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Summary

The evidence given before the Sadler Committee in 1831-1832 gives us a detailed look into the life of the Industrial worker in Nineteenth Century England. To begin with, the physical labor of the workers was intense and grueling, with Mr. Cobbett's Discovery stating that "Necessity compels a man that has children to let them work" (Parliamentary Papers, 1831-1832, XV, 44). Evidence from Mr. Matthew Crabtree showed that children began working in factories from the age of 8 and worked from 6 in the morning to 8 at night when business was normal, but from 5 in the morning to 9 in the evening when business was brisk (Parliamentary Papers, 1831-1832, XV, 95-97). Elizabeth Bentley spoke of being a "little doffer" at the age of 6 and working from 5 in the morning till 9 at night, with an hour for meals (Parliamentary Papers, 1831-1832, XV, 195). Similarly, Peter Smart spoke of the mill he worked at going till past 12 o'clock on Saturdays and working on the Sabbath morning (Parliamentary Papers, 1831-1832, XV, 197).

The rules and expectations of the workers were also harsh. Mr. Matthew Crabtree spoke of being beaten for being late, and Elizabeth Bentley spoke of the "overlooker" taking the breakfast she could not eat and giving it to his pigs (Parliamentary Papers, 1831-1832, XV, 95-97, 195). Peter Smart spoke of being bound to a man for six years, with his mother receiving

15s., and of children being kept locked up night and day and being chased and brought back if they tried to run away (Parliamentary Papers, 1831-1832, XV, 197). In Mr. John Hall's evidence, the spoke of “chastisement towards the latter part of the day going on perpetually” and children being “bent outwards as a family complaint” (Parliamentary Papers, 1831-1832, XV, 115).

The evidence given before the Sadler Committee in 1831-1832 shows us the harsh conditions and rules of the life of the Industrial worker in Nineteenth Century England. The physical labor of the workers was intense and grueling, with children starting to work in factories from the age of 8. The rules and expectations were also harsh, with workers being beaten for being late, and children being kept locked up night and day and being chased and brought back if they tried to run away.