

# **Children's Employment Commission.**

**REPORTS by FREDERICK ROPER,  
Esq., on the Employment of Children  
and Young Persons, in Mines and  
Collieries, in the South of Ireland; and  
on the State, Condition, and Treatment  
of such Children and Young Persons.**



**Edited by Ian Winstanley**

**The Evidence**

**Mines and Collieries, in the South of Ireland**

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# COMMISSION

(UNDER THE GREAT SEAL)

## FOR INQUIRING INTO THE EMPLOYMENT AND CONDITION OF CHILDREN IN MINES AND MANUFACTORIES.

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**VICTORIA**, by the Grace of God, of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland Queen, Defender of the Faith: To Our trusty and well beloved Thomas Tooke, Esquire, Thomas Southwood Smith, Esquire, Doctor in Medicine, together with Leonard Horner and Robert John Saunders, Esquires, two of Our Inspectors of Factories, Greeting:- WHEREAS, an humble Address was presented unto to Us by Knights, Citizens and Burgesses and Commissioners of Shires and Burghs in Parliament assembled, humbly beseeching Us that We should be graciously pleased to direct an Inquiry to be made into the Employment of the Children of the Poorer Classes in Mines and Collieries and the various branches of Trade and Manufactures in which numbers of Children work together, not being included in the provisions of the Acts for regulating Employment of Children and Young Persons in Mills and Factories and to collect information as to the time allowed each day for meals and as to the actual state, condition and treatment of such Children and as to the effects of such Employment, both with regard to their morals and their bodily health; NOW KNOW YE, THAT WE, reposing great trust and confidence in your ability and discretion, have nominated, constituted and appointed and do by these presentiments nominate, constitute and appoint you the said, Thomas Tooke, Thomas Southwood Smith, together with, Leonard Horner and Robert John Saunders, to be Our Commissioners for the purposes aforesaid and We do hereby enjoin you to obey all directions touching the premises which shall from time to time be given you, and any two or more of you, by one of our principle Secretaries of State and for the better discovery of the truth in the premises, we do, by these presentiments, give and grant to you, or any two or more of you, full power and authority to call before you such persons as you will judge necessary, by whom you may be the better informed of the truth in the premises, and to inquire of the premises and every part thereof, by all other lawful way and means whatsoever and We do hereby also give and grant unto you, or any two or more of you, full power and authority when the same shall appear to be requisite, to administer an oath or oaths to any person or persons whatsoever, to be examined before you, or two or more of you, touching or concerning the premises and Our further will and pleasure is, that you Our said Commissioners, or any three of you, do, with as little delay as may be consistent with a due discharge of the duties hereby imposed upon you, Certify to Us, under your hands and seals, or under the hands and seals of any three of you, your several proceedings in the premises; And We further will and command, and by these presents ordained, that this Our Commission shall continue in full force and virtue, and that you, Our said Commissioners, or any two or more of you, shall and may from time to time proceed in the execution thereof, and of every matter and thing therein contained, although the same be not continued, from time to time by adjournment: AND WE HEREBY COMMAND all and singular Our Justices of the Peace, Sheriffs, Mayors, Bailiffs, Constables, Officers, Ministers, and all other of Our loving Subjects whatsoever, as will within Liberties as without, that they may be assistant to you and each of you in the execution of these presentiments. And for your assistance in the due execution of this Commission, We have made choice of Our trusty and well beloved Joseph Fletcher, Esquire, to be the Secretary of this Our Commission, whose services we require you to use from time to time, as occasion may require. In witness thereof, We have caused these Letters to be made Patent. Witness Ourselves at Westminster, the Twentieth day of October, in the Fourth Year of Our Reign.

By Writ of Privy Seal,

EDMUNDS.

**LETTER OF INSTRUCTIONS EXTENDING THE TERMS OF THE COMMISSION TO  
“YOUNG PERSONS”**

*Whitehall, February 11th, 1841.*

GENTLEMEN,

THE QUEEN having been pleased to comply with the prayer of an humble Address presented to Her Majesty, in pursuance of a Resolution of the House of Commons, dated 4th. of February, 1841, ‘That Her Majesty will be graciously pleased to direct that the Commission appointees in answer to an Address of this House, on August 4, 1840, for the investigation of certain branches of Infant Labour, do include within its inquiry the Labour also of Young Persons designated as such by the provisions of the Factory Act’ I am delighted by the Marquis of Normanby to desire that you will include within your inquiry the Labour of Young Persons designated as such by the provisions of the Factory Act accordingly.

I am, Gentlemen,  
Your Obedient Servant,  
(Signed) F. MAULE.

*The Commissioners for inquiring into the Condition  
of Children employed in Mines, &c.*

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TO HER MAJESTY'S COMMISSIONERS.

## 1. - COUNTY OF WICKLOW MINES.

GENTLEMEN.

22, Richmond Hill, Rathmines Road, Dublin.  
21st April, 1841.

I HAVE now to report to you the result of my investigations of the various Mines in the County of Wicklow, and at the same time to express my extreme regret that there should be so little to report upon, coming within the objects of the Inquiry, although so extensive and interesting as are these mines.

I enclose the statement of Mr. Hodgson, the lessee of the Ballygahan Mine, which is all the evidence I have taken, and which very generally agrees with the observations made to me by the other agents

I have, however, used every endeavour to obtain the information required in the queries, in order to show the manner in which the mines are worked and conducted.

I shall commence with the copper and sulphur mines, which are as follows:-

The Ballymurtagh, belonging to the Wicklow Copper Mine Company; the Ballygahan, belonging to Mr. Henry Hodgson; the Cronebane and Tygroney, belonging to the firm of Messrs. John Williams, jun., and Brothers, of Truro, Cornwall; and the Connoree, belonging to the Connoree Mining Association.

There are two or three other copper and sulphur mines, which I am informed will be presently worked.

The mines I have named are all situated in the vale of Avoca and within a space of two miles.

At none of them are either females or children employed, and but very few young men under 18 years of age.

There is now comparatively but very little copper ore obtained from these mines, in consequence of nearly all their men being employed getting the sulphur ore, which lies much nearer the surface, and is consequently more readily obtained, and for which there is also a very great demand.

The cessation of the sulphur trade with Naples, has been of incalculable advantage to these mines, and indeed to the county generally, for their sulphur ore which was heretofore perfectly useless, by undergoing one chemical process, is now sold for the same purposes as that formerly imported from Naples.

There are from 500 to 1000 cars daily employed carting this ore to the ports of Arklow and Wicklow and a vast number of coasting vessels and fishing boats employed conveying it from thence

to Dublin for shipment. For the ports of Wicklow and Arklow are so bad, that large vessels cannot enter, and the few that go to the roadstead are obliged to have their cargo taken to them in lighters, an expensive and tedious operation.

The return freight of these vessels being generally coals, enables the inhabitants to get them cheap.

I entered and inspected some of these mines and saw neither children or young persons employed underground, in deed from what I saw they would be of no use, the labour being much too severe. It consists of boring, blasting and carting out the material in iron waggons. The boring is hard work, a heavy iron hammer in one hand, and a heavy iron bar in the other and although there is generally a railroad for the waggons, yet it is hard work, pushing them along.

There is moreover an abundance of labour to be had in the neighbourhood so much so, that an absurd rumour having got abroad, that I had come over from France to hire men to work in the mines and at the fortifications there and that I had a ship in Dublin all ready for them, I had at least a hundred applications from strong able men, miners and others, who expressed themselves ready to go.

I did not experience in the mines any bad air at all, on the contrary rather too much fresh air and I have good reason to believe that the whole of them are extremely well ventilated.

The sulphur ore being found so much nearer the surface than the copper, several mines have, in addition to the shafts, opened levels and partially inclined planes from the foot of the mountains into the mine, thus giving, I may say, almost a too free current of air: the ore is conveyed up these levels to the surface.

At the Ballymurtagh Mine I saw the men at work on a lode of sulphur ore, not three fathom from the surface and this at the top of a hill and I was informed that this lode was looking very promising. There were two other shafts being sunk on this same lode, lower down the hill.

The Connoree Mine, having lately changed some of its shareholders and Mr. Crockford, of London, having become one of its largest proprietors, has commenced working with renewed vigour and spirit.

I here observed a very ingenious contrivance, although I believe not a very profitable one, for using the water pumped from the mine. It is received into a series of wooden troughs, into which are put copper pyrites and bits of old iron and after it has run through these troughs it is received into a reservoir.

I am not sufficiently acquainted with chemistry to be able to explain this process, or its results, neither was it explained to me but I am informed that the action of the water on the contents of these troughs, by chemical affinity, produces precipitate of copper.

Formerly a good number of children were employed at these mines dressing copper ore but since the sulphur trade commenced, this has been entirely done away with.

At these mines there are about 2000 people employed, miners, and their labourers and I find that their average wages are about 12s. a-week and am happy to state that, very generally speaking, they bear the character of being very orderly, well-conducted, and well-behaved people.

I was much gratified at the cleanly and good appearance of many of them and their families on their return from chapel on Sunday. Many of their children were well dressed also. Almost all the younger men are well dressed on the Sunday.

The temperance society has here also created a most wonderful change for the better. All the miners, with but very few exceptions, belong to it and their conduct in every way has greatly improved thereby.

Some idea may be formed of the change thus created from the circumstance that now on the pay-days of the miners, which are once a fortnight, not even one gallon of whisky is sold by the only public-house there; whereas, formerly, generally 300 gallons used to be sold on the pay-day.

There is a market at Avoca on the pay days, I was present at one, which was attended by most of the miners and their families and many families from the neighbourhood and although during the day I should think there must have been upwards of 1000 people, yet not one instance of intoxication did I see. This market has all kinds of supplies, principally of food, likely to be wanted by the miners, for whose convenience entirely I believe it was instituted, not being an acknowledged market.

I regret to say that, notwithstanding they have left off whisky-drinking, they do not appear to have acquired any very provident habits as to the disposal of their money, if I may judge from the appearance of their cabins, for generally speaking more wretched, dirty and filthy habitations I never beheld. I believe there are some of the miners who have money in the Savings Bank.

There are Sunday and day-schools in the neighbourhood and a national school. There is also a school in connection with the Ballymurtagh mine, on the principle of the national school and one about

to be established at the Ballygahan mine. Indeed the children of the poorer classes appear to be well provided with schools.

## THE LEAD MINES.

I HAVE visited the lead-mines at Glenmalur, belonging to Mr. Henry Hodgson of Avoca, and found there were only 30 people employed there and no children whatever. Indeed, this mine I am informed is now in a bad state, has been many years worked, and requires a large outlay of capital to make it productive and profitable.

The agent told me the men were not earning much more than their subsistence and stores. Their subsistence, as it is termed, is the sum allowed them by the proprietor for their living, until their contract is finished, when the balance is paid to them. Here the subsistence is 10d. a-day and the agent said the men were not earning on an average more than 6s. or 7s. a-week. He also told me that they had upwards of 300 fathom of waggon-way, to bring the ore to the surface, along the levels.

There is a national school close by, the school-house for which was built by the miners.

I also visited the Luganure lead-mine, belonging to the Mining Company of Ireland and situated not far from the beautiful and interesting ruins of the seven churches. I found this mine very well conducted and in full operation. The agent told me they had lately found a fine lode close to the surface, on the side of a hill, which was not only working well but looked and promised well, and that the ore was of a very good quality.

There were neither females or children employed there and but a few young men. I did not think it necessary to take any evidence, particularly as the agent told me the work these young men were employed at, dressing the ore, was contract work and that they were constantly changing hands. He also told me he had previously been at the Knockmahon mines, where many children of both sexes are employed and that he had tried all in his power to persuade the poor people in the neighbourhood of Luganure to let their children, boys and girls, come to work at dressing the ore. That he had even offered to advance them money, to purchase little better clothing for their children to enable them to come to work, but without effect. A few boys were sent in the summer, but no girls. He says the girls would not go, and will not work; as he terms it, 'they are too proud.' He attributes it all to laziness and this too although they have but a bare subsistence.

The average wages of the miners and their labourers, are about 12s. a-week.

There is a national school, a Protestant school, and an infant-school in the neighbourhood.

## THE GOLD MINES.

THERE are three gold mines, the Killehurlagh, the Ballinvalley, and the Ballintemple, all situated in a beautiful and extensive valley called Ballycogue, about seven miles from Avoca. I visited the Killehurlagh mine. The Ballinvalley was precisely of the same description. I was informed, and worked in a similar way, lower down on the same stream.

I did not visit the Ballintemple, which I have since ascertained is the principal one and where the principal officers reside. They all belong to an English company, as it is termed, I believe called the Wicklow Gold Mine Company and I am informed that Mr. Crockford is here also one of the largest proprietors.

Although they are termed gold mines, there is no under-ground work. The one I saw was merely a small stream running from a mountain called Croker's Mountain and the operation of mining consists in slightly diverting the water for a short distance from the bed of its course, which is then dug up and carried to a small reservoir close by, through which water is constantly running and well raked about with an iron rake by a man called the '*buddler*' the larger particles are then removed and twice a-day the contents of this reservoir go through divers washings in wooden bowls, amongst the remains of which the gold is found. I was shown a few small pieces of gold, the produce of the morning's washing, I should think together making about the size of a small pea, this however I was told was worth 6s. There were 22 men at work, and four girls, as they called them, all of whom were strong able young women of about 20 years of age and two overseers. They work in parties of four or six, -two or four men at the pick and shovel and a girl to carry what they pick up, in a wooden bowl, to the buddler. This person is the most important, and receives 1s. 2d. and 1s. 4d. a-day, the men 1s., and the women 9d.



I am informed that when the summer commences these works are to be carried on with great spirit and vigour and many more men employed. They are doing better I believe at the Ballintemple mine, but in the opinion of the neighbourhood their success is very doubtful.

There are neither children or young persons employed at these works.

It was certainly a most curious sight, this gold mine and had I not been convinced to the contrary, I never could have believed that gold was found either in so extraordinary a place, or in so extraordinary a manner.

I cannot but again express my deep regret that, after the laborious exertion I have had in visiting these mines, suffering as I have been also from illness, I should have so little to report upon coming within the objects of the Inquiry, and still more that I have no evidence to transmit.

I have the honour to be, Gentlemen, Your very obedient humble servant,

FREDERICK ROPER, Sub-Commissioner.

---

## **EVIDENCE relating to the Ballygahan Copper Mine, belonging to HENRY HODGSON, Esq. situate in the Vale of Avoca, County of Wicklow.**

### **No.1.- Mr Henry Hodgson states:-**

I am 45 years of age. I have been the lessee of the Ballygshan copper mines for these last 20 years and have been also living in the neighbourhood. The miners work for eight hours and are then relieved by another set of hands. At present there are only two sets of hands to relieve each other. It is not customary to have a third set of hands, or the night set, in this mine. I do not approve of it and they are only used occasionally when there is a great press of work at any important part of the mine which requires expedition.

It is not generally customary at the mines here to employ the third set of hands, or the 10 night set. The miners' work is contract work. The average wages of the miners just now is about 12s. a-week. Eight hours is the time of each day's work for one set of hands but they do not actually work much more than seven hours, the other hour is occupied in going up and down the shaft. No females are ever employed in the mines. A few female children with male children used formerly to be employed on the surface of the mine dressing the copper ore, which is merely breaking it with a hammer. Very few of these were under 13 years of age. They could earn from 6d. to 1s. 4d. a-day. Their work was piece-work. The miners very rarely take any food with them in the mines, as they only work about eight hours a-day. It is not necessary for them to have any food in the mine. The power used is water. The miners go down the shaft by ladders. There is a platform over the heads of the ladders. The only labour of the miners is boring and blasting. The ore is drawn up the shaft by the water-power.

There are no boys employed underground. I am not aware that there is even a person under 18 years of age employed underground in my mine. They must be strong full-grown persons who work underground. There has only been one fatal accident in the mine for these 10 years. That was from the imprudence of the poor man who was killed. There has been no other accidents of any kind except bruises, which have been easily cured. I am very anxious to promote education. I have always been. I am about building a school-room for the children of the miners in my mine. There is a national school at Newbridge, and there are three other schools in the neighbourhood for the poorer classes, two of which are Protestant schools.

The great majority of the miners can neither read or write and may be said to be wholly uneducated. Generally speaking, the miners and their families are moral well-conducted people and are vastly improved in every sense by the temperance society, to which they nearly all belong. Very nearly all the miners are Roman Catholics.

I am getting some copper ore but the miners are principally employed getting sulphur ore. It has been a most beneficial thing for the whole district this sulphur trade, which has only commenced about a twelve month. There are at least 500 carts daily employed carting this sulphur-ore to Arklow and Wicklow. Nearly all the fishermen's boats during the winter were also employed conveying the ore to

Dublin for shipment.

Arklow is unfortunately a very bad place for shipping and we have to take the ore to ships in lighters. Wicklow is somewhat better, but even there it is bad enough.

I should think that the mines in this neighbourhood together pay at the least £20,000 a-year for carting their ore to the port.

I am a shareholder in the Wicklow Copper Mine Company who are now working the Ballymurtagh Copper Mine at the back of my mine. I am also the lessee of the Glenmalure Lead Mine, there is but very little doing there now.

---

## 2. - CAIME LEAD MINE.

GENTLEMEN,

Commercial Hotel, Enniscorthy, County Wexord,  
30th April 1841.

THE Caime Lead Mine, which I have last examined, belongs to the Mining Company of Ireland and is situated at the village of Caime, about six miles from the town of Enniscorthy, county Wexford.

This mine appears to be exceedingly well conducted and managed. It is a very small mine but I believe very profitable.

There are two steam-engines, one employed solely pumping the water from the mine, which I am informed is considered the Wettest mine in Ireland, the other at the machine for crushing the ore.

There are 127 persons employed here, of whom 60 are male adults, 14 female adults, 20 males and 26 females under 18 years of age and 7 children, all of whom are boys. None but the male adults work underground, the females old and young, as well as the young persons and children, all work on the surface, some at cobbing or breaking the ore with a hammer, of a size to be received into the crushing machine and the remainder at the divers operations of washing, of which there are about half a dozen. It is a very interesting sight to see these people at this work, at the various little running streams of water.

Generally speaking, the young girls, or rather young women, are fine, athletic, robust, healthy-looking people and many of them very good looking. A great majority of the washers are females. This work is clean work and does not appear to be very hard but many of them say it is and that they are but just able to do it. Most of the people employed at these works, which only began about six years since, are natives of the neighbourhood and many of the young women I found were members of large families, mostly exceedingly poor and living almost entirely on potatoes. Their wages help to keep their families. There are several of one family working here.

I was happy to hear they were such well-behaved, moral people, particularly the young women, more than one of whom entirely support their aged parents out of their small earnings.

One great inducement to good conduct is, that the well-conducted only are employed and there is such an abundance of labour in the neighbourhood, they are careful to behave well in order that they may not be discharged, for even the small wages they get is of the utmost importance to them.

All the persons employed on the surface have a very ruddy and extremely healthy appearance and generally speaking are good looking strong young girls. This I take it must be greatly attributable to their constant working in the open air, as, on inquiry, I found their food was not only, mostly, nothing but potatoes, in very many instances without milk.

They are all paid daily wages, none higher than 8d., or less than 4d. The children, who were all boys, got 4d., 5d., and 6d. a-day.

It was very pleasant here also to observe the same happy looking, merry, cheerful countenances, and the very pictures of health.

There is a Chapel in the immediate neighbourhood and a national school, but in most instances the parents were unable to avail themselves of this school from extreme poverty. But very few could read, still less, write, indeed there appeared but a very small amount of education amongst them. Many of them said they were obliged to go to work as early as they were able, in order that their large families might get food. The poorer people about here appear to be wretchedly poor, living almost

entirely on lumper potatoes, which are the worst kind and but a scanty allowance of those. The cabins of the miners and those working at the mines appeared to be much cleaner and neater than those in Wicklow. A surgeon attends the mine once a-week, for which a deduction is made from the wages of the people employed. There is also a sick fund to which the miners only and the company contribute.

I did not go down into the mine, for, from the state of the miners I saw coming up from it, I should think it was more like going into a river than a mine.

I have the honour to be, Gentlemen,

Your very obedient servant,

FREDERICK ROPER,  
Sub-Commissioner.

---

## EVIDENCE relating to the Caimé Lead Mine.

### No.2 - Bridget Cormerton states:-

I am 17 years of age. I have a brother and sister working at these mines. I live with my parents close by. I have been working here rather better than three years. I am at work now at one of the washings of the ore. When the ore is first brought up from the mine it is broken up with hammers, then crushed by machinery worked by steam, and then commences the washing. There are divers washings at the different places and it is at these several washings that we are nearly all employed, I mean the young girls and boys. I first began at cobbing or breaking the ore with hammers, then I went to the jigging and since at skimming, which is taking off the useless part on the surface after jigging. It is hot an unhealthy employment, but it does not at first agree with all of us. I have known some of the young girls who have been occasionally sick from the effects of the employment but only for a day or so.

We work winter and summer in the open air without any covering over head there are no sheds. I get 7d. a-day now. We usually used to get 8d a-day in the summer and 7d. a-day in the winter. We all have daily wages. There is a steward who overlooks us. At this season of the year we begin work at six o'clock in the morning and work till six at night. We have half an hour for breakfast and one hour for dinner. In the summer time we have a little extra work for which we get extra pay. In the winter time we work from daylight till we can no longer see and according to the weather. We cannot work in very bad or very wet weather. We have not earned much lately in consequence of the wet.

I and my family live principally upon potatoes and milk and sometimes we have fish but very seldom. We cannot afford it often. We very few of us go home to our meals, most of us have not sufficient time. We most of us go into one of the miner's cabins and our meals are brought to us by some of our brothers and sisters. The highest wages many of us women get is 7d. a-day. We all work at one or other of the washings. The younger girls get less according to their ages. We only get paid for the days we work. We have several holidays. We do not work on saints' days. We generally work for a man who contracts with the company for dressing and washing their ore. I have always been regularly paid by the contractor, most of us are so. Sometimes there are a few squabbles about the paying but if complaints are made to Captain Barrett, or at the office, it is always properly arranged. There are but very few complaints on this subject. The contractor pays us our wages, sometimes at his own house and sometimes at the public-house close by. Sometimes we work for the company, when they have a good deal of stuff on hand.

I can read a little, but not write. I do not go to school. Very few of the children go to school, the parents cannot afford it. When they are old enough they must go to work. Most of us regularly attend chapel. I like my present employment very well. I am very well treated at these works.

There is a school held in the chapel, children have to pay 2s. 8d. a-quarter for the young ones, the older 4s. I am well satisfied with my work, but I should like more wages.

**No.3 - James Matthews states:-**

I am going on 14 years old. I have been working here about two years at one of the washings, sometimes wheeling the stuff to the washings. Before this for two years I was at the Knockmahon mines. I there attended one of the hudlers washing copper ore. I got only 3s. or 4s. a-month at Knockmahon, I now get 4d. or 5d. a-day. My father is a miner and I live with him. My work is not very hard work, but I do not like it much. I have two brothers also working here. I have very good health, and always have had. I work from six to six, have half an hour for breakfast and an hour for dinner. I am sometimes tired when I leave off work. There is a steward who looks after us all and sees that we all work properly. I am very well treated at the works. I have no complaint to make, only I should like more wages. I generally get potatoes and milk for my meals, and sometimes some fish, or bacon, for dinner. I did go to school a little. I can neither read or write. I go to chapel every Sunday. In the summer we sometimes work overtime, for which we get extra pay. I used to make about seven days a-week. I have sometimes worked in the crushing mill at night-time, by this I mean that after working there for all the day, I had to stop working there for, from one to four hours, as it might be, until the mill stopped. This mill is worked by steam. I had to fill up the hopper and see that the mill was well supplied with the ore. I have always regularly been paid my wages, Mr. Purcell, the contractor, always pays us regularly. He is a very fair man. I have no complaints to make; I take my wages to my mother.

**No.4 - Bridget Kennedy states:-**

I am about 40 years of age. I am now a widow and have five children. My husband was killed in these works by falling off the ladder about three years since. Since my husband died I have worked in these mines. I get now 8d. a-day. I have two boys working here, one of whom gets 4d. a-day, the other 5d. It is a very healthy employment but rather hard work. We work from six to six, having half an hour for breakfast and one hour for dinner. The bell rings going to and coming from meals. I live close by here, I and my children go home to meals. All the women and young women and the children of both sexes, work on the surface at dressing or washing the ore. There are but very few young men at this work, no females whatever are employed underground. I receive my wages and those of my children regularly from the contractor. I have no complaints to make on this subject. The wages are very, very small. I have very hard work to manage to keep my small family. I have to work hard after leaving my daily work to enable me to help to keep and clothe my family. My husband, who was a miner, earned 9s. a-week. I cannot afford to send my children to school. It is as much as I can do to feed and clothe them. We all go to chapel on Sundays. There is a school in the chapel for the boys, and there is a school for the girls close by. The girls are taught reading, writing and needlework. We have to pay from 1s. 6d. to 4s. a-month, according to the age of the child. Both Catholics and Protestants go to these schools. They are national schools. There are but very few Protestants hereabouts.

**No.5 - Sally McDonald states:-**

I am 14 years of age. I live with my mother close by here. I have been working here about two years. I am now working at one of the washings and sometimes wheeling the stuff to the washings. I have to wheel it about 50 yards, at other times raking it about in the running water the wheeling is the hardest work. We work from six to six and have an hour and a half for meals out of that. It is rather hard work. I am often tired when I get home and sit down. I get 5d. a-day. I am regularly paid. I have no complaints to make. I like my work very well although it is hard enough. I don't think I get enough wages. My father is dead and there are nine children for my mother to keep. There are sometimes four of us working here. We have but poor fare. I have no shoes or stockings or any other clothes than these I have on.

I have been a little to school. I can neither read or write. I do not go now, my mother cannot afford it. I live almost entirely on potatoes. Sometimes on Sundays we get a bit of fish or bacon and sometimes we get milk, but not often.

**No.6 - Mary Hansom states:-**

I am going on 14 years old and live with my parents. I have been working here about a twelvemonth. I get 5d. a-day. I am working at one of the washings, sometimes raking and sometimes carrying the stuff in the hand-harrows, which is hard work. I like my work very well but it is very hard, so hard that sometimes I stay at home for a day. My father is a labourer and there are nine children of us. We live but very poorly, principally on potatoes and sometimes a bit of fish or bacon, and sometimes milk but we are so poor that this is not often.

I have very good health. There is nothing unhealthy in the employment . We all work out of doors. It is very hard work I think. I don't think I get enough wages. I have been but little to school. I can neither read or write.

**No.7 - Lawrence Byrne states:-**

I am 10 years old and live with my parents. I have one brother working here. I have been working here about two months. I work at one of the washings, sometimes raking the stuff about and sometimes feeding the buddle with stuff. It is rather hard work for me. I am rather tired at night sometimes. I get 4d. a-day, which I am regularly paid on pay days once a-month. I give my wages to my mother. We work from six to six, out of which we have one hour and a half for meals.

I once went to school for three weeks. I know my alphabet but cannot read. I go to chapel on Sundays. I am very well treated by the steward. I have one pair of shoes but they are too small for me. I cannot always wear them.

We work in all weathers but if it rains very much we cannot work, the works are stopped. We always work in the open air. The hours of work are rather too long for me. I am tired when I leave off very often. My father is a miner.

**No.8 - Mary Cooney states:-**

I am 17 years old and live close by here with my father. My mother is dead. We are five at home. I am working at this mine about three years. I am now working at jiggging, which is considered the hardest work that any of us females work at. I have been working at this for these six months. I get 7d. a-day. Jiggging is shaking the fine metal in a sieve in water, by means of a lever worked by the hands. I used to work at cobbing or breaking the ore with a hammer, but principally at jiggging. All the females and those employed washing, cobbing, and jiggging, work in the open air on the flooring as it is called. This is on the surface near the mouth of the shaft. There are 110 females employed underground. I am in very good health and have always been. My work agrees with me very well. I do not go home to my meals,. There is not sufficient time. I get my meals at Biddy Kennedy's, as do many other of the girls. My meals are brought there to me. We work from six to six in the summer, one hour and a half for meals out of that. Our family get potatoes and milk generally for meals. Occasionally, but very seldom, a bit of fish or bacon. Our hours of work in winter depends on the length of the day. In winter we get a penny a day less than in summer. I am regularly paid by the contractor for whom we work. There are but very few complaints about the paying. Any complaints made to the office about the pay is immediately put to rights.

I can read a little but not write. I go to chapel regularly on Sundays.

**No.9 - Michael Neale states:-**

I am 15 years old and live close by here with my parents. I have been working here about three years. I am to day working wheeling in stuff to the trunkers or washers, it is hard work. I have to wheel it about 10 yards. Sometimes I work at one of the washings buddling. We are frequently changed from one kind of work to another. I get 7d. a-day, which I give to my mother. I like my work very well but it is hard work. It agrees very well with me. I do not get enough wages. I can read a little and write a little. I do not go to school now, but I go to chapel regularly on Sundays.

**No.10 - Margaret Green states:-**

I am 15 years old and live with my brother and sister close by here. I have been working here about four months. I have always worked at cobbing, which is breaking the ore with a hammer. I am at work cobbing to day. I get some days 5d., some 6d. and some 7d., according to my work . It is very hard work. I always work in the open air. My work agrees very well with me. I can read a little, hut not write. I and my brother have a bargain with the captain now. We are to cob so much ore for a given price.

I have worked a little at farming work. I like my present work best. I am a Protestant. All my family, except my mother, are Protestants.

**No.11 - John Dunn sates:-**

I am going on 17 years old and live with my parents. I have been three years in these works. I worked at one of the washings and cobbing, but for these five months. I have been working in the engine-house, keeping the engine clean. I have to keep the bright parts clean and bright and keep the other parts washed and clean. It is not so hard work as it is dirty and requires so much attention. I have to clean it whilst at work and have to keep a sharp look out to keep myself from being hurt by the machinery. I get 7d. a-day. It is not enough wages. I only work from six to six and have one hour and a half for meals. The engineer is always there. No one takes my place in meal-times. It is not necessary. I can read a little, but not write.

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**3. - KNOCKMAHON COPPER-MINES, &c.**

**GENTLEMEN**

Imperial Clarence Hotel. Cork,  
May 7th, 1841.

I have now to report on the Knockmahon Copper Mines, belonging to the Mining Company of Ireland and situated adjoining the village of Bonmahon, in the County of Waterford and about sixteen miles from the city of Waterford.

These are, I believe, the most extensive mines in Ireland and everything about them evidently appears to be extremely well conducted and managed. The machinery, which is very extensive and ingenious, is admirably arranged for the purpose.

The principal power is water, of which they have a great abundance. The largest water-wheel, which is 40 feet diameter and 4 feet breast or width, pumps up the water from five different shafts, one of which is a mile and a half from the wheel.

There is also a crushing machine, worked by water, attached to which is a very curious and ingenious piece of machinery for receiving that portion of the ore not sufficiently crushed and re-conveying it into the machine. This is by means of a wheel similar to a water-wheel, but with the buckets or receivers inside. The ore received into these buckets at the bottom by the turning round of the wheel is discharged at the top into a spout communicating with the crushing machine.

There is also a very beautiful machine for jigging, which is sifting the ore in water. This is a patent machine, and saves a vast deal of labour, although Mr. Petherick, the managing agent, tells me if he could get a sufficient number of children to work he could, by putting up a very little extra machinery, give employment to at least one hundred more than he does at present. This, however, he cannot do, as they have so much trouble with the children and young persons already employed, whom, he says, there is great difficulty to get to come to work at all. That they are most irregular in their attendance, very averse to work, and will not come when the weather is unfavourable, although they work under capital wooden sheds.

The parents, he tells me, do not either insist on their children going to work.

There are two steam-engines, one for pumping, the other for drawing up stuff from the mine. Indeed every contrivance for carrying on the operations of these works appears to be most admirably

arranged and managed. The comfort of the people employed is not only considered but even their wants, for, in consequence of the dearness of potatoes in the neighbourhood, Mr. Petherick has imported large cargoes of potatoes and oatmeal, solely for his people, which is of course a vast saving and convenience to them: this is not done on the truck system, for every person buying, must pay cash on delivery.

There are about eleven hundred people employed here altogether. All young persons and children, and indeed, very many adults, are employed on the surface dressing and preparing the ore. None but adults are employed underground. None of the surface-work appears to me, to be by any means hard work.

Here also vast improvements have taken place from the miners having joined the temperance society, which happily has extended even to their children, who are now better clothed and fed than formerly. Mr. Petherick told me that, although, for these last twelve months, they have not employed any more people than they have for the previous two years, that the work people's wages have increased £300 a-month during that time. Most of the children and young persons are pretty well clothed, and, if one may judge from appearances, well fed also. They are all remarkably healthy looking. I think there is a much smaller amount of education amongst these people than anywhere I have yet found. There are but very few instances, indeed, amongst the young persons and children, of being able to read even.

There are two or three large ranges of cabins, built expressly by the company for their people, which are kept in very good order, being not only whitewashed outside, but generally speaking clean and tidy inside.

There is a benefit society amongst the people, and a surgeon regularly attends, for whom deductions are made from the wages of the work people.

There is a Church and national school close by the works and a Chapel about two miles distant.

A large building is just about to be converted into a temperance hall solely for the people belonging to these works, who appear to be very orderly and well conducted.

Nearly the whole population of this neighbourhood are more or less connected with these works, in one way or the other.

## **CUSHEEN COPPER MINE.**

The Cusheen Copper Mine is situated in Skull Harbour, about half a mile from the town of Skull and about 15 miles from Skibbereen, County Cork.

I visited this mine on the 11th inst. and found there were neither children nor young persons employed there.

There are altogether about 120 people employed.

I observed about 40 strong, able young women, apparently between 20 and 30 years of age, at work and Captain Martin, the agent, told me their daily wages were 4d. each and that he could have as many more as he might require at the same wages

Where labour is so abundant and cheap, of course children and even young persons will not be employed, who, generally speaking, although they may work for less wages, give infinitely more trouble than adults.

This mine has only been discovered about three years and not worked all that time, and is in, I think, the very wildest, poorest country I ever met with, hardly anything but mountains and rocks, and not even a blade of grass.

The ore was found so near the surface as to require only opening the side of the mountain and has been worked with a level only; another level, much lower down, has been opened and will be finished, it is supposed, in about four months more. I am informed the ore is very good from this mine and that it promises equally as well as it has yet turned out. Indeed, from its many advantages, this mine promises to be a very valuable speculation.

The Audley Copper Mine, not far from the Cusheen, is not now at work.

## **ROOSKA LEAD MINE.**

The Rooska Lead Mine is situated in Bantry Bay, about six miles from Bantry, County Cork.

I visited this mine on the 13th inst. and found there were neither children nor young persons employed there.

This mine has very recently been discovered, indeed, only one cargo of ore has yet been shipped from there, I am given to understand.

I found all hands, about 20 I imagine, very busily engaged sinking a shaft. This mine, it appears, has given indications of being worth working, and the operations are but just commencing.

I am told the ore produced is very good.

The Hollyhill Copper Mine, close by Bantry, is. not now at work.

I have the honour to be, Gentlemen,

Your very obedient humble Servant,

FREDERICK ROPER.  
Sub-Commissioner.

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**EVIDENCE relating to the Knockmahon Copper Mines.  
3rd and 4th May, 1841.**

**No.12 - Helen Hawke states:-**

I am 13 years old, and live with my brother and sister close by here; they work at these works. I have been two years working here; I have always worked at picking, which is picking out the pieces that have ore in them, and throwing on one side the remainder. We sit down at this work and lean on our elbows. Our work is done under a good wooden shed. I get 4d. a-day, and am working for the company. We come to work at six o'clock; half-past eight the bell rings for breakfast, we have half an hour. One o'clock the bell rings for dinner, we have an hour and then work till six o'clock, when the bell rings. In the winter we work as long as the light will permit. We begin at daylight and leave off when it gets dark. I like my work very well, it agrees very well with my health. I get very regularly paid by one of the clerks in the office. I am very well treated, I have nothing to find fault with. I had potatoes and a bit of fish for my dinner. I go home to my meals, but many have their dinners on the works. I have no shoes at all. I go to the Sunday-school. I can read pretty well, but not write. I am a Protestant.

**No.13 - Maurice Cuddy states:-**

I am 11 years of age. I live with my brother and sister at Bonmahon, close by here. I have been working three years at these works. I am keeping back the skimmings at one of the washings this day. I sometimes work at budling. I get 4d. a-day. I work for a contractor and am very regularly paid. I like my work very well, it is not very hard work. Some of us get a slap of the head sometimes, or a cut with a stick, when not attentive to our work. I am not tired when I leave off work. I have never been to school. I go to chapel on Sundays. I cannot read or write.

**No.14 - Nancy Mulcahey states:-**

I am 18 years of age. I live with my parents close by here. I have been three years at these works. I have always worked at 'Tying,' as it is called, which is putting the ore into a trough with running water and attending to it. It is one of the washings. I like my work 20 very well, it is not very hard work, but it is hard enough emptying the stuff out of the tyes. I get 3.5d. a-day. I work for a contractor and get my pay very regularly once a-month. We work from six to six, half an hour for breakfast and an hour for dinner out of it. The bell always rings at work and meal-times, coming and going. I can neither read or write. I have been but very little to school. I cannot make my own clothes. I like my 25 work 'Tying' better than the other work. I work under a wooden shed.



**No.15 - Thomas Maher states:-**

I am going on eleven years old. I live at Bonmahon with my parents. I have been working here about 7 months. I am most generally employed at budling, which is one of the washings. I get 3.5d. a-day. I like my work very well, it is not hard work. I am in very good health, my work agrees very well with me. We sometimes get a cut with a stick if we are not attentive. I go home to my meals. I generally have potatoes and sometimes a bit of fish. I have never been to school. I go to chapel on Sundays. I have no shoes or any other clothes than I have on. I regularly get my pay once a-month. There are but very few complaints about this.

**No. 16 - Anne Cavenagh states:-**

I am 21 years of age. I live close by here with my mother. I have been working here about six years. I never worked at any other than picking and cobbing; for these last three years I have been working at cobbing, which is breaking the ore with a hammer. I get 7d. a-day. I am working for the company. I have never worked at any other kind of work. I like 40 my work very well, it is the hardest of the girls' work. I generally work in the open air, but if it rains we work under a shed. I never work overtime, there is no such kind of work. We work from six to six, with an hour and a half for meals. I cannot either read or write. I went to school a little. I can make some of my own clothes. I generally go to chapel on Sundays. It is only the stout strong girls who work at cobbing.

**No. 17 - Jeremiah Harley states:-**

I am 19 years old. I live close by here with my parents. I have been five years in these works. For these last seven months I have been attending on the jiggging machine, before that I was employed budling, or one, it is not very hard work. I have always had good health. I once worked 50 underground at the air-machine. The miners won't take me underground to work with them, they say I am not strong enough. I can neither read or write. I never went to school but for half a year, when a little boy. I sometimes work overtime at the jiggging machine, which is worked by water-power, generally about an hour overtime, sometimes more, sometimes less. We have not much extra work, and we take our turns at it.

**No. 18 - Jane Pollard states:-**

I am going on 13 years old. I live with my parents close by here; my father is a miner. I have only been one week at work here. I am at work picking. We sit down at this work and are under a shed. I like it very well, it is not hard work. I am now getting used to it. I am to get 4d. a-day I believe. I used to go to the national school close by here, I there learned to read. I cannot write. I used to learn to sew, I can sew a little. I am not tired when I leave off work.

**No.19 Margaret Gough states:-**

I am about 15 years old. I live with my parents close by here. I have been working here for these three years. I have always worked at picking; I get 4d. a-day. I like my work very well. It is not hard work. We have to sit down at our work, and always work under a shed. I have never been to school. I cannot either read or write. I have three brothers and five sisters. They are all at home. Two of them besides me work here. We are very poor. I have no shoes or any other clothes than these I have on. I can sew a little. I get paid very regularly. I give my wages to my mother.

**No.20 - Helen Riley states:-**

I am 18 years old I live with my parents close by here. I have been working here about ten years I am at work picking which is what I have always worked at. I like my work very well. I get 5d. a-day. Sometimes I have to riddle some of the stuff. My work agrees very well with me. I have never been at any other work but at these works, except at home and minding my younger brothers and sisters. I never went to school. I can neither read or write. I can make some of my clothes.

**No. 21 - Henry Adams states:-**

I am 37 years old. I am a married man and have six children. I have been 13 years at these works. I have to superintend the dressing of the ore, to see that it is properly dressed and that there is none wasted. I look after the pickets, the riddlers and jiggers. I have to look after every process on the three floorings. I am paid a regular salary. I consider the young women generally speaking - and most of them are under my inspection whilst at work and have been so since they were children - to be very well behaved, and their conduct moral. We would not employ any who had bad characters. I do not consider any of the work at which girls and young women are employed very hard work. Some of it is rather harder than other. The wheeling is harder work, but they are changed daily at this. I point out in the mornings what particular work each shall work at for that day. Sometimes I am obliged to send some of the younger persons home when they do not work properly, they want a great deal of looking after. I have never seen any of them ill treated, it is not allowed. Very many of the people do not go home to their meals, they get them on the flooring. Their meals are brought to them. There is not in the establishment any regular place for either cooking or eating their meals. Their meals general consist of potatoes and milk and sometimes a bit of fish. The stamping machine works all night, there is a man to look after it. The crushing machine sometimes works all night, there are nine men attend to it. About 30 twelve months since a man was killed at the North Mine. About two years since a little girl was killed at the stamping machines also about twelve months since one of the miners was completely covered by the falling in of some earth. He remained in that state for three days and nights and was still alive when got out. He did not suffer any very material injury. He is able to work a little now. I mean he had no limbs broke but he suffers sometimes now in one of his legs, from its having been so long in the cold water. None of us ever expected to get him out alive. I consider the employment of the people on the floorings very healthy. It is not hard work, and is all in the open air, although sheds have been built to protect them from the rain. Generally speaking, we have as many persons as we want. It is very seldom there is a scarcity. Perhaps when they are very busy potato setting many of them stay away, but we have generally plenty of people to work. I consider the whole of the people in these works especially since the Temperance Society was instituted, to be a very well-behaved, well-conducted people.

**No.22 - Edward Lewis states:-**

I am 13 years old. I live with my parents not far from here. I have been working here about three years. I am now at work budling. I always worked at budling, which is one of the washings. I like my work pretty well. It is rather hard work. I get 5d. a-day. I work under a shed. I have never been to school. I cannot read or write. I go to chapel on Sundays. I am in good health. My work agrees very well with me. I am sometimes tired when I leave off work, but I do not feel it in the morning when I get up. My father works at these works. I have one brother also working here.

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**4 - THE ALLIHIES COPPER-MINE.**

**GENTLEMEN,**

Dublin, 8th June, 1841.

**I HAVE** now to report on the Allihies Copper Mine, belonging to John Paxley, Esq., situated in Ballydonegan Bay, near Castletown, county Cork.

There are upwards of 800 persons employed in these very extensive mines, which appear to be very well managed and conducted. The whole of their power is steam, having so little water as scarcely to suffice for the operations of the different washings. There are five powerful steam-engines two for pumpings, two for drawing up the ore, and the other for the crushing and stamping machines, alternately. A very great deal of labour is here saved by the use of two crushing machines, the first one being of such dimensions as to receive good large pieces of ore, which are afterwards received into the second one, and there crushed to the requisite fineness. This operation, as I have said, saves the labour of all the cobbers and is ultimately better done. There are but a few men to break the very large blocks that come up from the mine. Of course these machines require great power but I was greatly surprised to find at this mine only were the double crushing machines used.

There is here a very excellent jiggging apparatus, somewhat on the principle of the patent one at Knockmahom mines, which saves a great deal of labour and is very expeditious in its operations.

Captain Reed, the agent, has been connected with these mines for 26 years, almost since their commencement, and has, therefore, everything connected with them in most excellent order. There is a great abundance of labour in the immediate neighbourhood, for, strange to say, although a very rocky, mountainous, and wretchedly poor part of the country, there are a very great number of inhabitants. I have remarked this extraordinary circumstance in many other instances.

These mines are in a very isolated situation and the persons there seldom extend their journeys beyond Castletown, about six miles. I had great difficulty in understanding them, or making myself understood, indeed I could not have got on at all without an interpreter. They mostly spoke Irish only and many of them understood but little English.

The people of these mines are very poor, poorly clad, and seldom have more than two meals a-day - those of potatoes, with, but seldom, milk. Of course some of the miners live better but, generally speaking, they barely exist, and, notwithstanding this great scantiness of food, all, old and young, look very well and healthy, and certainly do not show any the slightest symptoms, in their personal appearance, of being scantily fed. There were but very few children. Captain Reed says he does not like them so young, they are more trouble than they are worth. There is a doctor resident in the neighbourhood, paid by the proprietor and the miners. There is a day-school also, on the principle of the national school but it is frequented only by the children of the mechanics and better class of miners and not by any children who are in the habit of working at the mines. A Wesleyan preacher attends on Sundays in the school-room but with very trifling exceptions, the miners and workpeople here are Roman Catholics. There is a Chapel about two miles from the mines.

The people are almost entirely uneducated. Many of the young persons of whom I made inquiries could neither read nor write, or had ever been to school. Many of the parents said it was as much as they could do and sometimes more, to provide food for their families.

I have the honour to be, Gentlemen,

Your very obedient humble servant,

FREDERICK ROPER,  
Sub-Commissioner.

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## **EVIDENCE relating to the Allihies Copper Mine.**

### **No.23 - Joan Tobin states:-**

I am about 30 years of age, and have been working in these works about 18 years. I live about two

miles from the works. I am now working at budling, which is one of the washings of the ore. I have worked at picking, but principally at budling. I get 4d. a-day now. I never had, all the years I have been here, more than 4.5d. a-day. I have always had very good health. We come to work as the bell rings at six in the morning and leave off as the bell rings at six in the evening. We have half an hour for breakfast and an hour for dinner. Many of us only have one meal whilst at work, but have supper at home after finishing work. I work for a contractor, most of the budlers do. I always get my wages. I have never had any complaints to make on this head. I like my work very well - it is not very hard work. I am not married. I cannot either read or write. I have never been to any school at all. The girls and young women all work at the same kind of work I do. We all begin at the same time and leave off at the same time. There is little or no difference in any of the work we are employed at, as to hard work - it is none of it very hard work. I live principally on potatoes, sometimes milk and sometimes a bit of fish.

**No.24 - Cornelius Kelly states:-**

I am 15 years old. I live with my parents close by the works. I have been working here these four years. I am to day employed in wheeling stuff to the budlers. Some days I am working at the jiggling - I like jiggling the best of all the work. I get 6d. a-day for my work. I always get my wages quite regularly every month. I am well treated in the works. We come to work as the bell rings and leave off as the bell rings, which is six at morning and six at night, half an hour, for breakfast and an hour for dinner. My meals are sometimes brought to me and sometimes I go home for them. They consist principally of potatoes and occasionally a bit of fish and some milk. I take my wages to my mother. I do not now go to school. I can read a little and write a little. I go to chapel on Sundays. I had 4d. a-day when I began to work

**No.25 - John Frewhella states:-**

I am 11 years old, I live with my mother close by. I am now at work blowing the bellows for the blacksmith and have been ever since I began work, about 14 months. I get 5.5d. a-day. It is rather hard work and sometimes rather hot. I am in very good health and have always been. I go to Sunday-school for about an hour. I can read and write. I read the Bible on Sundays at school, and learn my catechism. One of the captains pays me my wages, which I carry home to my mother.

**No.26 - Mary Reen states:-**

I am 18 years old. I live with my mother close by here. I have been working here about five years. I am to-day working at trunking, which is one of the washings - I have generally worked at trunking; sometimes I have to wheel stuff to the budlers. I get 4d. a-day now - I never had more than 4.5d. My work agrees very well with me. I have never stopped a day from my work from sickness. Sometimes I go home to my dinner and sometimes have my dinner at home after I have done work. I can neither read or write. I have been but very little time indeed at school. I can sew a little but not much. I don't think I get enough wages, but I get as much as the others.

**No.27 - Catherine Leahy states:-**

I am 16 years old, and live with my parents close by here. I have been four years at work here. I am now working at trunking - I always worked at trunking - which is one of the washings. I have always been in very good health. I sometimes go home to my meals and sometimes bring one meal with me and have no more till I go home after work. Many of us do the same. I only get two meals a-day. I have never been to school. I can neither read or write. I can sew a little but very little. We make but very little difference between our clothes winter and summer. I have some better clothes that I keep for Sundays. I like my work very well. It is not very hard work. I get 4d. a-day.

**No.28. Philip Donovan states:-**

I am 16 years old. I live with my parents close by here. I have been five years working in these works. I am wheeling to-day, but generally I am at work jiggging. I get 6d. a-day. I go home to my meals. I get paid very regularly. I have no complaints to make about that. I can read and write a little. I take my wages to my mother; I like coming to work here very well. I have never worked at any other kind of work.

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**5. - THE KENMARE COPPER AND LEAD MINES.**

**GENTLEMEN,**

Dublin, 8th June, 1841.

I HAVE now to report on the Kenmare Copper and Lead Mines, belonging to the Kenmare Mining Association, situated about four miles from Kenmare, County Kerry.

These two little mines have not very long been in full work and employ about 100 people. They are situated about a mile from each other and are under one and the same management. There are no children employed and but very few young persons. I did not visit the lead mine, as, being Holy Thursday and a holiday, the people were not at work. At the copper mine there is a fine steam-engine employed for pumping. The ore is drawn to the surface by horse-whims.

There is no crusher here, the cobbing is done principally by strong young women and they have an operation for breaking the ore of the requisite fineness for the last time, which is called 'bucking,' different to any other I have seen. This is done also by strong young females, under a shed, with a large flat hammer and appears to be very hard work. It is piece-work, and, hard as they work sometimes, even for fourteen hours, they tell me they cannot earn more than 6d. or 7d. a-day. The usual daily earnings are from 4d. to 6d. They usually work from six to six, and during that long time have only three-quarters of an hour for their one meal, most of them, they told me, had, seldom more than two meals a-day, and those of potatoes, which was as much as they could afford.

Wages here are extremely low, and the people wretchedly poor. There is also a great abundance of labour.

The copper ore is exceedingly rich and brings a much higher price than that of some of the other mines. This mine is just getting into full operation. They are erecting a stamping-machine to be worked by water-power.

The lead ore is not particularly good.

There is a national school in Kenmare well attended, but the young people in the mines said they had not time to go there - that they must work to be able to live.

Here also, I regret to say, they may be said to be almost entirely uneducated.

The people looked healthy and well, and certainly did not show any symptoms of being so poorly fed.

I have the honour to be, Gentlemen,

Your very obedient humble servant,

FREDERICK ROPER,  
Sub-Commissioner.

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**EVIDENCE relating to the Kenmare Copper and Lead Mines.**

**No.29 - Catherine Foley states:-**

I am about 15 years of age. I live with my parents close by here. I have been working here about three

years. I am now at work bucking, which is breaking the smaller ore still smaller with a flat hammer. We work in a covered shed. We get sometimes 6d. and 7d. and as low as 4d. a-day, according to our work. I sometimes work at cobbing, which is breaking the larger pieces of ore with a hammer and sometimes picking, at each of which I get 4d.a-day. I like my employment very well. It agrees very well with me. I get paid by Captain Thomas, our master. We come to work at seven o'clock in the morning, when the bell rings. We go to breakfast at half-past nine, we have three-quarters of an hour allowed. We then work till six o'clock at night. We have no dinner-hour. We have supper when we go home. I generally get potatoes and milk for my meals and sometimes a bit of fish. I sometimes work at the lead-works belonging to this concern, about a mile from here. I there work at bucking and picking. I have never been to school. I cannot either read or write. I can use the needle a little but very little. I go to chapel on Sundays. I have never worked at any other kind of work.

**No.30 - Norak Shea states:-**

I am 17 years old. I live with my parents close by here. I have been working here about two years. I am to-day working at picking, and sometimes at cobbing, at each of which I get 4d. a-day. I like my work very well. I have always had good health. We come to work in the morning when the bell rings at seven o'clock, go to breakfast at half-past nine, have three-quarters of an hour and then work till six o'clock, when the bell rings. We have supper when we go home. We most of us take our one meal on the works. We do not go home. I have never been to school; I can neither read or write. I can sew a little, but very little. I get very regularly paid. I give my wages to my mother. I go to chapel on Sundays. My parents are too poor to pay for my schooling. I have never worked at any other kind of employment.

**No.31. William Hagarty states:-**

I am 16 years old. I live with my parents close by here and have been at work here about two years. I am now at work jiggging. I get 6d. a- day. I always work at jiggging. I like my employment very well I have not been at any other kind. I come to work when the bell rings. We breakfast at half-past nine and have three-quarters of an hour. My breakfast is brought to me. We then work till six o'clock, when the bell rings. I have supper when I go home. I generally get potatoes and sometimes milk and fish. I can read and write a little, but not much. I have been to school. I go to chapel on Sundays. I get paid very regularly once a-month. I give my wages to my mother.

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## **6. - THE DROMAGH AND DYSART COLLIERIES.**

**GENTLEMEN,**

Dublin, 9th. June, 1841.

I HAVE now to report on the Dromagh and Dysart Collieries, belonging to Messrs. Leader, situated about five miles from Mill-street, county Cork.

There are in the Dromagh pits upwards of 200 people employed, but no children, neither are females of any age employed. I examined a good number of the young persons and found their statements so generally concurring, that I did not take much evidence.

All the young persons between 13 and 18 years of age and indeed many more who are older, are employed under ground as 'hurries,' pushing the loaded waggons along the railways from the workings to the foot of the shafts. This, and filling the waggons and buckets, are their only employments.

There are a number of shafts, varying as to their depth, many of which are not now used. The coal is not of the very best quality, but a great quantity is sold for the purpose of burning limestone, and as fuel for the poorer classes.

Although there is abundance of labour in this neighbourhood, and the wages paid at the

colliery are pretty good, yet, from the confinement underground so many hours, the work is not liked, although the workings are comparatively almost close to the surface-several shafts I saw were not more than 25 fathom deep. It is, however, a very dirty employment. Those employed generally remain, because the wages are better than they can get at any other work but very many of the young persons will absent themselves for two or three weeks, to go to other work and then return again to the colliery. The amount of education amongst these boys was small indeed. Their appearance was very healthy. They said their work was hard and that they must live well. I found they were much in the habit of using bread instead of potatoes and had meat two or three times a-week. Cleanliness is a thing not very often met with in Ireland but these boys I fancy do not wash themselves more than once a-week. It was the dinner-hour when I got there and not one of them did I see who had washed even his face and hands. Like most of the miners and colliers I have seen in Ireland, they do not generally change their clothes but once a-week.

There is a school in connection with the works, but it is not very well attended.

There is a range of very nice buildings erected as residences for the colliers close by the works.

Some of the young people I found were in the habit of working with the girdle and chain, but not many of them.

The Dysart Colliery is situated about a mile from the Dromagh; I did not visit it, finding it belonged to the same proprietors and was conducted in a similar manner. There are more people employed here than at the Dromagh, it being much more extensive.

I have the honour to be, Gentlemen,

Your very obedient humble servant,

FREDERICK ROPER,  
Sub-Commissioner.

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### **EVIDENCE relating to the Dromagh Colliery.**

#### **No.32 - Philip Murphy states:-**

I am about 17 years of age. I live with my father close by here. I have been working in this colliery these three years. I am employed under ground. I have to fill in the coal as it is got out by the miners into a waggon, and then push it to the bottom of the shaft, and empty the contents and go back again. I have to push the waggon about 100 yards. There is only one of us to each waggon. It is bard work. I like my work very well. I have never been ill from my work. I have always good health. I have been at work to-day. I went to work at six o'clock this morning. I breakfasted before going down; we come up to our dinners about 12 o'clock. We are allowed two hours for dinner. We then go down again and work till six o'clock at night. This we do every day. I get 1s. a-day. My dinner is brought to me. I get potatoes and milk for my meals, sometimes a little meat once or twice a-week, and sometimes I get bread. We do not generally change our clothes, except we are wet. We do not generally wash ourselves when we come up from work, very seldom that we do so. We work for the men who take the bargains, but we are paid in the office. We get our pay very regularly. I can read and write. I am not tired when I leave off work. We all boys work at the same work and are called 'hurries.'

#### **No.33 - Dennis Toomey states:-**

I am 14 years of age. I live with my mother close by here. I have been working in this colliery about three years. I think I am the youngest and smallest boy in the colliery. I am at work at filling the buckets that go up the shaft with the coal brought in the waggons. I always work at this work. It is hard work. I would not work at it if I could help it. I do not get beaten or ill-treated. My work agrees very well with me. I begin work at six in the morning, come up about 12 o'clock to dinner, have about

an hour and a half and then go down to work till six or seven o'clock in the evening. I get 10d. a-day and am paid very regularly once a-week, which I give to my mother. I generally get potatoes for my meals and very seldom anything else, except sometimes some milk. I get three meals a-day. My dinner is brought to me. I always work during the day. Many of us have to work at night, when the miners are working. We must work the same time the colliers work. I cannot read or write. I have never been to school. I am always paid by the day-work and although I am hired by the colliers. I am paid in the office, the collier giving a return of. the number of days I have worked.

**No.34 - Jeremiah Kenelly states:-**

I am about 17 years of age, and live with my mother. I have been working here these nine or ten years. I now work at hurrying, which is filling the coals into a waggon and pushing them to the foot of the shaft. I have to push the waggon above 60 yards. It is hard work and I do not like it. I think the loaded waggon would weigh about 2cwt. or more. I have very good health generally. My work agrees very well with me. I get 1s. a-day. I am paid every Saturday night very regularly. We take our turns for our time of work. When it is my turn for night-work I go down with the night corps about eight o'clock, and come up about five in the morning. We have none of us any meals during the time we work at night. I like the day-work best. Every second week we change about from night-work to day-work. We have just the same kind of work at night-work as day-work. I take my wages to my mother. I cannot read or write. I have never been to school. I go to chapel.

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**7.-THE LACKAMORE COPPER-MINE.**

**GENTLEMEN,**

Dublin, 9th June, 1841.

I HAVE now to report on the Lackamore Copper Mine, belonging to the Lackamore Mining Company, situated in a beautiful valley, through which the river Newport winds, about four miles from Newport, county Tipperary, and about 16 miles from the city of Limerick.

There are nearly 200 people employed at this mine, which is now extremely well managed and conducted, and is in full operation.

It has been occasionally worked for a number of years but the workings were of short duration. From the good management for these last few years, it now begins to pay very well and the ore produced is the richest in Ireland, fetching a higher price than that of any other mine in Ireland.

They have a very fine run of water, which was brought from the mountains, a distance of about five miles, sufficient to turn three powerful wheels, two of which are now at work for pumping and the crushing machine, and another about to be erected for drawing up the ore from the mine.

I think the arrangements here for the various washings are the best of any mine I have seen.

The wages are a little better here than at some of the mines, and the young people I saw at work on the surface are cheerful and very healthy looking there is a great abundance of labour to be had in this neighbourhood. Captain Curry, the agent, says he has numerous applications to take children into the works. Here, as in several other places, they have only one meal-time during their 12 hours work and many of them told me they had no more than two meals a-day and those of potatoes, with milk occasionally. It puzzles me to account for the very healthy and comparatively robust appearance of most of the young people working at the mines, knowing as I do how scanty is generally their food but throughout Ireland, or rather the southern half of it, I have remarked that the countenances of the working people are generally plump, healthy looking, and cheerful. There is a school-house about being erected, partly by subscription of the miners and in connection with the Commissioners of the National Schools. There is also a fund for paying the doctor. The young females about here employ their leisure hours in knitting, which is in many instances very well done, and many take a great pride in it but I am sorry to say education is almost but a name amongst them.

I have the honour to be, Gentlemen,

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Your very obedient humble servant,

FREDERICK ROPER,  
Sub-Commissioner.

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**EVIDENCE relating to the Lackamore Copper Mine.**

**No.35 - Michael Ryan states:-**

I am about 11 years of age. I live close by here with my father and mother. I have been working at these works about six months. I am to-day at work feeding the crusher;but generally at work cobbing. I like my work very well. It is not hard work. I get 4d. a-day. I give my wages to my mother. I get paid once a-month. We come to work at six o'clock in the 15 morning when the bell rings. We work till 12, then the bell rings for dinner. We have an hour for dinner and then work till six in the evening, when the bell rings. My dinner is brought to me on the works. I had milk and potatoes for my dinner to day. I generally have the same. We have supper when we go home, potatoes again. I am sometimes a little tired in leaving work. I have day wages and am paid once a-month in the office. I sometimes get a slap when I am not attending to my work. I am very well treated in the works. I have nothing to find fault with. I have never been to school. I cannot either read or write. I go to chapel on Sundays about two miles from home.

**No.36 - John M'Namara states:-**

I am about 11 years old. I live with my parents, three miles from these works. I am to day at work picking the ore. I have generally worked at picking; I only began to work at this mine last Monday. I like my work very well. It is not hard work. I would rather be at work here than be idle at home. I come to work at six o'clock and work till 12, dinner time, have an hour and then work till six in the evening. I have supper of potatoes when I go home and sometimes milk. I get 4d. a-day. My dinner is brought to me. I cannot read or write. I have been a little to school. I go to chapel.

**No.37 - Biddy Ryan states:-**

I am 14 years old and live with my father and mother about a mile and a half from this. I have been working here about two years. I am the youngest girl at work at these works. All the others are older. I am picking the ore. I always work at picking. I like my work very well. It is not hard work. It agrees very well with me. I am in very good health. I get 5d. a-day but I hope the captain is going to raise my wages. I used to go to school a little. I cannot either read or write. I give my wages to my mother. I can sew a little, my mother taught me. I go to chapel on Sundays, and to catechism after. I am very well treated in the works. I have no complaint to make.

**No.38 - Mary Ryan states:-**

I am about 18 years of age; I live with my parents about three miles from this. I have been working here for about three years. I am to-day at work picking. I generally work at jiggling. I get 6d. a-day, day wages for whatever work I am at. I like my work very well, it is not hard work, and agrees very well with me. I have always had good health. We all work in the open air. There are about 15 or 16 females only at work at these works, most of the females are about my age. 6d. a-day is the highest wages we females get. My dinner, which is the only meal I have whilst at work, like the rest of us, is brought to me; we have an hour for dinner. I have several brothers and sisters. I give my wages to my mother, to help to keep the family. I can neither read or write. I have never been to school. I can make

my own clothes - my mother taught me this. Most of us girls about here can make our own clothes. We are very regularly paid every month. I used to knit stockings and other things at home before I came to work here but I have never been at any other work but at these works. We are all very well and kindly treated in these works.

**No.39 - John Ryan states:-**

I am about 16 years of age. I live with my parents, about two miles from this. I have been working here for about five years. I am at work cobbing today. I generally work now at cobbing. I get 8d. a-day. I give my wages to my mother. I get very regularly paid once a-month in the office. I can read, but not write. I have been to school. I have never worked at any other kind of work. I seldom get anything but potatoes and milk for my meals. There is a large family of us.

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**8. - THE COLLIERIES IN THE COUNTY OF TIPPERARY.**

GENTLEMEN,

22, Richmond Hill, Rathmines Road, Dublin.  
10th June 1841.

THE Mining Company of Ireland have three collieries in this county, situated from about two, to six miles from Killenaule. I first visited Mardyke Colliery, which is the nearest to Killenaule, and where the agent for all of them, Mr. Robert Nicolson, resides. At this pit there are no children employed and but two or three young persons, and no females at all, indeed females are not employed in any of the collieries in this county.

Mr. Nicolson stated that they had a few young boys who were employed under ground, merely opening and shutting the doors after the waggons had passed through, in order to keep the fresh air in its regular course round the mine. That for the other work, as 'hurries,' they required strong able young men of from about 18 years old and upwards.

The hurries, fillers, and colliers are generally partners in the same bargain.

At the Sleive Ardagh Colliery, which is about six miles distant but under the same management and direction, there are about 20 young men under 18 years of age employed but no children; but the day I visited it was fair-day at Ballingarry, close by and the people were not at work. There also were two or three little boys employed as at the other pit, opening and shutting the doors, after the waggons had passed.

At the Mardyke Colliery is a temperance hall, a lending library and reading room, a saving society and a school-room about to be built by subscription of the company, and colliers.

There are also neat ranges of buildings built by the company as residences for the colliers.

Altogether, at the company's pits, there are about 400 people employed. There is a great deal of sulphur amongst the coal, so much, that, at that used for the steam-engines, I found it almost impossible to enter the engine-house from the suffocating smell.

In this neighbourhood, between the two principal pits of the company, there is a very extensive colliery, called the Coolbrook, belonging to --- Langley, Esq., which I visited, but, being fair-day close by, the people were not at work. The machinery connected with the pumping was also so much out of order that they expected to stop work for a week or two.

Mr. Nasmyth, the agent, told me they did not employ children - that they were of no use. They required strong able lads of 17 or 18 years old to do their work, of whom about 30 were employed. They work from eight to twelve hours daily and, as the work is all task-work, there are no regular meal-times but he informed me that the people generally took bread with them when they had their meals under ground.

There are about 400 people employed at this pit.

There is no school attached to the works, neither is there a sick-fund, or doctor's fund.

On my remarking upon the high price of the coal at the pit mouth (10d. a cwt. for the best), Mr. Nasmyth said, in consequence of the great difficulty in getting the coal, it hardly paid a

remunerating price, not more than 2% interest on the capital employed. That the seam of coal was generally very small and the rock they had frequently to work through exceedingly hard.

There are in all directions hereabouts small shafts opened, which are worked only until they come to the water, for the sake of the culm or small coal, used for burning limestone, and by the poorer people for fuel.

I believe there are two or three other rather extensive collieries hereabouts but I had not time to visit them all.

It is a subject worthy of remark, that at all the mines I have visited the managing directors are Englishmen, generally Cornishmen; and at the collieries in Tipperary the managing agents are Scotchmen.

I am told the Irish are not clever at sinking shafts but are pretty good miners, so long as they have some experienced Cornishmen working with them, or to direct them being comparatively a new field for them, they do not generally understand the operations of mining, except the simple one of getting the ore or coal.

I have the honour to be, Gentlemen,

Your very obedient humble servant,

FREDERICK ROPER,  
Sub-Commissioner.

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## 9 - THE COLLIERIES IN THE COUNTY OF KILKENNY AND QUEEN'S COUNTY.

GENTLEMEN,

22, Richmond Hill, Rathmine: Road, Dublin,  
26th. June, 1841.

IN these very extensive coal-fields on the borders of these adjoining counties and about midway (six to eight miles) between Athy and Castlecomer, there are three large proprietors, viz. the Hon. C. Wandesford, the Rushes Colliery Company (English), and Mr. John Edge.. A Mr. Delany also works an extensive colliery which he rents of Mr. Edge.

I visited the five principal establishments and found that no children or females of any age and but very few young persons, were employed.

I inspected about a dozen of the different shafts, worked by contractors and found none but men employed; indeed, I was informed that none but strong, able young men would be of any use in the pits, the labour being severe. I did not see any apparently under 18 years of age.

I went down into two of the pits and saw the people at their different work, all of whom were strong, able men; even the 'hurries,' who draw the coals to the foot of the shaft, were mostly strong young men, who go along the narrow low passages, of seldom more than three feet high and often less, on their hands and feet, the body stretched out. They draw the sledges, on which wooden boxes containing the coals are placed, by a girdle round the loins and a long chain fastened to the sledge going between their legs.

It was a matter of wonderment to me how these 'hurries,' many of whom were stout men upwards of six feet high, could manage to get along these very narrow low passages at such a rate as they do, particularly considering the excessive labour and difficulty I found, myself, in proceeding along about 130 yards in each of the pits in many places there was but just sufficient room for me to crawl through. I believe it is customary in the collieries, in many parts of England and Scotland, to employ children and young persons, of both sexes, as 'Hurries,' or 'Hurriers' it is therefore worthy of remark that such is not the custom in the south of Ireland, where no females, of any age, are employed, and but a few young boys, whose sole employment is opening and shutting the doors for the ingress and egress of air. In reply to my numerous inquiries as to why children were not

employed as 'hurries,' I was told, that as labour was so abundant and cheap they would not be troubled with children, moreover, that, from the laborious nature of the work, even young persons, unless nearly as strong and able as men, were of no use. Very many of the young persons who worked as 'hurries' complained grievously of the hardness of the work. The reason of this species of labour being so hard, and requiring so much strength, is entirely owing<sup>6</sup> to there being neither tramways nor railways in the collieries, consequently the sledge, on which is the box of coals, has to be drawn along on the surface of the passages, consisting of uneven rock, or, more generally, soft mud.

I did not recover from the effects of the severe labour of this underground visit for several days, the muscles of my legs being so painful as almost to prevent my walking. I received, moreover, from some falling slate, a severe cut in one of my hands.

It is an extraordinary fact, that of the seven steam-engines used for pumping in this large coal-field five have been erected. I believe, within the last three years, although the coal-field itself, I am informed, has been worked for nearly a century.

Previous to this a shaft was opened and worked down to between 40 and 60 yards, when they met the water; it was then abandoned and another shaft opened and worked until again they met the water, then abandoned, and so on.

Consequently, the surface of the coal-field is covered in every direction with these shafts, most of which are now worked, for, from the advantages derived from the several steam-engines pumping the water, very many of the old shafts have been reopened and are now in full work.

A custom still prevails here, and has for many years, which I think a very iniquitous one, and which is condemned by all the proprietors and their agents that I met with. It is this a pit and shaft is let to a man called a contractor, who is generally a collier. He enters into a sort of bargain with from 10 to 20 other colliers and labourers to work this pit and for every shilling's worth of coal raised and sold therefrom the proprietor is paid sixpence, whose clerk keeps an account of the weight thereof. For this he has to keep his steam-engine in order and constantly pumping, as well as to repair the colliers' tools.

A settlement takes place once a fortnight between the proprietor and the contractor and his men.

The rate of wages for each kind of labour and the quantity of work for each man a day, is mutually settled between the contractor and his men.

The contractor generally keeps a shop for the sale of tobacco, bread, bacon, herrings, &c., from which his men obtain their supplies on credit till the settling day, when the amount of their bills is deducted from the wages coming to them, thus causing endless disputes, quarrels, and bickering's. Many of the poor fellows told me they had seldom any money to take on the settling days.

With the exception of those belonging to the Rushes Colliery Company, who discountenance the practice, nearly all the pits and shafts, of which there are an immense number, are let in this way, but very few of them, comparatively, are worked on the proprietor's own account.

This very bad custom has prevailed so long that several of the proprietors and their agents told me they could not break through it, much as they condemned it as bad for all parties concerned, except the contractor and that the only way effectually to do away with it, would be by sinking new shafts and working the themselves, which some of them are about doing.

In consequence of the coal-field being so well drained now, by the several steam-engines constantly pumping, a great deal more coal is raised than formerly, notwithstanding which the demand is greater than the supply, and on the increase.

The good coal is sold at 11s. 8d. a ton at the pit and the culm at 4s. 2d.

The coal from some of the pits fetches a rather higher price.

There is a church, three chapels and five schools, in the immediate neighbourhood.

This being my last Report, I may here remark that in all the Mines, Collieries, and Manufactories I have visited in my tour throughout the Southern half of Ireland, I have not observed any instances of ill treatment of the children or young persons therein employed; on the contrary, I everywhere found them well treated, particularly the children, as their universal healthy and very cheerful appearance sufficiently indicates.

I regret to have to state, that great poverty, nay, in very many instances, extreme poverty, but too frequently exists amongst the labouring classes that have come within my observation, as well as a great paucity of education, yet I am happy to bear testimony, from my own necessarily slight observation, to their good conduct and morality especially of the younger persons. Indeed, I am still more happy to say, that I have very frequently received, from many respectable persons connected with the various works I have visited, a strong confirmation of this my impression.

In conclusion I feel it proper to state, that although, probably, in comparison with others, the amount of evidence I have been enabled to collect may appear small, yet, when it is taken into consideration the many difficulties with which I have had to contend, from not being acquainted 'with Ireland, or a single person therein; having had moreover to find out, as best I could, even the very existence as well as localities of the different Mines, Manufactories, and Collieries coming within the objects of the Inquiry, together with the great number of miles I have been obliged to travel, from the circumstance of their great scarcity, considering the extent of my district (the southern half of Ireland) being so widely scattered, suffering too from illness as I have, since I have been in Ireland, owing to the humidity of the atmosphere, after a residence for so many previous years in a warm and very dry climate I trust it will readily be conceded that my duties have not only been very arduous and irksome, but attended with great labour.

Under all these circumstances, I again beg to assure the Commissioners that I have used every possible exertion, not only to find out, but to visit and inspect, every place where persons were employed, coming within the province of the Inquiry and to my knowledge am not aware of having omitted any material object.

I have the honour to be, Gentlemen,

Your very obedient humble servant,

FREDERICK ROPER,  
Sub-Commissioner.

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