

## Extracts from a testimony given before the Sadler Committee, 1832

"Elizabeth Bentley, called in; and examined.

What age are you?

**Twenty-three.**

What time did you begin to work at a factory?

**When I was six years old.**

What were your hours of labour in that mill?

**From 5 in the morning till 9 at night, when they were thronged (busy).**

For how long a time together have you worked that excessive length of time?

**For about half a year.**

What were your usual hours of labour when you were not so thronged?

**From 6 in the morning till 7 at night.**

What time was allowed for your meals?

**Forty minutes at noon.**

Had you anytime to get your breakfast or drinking?

**No, we got it as we could.**

Explain what it is you had to do?

**When the frames are full, they have to stop the frames and take the flyers off, and take the full bobbins of, and carry them to the roller; and then put empty ones on and set the frame going again.**

Does that keep you constantly on your feet?

**Yes, there are so many frames, and they run so quick.**

Suppose you flagged a little, or were too late, what would they do?

**Strap us.**

Are they in the habit of strapping those who are last in doffing?

**Yes.**

Constantly?

**Yes.**

Girls as well as boys?

**Yes (...)**

Were the children beat up to their labour there?

**Yes**

With what?

**A strap; I have seen the overlooker go to the top end of the room, where the little girls hug the can to the backmindes; he has taken a strap, and a whistle in his mouth, and sometimes he has got a chain and chained them, and strapped them all down the room.(...)**

Had the children committed any fault?

**They were too slow.**

Were the children excessively fatigued at that time?

**Yes, it was in the afternoon.**

If the parents were to complain of this excessive ill-usage, the probable consequence would be the loss of the situation of the child?

**Yes (...)**

Did [your work] affect your health?

**Yes; it was so dusty, the dust got upon my lungs, and the work was so hard; I was middling strong when I went there, but the work was so bad; I got so bad in health, that when I pulled the baskets down, I pulled my bones out of their places.**



**Read Source A and answer the questions.**

**a** Who was Elizabeth Bentley?

- ⊙ She was a girl who worked in a factory since she was six years old.
- ⊙ She was a journalist who interviewed workers from the factories.
- ⊙ She was a member of the Parliament who tried to improve working conditions in the factory.

**b** How long was Elizabeth Bentley's working day?

- ⊙ 16 hours during busy periods and 13 hours during the rest of the year.

- ⊙ 8 hours during busy periods and 6 hours during the rest of the year.
- ⊙ 12 hours a day.

**c** What happened if they did not do their work well?

- ⊙ They did not receive their wages.
- ⊙ They had to stay in the factory until the work was done.
- ⊙ They were beaten.

**d** What were the working conditions for the children in the factory like?

**e** How was Elizabeth Bentley's health affected by her work? Write a paragraph explaining your answer.