

Clip 8– Cannock constituency

From: audio 5/2/1/2 c.1950 programme American radio interview

In: 00:00:00

Out: 00:01:57

Dur: 00:01:57

American interviewer:

Well Miss Lee would you tell us something about the ordinary day to day life of your constituents today?

Jennie Lee:

Where can I begin? Maybe by sharing with you a picture I have of Cannock Square, where the folks come in from the surrounding villages to do their marketing on a Saturday morning. I was standing in the Square last week and I looked at the women going from shop to shop, most of them were miners' wives, and I was particularly struck by the older women, because there they were, they had on a neat pair of shoes, proper stockings, a tidy dress, I noticed most of them had had their hair permed, they were busy going from shop to shop seeing how they could spend their rations to best advantage and complaining of course – not enough butter, not enough sugar, not enough meat. But how happy that type of complaint was to what I remember, when the shops were full of all those things and when particularly the older woman – maybe had no teeth, her hair straggly, her lips showing the signs of anaemia, her whole personality sagging – why? Because she'd always been the last in the family to be served. I know people talk about the babies, babies are wonderful, but you get that anywhere in Great Britain but if you're asking me particularly about a mining area I say there is nothing there makes me happier than to see the busy, superficial worries of the housewife today compared to the deep sadness and hopelessness and helplessness when there was nothing but poverty all around them and where they just didn't know where to turn for help.