

Sir R. Peel.

now is; as far as my knowledge reaches with respect to other Trades, I believe if the restrictions were removed similar good effects would arise from it.

Are you able to state to the Committee, from your own knowledge or observations, what number of years will be necessary to make a good and competent Cloth-worker and shearmen in all its branches, supposing the boy to be apprenticed at the age of fourteen years?—I cannot answer that question.

Adjourned.

Committee on the Woollen Trade.

Jovis, 5^o die Junii 1806.

J. Graham, Esq.

JAMES GRAHAM, Esquire, (a Member of the Committee).

Examined by the Committee.

ARE you acquainted with the part of the West Riding of Yorkshire where the woollen manufacture is carried on?—Yes.

Will you have the goodness to state the result of your observations and experience, so far as they may throw a light upon the subjects under consideration in this Committee?—I became connected with the county of York so long ago as the year 1782, and possessed of a small property in the neighbourhood of Leeds, let out at that time in agricultural farms; I continued it from that time without making any enquiry into the general situation or nature of the trade of that country, and let them upon the same terms for fourteen years, the leases expired in 1795; previous to that, in 1794 and 1795, being in the habit of visiting manufacturers and merchants, particularly an uncle of Mrs. Graham's, Mr. Edmund Lodge, they suggested to me that it would be a most beneficial thing to the country to divide those agricultural farms into small allotments for clothiers, not only to myself as proprietor but to the country at large, that they thought it would encrease the domestic system, and encourage it very much; Mr. Lodge being the possessor of an estate called Eccleshill, in the neighbourhood, was proceeding on the same plan. I visited from that time almost every clothmaker's house in the neighbourhood, to discover the best plan of building, and soon after I began and built twelve or fourteen houses in the neighbourhood, every one of which was immediately taken at almost any price I chose to fix, with five, six, seven, eight, or ten acres of land, according to the ability of the man; in Armley, Bramley, Horsforth, and the neighbouring places, from 1795 or 1796 to the present time, I will undertake to say, having visited twice a year, during that time, every part of that country, not only the population is encreased but the domestic manufacturers have encreased in number as well as in wealth, if one may judge from appearances; they are now, instead of living shut up in narrow streets, in towns extending themselves into the middle of a field; you may see two or three manufacturers houses in almost every field in Armley; they are doubled within these ten years in Bramley, nearly the same in Horsforth; they have encreased very greatly, not perhaps in the same proportion, in Kirkstall and Healding, there was not a single manufacturer when I first went, now there are at least fifteen or twenty master manufacturers; this continued five or six years; I made enquiry of every merchant, I found that they were raising a cry against factories; I had several deputations from the Cloth Halls; I made enquiry into their supposed apprehensions that the Factories would destroy the domestic system, and, after every enquiry and mature deliberation and consideration, I was satisfied that, so far from injuring them, it must be of very great benefit, and on that ground alone I was applied to by some Merchants at Leeds, to build a manufactory to let out; in order to promote the domestic system; I built a manufactory, and let it to a great manufacturer, and I am sure since it has been built it does not benefit the letting the land, but it incites the domestic manufacturer to a competition; this I found on the enquiries I made, and the examinations of various parts. I have seen myself that the improvements in the factory are very great indeed, there are a variety of cloths made which could not be attempted by domestic Clothiers, dyeing, for instance, they could not carry to the extent in the domestic system they do in the factory; Mr. Gott has introduced into Yorkshire a most advantageous scheme of dyeing by steam instead of water, which has cost him many thousand pounds

pounds in the experiments he has made ; great improvements have been made likewise in dyeing blues, scarlets, and blacks ; for some time Mr. Gott expended very large sums of money in his experiments, which no man but a great capitalist could have done ; they will produce a great saving of expence ; but there are also other advantages from the Factories, they are continually trying experiments and making improvements, the great improvements in machinery arise from the great capitalists ; on that ground I certainly did encourage a factory about five years ago ; and I have found that the domestic manufactory and the factory system are encreasing each other, and are carried on to much greater advantage where there are factories than where there are solely domestic manufacturers. If the factory system were to exclude from the country the domestic system it would be dreadful indeed, for it is very pleasing in Yorkshire to see the domestic Clothiers living in a field, with their homestead, rather than shut up in a street. The encrease of population has been very great, I dare say the Merchants have encreased double ; I can remember the time when there were not seven carriages kept in Leeds, and now I dare say there are a hundred ; and I think the domestic Clothiers have nearly doubled in the district to which I speak, between Bradford and Leeds, and up to Wakefield ; I can state the names almost of the persons possessed of property, and freeholders in Armley, who are doubled within these ten years ; I think they are nearly doubled in Bramley, another township, and I dare say they are trebled in some parts, therefore I think that the apprehensions, as I have often said to the Trustees of the Cloth Halls, of themselves and others of the domestic manufactures, are not well founded ; if they were to lose any labour by the introduction of machinery, I should be happy to satisfy them, by giving up to them the property I have there.

Do the Committee understand you right, that the interest you have in the success of the factory system, in consequence of your having built one factory, is as nothing compared with the interest you have in the preservation and prosperity of the domestic system ?—Certainly.

Examined by Mr. Harrison.

Has the encrease in Armley been taken, with reference to the statement delivered in by Mr. Ellis, subsequent to its being doubted whether he had given a correct statement ?—Yes ; and I can give in the name of every person who has been a domestic Clothier.

It appeared by that, that there had been a considerable decrease ?—Yes, but it is not correct by any means ; I have in my hand a statement of the names of the persons seven years ago, and now I have received this information, which has been collected by some of the most respectable men in Armley, and from my own knowledge of the place, I believe it to be correct ; in 1786 eighty master Clothiers, in 1791 ninety-five, in 1796 one hundred and ten, in 1801 one hundred and thirty ; at this present time there are one hundred and sixty master Clothiers in Armley, the names of whom, if it is necessary, I will deliver in.

Does the number, stated as the existing number at present, consist of persons deriving their support as master Clothiers only, or are they not employed also by the Factories ?—Some of them are occasionally employed by the Factories, but they are domestic Clothiers, having separate and distinct houses and premises of their own.

I am anxious to know whether in that number is included all those who work at home, whether to sell on their own account or receiving employment from Factories ?—I understand it includes the persons working at home, none of them working, except occasionally, at Factories, they are all working at home as domestic Clothiers.

Can you distinguish the number of those persons who work simply on their own account ?—No, I cannot do that, because I believe that almost every master manufacturer, if he can get a better job from a factory, will take it ; there are a hundred and fifty-nine or a hundred and sixty master domestic Clothiers in Armley ; the proprietors of estates have encreased nearly double within these ten years, which I consider as a proof of the prosperity of the neighbourhood ; in Bramley there has been nearly the same increase if not a greater ; and I am sure in Kirkstall I can state positively there was not a single manufacturer but one, who could scarcely be called so, and now there are nearly twenty ; I have divided farms in Armley, and the people who were farmers have now become cloth makers.

Are you able to state how many of those hundred and sixty persons make cloth and send to the Cloth Halls ?—No ; I cannot state that ; I must state another circumstance which

J. Graham, Esq. which I know to be a fact from living a great deal in that neighbourhood, that a great many of those domestic Clothiers and some of the most respectable, and some of the richest, never send any cloth to the Cloth Hall, particularly the superfine cloth; it is a new introduction, and is bought by the Factories, who have been the cause of its introduction into Yorkshire, and they give out their directions to the Master Clothiers to make it according to those directions, and that may be the reason why the same quantity of cloth is not exposed in the Cloth Hall as formerly, the system is altered materially in that respect.

When you stated that your interest, as a proprietor of a factory, bore no proportion to your interest in the domestic system, will you allow me to ask, whether that answer had reference to your property, or only your general interest in common with the other members of Parliament in the welfare of the system?—Certainly, with respect to property; I conceive if the factory system was to prevail to the extent which is apprehended, that is, to annihilate the domestic manufacturers, my property in that neighbourhood would be worth very little; the factory might, but I believe that would even decrease considerably.

Examined by Mr. Jackson.

Can you state what proportion the factory system bears to the domestic system in the North of England, with which you are acquainted?—From my enquiry, and certainly I have made very particular enquiry, not only wishing for the public good, but also my own private interest, to encourage the domestic manufactory as well as the factory system, I have made the best enquiry I can; I know in the neighbourhood of Leeds there are but four or five factories now in existence, they make but a very small proportion to the domestic manufacturers.

If the factory system should prevail over the domestic system in the West, do you apprehend that the consequences, according to the best of your opinion, would be less severe and dreadful to the West than you suppose in that case they would be to the North?—As far as I have been able to understand the nature of the system in the West, it is all, in some measure, the factory system, there is no such thing as what we in Yorkshire call the domestic system; what I mean by the domestic system is the little clothiers living in villages, or in detached places, with all their comforts, carrying on business with their own capital; every one must have some capital, more or less, to carry on his trade, and they are in some degree little merchants as well as manufacturers in Yorkshire; I understand in the West of England it is quite the reverse of that, the manufacturer there is the same as our common workman in a factory in Yorkshire, except being in a detached house; in the West the wool is delivered out to them to weave, in Yorkshire the wool is the men's own property till it is fold in the cloth, he buys the raw wool, and sells it in the Hall worked into cloth; in the West I understand they do not work on their own property; in Yorkshire, where there is one works on hired premises there are ten who work on their own property.

Supposing that in the counties of Wilts and Somerset, and other parts of the West, a great proportion of the trade should be conducted by small masters, then, in your apprehension, would the prevalence of the factory system have a similar effect to what you suppose it would have in the North?—I really cannot say, I am afraid it is already so in the West of England, as far as I understand the mode of carrying on the trade, it is now so; they have not the same advantages and comforts which the people have in Yorkshire, and I should dread the same in Yorkshire; within the last ten or twelve years I believe the number of mills, which I should call domestic mills, manufacturers mills, in the district I am acquainted with, have been increased more than three times, perhaps more than four times; those which I speak of are the mills to which the domestic Clothiers resort; domestic Clothiers are rising up very fast, and mills seem to be erected in every valley; whenever I go into the country I find a new mill, or a small steam engine erected wherever there is any water; on the smallest brook they erect a wheel to carry two or three engines; they have erected machines up to a thirty horse engine, I do not mean gig mills or shearing frames, but principally for scribbling and carding; there are not gig mills in our neighbourhood.

Are you able to say, whether or not the domestic system of manufacture affords a means by which any man of sobriety and industry, who wishes to engage in it, may obtain credit for such a quantity of wool as to enable him to become a manufacturer, and to maintain his family in comfort and independence?—Most certainly; I have known many

many instances where persons were not worth one shilling, but from the representation of their neighbours, that they were honest and industrious, they have got credit for any quantity of wool they could work; and I could state an instance, among many others, of three brothers of the name of Gudson, who lived in a hovel, and had only two looms between them, borrowed or hired, and they could not get a larger building; I was informed respecting them that they were very honest and sober, and could get credit for wool, but could not erect a building, or hire one larger; on this representation being made to me, I built each of them a separate house, each immediately took separate journeymen, and all their children were set to work; they have flourished from that time, and are in as comfortable a situation as any men would wish to be. I have known twenty other instances, and I am persuaded a sober industrious man may get credit to any amount; indeed, I believe credit is too easily given; I am sure that the comforts of the cloth manufacturers, as well as the common cottagers, are increased double since I had the honour of knowing that country; there is not a single cottager of forty or fifty shillings a year, who has not his oven in the side of his chimney, so that if he gets home to dinner an hour earlier, or an hour later than usual, it is always warm and comfortable for him; and I must say that, within these ten years, I think the general good behaviour of the people has become much better; it is a great deal better than that of people in the towns, where they live together; in towns I think they have increased in idleness and wretchedness.

J. Grabam, Esq.

Have not the small Clothiers in general a little land attached to their houses?—They all have, or at least wish to have, in the general they have; the quantity depends on the size of their family; if it is a very small family they wish to have land enough to keep a cow; if they have a large family they wish to keep two or three cows; so that I have allotted the quantity of land, and so has every person who wishes to encourage the domestic manufactory, according to the family, from three acres up to fifteen; it is all pasture land, they sometimes wish for a little ploughed land; but whenever a manufacturer engages in arable land, he is sure to waste what he is getting in making cloth.

WALTER SPENCER STANHOPE, Esquire, (a Member of the Committee).

Examined by the Committee.

Are you acquainted with the part of the West Riding of Yorkshire where the woollen manufacture is carried on?—I am.

W. S. Stanhope, Esq.

Will you have the goodness to state the result of your observations and experience, so far as they may throw a light upon the subjects under consideration in this Committee?—My paternal estate is situate at Horsforth near Leeds, all of which has been in my possession for upwards of thirty years; there are no factories, to my knowledge, in that village, but there are four mills, generally called scribbling mills, that are principally, if not entirely, employed for the use of the domestic Clothiers, and that have all been erected within the last twenty years, or less; the inhabitants of that village are increased from fourteen hundred and odd, in the year 1782 or 1783, to twenty-two hundred and upwards when the population of the kingdom was taken in 1795 or 1796, and I have every reason to believe they have increased in a more considerable ratio since that time. The principal employment of the inhabitants, exclusive of agriculture, consists in the trade of domestic Clothiers, and if the factory system was to root out that of the domestic Clothiers, it is my firm persuasion and belief that my estate would not be worth having; inasmuch as it would take the whole rent to maintain the poor that would then fall upon the parish. I am myself landlord to upwards of sixty clothmakers tenements; their opinions respecting the points pressed before this Committee by the petitioners, were about a year and a half ago very much divided; I had a good many of them assembled, not only of my own tenants, but other clothmakers in the place at that time, for the purpose of informing myself both of their wishes and of their reasons, and the arguments by which their wishes were fought to be carried into effect; I found that their main object was to stop, if possible, the Factories; and still more, to prevent the increase of them; I found that their object in pressing for the strict execution of the apprentice laws, and for the limitation of looms, was only a means towards an end, which end was the preventing

W. S. Stanhope, Esq.

preventing an encrease of the factory system; with respect to the former, I found that in that meeting there was a great number, as well as I recollect a majority, who had never been apprenticed themselves; and if it had not been for the jealousy of the factory system, I believe the law of Elizabeth would have continued as obsolete, with respect to apprenticeships, as, from every knowledge I have been able to obtain, it has been for a great many years past; I found that a great number who attended that meeting thought there would be no advantage in the enforcing the apprentice law. Interested as I have stated myself to be in the maintenance of the domestic system, I personally feel no apprehensions that the factory system will very rapidly encrease or have the effect of destroying the domestic system; if my opinion were otherwise, I might perhaps be of opinion that the measures recommended by the Petitioners might deserve the serious consideration of Parliament; but, being thoroughly persuaded of the benefit arising from the competition arising between the two systems, and the very great preponderance of the domestic Clothiers, not only in point of number of manufacturers, but in the amount of the cloths so manufactured by them, that though I am as much interested in it as almost any individual can be, I have not the smallest apprehension of any such effect taking place, my own persuasion is, that the factory system is not now upon the encrease, and I have very little doubt that the ingenuity and the industry of the domestic Clothiers will prevent their being oppressed by any such encrease, if such encrease were at all probable, which in my opinion it is not.

Adjourned.

Committee on the Woollen Trade.

Veneris, 6^o die Junii 1806.

THE following Paper was delivered in and read :

“AT a general meeting of the Inhabitants of the parishes of Almondbury, Kirkburton, and other places in the neighbourhood of Huddersfield, in the West Riding of the county of York, who are any way interested in the Woollen Manufacture, held at Mr. Greaves's, the George Inn, in Honley, in the parish of Almondbury, on Wednesday the 28th day of May, 1806, at three o'clock in the afternoon, to take into consideration the necessity and propriety of sending a delegate or delegates from these parishes to give evidence before the Select Committee of the House of Commons, respecting the nature of the Trade, and the objects this meeting have in view, relative to the Woollen Manufacture in these parishes, pursuant to public notice posted up, in printed hand-bills, throughout the said parishes; Mr. JOSEPH FISHER in the Chair:—Resolved unanimously, That it is the opinion of this meeting, that the domestic system of manufacturing woollen cloth is best adapted to the situation and circumstances of these parishes, and to the advantage and convenience of the inhabitants in general.—Resolved unanimously, That it is the opinion of this meeting, that, in order to preserve and secure the domestic system of manufacturing woollen cloth, the number of looms, being the property of any individual person or company, to be employed in his or their own buildings, ought to be limited, and not exceed five.—Resolved unanimously, That it is the opinion of this meeting that, for the above-mentioned reason (namely, the preservation of the domestic system), the number of spinning jennies, or other machines used for the purposes of spinning, belonging to any one person or company, to be employed in his or their own building or buildings, ought to be limited, and the number of spindles not to exceed one hundred and sixty.—Resolved unanimously, That the domestic system is highly favourable to the cultivation of paternal, filial, and fraternal affections, the springs of family happiness, and to the cultivation of good, moral, and civil habits, the sources of public tranquillity; that the factory system tends to the prevention of these affections and habits, and leads youth sooner into the strongest temptations, by which they are in danger of being corrupted, even to their ruin.—Resolved unanimously, That, as the Clothiers are a numerous body of men, and their

trade and employment are their chief, frequently their only birth-right and source of support, therefore, they ought to be protected and secured to them, as the most sacred property.—Resolved unanimously, That it is the opinion of this meeting, that, though it hath, for many years, been the general practice for parents to instruct their own children in the art or mystery of manufacturing woollen cloth, without taking or binding them apprentices, yet, as, it hath been common for men of different occupations to bind their children apprentices, to learn the Woollen Cloth Trade, a seven years servitude is absolutely necessary, in order to furnish good and skilful workmen, and to entitle them to follow the Woollen Cloth Trade.—Resolved unanimously, That as certain individuals, (actuated more by private interest than public good,) made application to Parliament for the repeal of all restrictive laws, and are now opposing the regulations which the domestic manufacturer wishes to obtain, that they may have liberty to erect Factories at will, we ought immediately to send one or more delegates to assist in giving such evidence before the Select Committee aforesaid, as may tend to counteract the design of such individuals.—Resolved unanimously, That a committee of thirty-one Master Manufacturers be immediately appointed for carrying these resolutions into effect.—Resolved unanimously, That the thanks of this meeting be given to WILLIAM WILBERFORCE, Esq. for his public approval of the domestic system; and that a copy of the above resolutions be immediately printed and sent to him—Resolved unanimously, That the thanks of this meeting be given to Mr. Joseph Fisher, for his very able conduct in the chair.—JOSEPH FISHER, Chairman, JOSHUA MOORHOUSE, Secretary.—Printed by Thomas Smart, Bookseller, Kirkgate, Huddersfield.”

Mr. *Harrison* heard to sum up the case of the Woollen Cloth Manufacturers of York.

Adjourned.

Committee on the Woollen Trade.

Lunæ, 9^o die Junii 1806.

Mr. JACKSON summed up the case of the Cloth-workers of York, Lancashire, Wilts, Somerset, and Gloucester.

Adjourned.

Martis, 10^o die Junii 1806.

Mr. WIGLEY summed up the case of the Woollen Weavers of Gloucester.

Adjourned.