From the *Transactions* of the
Bristol and Gloucestershire Archaeological Society

The Petitions of the Weavers and Clothiers of Gloucestershire in 1756

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1954, Vol. 73, 216-227

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THE PETITIONS OF THE WEAVERS AND CLOTHIERS OF GLOUCESTERSHIRE IN 1756

by W. E. MINCHINTON

THE year of 1756 was the high-water mark of workers' activity in the Gloucestershire woollen industry in the 18th century. But though the events have been often described[1] the petitions presented by the weavers and clothiers to the justices of the peace in the autumn of 1756 have never been reprinted since they appeared in the pamphlet issued in support of the clothiers' case in 1757.[2] Then the petitions were printed without the names of the signatories.[3] Yet these petitions deserve to be reprinted because they are both extremely articulate statements of the opposing points of view.

The circumstances which gave rise to the petitions may be briefly stated. In 1728 the system of wage regulation by the justices had been revived and then had once again fallen into disuse. A period of poor trade in the mid-fifties led to appeals by the weavers for the revival of this system. On 23 July 1755 'the poor weavers' of Horsley petitioned a local justice to enforce the scheme, submitting a few weeks later, on 22 August 1755 'a table or scheme of the rates of wages to be paid to the woolen broadcloth weavers.'[4] And the weavers, obviously with

[1] W. A. S. Hewins, *English Trade and Finance*, pp. 118–25; J. L. and B. Hammond, *The Skilled Labourer*, pp. 157–9; E. Lipson, *Economic History of England*, III, 266–71; and W. E. Minchinton, 'The beginnings of trade unionism in the Gloucestershire woollen industry', in *Trans. B.G.A.S.*, LXX (1951), 126–41.

[2] *A State of the Case, and a Narrative of Facts relating to the late Commotions, and Rising of the Weavers in the County of Gloucester*, 1757. Gloucester Public Library. Cited hereafter as *A State of the Case*.

[3] The present transcription of the petitions is from the original manuscript petitions in the Gloucestershire Quarter Sessions Records, Michaelmas 1756, in the Shire Hall, Gloucester.

[4] These petitions are to be found in the Clifford Papers recently deposited in the Shire Hall, Gloucester. I am indebted to Mr Irvine Gray for calling my attention to them.

expert advice, sought and secured the passage of an act (29 Geo. II, c.33) restating the principle of wage assessment by the justices.[1] They followed up their legislative success by sending the following petition to the magistrates:

Gloucester Shire . . . To the Worshipfull The Justices of the peace for the said County at their General Michaelmas Quarter Sessions Assembled the 5th October 1756. . . .

The Humble petition of the Severall Woollen Broad Cloath Weavers residing in the Severall Parishes of Hampton Bisley Stroud Painswick Wootton Underedge Dursley Horsley Kings Standly & Rodborough on behalf of themselves and all the other Woollen Broad Cloath Weavers residing within the County of Gloucester.

Sheweth

That the Wages of Woollen Broad Cloath Weavers in the said County being unsettled and great Complaints being made of the Hardshipps and Oppressures which the Weavers laboured under thereby this Court of their Easter Quarter Sessions of the peace in the first year of his present Majestys Reign—Approving of a report of Nathaniel Stephens, Thomas Cook and Charles Yeat Esqrs., three of his Majestys Justices of the peace for the said County (dated the 14th Day of February then last) touching the Wages of Woollen Broad Cloath Weavers in the said County in pursuance of an order of reference made for that purpose and having such Conference and Consideration of all necessary Circumstances as by law is directed touching Weavers Wages did limit rate order and appoint the Wages of Woollen Broad Cloath Weavers for the future (untill alteration by proper Authority) to be and to be paid according to the Number of Hundred of threads contained in each respective chain[2] of Woollen Broad Cloath and according to the respective proportions and sums rated and Expressed in the Table or Scheme of rates for Wages subjoined to the said Order and which Table or Scheme of rates for wages is also hereunto Subjoined.[3]

[1] From and after 26 June 1756 wage rates were to be made by the justices at their Michaelmas General or Quarter Sessions. *House of Commons Journals* XXVII, 730.

[2] The chain is the warp.

[3] The rates settled in 1728 were as follows:

Hundreds of threads	4–5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
Wages per yard (pence)	3	4	4½	5¼	6	6½	7¼	8	9¼
Hundreds of threads	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22
Wages per yard (pence)	10½	12	13¼	14½	16	17¼	20	21½	24

A State of the Case, p. 5.

That the Weavers (greatly pleased themselves with the Attention that this Court was so good to give to their greivances) were well satisfied with the said rates and readily acquiesced with the said order hoping that the Clothiers (who are their Employers) would also on their part have Conformed thereto and paid due obedience to the said order and to the Authority of this Court.

But so far from any such compliance that the Clothiers treated the said order with the Greatest Contempt not any ways complying therewith well knowing that as this Court [would] not Inflict any penalty on the non-Conformance therewith and that the Weavers could not bear the Expence of Applying to this Court every Breach thereof the good intent of the said order could not be answered nor the Unhappy Weavers be any ways relieved thereby.

That their hardships and sufferings have since Increased by the continued oppressions of the Clothiers and the great reduction of their Wages Insomuch that the Weavers cannot gett above four pence for Sixteen Hours labour upon many sorts of Work whereby their familys are thrown upon and become burthensome to the Parishes, they were induced to lay their Greivances before the Honourable House of Parliament who (for their relief and without any opposition from the Clothiers) were pleased to pass an Act in the last Sessions of Parliament and in the 29th year of his present Majestys Reign Intituled An Act to render more Effectual an Act passed in the 12th Year of the Reign of his late Majesty King George to prevent unlawful combinations of workmen imployed in the Woollen Manufacture and for better payment of their wages and also an Act passed in the thirteenth year of the Reign of his said late Majesty for the better regulation of the Woollen Manufacture and for preventing disputes among the persons concerned therein and for Limiting a time for prosecuting for the forfeiture appointed by the aforesaid Act in case of the payment of the workmen's Wages in any other Manner than in money[1] Whereby it is (amongstother things) Enacted that from and after the 24th of June 1756 it shall be lawfull for the Justices of the Peace Assembled at any of their General or Quarter Sessions held next after Michaelmas yearly to make rates for the payment of wages to Weavers and others Employed in the Woollen Manufactures According to the Number of yards that the Chains are laid upon the Warping Barrs and not otherwise which rates shall continue for one year from the making thereof and that the said Justices shall yearly in their said General or Quarter Sessions either continue such rates for another year or alter them in such Manner as they shall think fitt always observing the directions of the said Act for that purpose, and if any maker of mixt medly or white Broad Cloath

[1] *i.e.* payment in 'truck' or kind.

shall not pay to the Weaver or Weavers imployed by such maker According to such rates every person so offending is to forfeit and pay the sume of 5*li* to be recovered as therein is mentioned.

That the Weavers are not only greatly distressed by the Hardships and oppressions aforesaid but the Clothiers have also laid the Chain four or five yards longer on the Barr and instead of paying the Weaver in Stopp list Cloth two Shillings a Cloth for stopping (being the usual price) they first reduced it to one shilling and now refuse to pay any thing tho' the stopping Occasions the Cloth being one fifth longer in Weaving.

The great hardships which the Weavers thus groan under and the Extream poverty to which many of them are reduced thereby calling for immediate Relief they are induced to lay their Case before your Worships and humbly intreat you will please to take the same in consideration by making of rates for the payment of Wages to Weavers and others Employed in the Woollen Manufactures in Pursuance and According to the directions of the said Act of Parliament and to make such order therein As to your Worships shall seem meet. And your Petitioners as in duty Bound

Shall for ever pray &c.

William Brokenborrough
The marke & name of
Grevill Hunter
Gabriel Minton

The marke of
Thomas x Witts
Samuel Moor
Philip Elliss

The marke of
Edward x Wright
The marke of
James x Nicholls

Taken by surprise by the weavers' petition for legislation, the clothiers neglected to oppose the bill and when it became law, at first acted individually to evade its provisions. 'Some clothiers, apprized of the weavers' notions, and that a few of the justices had given them encouragement, drew up a paper for their weavers voluntarily to sign, which many of them did; wherein they acknowledged themselves well satisfied with their then wages, and agreed to work upon the same terms as long as they worked for their respective masters.'[1] In some cases this action produced threatening letters, but in one instance, that of the clothier Joseph Ellis, the weavers went further. They

[1] *A State of the Case*, p. 6.

approached one of the magistrates, John Stephens for advice and he informed them 'that unless these contracts were put a stop to, their act of Parliament was of no value.' Upon this the weavers brought Ellis' mill to a standstill, informing him 'that the justices were on their side.' To forestall further action on the part of the weavers, Mr Ellis thereupon destroyed in their presence the contract which had been signed by his workers.

Thus the clothiers had sustained both a legislative and a judicial defeat. Concerted action was clearly required and the clothiers therefore drew up a counter-petition or memorial which they presented to the justices of the peace at the same time as the Weavers' petition. It bore seventy-three signatures and many of the important clothier families were represented: the Pauls, Peaches, Clutterbucks and Cambridges of Woodchester, the Wathens and Dallaways of Brimscombe, the Tayloes of Bisley, the Tippetts, Adeys and Phelps of Dursley and the Holbrows of Uley. But because the petitioners were drawn predominantly from the Stroud valleys, several well-known names are missing—the Purnells of Dursley, the Lloyds of Uley and the Sheppards of Minchinhampton. Despite these omissions, the petition gives a fuller list than is otherwise available of the clothiers engaged in woollen manufacture in Gloucestershire in the middle of the 18th century. The clothiers' petition, a lengthier document than that of the weavers', reads as follows:

A MEMORIAL

Humbly addressed to the Worshipful Bench of Justices Assembled at the Booth Hall in the City of Gloucester at their general Quarter Sessions held next after Michaelmas for the County of Gloucester The year of our Lord One Thousand Seven hundred and fifty six.

WHEREAS by an Act made the last Session of Parliament intitled an Act to render more effectual an Act passed in the Twelfth Year of the Reign of his late Majesty King George to prevent unlawfull Combinations of Workmen employed in the Woollen Manufactures and for better payment of their Wages: and also an Act passed in the Thirteenth Year of the Reign of his said late Majesty for the better regulation of the Woollen Manufacture; and for preventing disputes among the Persons concerned therein, and for limiting a Time for prosecuting for

the forfeiture appointed by the aforesaid Act, in case of the payment of the Workmens Wages, in any other manner than in Money. It is enacted that it shall be lawfull for you his Majestys Justices of the Peace for the County of Gloucester Assembled at your Michaelmas Quarter Sessions to make Rates for the Payment of Wages to Weavers and others employed in the Woollen Manufactures according to the number of Yards that the Chains are laid upon the Warping Barrs and not otherwise And according to the Rate of former Acts of Parliament refered to therein; which said Rates shall continue in force for one year from the making them, and are subject to be continued or altered as you shall think fit; And if any maker of mixed medley, or White Broad Cloth shall not pay to the Weaver or Weavers employed by such Makers according to such Rates, every Person so offending, shall forfeitt and pay the sum of five Pounds; The penaltys to be recovered by Action of Debt by any person who shall sue for the same or may be levied by Distress upon conviction before any two or more Justices of the Peace for the County or Place where the offence is committed And all Appeals to be made to the next general or Quarter Sessions and all orders at such general or Quarter Sessions relating to the Premisses are final and not liable to be removed by Certiorari[1] or any other form or Process of Law. We the Principal Clothiers of the County of Gloucester having taken that part of the said Act into Consideration and being convinced of the inexpediency of it, and the Impossibility of puting the same into Execution in an equitable manner Do by these Presents remonstrate against it.

AND FIRST, Because we apprehend that every Law which tends towards raising the Price of Labour, (As it must in the end necessarily advance our Manufactures) will be greatly prejudicial to the Trade of this Nation. Were our Manufactures all consumed at Home it would be of less moment, but as we have to encounter many potent Rivals in forreign Markets, which have grown upon us, (particularly our greatest Enemies the ffrench) who happily for them have already this great advantage over us that Labour is much cheaper in ffrance than here, we cannot but think it would be more commendable in order to preserve our little remaining Trade, that instead of raising our Manufacturies, to which this Law directly tends, every Scheme should be adopted that would cheapen them, and every Justifiable Method should be used to render them upon easier Terms to procure the necessaries of Life for the Labouring Manufacturer at a lower Prise, and to remove all Temptations to Idleness, Luxury and Intemperance out of their way; Hereby only shall we be enabled to vye with our Rivals in fforreign Marketts.

[1] A Writ of certiorari is a writ from a higher court for the records of a case tried in a lower court. The effect of this provision was to make the quarter sessions the court responsible for making both the wage assessments and for hearing appeals concerning them.

SECONDLY. Because the execution of this Law tends to invert the Laws of Society, and to destroy that due subordination which ought to be religiously preserved in all Communities. The Weavers by this Act will be rendered more our Masters than we are now theirs. A Levelling and turbulent Spirit (to which we have some cause to impute the Rise of this new Act) ought never to be countenanced amongst the common people and labouring Manufactures of this Kingdom, where they have been but to much already imbibed. This has been evident in our own Country formerly on the like occasion. The same sparks visibly remain and will easily be blown into a fflame. And the general maxim is apparent from those recent Instances and Commotions that have very lately disturbed several of the Northern Counties, and which have already proved fatal themselves, and to the properties of their Superiors.

THIRDLY. Because the Value of weaving is lessened by some Alterations in the Weavers ffavor: The Number of Sorts and the Qualities of the Manufactures of this County are greatly increased. They are now too various to be reduced to any regular or fixed Standard, and it has been found by experience prior to our Days, that these and all other Laws for the regulation of the Prise of Labour are not to be reduced to practice, nor expedient to be put into Execution. There need no better evidence of this than to consider how many of them lye dormant at this Time, notwithstanding they are not Repealed.

FOURTHLY. Because we are assured that the Honest and Industrious Weaver, who is a good Workman, and has Employment at the Rates generally now paid may get a comfortable subsistance for himself and family, and that one single Loomb well Employed will get from thirteen to eighteen shillings . . . per week; and an Increase of Wages would ôñly make them who are now wanting in Diligence to become more Idle: What need is there then of Innovations: Why must our Hands be tyed up by penal Laws, whilst others are ffree, why must the first Manufacture in the Kingdom (such the Woollen is justly esteemed) be put under unnecessary Restrictions, and, if unnecessary, they must be pernicious; for Trade is a Tender Plant that can only be nursed up by Liberty; if you cramp it 'twill dye away like untimely ffruit. Besides the persons employed in Weaving are not chosen for their strength or Robustness; The Business is neither Laborious nor Toilsome; nor are the Weavers who work under their own Roofs exposed to those Hardships and Difficulties which many other Trades are liable to: The Weak, the Lame, the Old and decriped, the Puny, Women and even Children and such whose Conditions, and natural abilities are not equal to other Employments are made Weavers: Is it just or Reasonable therefore that the Labour of such people should be estimated or put on a footing with men of stronger, and more robust Constitutions or more useful Abilities.

FIFTHLY. Because we know it to be a matter of ffact that it is impossible to Rate the Prise of Weaving by the Hundred (which is the only method yet prescribed) in an equitable manner, for one sort of Cloth of almost any given Hundred may and is worth near one fourth more for the Labour of Weaving than an other sort possibly can be, let it be done ever so well.

SIXTHLY. Because the Execution of this Law will tend to Injure the goodness of the Manufactury, and hurt the reputation of it, more especially in the Turkey Trade, where the distinguishing excellence of the Cloth consists in the smallness of the spinning and the height of the Hundred, as it thereby best Imitates the ffrench Manufactury: for the maker in order to save something in the Weaving will be tempted to lower the Hundred.

SEVENTHLY. Because such as are willing to keep up the Reputation of the Manufactury, or those who think it better to stand still than to go on under such Innovations and Restrictions, by taking Stepts to avoid them will perhaps be exposed to the Resentment of that Spirit Which has already appeared, and which once raised may be productive of the most dangerous consequences.

EIGHTHLY. Because we think it absolutely absurd and repugnant to the Liberties of a ffree people, and to the Interest of Trade that any Law should Supersede a private Contract honourably made between a Master and his Workmen, which we apprehend to be the case of the present, if put into Execution and which we believe cannot be Parralleled in that Respect, by any other Law, now in use.

NINTHLY. Because we apprehend the putting this Act into execution will not only occasion present Comotions and Confusions, but will pave the way for a Total Migration of our Manufactury to some other Countys, where it may meet with favour and be countenanced by Gentlemen and Men of the first property, who feel the want of such for the employment of the Neighbouring poor and the consequent improvement of their Estates; and where it will be cherished by ffreedom, and enjoy all the advantages of unrestrained Liberty. These Revolutions of Manufacturies are common from one Kingdom to another, thro' good or ill policy. If we look back but a few Centurys we shall see the Brittons exporting their Wooll into fforreign Countries to be Manufactured for them. Thro' the Ill policy and Biggotry of Lewis the Fourteenth of ffrance. The Loombs of Spittal ffields are now employed to furnish the richest Manufactures of Silk for those very Countries from whence we formerly received them. Internal Revolutions of this kind are not only evident in our own Nation, but particularly so in our own Manufactury. The County of Suffolk and some other places were formerly the Seats of Manufacture for Woollen Broad Cloths where it is now hardly known Salisbury and Worcester, were celebrated within this last Century for the same, which the present names of some Particular Sorts of Broad

Cloth now made amongst us Evince; Till under the mistaken Notion of wise Regulations and Salutary Restrictions and thro' the Grants of particular priviledges, ffreedoms, and Exclusive Charters, they have drove it from them. And Yorkshire within our own Knowledge, have gained from us some considerable Branches of our Trade, because their Labouring Manufacturers are better Oeconomists, more Tractable, Temperate, and ffrugal and consequently Work Cheaper than ours.

TENTHLY. Because we know of no other County where the Weavers have made any Stir about their Wages but this, nor where they have been encouraged to attempt at putting this Act into Execution. It is our Misfortune rather than our fault if thro' the present dulness of our Trade some occasions of complaint of the lowness of Wages paid to them have arisen or that some few Members of our Body whom we would by no means Countenance have taken that advantage of the Times, which it would not have been in their power to do in a more fflourishing Trade: But is it Equitable that a whole Body of respectable Tradesmen should therefore be censured, and brought under unnecessary and Unprecedented Restrictions, such as will be productive of those bad Consequences set forth in these our Remonstrances. Why should the Weavers be exempted from feeling the effects of Bad Times any more than their Masters or any other Branches of the Manufacturys. If the Head and the Body suffer ought not every Member to bear a part. Besides may we not ask why this County should first lead the Example especially in these Times. Is it a means to mend our Trade: or rather will it not be a means to spread the Spirit of Murmer and discontent into other Countys. And should those other Countys have the Wisdom to discountenance it, will they not have a great advantage over us. But should they be imprudent to ffollow us, and thereby render the Law General, our fforreign Rivals will reap the benefit of it. And the next Age may very Justly reproach the present for suffering such unnecessary Innovations; because in all human probability they will have the Mortifications to experience thereby future Migrations in the Wollen Broad Cloth Manufactury as remarkable as those that are past, and which we now thro' the Wisdom, Virtue, Industry, and good policy of our Ancestors Reflect upon with pleasure and Satisfaction.

AS WE have seen a printed paper under the form of a petition which the Weavers have procured to be Drawn up for them and which (as we are informed) they have Caused to be presented to every Justice of Peace in the County to request their Attendance at this Sessions and their assistance in putting the aforesaid Act into Execution. Therefore with all Deference and respect to the Worshipfull Bench We present these our Remonstrances against that part of the Act before Recited and which respects the Rating therein of Wages to be paid by us to the Weavers. But as to that part of the Act which relates to the payment of Workmen in any other manner than in Money It is our sincere desire that it may be put in Execution in the strictest Manner.

William Colborne[1]
Edward Peach [Woodchester]
Jos. Wathen [Brimscombe]
Robrt. Ellis [Ebley]
Ones. Paul [Southfield Mill, Woodchester]
Wm. Dallaway & Co. [Brimscombe]
Danl. Chance [Dudbridge]
Nathl. Peach [Woodchester]
Geo. Hawker [Woodchester]
G. Clutterbuck [Woodchester]
Thos. Roberts [Lightspill Mills, near Stroud]
Thos. Longford [Sapperton]
Isaac Moorland
Thomas Pegler [Stroud]
Thos. Tanner
Richd. Pitt [Stonehouse]
Willm. Wathen [Woodchester]
Joseph Ellis [Ebley]
Jno. Parham [Chalford]
Jer. Day [Stroud]
Saml. Arundell [Stroud][2]
Wm. Parham [Chalford]
Edward Tayloe [Bisley]
Saml. Whitmore [Minchinhampton]
Will. Sevill [Chalford]
S. Sevill [Chalford]
Jno. Blackwell [Chalford]
Samuel Yeats [Dyehouse, Minchinhampton]
Danl. Deverell [Minchinhampton]
Sam. Clutterbuck [Woodchester]
Wm. Hall
John Inneld [Chalford]
Thos. Deverell [Minchinhampton]
Stepn. Wilkins
John Harper
Thos. Phillips
Henry Wilkins
Saml. Went [Uley]
J. F. Phelps [Dursley]
Nathl. Lawson
Henry Adey [Dursley]
Fran. Cornock
Fran. Whitney
Robt. Phillimore [Draycott's Mills, Cam]
Jasper Selwyn [Cam]
Thos. Tippetts [New Mills, Dursley]
John Wallington & Co. [Dursley]
Jno. Jobbins
Jno. Hobbs
Timo. Laxton
John Osborne [Monks Mill, Wotton-under-Edge][2]
Thos. Austin & Co. [Wotton-under-Edge]
Thos. Cooper [Woodchester]
Hen. Winchcombe [Stroud]
J. Holbrow [Uley]
Cas. Cambridge [Woodchester]
Saml. Cambridge [Woodchester]
John Peach [Woodchester]
John Cambridge, Sen. [Woodchester]
John Cambridge, Jnr. [Woodchester]
Thomas Pegler, Jnr. [Stroud]

[1] The place of residence has been inserted where known after the names of the clothiers. Some of the attributions are tentative. The main sources used were S. Rudder, *A New History of Gloucestershire* (1779); R. Bigland, *Historical, Monumental and Genealogical Collections, relative to the County of Gloucester* (1791) and H. E. Hawker, *History of the Gloucestershire Woollen Industry* (1949). MSS. Gloucester City Library.

[2] For Arundell see E. Arundell, 'The Arundells of Gloucestershire', *Trans. B.G.A.S.*, LXVI (1945), 208–10: for Osborne and Peach see E. S. Lindley, 'A History of Wortley', *ibid*, LXVIII (1949), 45–90.

John Pegler [Steanbridge, Stroud]
Thos. Arundell [Stroud]
Saml. Wallington [Dursley]
Thos. Colborne
Saml. Watts[Stroud]
Richd. Watts [Stroud]
Wm. Hill [Stonehouse]
M. Ellis [Ebley]
Richd. Cooke [Lodgmore Mill, near Stroud]
Hen. Cooke [Lodgmore Mill, near Stroud]
Jno. Webb [Iron Mills, Minchinhampton]
Robt. Ellis, Jnr. [Ebley]

Each petition is thus a partisan document and neither sets out to present an unbiased assessment of the causes of the 'decay of trade.' While the weavers' petition is couched in straightforward terms, narrating the recent history of wage regulation in the industry and adducing reasons for the application for the enforcement of the legal method of wage assessment, the clothiers' petition is more elaborate and wider in scope. In their economic arguments, the clothiers, as Lipson remarks, seem to have caught the spirit as they certainly anticipate the language of a later age.[1] The petition justifies *laissez-faire* two decades before Adam Smith magisterially stated the arguments in his *Wealth of Nations*.

As the evidence about the recent trend of wages conflicted, it was the technical arguments, later elaborated by William Dallaway, one of the clothier signatories and the author of *A State of the Case*,[2] which were the most telling. The evidence presented to the magistrates showed the difficulties in the way of the establishment of a general wage scale with the result that the justices reported 'that it is the opinion of every gentleman upon the bench, that no equitable rate for settling such wages could be made by any law now in being.'[3] They therefore decided to take no action under the act.

[1] Lipson, *Economic History*, III, 268.

[2] According to the inscription in one of the copies of *A State of the Case*, in Gloucester Public Library. This copy came from the library of his son, John Dallaway, and is bound up with the son's pamphlet on the Stroudwater canal. William Dallaway was the clothiers' spokesman before Parliament 24 February 1757. *House of Commons Journals*, XXVII, 730–1.

[3] *A State of the Case*, p. 24.

Thereupon the clothiers' forecast of 'comotions and confusion' were fulfilled and rioting ensued. It ended when the justices at a special session held at Gloucester on 6 November 1756 confirmed a table of wages. The weavers then returned to work, but few clothiers operated the new wage scale. Instead they began to campaign for the repeal of the act of 1756. *A State of the Case* was published early in 1757 as part of their propaganda. Supported by the clothiers of Wiltshire and Somerset, they achieved their object in the next session of Parliament when an Act (30 Geo. II, c. 12) was passed to repeal the 1756 Act.[1] Thus wage regulation by the justices in the woollen industry came to an end more than fifty years before the general act relating to wage assessment, the Elizabethan Statute of Artificers, was repealed in 1813.

[1] *House of Commons Journals*, XXVII, 731–2. The Gentlemen and Landholders of the Stroud area petitioned against repeal. *ibid*, 753–4.