

with your permission, read an extract from the Lord Provost, as follows :—

“The Lord Provost rose and said,—Ladies and gentlemen, it affords me sincere pleasure to see so large and respectable a meeting before me to-night. We are assembled, as you are aware, for the purpose of countenancing and aiding what has been called the Early Closing movement—of giving our support to those whose efforts are directed to diminishing the hours of labor in our shops and warehouses. I am happy to think that, of late years, a very great improvement in this respect has been effected. I believe we are very much indebted for it to that Society under whose auspices we have met this night—I mean the Glasgow Drapers' Early Closing Society. (Cheers.) This Society, although little heard of, has been laboring very assiduously in a quiet and inoffensive way, to bring about that change, which, I believe, is now admitted to be made—a change, beneficial alike to themselves and their employers. (Cheers.) Before the institution of this Society, there appeared to be no fixed hour for the shutting of shops. Ten o'clock was not reckoned too late; and if a customer should drop in even at that hour, although to make a very trifling purchase, the time was very readily prolonged. I ought to mention that a gradual shortening of the hours of labor from that time has taken place. But of late years—I believe, two years ago—an arrangement was made and gone into by all the leading houses in this city, that seven o'clock, for the greater part of the year, should be the hour of closing. This improvement, you may readily suppose, was not obtained without very persevering efforts; and I know that it requires still the watchful attention of this Society to prevent this good rule from being broken through—(applause)—and the old and tiresome system revived. I very greatly approve of the efforts which have been made in this good cause. I very warmly congratulate you on the success which has attended them. I believe that it will be found, that the desire so extensively expressed by the young men of our city, to have a little more time at their disposal, did not proceed—as some have been uncharitable enough to suppose—from any wish to spend their time in idleness and dissipation, but it originated in an earnest wish to avail themselves of the numerous means of improvement which now have been obtained among us. (Cheers.) I have no doubt that the most active men in promoting this early closing movement, have been those who are most zealous in their masters' service, and who are most likely to make good use of the time afforded to them. I believe that the response which has been made to this wish on the part of the employers, has been in no churlish or reluctant spirit; but they have consented to it willingly, from a kind and considerate wish to promote the benefit of those with whom they are so intimately connected. I am certain that the benefit is mutual—benefits that I sincerely hope that, on no pretence, will these new arrangements be disturbed; and I think it becomes all of us to do what we can to prevent such a great evil.”