than 40 hours. Any country which thought much of its young people would agree with such a proposal. The suggestion that this means a reduction of hours is not borne out by examination. They will work in the one week 48 hours and in the other week 40 hours. Those who have worked a two-shift system know the continuous effort which has to be engaged in throughout the period because these firms are determined that they are going to get everything they can possibly get during the period of work. I have no hesitation in stating—and I wish that employers were on the other side of the Committee in order that they might have the opportunity of answering this—that young people are often worse off working a two-shift system than working an ordinary day shift.

It has been said that industry cannot afford overlapping shifts. Why? It is because the employers are not concerned, and the Government are not concerned, with the interests of young people. They are concerned only with the operating of machinery for the whole length of the two shifts, and they are quite prepared to put a permanent burden upon the shoulders of the young people engaged in industry. You are giving nothing in the matter of hours. Lever Brothers at Port Sunlight were quite prepared, if other employers had not put so many obstacles in the way, to adopt a 36-hour week. They got rid of the two-shift system because of the injury to the girls and young people engaged upon it.

I ask the Committee to consider, and in particular I ask the hon. Member for London University (Sir E. Graham-Little) to consider, what will happen in London when employers have the



[Mr. Kelly.] opportunity of adopting this system. London University, which claims to be a pattern in educational matters, should have some desire to see an improvement in the conditions of work for young people. London is one of the greatest manufacturing centres in the whole country, although it is often spoken of as merely a distributing centre. Imagine the condition of young people who have to cross London to get to work. It takes at the very least an hour and a half to get from the S.E.—even from the part of the S.E. nearest to the centre—to the N.W., to Hendon and other places where factories have been started. It takes about the same time to reach Willesden or Woolwich or Dagenham, all places where factories are situated. The same considerations apply in a case of young people in Manchester going to Trafford Park. Again, those who have stood in the Leeds railway stations and seen the large numbers of young people returning from their work can picture what it means for those young people to be out at 5 or 5.30 in the morning and then, on the second shift, having to return after 10 at night. Birmingham has also been quoted, and Derby might very well have been mentioned, in view of the many hundreds, if not thousands, who leave Derby daily to go to works in the neighbourhood.

It has been suggested that the Traffic Commissioners and the railway companies should be approached to improve transport facilities. I think the Home Office will fail there. The Juvenile Advisory Committee of the Ministry of Labour, backed up by the Ministry and by the London County Council, have for years been trying to prevail on the transport authorities in London to give better facilities for children to reach their work, but they have not done so up to now. As a member of a public authority which has 70,000 employes, I should consider I was doing an injury to this country and to its workpeople if I agreed to a system of two-shift working at this time of day, when inventions have given us such enormous powers of production.

The question of education will come up later, and I will wait till that Amendment is reached to speak about it. We are not even to have a short day on a Saturday. It took many years' hard effort to secure the Saturday afternoon

holiday for the people, first to get work stopped at 2 o'clock, then at 1 o'clock, and now 12 o'clock. Within the space of my own lifetime that reform has come about. Now we are going to say that adults in these establishments may leave off work early—because I can assure you we shall see to that, in another capacity than as Members of Parliament—but that these young people may be occupied until 2 o'clock on a Saturday afternoon. We have come to a sorry plight in Great Britain when this treatment is to be handed out. Welfare has been mentioned. What is meant by "Welfare"? I know about welfare officers and have often had to deal with them. Is that a satisfactory way to deal with young people who are to be forced to work under conditions which will upset the whole domestic life of families, and upset their mode of living, even if only for a period? I hope these Amendments will be carried, in the interests not only of the young people but of the country.

**Mr. LECKIE:** Do I understand the hon. Member to assert that the two-shift system is actually being worked in London to any great extent?

**Mr. KELLY:** It is not at the present moment being worked in London, but this Bill will make it much more easy for it to be operated. We have been able to keep it out of London, because we are concerned with the education of our children to an extent that other districts are not. We have been able to prevent it, and those engaged in placing young people in employment have also seen about something of that kind. Whether it was legal for us to do it or not is another matter.

**Mr. BROMFIELD:** The Under-Secretary of State is perfectly right in saying that this is no new system. The two-shift system has been in operation for some considerable time. As the secretary of an association I have had to deal with quite a number of two-shift systems in the textile trade, and so far, while I do not agree with young persons working from early morning till late at night, the system has worked fairly satisfactorily. But where I disagree with the Under-Secretary of State is here: He tells us that there is a reduction in hours, but seems to forget that this is a two-shift

system and not a one-shift system. What have been the hours in the two-shift systems introduced up to now? The actual working hours have been: morning shift 43 hours, afternoon shift 37½ hours, actual working time; and work stopping at 12 o'clock on Saturday in every case. I am speaking now of North Staffordshire and Cheshire, where those conditions have been agreed to between the Home Office, the employers' organisations, and the trade unions. In this Bill we introduce an increase of hours, not a decrease, and that is a retrograde step. Up to now work on Saturdays has stopped at 12 noon, but under this Bill it will not stop until 2 o'clock, which is an increase of two hours per week for the operatives, for, I presume, the same rate of pay.

I want the Under-Secretary of State to remember that in our agreements with employers' associations and with the Home Office we have been able to obtain 48 hours' pay for 43 hours and 37½ hours respectively—that is, the standard rate of pay for a 48-hours week. In this Bill we are deliberately giving the employers two extra hours each week without pay, and I contend that the whole thing is wrong and a retrograde step. Things are moving very rapidly, and although the two-shift system has not extended very much so far, it may increase in the future. I hope it does not, but if it does we have to be ready for it, and I contend that if there is a further move towards introducing the two-shift system, it must not be accompanied by an increase of hours. I am convinced that early morning starts and late stops at night are not beneficial to operatives generally, and particularly to women and girls; and with the exception of perhaps 2 per cent. those affected are all women and young girls. It is my complaint that under the Bill the Government are increasing the hours of labour for these young persons by two per week.

**Sir ERNEST GRAHAM-LITTLE:** I wish to say a word in answer to the challenge thrown out to me by an hon. Member. I support this Bill because I feel there are two arguments which are absolutely incontrovertible. The first is that a two-shift system is necessary to enable us to compete against conditions outside this country. Anyone who knows the conditions prevailing in Europe—out-

side Russia—will know that every nation thinks we are working very many fewer hours than they are, and that is a fact. If the argument from the other side is that the two-shift system is impossible, another question arises; but if the view is accepted that some shift-system is necessary, it surely becomes a question of how to divide up the 16 hours which are available, because night work is ruled out. From a long life spent in certain conditions I am very familiar with two-shift systems in big hospitals. The night service in hospitals is run by a staff of nurses not on duty during the day.

**Mr. KELLY:** But none of them is below 18.

**Sir E. GRAHAM-LITTLE:** No, they are much nearer 20 than 18. At any rate, the two-shift system works very well in hospitals, and I have seen a document prepared by a committee of the Labour party which proposed to regulate hours in hospitals on a three-shift system. The doctors and the nurses were to work shifts of eight hours throughout the 24. The surgeons do not see how they are going to interrupt their operations at the end of the 8-hour limit, but a three-shift system was seriously put forward as a counsel of perfection in running hospitals. Surely the two-shift system as proposed by this Bill is a charter of short hours for those who come under it. The hours are never to exceed eight hours in the 24. Is there any other way of securing that with absolute certainty?

**Mr. JAGGER:** Does the Under-Secretary of State agree that never are the hours to exceed eight on any one day.

**Sir E. GRAHAM-LITTLE:** I shall press for that, and it must be considered in any future legislation. I am supporting this Bill, and I think that is one of the important arguments for it. It is not true that the Bill is going to make conditions worse but, I hope, better—very much better. I am not sure what the point is about the education Amendment, but I am in favour of extending any facilities for education outside of these hours. I cannot help thinking that this is a necessary Bill to enable us to compete with conditions abroad, and that it is a Bill to secure greater health facilities, and therefore I am supporting it.



**Mr. RHYS DAVIES:** I am disturbed by some of the arguments of the hon. Gentleman when he talks of adopting the two-shift system in order to meet competition from abroad. In the last Parliament the Government did all it could to prevent competition by tariffs and duties, and we thought we were settling the problem in that way. If the hon. Gentleman will look up the reports of the Departmental Committee, he will find that the two-shift system is used, in the main, in the home industries. It may astonish him to know that chocolates and toffees are made under the two-shift system. Just imagine Japan and Russia competing with us in making toffee for world markets. Frankly, that argument will not avail. He is going to stand with us in seeing that nobody works more than eight hours a day. I hope he will leave his Tory allegiance for that purpose. The hon. Member shakes his head whenever I speak. I do not know why.

My attention has been called to a new problem in connection with hours and if we cannot deal with it here, perhaps we can on the Report stage. I am told authoritatively that since the two-shift system has been adopted in some factories women and young persons in the offices belonging to the factories are working longer hours, consequent upon the introduction of a two-shift system on the manufacturing side.

This is not a party issue, and I should be pleased if the Home Office would be good enough to look into this matter to ensure, when the two-shift system is applied to a factory, that the same conditions of employment in respect of hours shall apply also to the women and young persons on the clerical side of that factory. The Chairman shakes his head; that is more ominous than the gesture from the Minister, so I will leave the point at that.

One of my hon. Friends spoke about our English week-end, as they call it. It ought to be called the Welsh week-end, because we started it.

**Mr. KELLY:** You may have the credit.

**Mr. DAVIES:** Whenever I have been in foreign countries, I have found the trade unions striving for what they call the English week-end, which is that work should finish at mid-day on Saturday, or thereabouts, and start again on Monday. That is one of the most excellent institu-

tions of this country, and I should be very sorry to see anything done to disturb that English week-end even by one hour. Let me appeal to the hon. Lady who spoke. When I was younger than I am, I took the chair, with leaders of the feminist movement, and advocated that women ought to be in public life—

**The CHAIRMAN:** Order. I hope the Committee will now come to a decision.

**Mr. DAVIES:** I am finishing my argument now. I want to put it to the hon. Gentleman who is in charge of the Bill that, in spite of all the restrictions that are supposed to be included in the Bill, he will find that no argument is better than the one put forward by my hon. Friend, that whereas the two-shift system will reduce hours of labour, there is no doubt that it will lengthen hours for a considerable number of young people and women, and I would like him to look into that point.

**Lieut.-Colonel MAYHEW:** I would like to ask the Under-Secretary of State a question. Is it suggested under this Clause that young persons are to be kept hanging about from six in the morning until 10 in the evening? Although they may be working only eight hours a day, if they are working in two shifts they may be hanging about for a good many hours. I should like an assurance that that will not be the case.

**Mr. HOLLINS:** I would ask the Under-Secretary of State whether he has paid attention to the report of the percentage of factories and persons employed who have not received any make-up of their wages for the reduction in hours. In one case, the non-textiles, 50 per cent. have had only part make-up and 37 per cent. have had none. In textiles, 11 per cent. have had only part, and 15 per cent. have had no make-up.

**Mr. LLOYD:** I will deal with that point upon the Amendment which later will raise it specifically; it is not very relevant to the Amendment which we are discussing. I can give my hon. and gallant Friend the Member for East Ham North (Lieut.-Colonel Mayhew) the assurance that he desires. There is no question of workers being kept hanging about for the other shift. We will certainly consider the question raised by the hon. Member for Westhoughton (Mr. Rhys Davies).

**Mr. JAGGER:** There is nothing in the Bill to prevent a split turn. What is to prevent people hanging about for more than eight hours?

**Mr. LLOYD:** The Home Secretary lays down in his authorisation exactly what the hours are to be, and they are the hours which will, in fact, be worked. That has been the practice in the past and will be the practice in the future. No difficulty has arisen, and we may take it that no difficulty will arise.

**Mr. JAGGER:** Does the hon. Gentleman suggest that we can pass an Act of Parliament to ensure that nobody will ever be Home Secretary who will sanction unreasonable arrangements?

**Mr. LLOYD:** The practice of the House of Commons and of Standing Committees is usually to lay down certain conditions in which Home Secretaries can and should work, on the understanding that a Home Secretary will take a reasonable view of his duties as one of His Majesty's principal Secretaries of State. It is a confusion of thought that this Bill will in any way increase hours. The provisions of the Bill in regard to hours are exactly the same as in the existing Act. What I think the hon. Member had in his mind was the case in which the total of permitted hours is not worked up to, but that is the case at present. They are not always worked up to two o'clock on Saturday afternoon, and they will not always be worked up to two o'clock in future. It is considered on general grounds that the total of permitted hours should be what they are in the Bill, because there is no difference in that respect between the Bill and the Act under which the system is at present carried on.

**Miss WILKINSON:** The hon. Gentleman does not seem to have caught the point which we are trying to make. When girls are employed on piece work, there may be a tendency either to keep

them hanging about the factory or to send them home. Suppose there was enough work when they came to keep them going from six o'clock to eight or nine o'clock, and then there was no work, or the work was not ready, or the previous set of workers had not finished their job—and such things frequently happen in a not-well-managed factory—the girls are told they can go home. They stay outside the factory, but as far as the law is concerned they have gone home. They are told that they can come back at the end of the next shift. They may be told that they can come back at eight o'clock and work from eight to 10. That is most deleterious to health. Can we not prevent the spread-over of the two shifts?

**Mr. LLOYD:** I quite appreciate the hon. Lady's point, but it is based upon her not realising the administrative practice of what is laid down in the Bill. The Secretary of State in each authorisation lays down the hours which are to be worked; not merely between six a.m. in the morning and 10 p.m. at night, but the actual hours. That is to say, it would be illegal for the employer, if he is not running his factory very well, to tell his workers to go away and to come back at a later time. That is against the law and would not be allowed.

**Miss WILKINSON:** What check is there? I find that the matter is very loosely understood by employers. Can we have it definitely laid down that no girls employed for any period in one shift may be employed for any period in the second shift of that day? There is nothing in the Bill to prevent that, and we cannot rely on administrative practice when we are dealing with courts of law.

Question put, "That the word 'six' stand part of the Clause."

The Committee divided: Ayes, 34; Noes, 12.

#### Division No. 4.]

Acland-Troyte, Lt.-Col. G. J.  
Astor, Hon. W. W. (Fulham, E.)  
Blair, Sir R.  
Bower, Comdr. R. T.  
Braithwaite, Major A. N.  
Cartland, J. R. H.  
Cayzer, Sir C. W. (City of Chester)  
Chapman, A. (Rutherglen)  
Crowder, J. F. E.  
Despencer-Robertson, Major J. A. F.  
Dunne, P. R. R.  
Eckersley, P. T.

Fremantle, Sir F. E.  
Hannah, I. C.  
Horsbrugh, Florence  
Howitt, Dr. A. B.  
James, Wing-Commander A. W.  
Leckie, J. A.  
Little, Sir E. Graham-  
Lloyd, G. W.  
Maitland, A.  
Makins, Brig.-Gen. E.  
Mayhew, Lt.-Col. J.

#### AYES.

Palmer, G. E. H.  
Pickthorn, K. W. M.  
Pilkington, R.  
Ponsonby, Col. C. E.  
Rathbone, Eleanor (English Univ's.)  
Roberts, W. (Cumberland, N.)  
Samuel, M. R. A. (Putney)  
Seely, Sir H. M.  
Somerville, A. A. (Windsor)  
Walker-Smith, Sir J.  
Ward, Irene (Wallsend)



## NOES.

Adamson, W. M.  
Banfield, J. W.  
Bromfield, W.  
Chater, D.

Davies, R. J. (Westhoughton)  
Hollins, A.  
Jagger, J.  
Kelly, W. T.

McGhee, H. G.  
Riley, B.  
Stewart, W. J. (H'ght'n-le-Sp'ng)  
Wilkinson, Ellen

Motion made, and Question proposed:  
In page 1, line 12, to leave out "ten,"  
and to insert "nine".—[Mr. Adamson.]

Amendment negatived.

Motion made, and Question proposed:  
In line 13, to leave out "six," and to  
insert "seven".—[Mr. Adamson.]

Amendment negatived.

## Division No. 5.]

Acland-Troyte, Lt.-Col. G. J.  
Blair, Sir R.  
Bower, Comdr. R. T.  
Braithwaite, Major A. N.  
Cayzer, Sir C. W. (City of Chester)  
Chapman, A. (Rutherglen)  
Crowder, J. F. E.  
Despencer-Robertson, Major J. A. F.  
Dunne, P. R. R.  
Eckersley, P. T.  
Fremantle, Sir F. E.

Hannah, I. C.  
Horsbrugh, Florence  
Howitt, Dr. A. B.  
James, Wing-Commander A. W.  
Leckie, J. A.  
Little, Sir E. Graham-  
Lloyd, G. W.  
Maitland, A.  
Makins, Brig.-Gen. E.  
Mayhew, Lt.-Col. J.  
Palmer, G. E. H.

Pickthorn, K. W. M.  
Pilkington, R.  
Ponsonby, Col. C. E.  
Rathbone, Eleanor (English Univ's.)  
Roberts, W. (Cumberland, N.)  
Samuel, M. R. A. (Putney)  
Seely, Sir H. M.  
Somerville, A. A. (Windsor)  
Walker-Smith, Sir J.  
Ward, Irene (Wallsend)  
Wells, S. R.

## NOES.

Adamson, W. M.  
Astor, Hon. W. W. (Fulham, E.)  
Banfield, J. W.  
Bromfield, W.  
Cartland, J. R. H.

Chater, D.  
Davies, R. J. (Westhoughton)  
Hollins, A.  
Jagger, J.  
Kelly, W. T.

McGhee, H. G.  
Riley, B.  
Stewart, W. J. (H'ght'n-le-Sp'ng)  
Wilkinson, Ellen

Mr. KELLY: On a point of Order, Mr. Chairman. I understood you were going to take a vote on the four first Amendments. I am not very fond of votes, but I do want to see recorded who are the people who are prepared to vote for youngsters being out at 10 o'clock at night.

The CHAIRMAN: The Committee voted on the principle of the first three Amendments, and I understood that hon. Members desired to vote on the last of the four Amendments. The hon. Member for Rochdale (Mr. Kelly) has an Amendment in page 1, line 15, to leave out "subject as hereinafter provided." The decision regarding that Amendment will obviously dispose also of the Amendment which he has put down to leave out lines 18-23. The Committee might discuss those two Amendments together.

Mr. KELLY: I beg to move, in page 1, line 15, to leave out, "subject as hereinafter provided."

This would make the Clause read, after referring to the hours these people work :

Motion made, and Question proposed:  
In line 14, to leave out "two in the after-  
noon", and to insert "twelve noon".—  
[Mr. Kelly.]

Question put, "That the words pro-  
posed, to be left out stand part of the  
Clause".

The Committee divided: Ayes, 33;  
Noes, 14.

"and between the hours of six in the morning and two in the afternoon on any Saturday, so however that the system of shifts shall be such that the hours for each shift shall not exceed an average of eight hours per day."

I ask the Committee to agree to the deletion of these words, and in view of your ruling, Sir, that this Amendment also covers the Amendment to leave out lines 18 to 23, I ask the Committee to agree to that also. In the Clause there is the statement:

"Provided that, where the work or process for which the system of shifts is authorised is not carried on on more than five days in each week, the system may be such that the hours exceed the said average per day but so that they do not exceed in the aggregate 88 hours in any two consecutive weeks."

There are Amendments to get rid of the 88 hours' provision, which is, of course, a danger, and I hope that such a provision will not enter into any agreement that is made even between employers and employes, because it would give an opportunity for the 88 hours to be made up in conditions which we would

consider unsatisfactory, as would anyone else who had regard for children. Therefore, with a view to making it clear that no more than the seven or eight-hour day shift shall be carried on in future I ask that the Amendment be accepted.

Mr. LLOYD: These words were inserted in the Bill in pursuance of a recommendation of the Departmental Committee, and that recommendation was prompted by a desire to allow a modern movement in regard to employment to be fitted in with the system of shift working. The movement to which I refer is the movement towards the five-day week. It would not be proper here to go into the arguments in favour of the five-day week, but it is sufficient to say that many employers and workpeople, although not all of them, believe it to be a better method. The five-day week could not have been worked under the Bill unless there was a provision of this kind following the recommendation of the Departmental Committee, so that a rather larger number of hours per day could be worked in the five-day week if that was chosen instead of the ordinary working week.

Hon. Members opposite, while not being opposed to the principle of the five-day week, or even to the principle of making it fit in with the shift system, may feel that there is a danger that freak hours may be imposed by employers in order to make up the weekly total, and that they may suddenly make a large number of hours per day and yet manage to keep within the 88 hours per fortnight. Of course, that could never arise in practice, because administratively it would always be in the power of the Home Secretary to lay down precisely what should be the hours, and he would never allow a freak system of hours to be worked. In order to remove any misunderstandings on this point, my right hon. Friend moved an Amendment in line 11, laying down that the Secretary of State should specify the hours for each shift in an authorisation. The object of that Amendment was to make it clear that the Home Secretary has the power to lay down the hours which shall be worked and will not, in fact, permit any freak system to be worked at all. Therefore, the provision, as it stands, is simply to make an adjustment to enable the five-day week to be worked, and we have

moved that Amendment in order to make sure that no abuses will be allowed.

Miss WILKINSON: The Minister gets round this point rather nicely, because, when not sure of his proposal, he describes it as modern, which has a good sound. If the Bill were definitely going to make a five-day week and an eight-hour day, while there would still remain a good many objections regarding the late hours of the late shift and the early hours of the early shift, the Government and the employers would at least be offering the workers a definite *quid pro quo*. That is not the case, however, and the Under-Secretary of State cannot get round the matter by saying that it may happen and will be very modern if it does happen. It is not a question of legislating for good people. Those who are conditioned from birth to keep all the Ten Commandments may be safely left without any law at all. We have to legislate for bad people, and the good wishes of the Under-Secretary of State are not relevant when it comes to a court of law. I have found, when we have taken cases to the court concerning workpeople, compensation, and so on, that the judge always says that it is not the intention but the law that matters. Therefore, while I agree that we must make provision for the employer who wants to have a five-day week and an eight-hour day, we ought to make much more stringent provisions than are being made against the exploitation of these girls.

The Under-Secretary of State said that the Home Secretary would not give permission for freak hours of work, but I do not think it is necessary to remind the Under-Secretary of State that whether freak hours be worked or not, the punishment is a matter which depends, not on the good intentions of the Home Secretary, but on whether the infringements are reported and on the efficiency and number of the inspectors. Now, the inspection staff is wholly inadequate and very much overworked, and it is not possible to know what situation exists. In any case, in bringing prosecutions under an Act, the inspector has to be very careful that he has a clear case. I appeal to the Chairman on this matter, because he knows that, however well-intentioned the inspectorate and the Minister may be, and however



[Miss Wilkinson.]

clear the infringement of the intentions of the Act may be, unless the inspector bringing the case can point to the line and clause and say that there has been an infringement, a prosecution and a judgment are almost impossible to obtain. Therefore, in order to assist the inspectors to deal with this matter, it ought to be very clearly laid down that the eight-hour day in one shift should not be worked except under most exceptional circumstances.

I congratulate the Under-Secretary of State on the very successful way in which he avoided answering my question on the previous Amendment, a question which has perhaps more relevance to this matter than it had on the matter on which I raised it. Is there, in fact, any way in which the Home Secretary will make it impossible for spread-overs between two shifts to take place—or, since he cannot make it impossible, is there any way in which he will at least make sure that the matter is so clear that if there is an infringement, it can easily be brought to the notice of the courts and punished?

**Mr. RILEY:** I would like to emphasise in connection with this Amendment a point which I would like to make with regard to the two-shift system as a whole. The operation of this Clause, particularly the Sub-section at the bottom of the page, secures an advantage for the employer without giving a corresponding advantage to the workpeople. It is provided that the employer may vary the hours on any one day as against another, provided he does not exceed in the aggregate 44 hours per week. That means obviously that he

may work his people, say, 10 hours one day and 6 hours another day, provided he does not exceed an aggregate of 44 hours in the week. Assuming that is the case, an inroad will be made upon the protection given in most trades that if 10 hours are worked in a day, two hours will be paid for as overtime. As the Bill stands, overtime will not be paid for two hours, but that time will be regarded as part of the shift provided under the Bill. I suggest to the Government that if it is legitimate to put into the Bill these provisions for the express advantage of the employer, there should be some corresponding concession given to the operatives in return for the convenience which their inconvenience is providing for the employer. I suggest as a counter-balance a provision that there should be not more than 40 hours worked in the aggregate. At present the whole advantage goes to the employer, without corresponding advantage to the operative.

**Mr. KELLY:** Reference was made by the Under-Secretary of State to the five-day week as if that could come into operation only with the two-shift system. That is coming down on the side of the employers. I hope that the Home Office, which has often done that in the past, is not going to continue that bad practice. We hope for a five-day week without having to resort to a two-shift system.

Question put, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Clause."

The Committee divided: Ayes, 29; Noes, 11.

Division No. 6.]

AYES.

Acland-Troyte, Lt.-Col. G. J.	Hannah, I. C.
Astor, Hon. W. W. (Fulham, E.)	Horsbrugh, Florence
Blair, Sir R.	Howitt, Dr. A. B.
Bower, Comdr. R. T.	James, Wing-Commander A. W.
Braithwaite, Major A. N.	Leckie, J. A.
Chapman, A. (Rutherglen)	Little, Sir E. Graham-
Crowder, J. F. E.	Lloyd, G. W.
Despencer-Robertson, Major J. A. F.	Makins, Brig.-Gen. E.
Eckersley, P. T.	Mayhew, Lt.-Col. J.
Fremantle, Sir F. E.	Palmer, G. E. H.

NOES.

Adamson, W. M.	Hollins, A.	Riley, B.
Banfield, J. W.	Jagger, J.	Stewart, W. J. (H'ght'n-le-Sp'ng)
Bromfield, W.	Kelly, W. T.	Wilkinson, Ellen
Chater, D.	McGhee, H. G.	

**Mr. JAGGER:** I beg to move, in page 1, line 17, to leave out "an average of."

I think we are all fairly clear that the pressure for this Bill comes from employers with the conveyor belt and other expensive automatic machinery who want to work that machinery for a very long period each day, but we cannot lose sight of the fact that once this Bill becomes an Act it will be worked by other people. We have had given as one of the reasons for the shift system that it is necessary in order to deal with Christmas pressure and seasonal rushes. I want to remind the Minister that there are trades where the pressure comes every week, but only for part of the week. That is notably the case in laundries. A laundry proprietor will be perfectly prepared to leave his employes free on a Monday provided he can get on Thursday and Friday a sufficient number of hours to average eight per day for the week. I use that as an instance because that kind of thing is universal in laundries. The proprietors will not mind how few hours are worked on Monday provided that, without having to pay overtime, they can get long hours on Wednesday, Thursday and Friday. It is to prevent that kind of thing that this Amendment has been put on the paper. I think it will be understood that when we are to have an Act of Parliament of this kind we must take into consideration the fact that, although it is the large establishments with automatic machinery which bring the pressure for this Bill, it will be used by many other kinds of employers, and I think they must be prevented from introducing abnormal hours on two or three days in the week.

**Mr. LLOYD:** It is true, as the hon. Gentleman says, that the Amendment would prevent the sort of thing he mentioned, but it will also have the effect of preventing certain variations which the workers often find convenient. For example, workers sometimes prefer to work from 6 a.m. to 1 p.m. and from 1 p.m. to 10 p.m. in alternate weeks to meet their own convenience in regard to travelling arrangements. Sometimes they prefer that the morning shift should be shorter than the afternoon shift, so that six mornings give approximately the same as five afternoons. I do not think that the Committee should put in restrictive

provisions which would have the effect of preventing workers making arrangements which are permissible at present and which they definitely prefer.

**Mr. JAGGER:** The Under-Secretary of State has not dealt with the possible injustice of which I complained, but says the Amendment would lead to some other injustice. I would like to meet the girl who would like to work nine hours in the afternoon. Perhaps he will introduce me to her. She is not among these 145,000 that I know, anyway. I am anxious, not to prevent her working nine hours, but to prevent the employer working his employes abnormally long hours on certain days of the week.

**Miss RATHBONE:** I would like a little more information from the Under-Secretary of State, because I feel rather puzzled about the Amendment. I do not feel that the safeguards are sufficient. What is the objection to putting some limit to the extent to which the hours may exceed the average? An instance has been given of employes wanting to work an hour more on one shift and an hour less on the other shift in alternate weeks. I can quite realise that that might be to the convenience of the workers, and it might not be objectionable in the case of young people, but if the hours of employment may be 10 or 11 a day, as is apparently possible, then in the case of young people that would be very objectionable. I do not see why there should not be some safeguard providing that the amount of excess over the average should not be more than, say, an hour or an hour and a half a day.

**Mr. RILEY:** I support the Amendment, and I would like to point out that even if the Amendment is accepted, the employer will still have a number of advantages under the two-shift system. In particular he will have the advantage of running his machinery 16 hours a day. It seems to me that 16 hours' continuous running with young people is ample, and that no substantial case can be made out for a further extension beyond 16 hours.

**Miss WILKINSON:** Once again we are told that it is what the workers desire, but in this case it is important to remember that we are trying to protect girl labour, which is notoriously the most



[Miss Wilkinson.]  
difficult to organise. If we are dealing with workers in trade unions, they would settle comfortably what should be done, but we are dealing here with an almost unorganisable class of labour that drifts in and out of these quick, mass-production trades. Therefore this Committee ought to protect these workers, especially as they are young people. May I ask the Under-Secretary of State whether, if we submitted a manuscript Amendment, he would be prepared to come to some agreement that the variation should not in any circumstances be more than one hour? I cannot think it right to have girls working 10 hours a day.

The right hon. Gentleman, the Home Secretary, speaking in the House, with that wonderful understanding of the minds of the workers that the Home Office always develops when such a Bill as this is under discussion, said that he was quite sure, from intimate knowledge of the girls in the factories, that a large number would always prefer to be on the evening shift. It might be for the convenience of a firm to have one set of girls working always on a late 10-hour shift. There is nothing in this Bill to prevent it. Therefore, I ask the Minister whether he would accept some such Amendment, as he seems to see the point we are trying to make, which is a very important one.

**Mr. KELLY:** I cannot see how the Minister can do that, because he gives his authorization that these young people may work between certain hours. He lays down the hour at which they may start and the hour at which they must leave off, and that any work must be done within those hours. If he is to permit a firm to go outside those hours, I can foresee great difficulties, and can imagine unscrupulous employers—we have some in this country—taking full advantage of the opportunity to make the hour for leaving off later than if an 8-hour day only were worked.

**Mr. LLOYD:** I am always ready to consider any suggestions made by the hon. Lady, but her colleague opposite sees considerable difficulties in accepting her proposal, and I am bound to say that I share those misgivings and think it would be difficult to incorporate such an Amendment. I would say to her and to

the hon. Member for the English Universities (Miss Rathbone) that I really do not think there is a real danger of wrong conditions arising out of the proposals before the Committee. First, there is the fact that it must be an average of eight hours, and that does not allow very much variation in hours. Secondly, we have the provision, now definitely laid down, that the Secretary of State himself must specify what those hours are to be. As to the point made by the hon. Lady that we must give special protection to these workers because it is difficult to organise them, everything we have been discussing is governed by the fact that the workers themselves must give their consent. Whether they are organised or not, these girls will have the opportunity, by a secret ballot, of deciding whether they want to work the two-shift system.

**Mr. JAGGER:** They will have a secret ballot on the two-shift system, but not on the point of whether they are to work longer than eight hours on one day and fewer hours on another day.

**Miss RATHBONE:** If the Secretary of State is to specify the hours that may be worked, I cannot see why he cannot specify in the Bill the maximum excess over the average which he will allow. It is not convincing to say that an average spread over a fortnight will not allow of any large excess on any particular day, because it will. Three or four extra hours might be worked on certain days, still within the legal average.

**Mr. LLOYD:** I ask the Committee to trust the Secretary of State of the day to lay down reasonable conditions within this general overriding condition of 88 hours for the fortnight.

**Mr. McGHEE:** Is it the practice of the Home Secretary to specify the hours per shift per day, or only per day? Does he say "between 6 and 2" and "between 2 and 10"?

**Miss WILKINSON:** I am sorry to keep the Committee from their lunch, but this is really important. I think the Minister would be right if he were dealing with factories on full time. Obviously, permission for 88 hours in two consecutive weeks would allow only a comparatively slight variation. But take the fur trade in London, of which I happen to know a

fair amount, which has periods of intense rush. We might have the 88 hours worked in a few days. With only the guarantee as to 88 hours in the fortnight, there might be long shifts, and in that particular trade they would probably be long shifts in the latter part of the day, because of the work to be done by the men fur dressers in the early part of the day. There is nothing to prevent these young people working 10, 11, or 12 hours a day.

**Mr. LLOYD:** The hon. Lady should not forget that the Secretary of State actually specifies the hours per shift per day and lays down the actual hours.

**Miss WILKINSON:** The actual number for each shift to work?

**Mr. LLOYD:** Yes.

**Miss WILKINSON:** Would it not be better to put in these words:

"provided the excess in each case should not be more than one hour per day"?

**The CHAIRMAN:** The question I have to put—

**Miss WILKINSON:** Are you putting the Amendment, Major Milner, before we know whether my manuscript Amendment can be put in? Would it not be better for us to adjourn so that my Amendment may be on the Order Paper next time before we vote on the Clause?

**The CHAIRMAN:** I am afraid I must put the Question. I cannot compel the Under-Secretary of State to reply.

**Miss WILKINSON:** On a point of Order. If you put the Question now, will that prevent me from putting down this manuscript Amendment, which my hon. Friend the Member for the English Universities (Miss Rathbone) has agreed to second?

**The CHAIRMAN:** I do not think the hon. Lady was present when the Committee started, and when I said that I

was only prepared to accept manuscript Amendments in exceptional cases. There will be an opportunity of dealing with the matter on the Report stage.

**Mr. KELLY:** As we are about to adjourn, there is the possibility of putting an Amendment dealing with this point on the Paper next time, if agreement can be arrived at. I have taken part in framing many agreements with employers, but never once have we had anything like this—"an average of."

**Miss WILKINSON:** May I move that the Committee do now adjourn?

**The CHAIRMAN:** No; I cannot accept that Motion. The discussion has closed, and I must put the Question.

**Miss WILKINSON:** May I raise a point of Order? I did not raise this point when you were actually putting the Question. The point was raised in debate and is a very relevant point. It has arisen largely because the Minister has shown that he appreciates our arguments. I am sure hon. Members on this side of the Committee would not press for any further discussion, and that there would merely be a formal vote on my proposed Amendment if you would agree to the adjournment of the Committee now, so that my hon. Friend and I could put down the Amendment for the next meeting.

**The CHAIRMAN:** I do not think the hon. lady or her friend the hon. Member for the English Universities (Miss Rathbone) will be prejudiced by the course I am taking. They will have an opportunity of raising the matter on the Report stage. There has been full and fair discussion, and it is my duty to put the Question.

Question put, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Clause."

The Committee divided: Ayes, 24; Noes, 11.

## Division No. 7.]

Acland-Troyte, Lt.-Col. G. J.  
Astor, Hon. W. W. (Fulham, E.)  
Blair, Sir R.  
Bower, Comdr. R. T.  
Braithwaite, Major A. N.  
Crowder, J. F. E.  
Dunne, P. R. R.  
Eckersley, P. T.

Fremantle, Sir F. E.  
Hannah, I. C.  
Horsbrugh, Florence  
Howitt, Dr. A. B.  
James, Wing-Commander A. W.  
Leckie, J. A.  
Little, Sir E. Graham-  
Lloyd, G. W.

Makins, Brig.-Gen. E.  
Mayhew, Lt.-Col. J.  
Pickthorn, K. W. M.  
Ponsonby, Col. C. E.  
Samuel, M. R. A. (Putney)  
Somerville, A. A. (Windsor)  
Ward, Irene (Wallsend)  
Wells, S. R.



NOES.

Adamson, W. M.  
Banfield, J. W.  
Bromfield, W.  
Hollins, A.

Jagger, J.  
Kelly, W. T.  
McGhee, H. G.  
Rathbone, Eleanor (English Univ's.)

Riley, B.  
Stewart, W. J. (H'ght'n-le-Sp'ng)  
Wilkinson, Ellen

Committee adjourned at Thirteen Minutes after One o'Clock until Thursday, 20th February, at Eleven o'Clock.

THE FOLLOWING MEMBERS ATTENDED THE COMMITTEE:

Milner, Major (Chairman)  
Acland-Troyte, Lieut.-Colonel  
Adamson, Mr.  
Astor, Mr.  
Banfield, Mr.  
Blair, Sir Reginald  
Bower, Commander  
Braithwaite, Major  
Bromfield, Mr.  
Cartland, Mr.  
Cayzer, Sir Charles  
Chapman, Mr.  
Chater, Mr.  
Crowder, Mr.  
Davies, Mr. Rhys.  
Despencer-Robertson, Major  
Dunne, Mr. Philip  
Eckersley, Mr.  
Fremantle, Sir Francis  
Hannah, Mr.  
Hollins, Mr.  
Horsbrugh, Miss  
Howitt, Dr.  
Jagger, Mr.  
James, Wing-Commander

Kelley, Mr.  
Leckie, Mr.  
Little, Sir Ernest Graham-  
Lloyd, Mr.  
McGhee, Mr.  
Maitland, Mr.  
Makins, Brigadier-General  
Mayhew, Lieut.-Colonel  
Palmer, Mr.  
Pickthorn, Mr.  
Pilkington, Mr.  
Ponsonby, Colonel  
Rathbone, Miss  
Riley, Mr.  
Roberts, Mr. Wilfrid  
Samuel, Mr. Marcus  
Seely, Sir Hugh  
Somerville, Mr. Annesley  
Stewart, Mr. William Joseph  
Turton, Mr.  
Walker-Smith, Sir Jonah  
Ward, Miss  
Wells, Mr.  
Wilkinson, Miss  
Woods, Mr.

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