

Stand Up and be Counted!

Suffrage and gender in Ireland during the Decade of Centenaries and beyond

DOCUMENT PACK 3: Suffrage, Labour and Class

This document pack includes:

- Report on the education of children, Belfast Municipal Technical Institute, 1913
- Flax Spinners' Association and Power Loom Manufacturers' Association and the Textile Operatives Society of Ireland (TOSI) and Ulster Weavers and Winders (Lurgan District) Committee Minutes.
- Printed prospectus of The Lodge Ladies School, Belfast
- Memoirs of the working life of William Topping, 1903 – 1956
- Photographs of female factory workers

MUNICIPAL TECHNICAL INSTITUTE, BELFAST.

MISCELLANEOUS OBSERVATIONS on the GENERAL QUESTION.

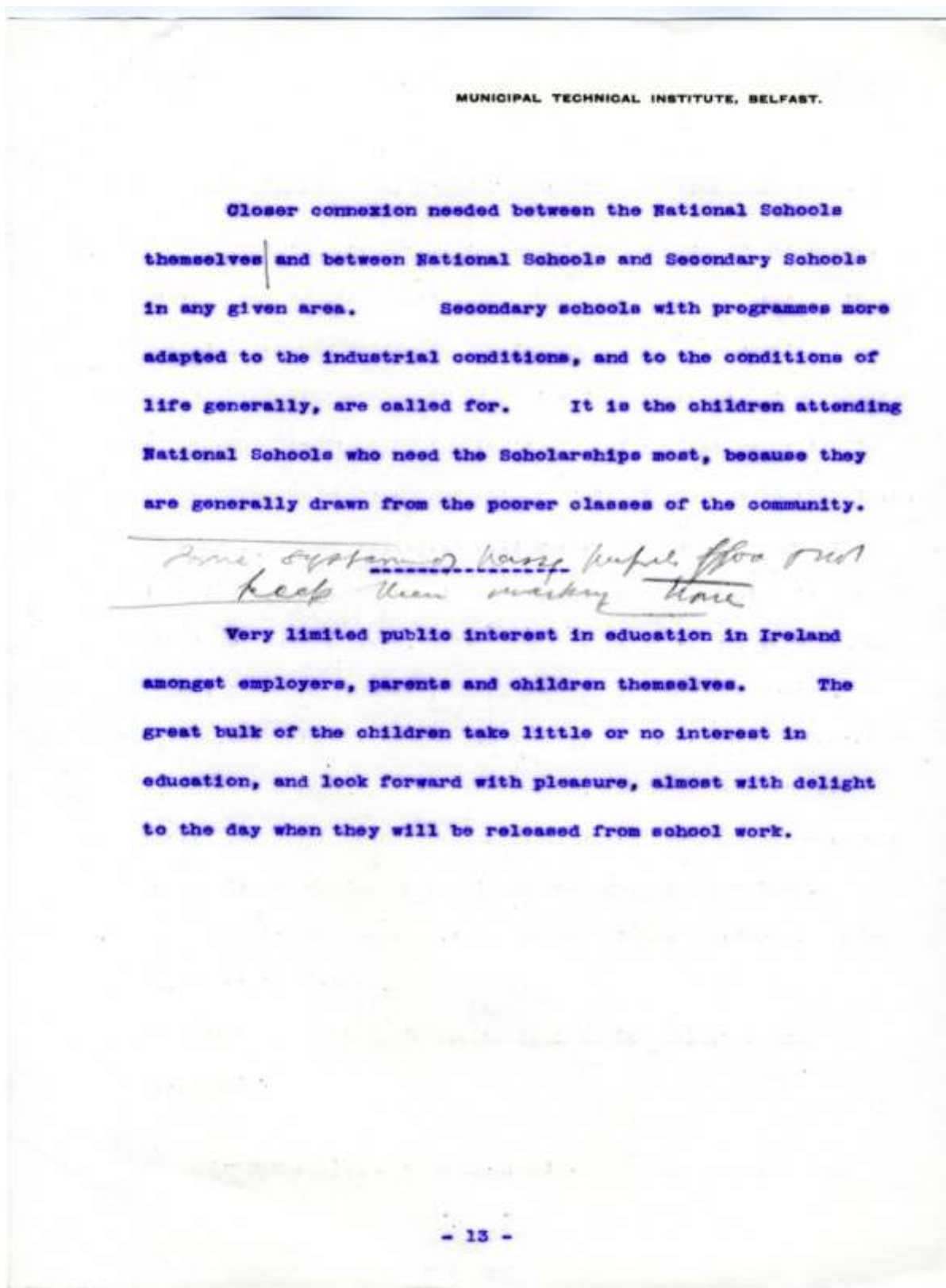
X. Evening elementary instruction a very ineffective substitute for day instruction. Compulsion can be applied in day schools, but not easily in evening schools. Necessity for raising the minimum age of exemption in Day Schools, irrespective of standard attained by the pupil. At present exemption is given when the pupil passes out of Fifth Standard into the Sixth Standard. The brightest children reach this standard at the lowest age, with the result that it is the brightest children who leave school first, whilst they ought to be retained in the school in order that they might benefit by the instruction. The duller children who profit less by the instruction remain longest at school. In other words, the most intelligent pupils pass from under the school influence at the age when they are really beginning to profit by the education provided.

Small number of children in the higher standards. (See Mr. Phenix's Report),

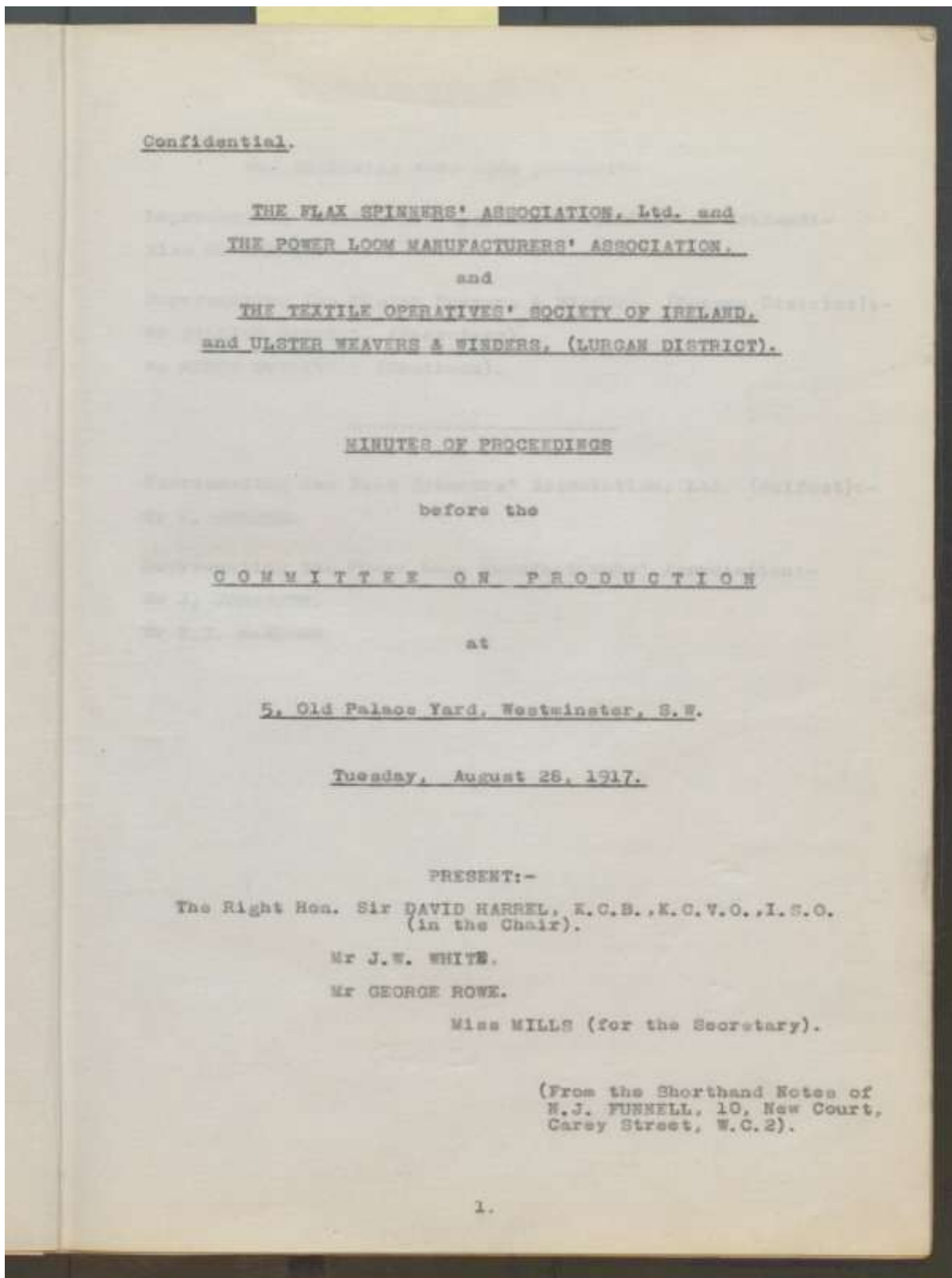
Advantages that would accrue from taking evidence from Mr. Phenix.

Corporate
Co-operative life - in Schools.

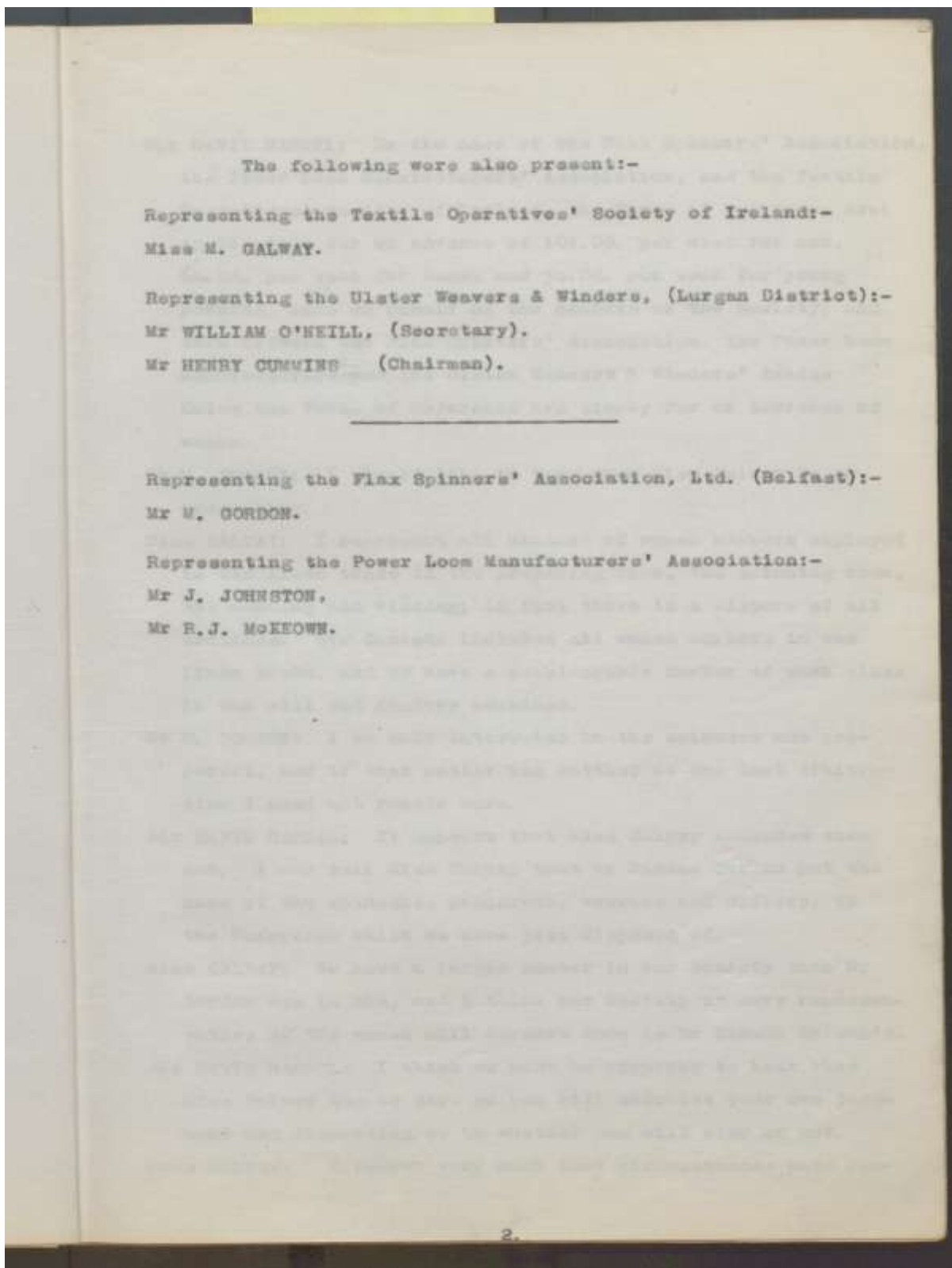
Education of children - miscellaneous observations on the general question, Belfast Municipal Technical Institute (1913). Image 1 of 2. PRONI reference: BCT/6/4/5



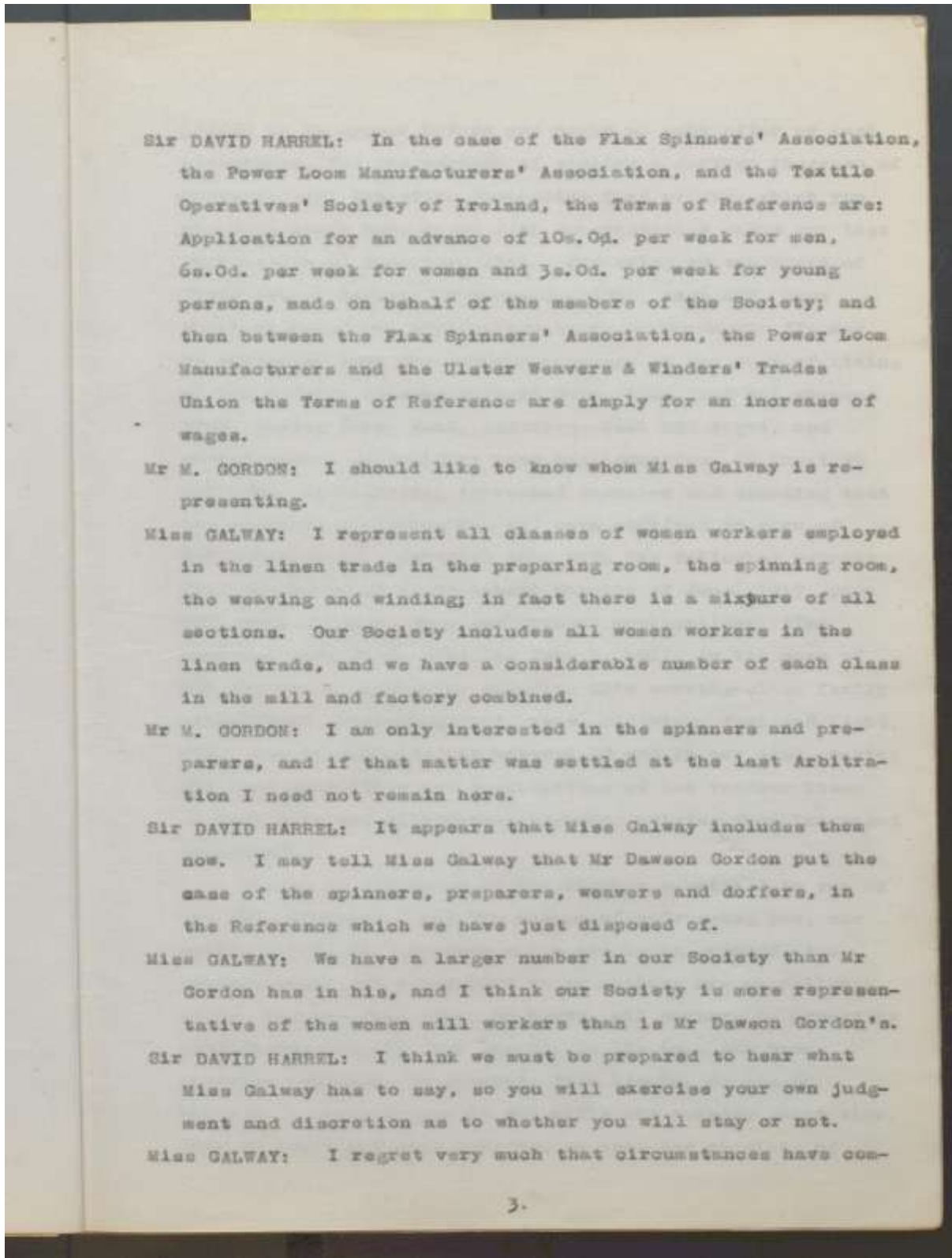
Education of children - miscellaneous observations on the general question, Belfast Municipal Technical Institute (1913). *Image 2 of 2*. PRONI reference: BCT/6/4/5



Flax Spinners' Association and Power Loom Manufacturers' Association and the Textile Operatives Society of Ireland (TOSI) and Ulster Weavers and Winders (Lurgan District). Minutes of Proceedings before Committee of Production (28th August 1917). Image 1 of 8. PRONI Reference: D2088/27/1



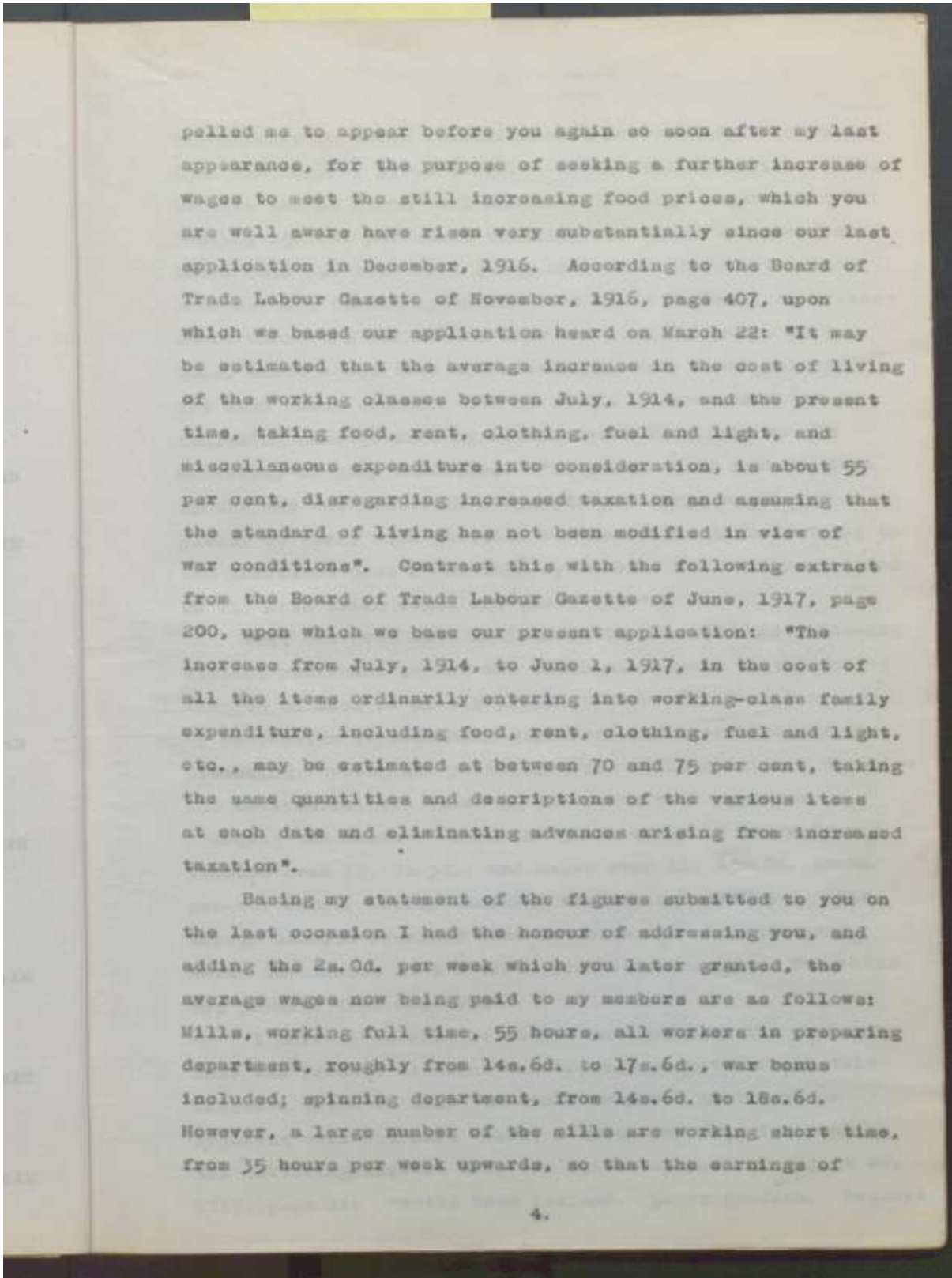
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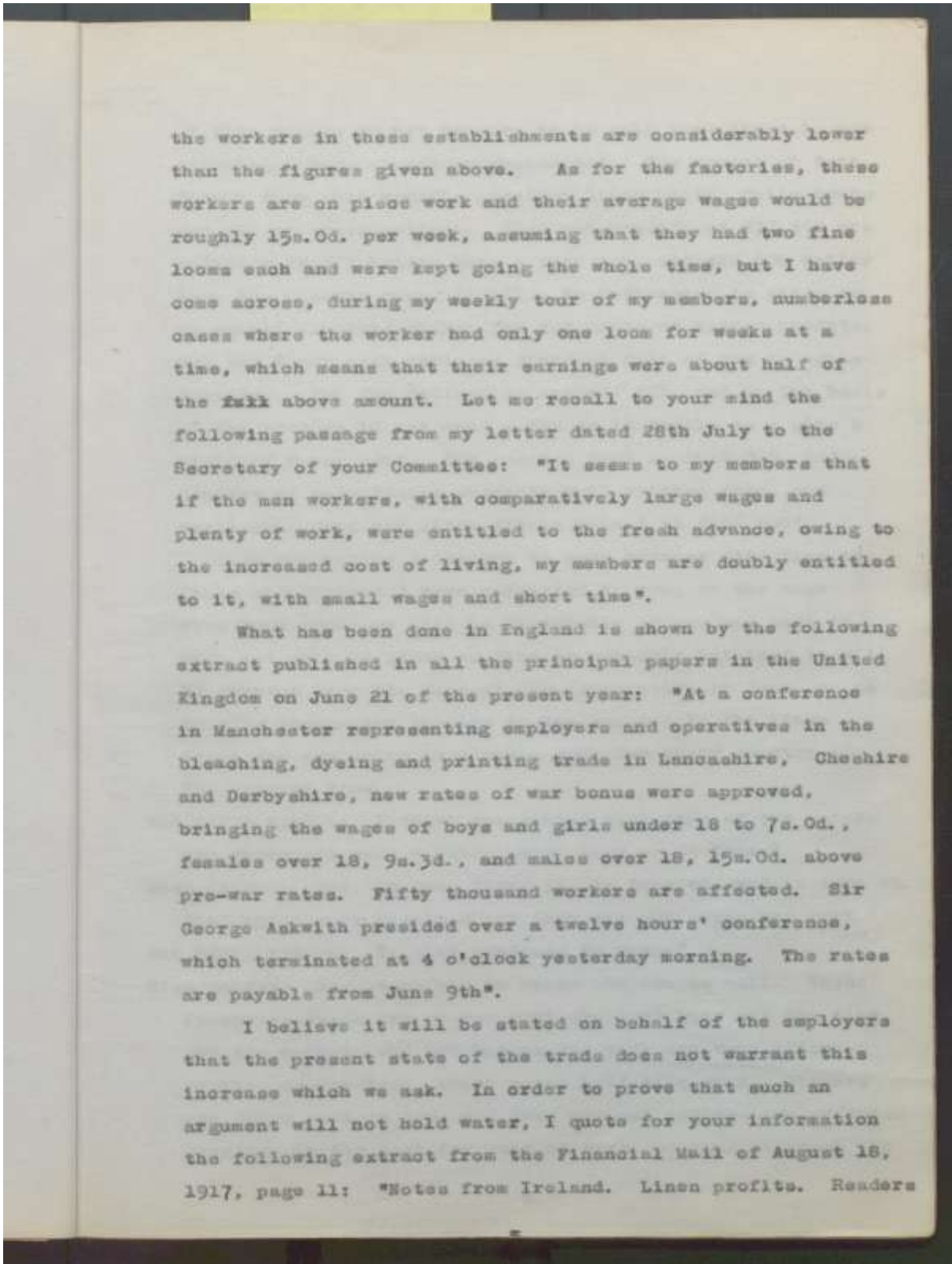
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Flax Spinners' Association and Power Loom Manufacturers' Association and the Textile Operatives Society of Ireland (TOSI) and Ulster Weavers and Winders (Lurgan District). Minutes of Proceedings before Committee of Production (28th August 1917). Image 4 of 8. PRONI Reference: D2088/27/1

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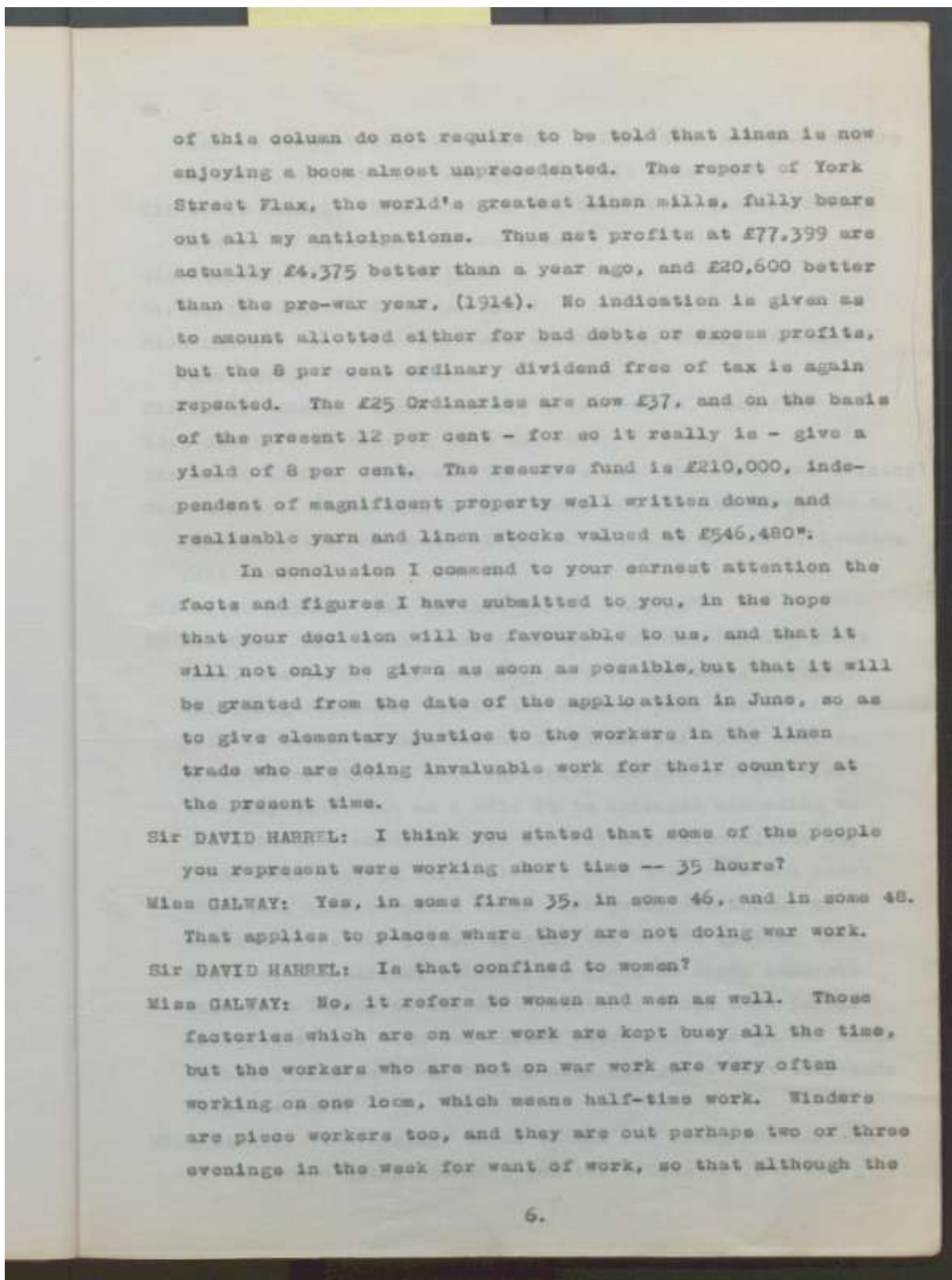
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Flax Spinners' Association and Power Loom Manufacturers' Association and the Textile Operatives Society of Ireland (TOSI) and Ulster Weavers and Winders (Lurgan District). Minutes of Proceedings before Committee of Production (28th August 1917). Image 5 of 8. PRONI Reference: D2088/27/1

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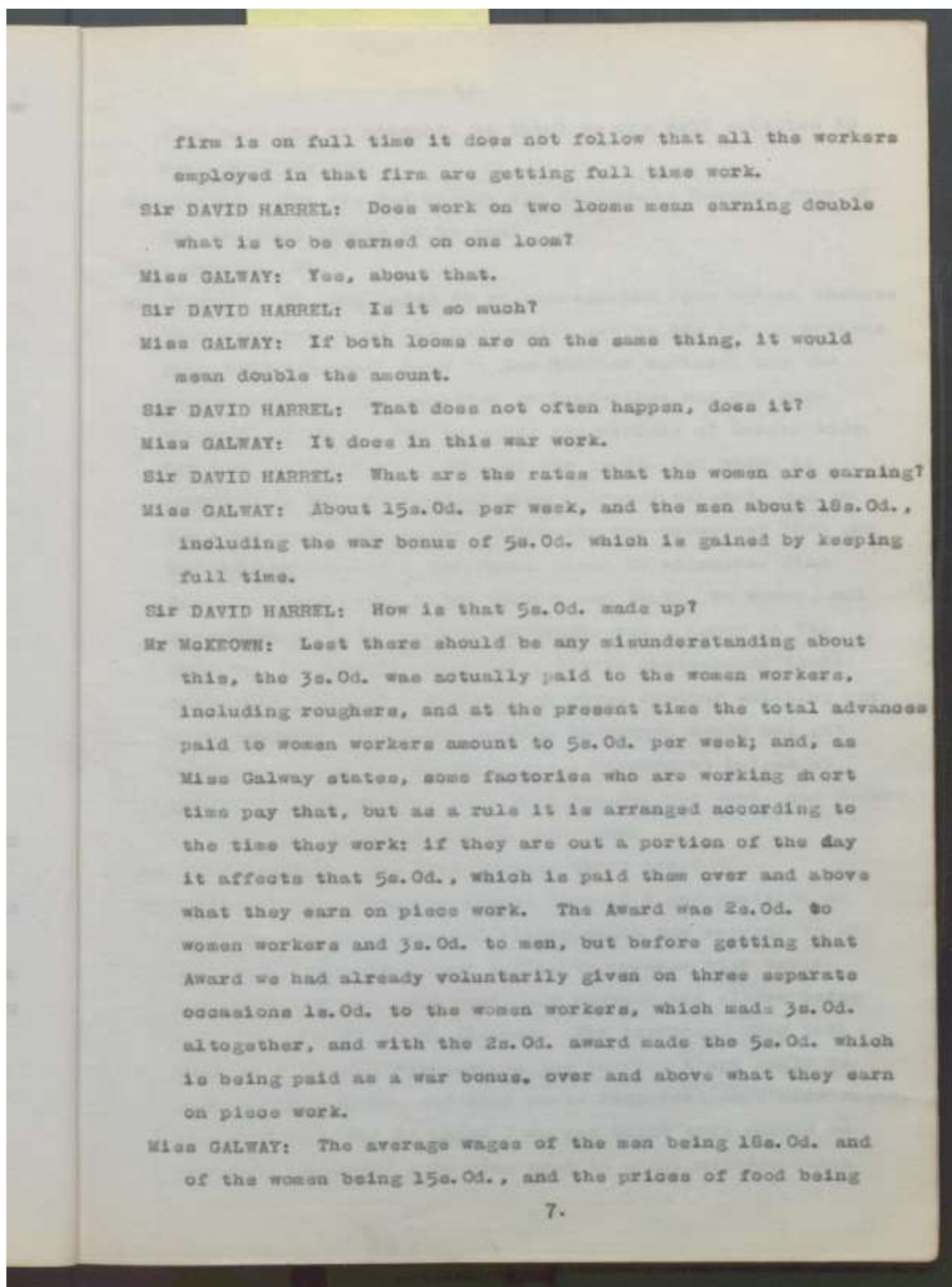
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Flax Spinners' Association and Power Loom Manufacturers' Association and the Textile Operatives Society of Ireland (TOSI) and Ulster Weavers and Winders (Lurgan District). Minutes of Proceedings before Committee of Production (28th August 1917). Image 6 of 8. PRONI Reference: D2088/27/1

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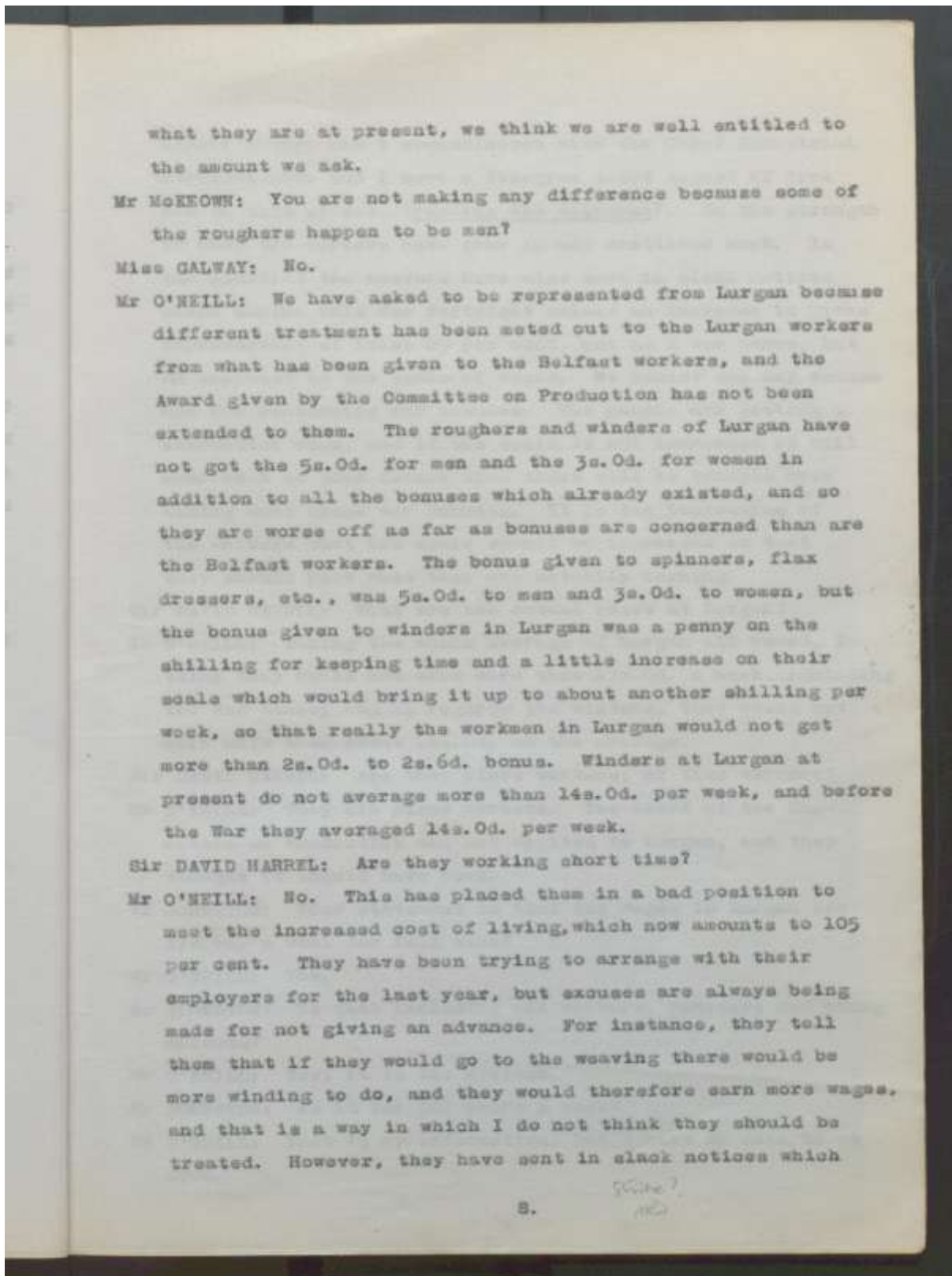
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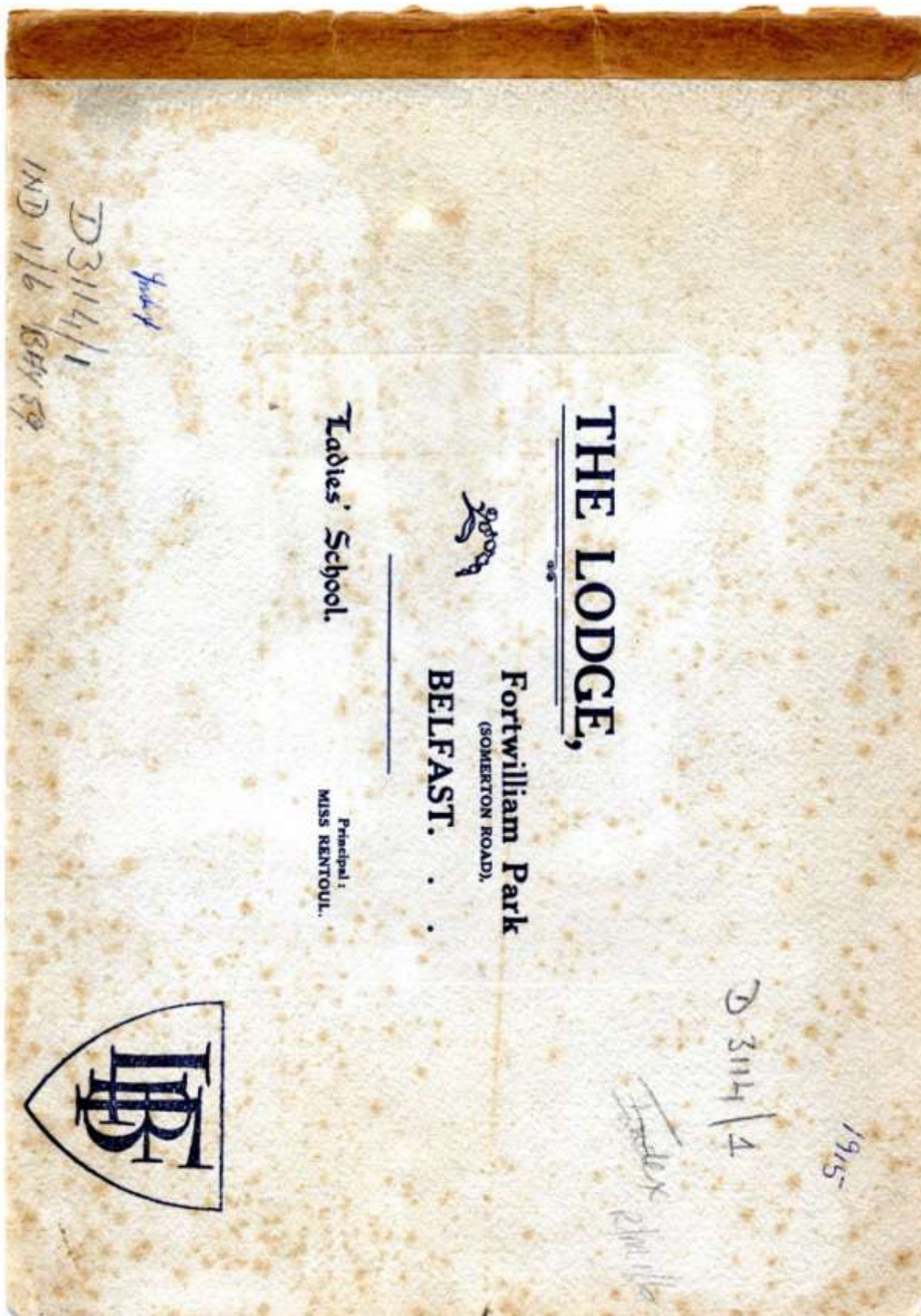
Flax Spinners' Association and Power Loom Manufacturers' Association and the Textile Operatives Society of Ireland (TOSI) and Ulster Weavers and Winders (Lurgan District). Minutes of Proceedings before Committee of Production (28th August 1917). Image 8 of 8. PRONI Reference: D2088/27/1



Photographs of factory workers, Boon, Alexander & Co.Ltd. (c.1920s) PRONI Reference:

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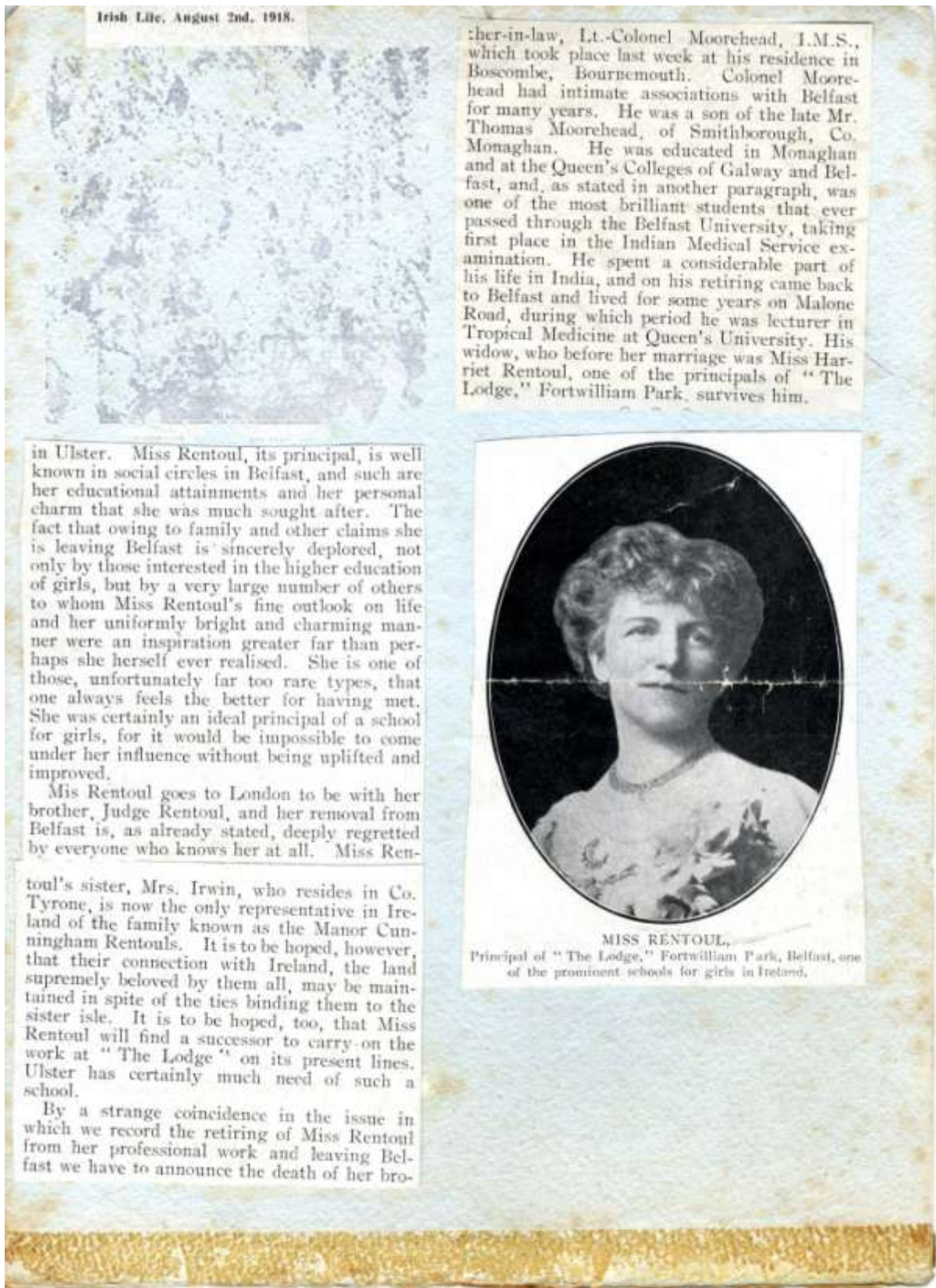
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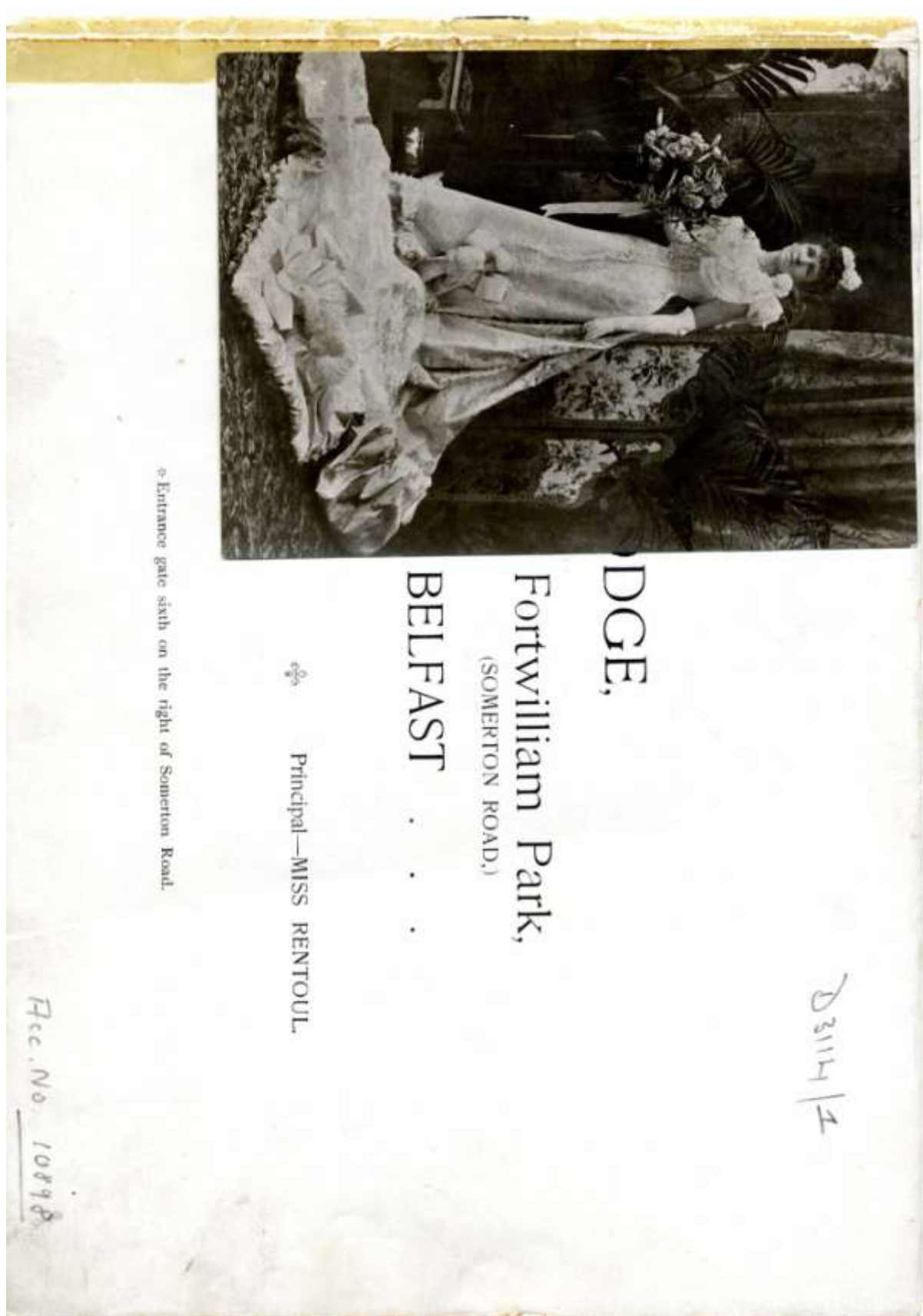
Printed prospectus of The Lodge Ladies School, Belfast (1915). Image 1 of 11. PRONI Reference: D3114/1

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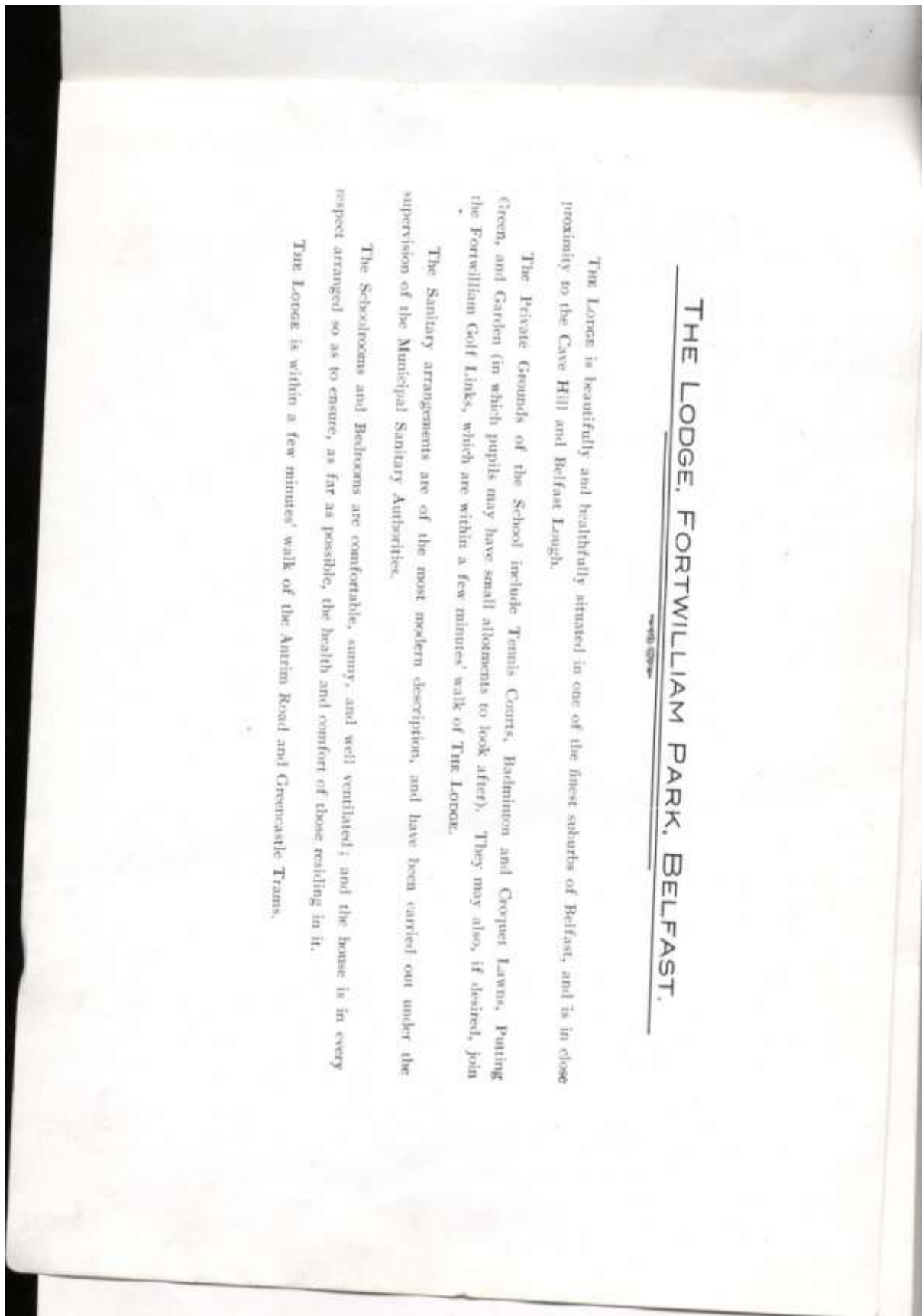
Printed prospectus of The Lodge Ladies School, Belfast (1915). Image 2 of 11. PRONI Reference: D3114/1



Printed prospectus of The Lodge Ladies School, Belfast (1915). *Image 3 of 11.* PRONI Reference: D3114/1

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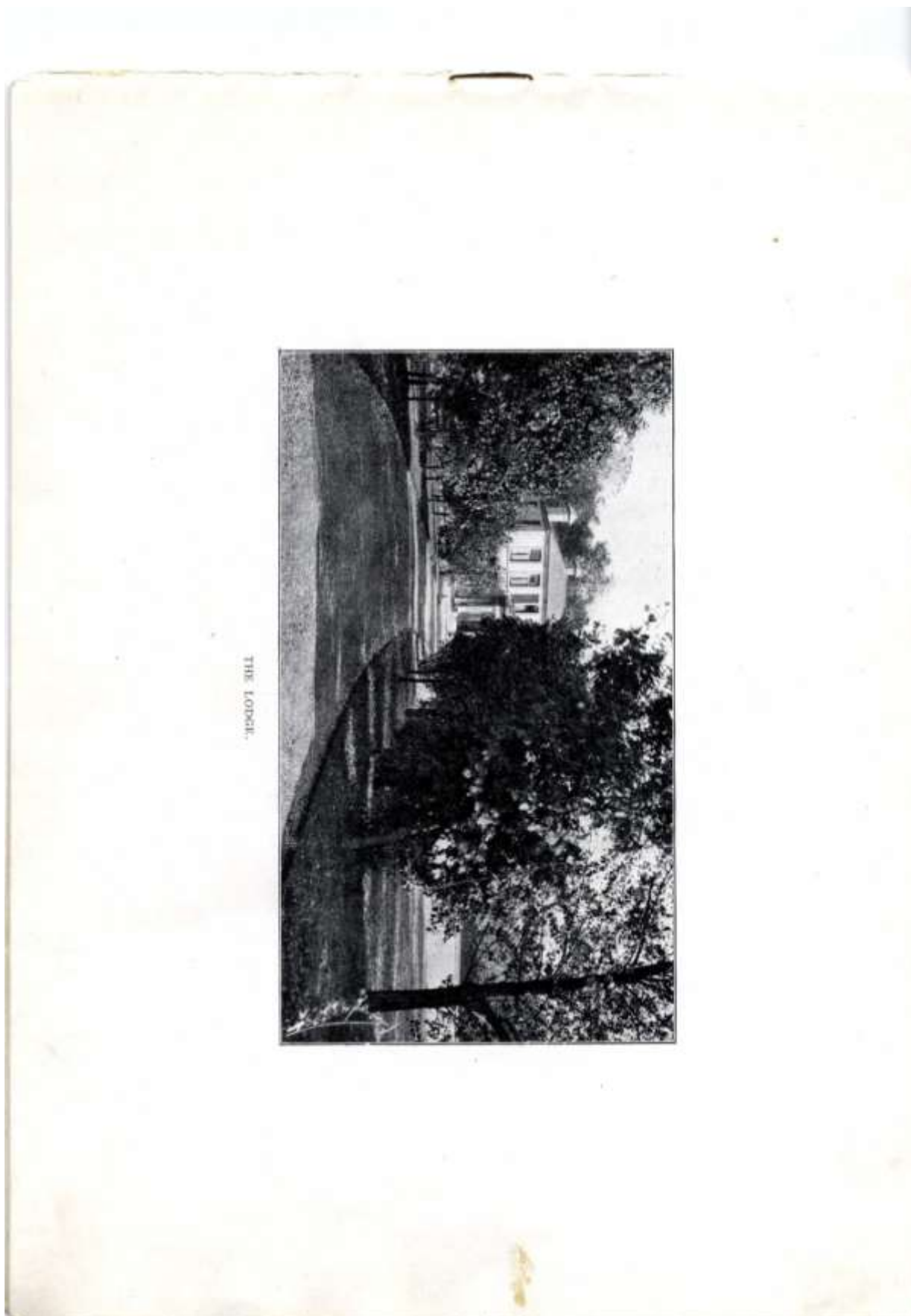
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Printed prospectus of The Lodge Ladies School, Belfast (1915). *Image 4 of 11.* PRONI Reference: D3114/1

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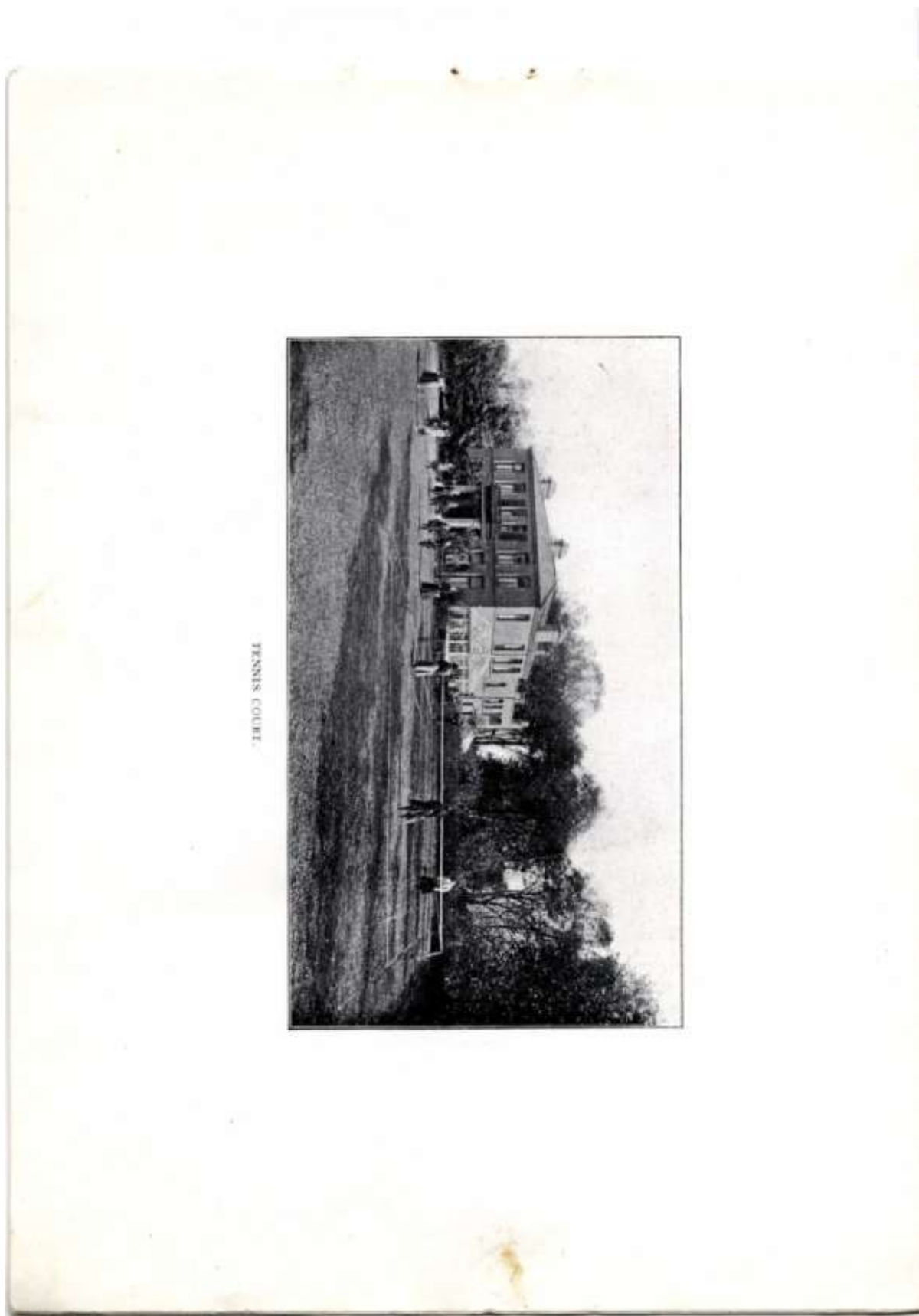
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Printed prospectus of The Lodge Ladies School, Belfast (1915). Image 6 of 11. PRONI Reference: D3114/1

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Printed prospectus of The Lodge Ladies School, Belfast (1915). Image 8 of 11. PRONI Reference:

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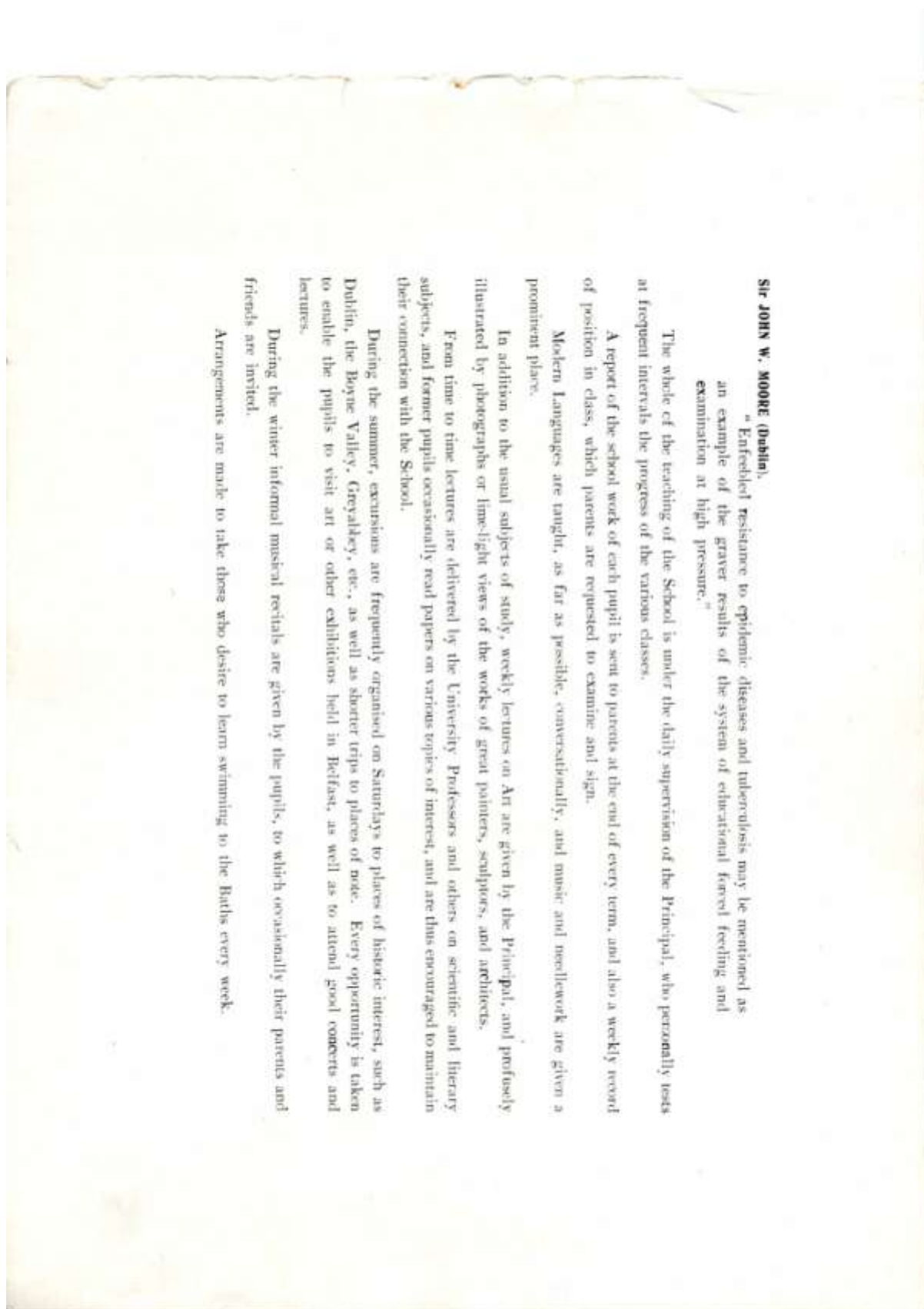
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Printed prospectus of The Lodge Ladies School, Belfast (1915). Image 10 of 11. PRONI Reference:

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Sir JOHN W. MOORE (Dublin).

"Entirely resistance to epidemic diseases and tuberculosis may be mentioned as an example of the graver results of the system of educational forest feeding and examination at high pressure."

The whole of the teaching of the School is under the daily supervision of the Principal, who personally tests at frequent intervals the progress of the various classes.

A report of the school work of each pupil is sent to parents at the end of every term, and also a weekly record of position in class, which parents are requested to examine and sign.

Modern Languages are taught, as far as possible, conversationally, and music and needlework are given a prominent place.

In addition to the usual subjects of study, weekly lectures on Art are given by the Principal, and profusely illustrated by photographs or lime-light views of the works of great painters, sculptors, and architects.

From time to time lectures are delivered by the University Professors and others on scientific and literary subjects, and former pupils occasionally read papers on various topics of interest, and are thus encouraged to maintain their connection with the School.

During the summer, excursions are frequently organised on Saturdays to places of historic interest, such as Dublin, the Boyne Valley, Greystock, etc., as well as shorter trips to places of note. Every opportunity is taken to enable the pupils to visit art or other exhibitions held in Belfast, as well as to attend good concerts and lectures.

During the winter informal musical recitals are given by the pupils, to which occasionally their parents and friends are invited.

Arrangements are made to take those who desire to learn swimming to the Baths every week.

Printed prospectus of The Lodge Ladies School, Belfast (1915). *Image 11 of 11.* PRONI Reference:

1

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It was my privilege to be educated at The Lodge, Fort-William Park, Belfast. Looking back over the years it was a very different establishment from modern schools as at that time not many girls were taking their place in careers in public life.

The school had originally been at Cliftonville - it was also called The Lodge, and it had been established by the Misses Reutoul, members of a family distinguished by eminent ministers of religion and in the legal profession.

When I went there in 1912, Miss Lizzie Reutoul was the principal. As a child I regarded her with awe which turned to deep affection as the years passed and I came under her influence in the senior classes, many of which she took herself.

She did not approve of public exams such as 'the Inter-mediate', so we were spared the strains and anxieties of present-day pupils, but we were expected to give a good account of ourselves in the term exams.

There were a few resident teachers, including

Manuscript by Mrs Eileen A Moore, describing her recollections of The Lodge, Belfast (1984).

Image 1 of 3. PRONI Reference: D3712/1

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12
The mademoiselles who came for a year to teach us French; and others came daily for music, singing, elocution, painting and drawing, etc.

Miss Reutoul had previously taken groups of girls to the continent to visit and appreciate art in famous galleries and cathedrals, but in any time she had discontinued these trips. Instead on Wednesday afternoons we had "Art lectures" on Sculpture, Painting and Architecture, often illustrated by lantern slides.

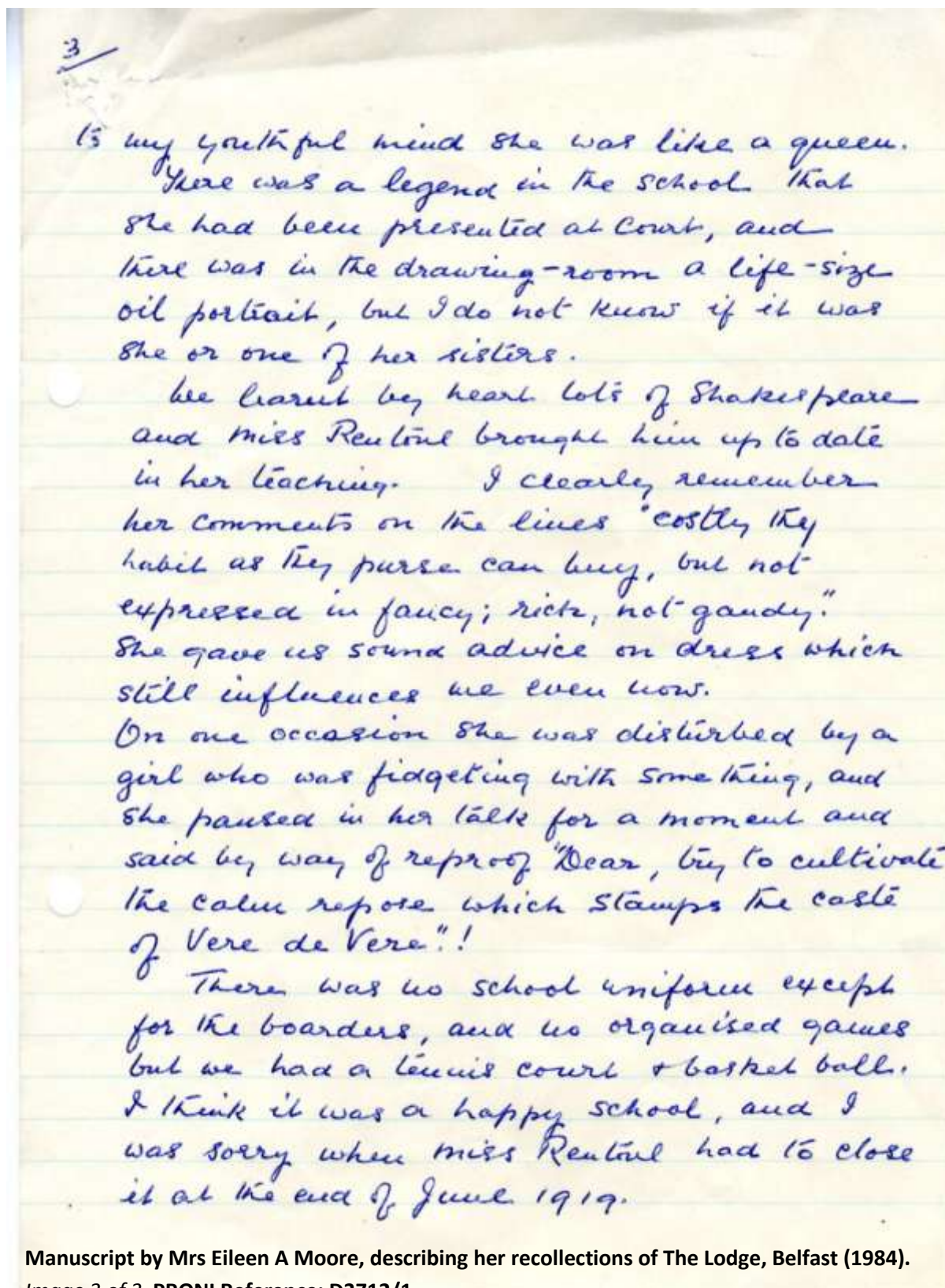
I still have copious notes of these lectures which have been used by my granddaughter at Q.U.B.

Every girl had a Judgement Book, in which she entered the marks she had received in each subject during the week, also any bad marks for conduct.

On Friday afternoons the books were handed in and on Monday morning Miss Reutoul went to each class to return them and to make comments where needed. She had signed them, and then they had also to be signed by a parent.

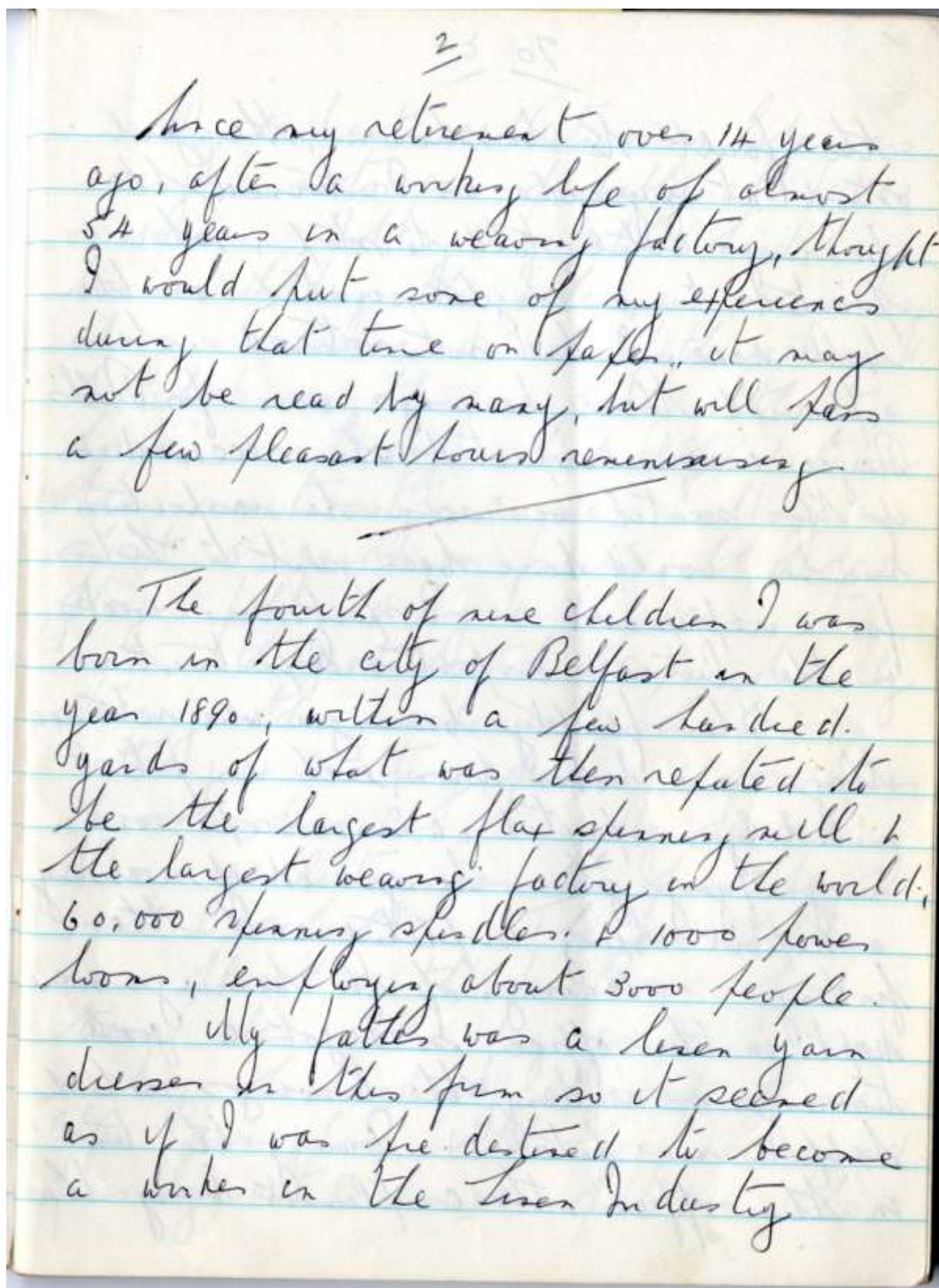
She was always beautifully dressed, and

Manuscript by Mrs Eileen A Moore, describing her recollections of The Lodge, Belfast (1984).
Image 2 of 3. PRONI Reference: D3712/1



Manuscript by Mrs Eileen A Moore, describing her recollections of The Lodge, Belfast (1984).

Image 3 of 3. PRONI Reference: D3712/1



Memoirs of Working Life of William Topping 1903 – 1956 - Extracts from Book 1 – (20th January – 10th February 1971). Image 1 of 15. PRONI Reference: D3134/1

3

My earliest recollection in life was seeing a motor car, probably about 1893 or 1894. Holding my father's hand, a brother holding the other, we were walking along a main road, when father exclaimed, "O! look see this car coming without a horse". Everyone had stopped to see this monstrosity; a man walking so about 5 yards in front with a red flag, followed by a large car, two men with great coats & caps, slowly steering this mechanical vehicle, rattling & emitting fumes, a forerunner of our modern car. My second clear recollection was the first day I went to school. The new children were placed in the front row of a tiered class room, my companion was a boy who lived adjacent to me, Alpe Cunningham, with whom I remained friendly until he was lost in the

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(disaster) 4
"Tateric" in the year 1912
My progress was rapid I did
fairly well in all subjects, except
singing, when this lesson was in
progress about five of us were given
a card of sins, which we seldom did,
& put outside the class room until
the lesson was over. The ~~three~~
main subjects consisted of the three
'R's' Reading, Writing & Rithmetic, with
composition, drawing, parsing & grammar.
I passed "out of books" at the
age of twelve into sixth second class,
which was taken by the head master.
This class was only a name the
work merely revision; with five pupils
three girls & two boys, I can still
remember the names, we could do almost
as we wished & our absence from school
was ignored. When a few weeks over
13 years old I applied & got a job.

Memoirs of Working Life of William Topping 1903 – 1956 - Extracts from Book 1 – (20th January – 10th February 1971). Image 3 of 15. PRONI Reference: D3134/1

5

in the afore mentioned form I applied for my educational certificate, to prove I was educated to National School standard; the head master had no option except to grant this, altho' he remarked that he thought I was going to be a monitor with the view to teaching. I have wondered since, did I lose my vocation.

My first day at work was uneventful I was quick to learn my duties which you will note as you read were multifarious. My day duties were in the telephone office to attend an inside switch, also answer the exchange. Each department had to be connected from this office to the department required, I had also to answer the bell from the office manager to deliver messages throughout the firm.

This necessitated my absence from

Memoirs of Working Life of William Topping 1903 – 1956 - Extracts from Book 1 – (20th January – 10th February 1971). Image 4 of 15. PRONI Reference: D3134/1

6

The switch board from 10 to 15 minutes; during this time my duties were done by a typist who worked in the office. I was also responsible for indexing letter copy books which had been copied in a letter press the previous evening & each evening I had to collect "key" ledgers from various offices & lodge them in the storeroom & return them before nine o'clock the following morning. But this was not all. I carried the Manchester mail bag to & from the Fleetwood boat (now the Heysham). This bag was used for yarn & cloth samples & letters, which I understood was cheaper & quicker. After the mail service & was used by various linen firms. To collect this bag I had to leave home at 8.15 each morning to have it lodged in the "Board Room" before 9.0 A.M. & I had 25 minutes

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7

walk to the boat + 20 minutes walk
to the farm. The reverse procedure
at night, at times I did not receive
the bag until 6.15 + not return home
until 7 o'Clock. A minimum working
week of $56\frac{1}{2}$ hours for four shillings
per week (brought for one day's writing)

20.1.1971

I remained in this job until a
few months over 14 years old when I
became eligible to become an
employee in the manufacturing part
of the farm. However a child could
start half time when over the age of
12 years, alternate days at school +
work until attaining the age of 14
years. The school was on the
farm premises + I understood the
teacher paid by them. They received
2/6 per week + had to keep on working
days, the usual hours, which were 6.30

Memoirs of Working Life of William Topping 1903 – 1956 - Extracts from Book 1 – (20th January – 10th February 1971). Image 6 of 15. PRONI Reference: D3134/1

8

A.M till 6.0 P.M., with 8.15 to 9.0 for breakfast + 1.0 to 1.45 for dinner. + 12.30 P.M. on Saturday. a total of 30 hours for "half times" + 55½ hours for full time employees.

Holidays consisted of 2 days at Easter, 2 days in July + 2 days at Christmas, no holiday pay.

One anecdote I witnessed which I shall never forget, but a few words of explanation will be necessary.

In the weaving factory we had three minutes grace each morning, due to most of the ^{men} being on piece rate, only receiving what they earned, mill workers were mostly on set pay, so the gate was shut promptly on time.

One morning early in Spring, cold & dry, I was very late + running to "beat the gate", in front of me was a little girl a "half time", bare

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9

feet + a little shawl round her
shoulders, she reached the gate when
it was about a foot from ~~closure~~^{closure}
+ endeavoured to go in, the gate man
pushed her out + the last I saw she
was crying + on her way home.
"The good old days"
My father was now foreman
in the weaving factory +
arranged that I should start there
with the view to serving an apprentice
ship to the Danish Textiles (now
classified ~~Danish~~^{Danish} Loom Overlookers).
I was quite happy with this
arrangement, as when passing through
the weaving shed was intrigued seeing
the pattern being woven into the cloth.
This meant starting work at
6.30 A.M. compensated by an increase
of 50% to six shillings per week.
The hours were no longer for

Memoirs of Working Life of William Topping 1903 – 1956 - Extracts from Book 1 – (20th January – 10th February 1971). Image 8 of 15. PRONI Reference: D3134/1

13

of clothing. A few years later this was enclosed & converted into a cloak room.

My next "promotion", no extra pay, was learning to make up & charge pattern cards, this was easy to learn with the pre. knowledge I received. when cutting & lacing cards. It was heavy work & I was light, used to & stores in weight, but soon learned. (~~the handle work~~) how to handle weight without undue strain. The job meant getting the new pattern from the store, removing existing pattern from the loom for replacement & returning to store.

About this time a large order was received from the Royal Mail Steam Packet Co. for all kinds of Danish Cloth Table cloths, napkins, lettered sheetings, lunch towels, glass cloths etc all with

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14

The names of initials woven into the cloth. I still always remember the initials R.M.S.P. Co. as this order was the means of getting me started to serve an apprenticeship proper.

My pay was now 8/- per week & looking back it was well earned.

The first year I had to oil looms & overhaul machines, tie broken harness cords & assist the journey men. Ten hours per day & some days not getting time even to go to "Parliament". A lot of overtime was necessary to get the looms ready for this order, 52 were required. As a concession, as I was not yet 18 years to qualify, was given the option of working overtime.

In some months I worked from 6.30 AM to 10.30 PM & Saturday to 5.0 PM, was were paid time & a

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15

quarter per overtime, so I received
ten pence per night which increased
my pay to 13/- per week of 80 hours;
no deductions then & I was just
over 16 years old. Lighting was a
problem, gas was used; this meant
using flexible tubes to convey the
gas from a lighting point to the job,
which was some times ~~over~~ overhead;
to this day I wonder how sewers pipes
were prevented, minor one certainly
but never any serious damage.

26.1.1971

In this respect one of my duties
was to light the gas jets for the
booms each evening, also during the
winter in the morning, I was supposed
to start at 6.20 AM & to have the
'jet' jets lit before starting time
A small oil lamp was used
with a reservoir reservoir & wick.

Memoirs of Working Life of William Topping 1903 – 1956 - Extracts from Book 1 – (20th January – 10th February 1971). Image 11 of 15. PRONI Reference: D3134/1

19

I sent me for a tool, it took a few minutes, & on my return the fault was rectified & no explanation given.

About this time, second year apprenticeship, I had to attend the Technical School (now the Municipal College of Technology) for theory in Linn Weaving. It was a special class for apprentices called 'The Power-loom Course', & attendance was one night per week 7.30 till 9.30. We received instruction in loom speeds, yarn counts pegging Dobby patterns & weaving them on hand looms. The full course last three years, the final year chiefly confined to Danish problems in which I was keenly interested. The results of the examinations & attendances were sent to the various firms. The rule of the firm, in which I was employed.

Memoirs of Working Life of William Topping 1903 – 1956 - Extracts from Book 1 – (20th January – 10th February 1971). Image 12 of 15. PRONI Reference: D3134/1

20
was to refund (paid by us for a second class pass & double the fee for a first class pass, I was fortunate in getting double fees each year, which was a gold half sovereign, more than a weeks wages. I decided to join the linen weaving course & study for the City & Guilds Certificate, to do this I had to pass an educational examination & receive over 70% pass marks, I passed with little effort. This class was three evenings per week: 7.30 till 9.30; a big strain for me, as I was rising at 6.0 AM & working a ten hour day & the home work was difficult. However I completed the session with only one evening absent & received a first class in the examination. This year my apprenticeship was completed so thought I was qualified

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21

to take charge of a share of looms without further education. I have since regretted this decision, as it might have helped me in my future career.

10.12.1971

On completing my apprenticeship I received an increase of 4/- per week which brought my wages up to 16/- per week, but I only received this three times. An advertisement appeared in the press for a Danish Technician & the assistant manager in the firm taught me in the "Tech", so took a chance: altho only in my twenty third year got the job.

The week I was due to leave the results of the Technical Exam. were sent to the firm & we were summoned to the managers office to receive the results & refund of fees. My name was top of

Memoirs of Working Life of William Topping 1903 – 1956 - Extracts from Book 1 – (20th January – 10th February 1971). Image 14 of 15. PRONI Reference: D3134/1

22

the best"; before the director gave me a golden sovereign, he said he understood I was leaving, & was sorry they had not a vacancy as they wanted to keep lady like me, but the first vacancy I had only to apply, if I wanted to return to the employment of the company. I soon settled as a journeyman, I got a good apprentice who kept me posted in the various looms & weavers. The work was different to the part-fun, I had a good memory & was accustomed to hard work & seemed to give satisfaction. My first weeks wages as a journeyman were £2.6.9, no deductions & paid in gold. I was a proud man as an ex-greener or journeyman wages were only 38/- or 39/- per week.

Memoirs of Working Life of William Topping 1903 – 1956 - Extracts from Book 1 – (20th January – 10th February 1971). Image 15 of 15. PRONI Reference: D3134/1

29.1.1976
D3134

1/ I was born at 36. Upper Meadow St.
Belfast on the 29th May 1890 the fourth
of nine children (this street is often in the
news at present) It was a good working
class street houses almost new, the
usual 2 down & 3 up rooms ~~on~~ an attic
holding 2 beds, the third at a perch.
5 [My childhood was happy not
many luxuries but sound food & plenty.
We always, on birthdays, had
a plum pudding boiled in a large
pot over the kitchen fire the only
means of heat & cooking. not even a
gas range. Father rose every morning
at 5.0 & had to light the fire &
boil the kettle before having a 'cappi'
& start work at 6.30. Saturday
was pay day & we each got $\frac{1}{2}$ ^p to
spend, much thought be^{ing} given to this
problem. Simple pleasures the
only we knew. The only day trip we
had was the Sunday school excursion

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Image 1 of 6. PRONI reference: D3134/1

2

held in June each year usually to
Newcastle or Whitehead by train, costing
24 pence is a shilling according to the
prices of the school & for this we
had two 'refreshments' tea & a bag with
4 hrs ⁱⁿ at each a real treat! returning
tired but happy for another year

5 Father had no time to take us for
a field as his holidays were 2 days each
Easter, July & Christmas Easter Monday
we usually went to the Belleme
Yardens, then at Glesgorney, where
there were hobby horses, swivel backs
& swings all costing one penny to use

This necessitated going by horse
tram costing 1^p + $\frac{1}{2}$ ^p for children to
Chester Park, where we had to change
to the Whitewell horse tram for
Glesgorney (~~an~~), an open one deck vehicle

That was all the outings we
had in childhood] 1903

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3

2/3 The year 1894 was a momentous one for me for that was the year I was enrolled, at 4 years of age as a pupil in Hillman National School, situated in Upper Meadow St & extending to Hillman St. along Upper St, hence its name, altho' it was better known to parents & children as "Hanna's School".

Why 'Hanna's School'? Back school under the National School Board was linked with a convenient Church - Hillman with St Enock's Pres. Church, Carlisle Lucas, whose Minister, Rev. H. Hanna became school manager.

6 He died in 1892 & it may have been unofficially named after him, or more likely, in my opinion, the children seeing Rev. Hanna so often assumed he owned the school, it remained so called as far as I remember until I left in the year 1903. [The first thing we learned in school was the

8 (was)

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Image 3 of 6. PRONI reference: D3134/1

4

alphabet, first the Capital + then
the small letters. A scroll was
8 put on an easel + the teacher pointing
to the letter 'A' with a case (no
teacher was without one), until after
constant repetition it was, or should,
have been memorised + so on until
the alphabet was completed, then
the small letters followed.
The testing time followed, each
letter at random was touched with
the case + the one asked said the
letter, crude perhaps but effective so
the alphabet was soon mastered.
A leaf on the scroll was turned over +
simple two letter words were displayed +
the same method used, repetition.
The school was two storied
Upstairs + down stairs to the
pupils. The ground floor
(was)

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Image 4 of 6. PRONI reference: D3134/1

5

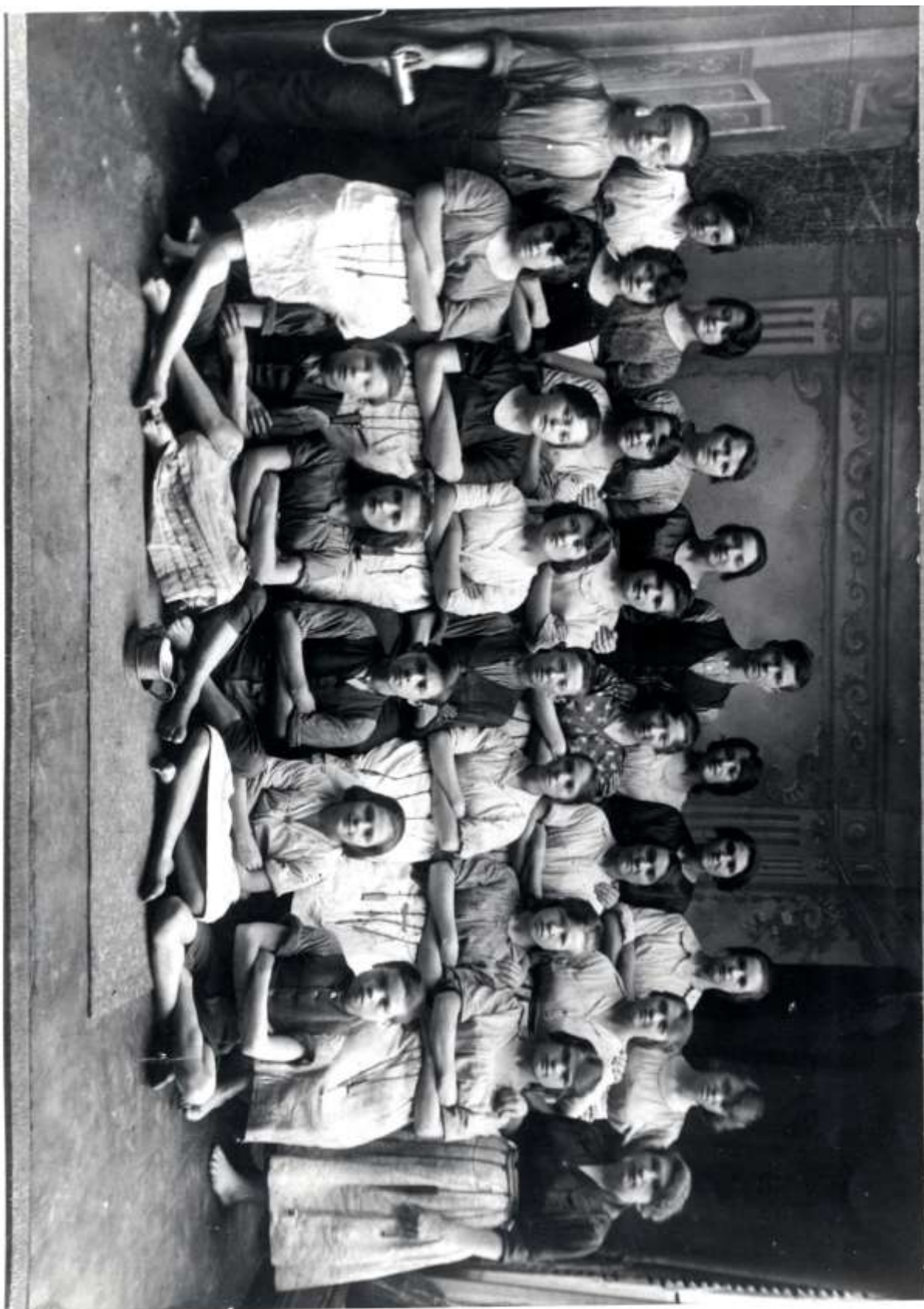
was the junior section + had five classes, infants - low first - high first + second, after passing through second + able to read + write + do simple sums the pupils were transferred upstairs to be taught "higher mathematics", "advanced English" also free hand drawing, etc. Terminating in sixth class as far as one could go in N.S. education.

There was no encouragement to any further study altho' the head master, when I asked for my leaving certificate, remarked that he thought I was going to remain at school with the view of becoming a monitor, that was taking junior classes to see if I would be suitable for teacher training but no suggestions to help. Discipline was good, the teachers obviously believing in (the)

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Image 5 of 6. PRONI reference: D3134/1

6
The
"adage" "Span the rod & spoil the child",
each teacher had a cane & used it.
One teacher I thought was a
sadist, teachers supplied their own
& this teacher required one frequently
sent the class "hulley" with the penny
to buy it, the shops around the
school always kept a supply in stock
10 I nursed very few days, was
healthy altho' small & thin & the
learning was no trouble
3
York St Glass Co Ltd was
a self contained building extending
the whole length of Henry St, Albany
Wolfe Queen St & down Surber St. &
along York St, it was rebuilt
after the war on the same design.
Now, as built, is occupied by
Gallagher's Ltd. After York St went
into voluntary liquidation, some
"gentlemen" reaped the benefit
9.

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**Photograph of 30 mill workers at Charters Spinning Mill, North Howard Street, Belfast (c.1915).
PRONI Reference: T3494/1**

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