

It thought the work was 'obviously unfitted for women' but to ban it when there was no other work available would cause 'a great deal of grievous suffering'.
Nineteen years later the pit brow girls were attacked again. The newspaper reports of the time suggest that the unions' arguments were the same as before but that public opinion was beginning to change. The *Daily Telegraph* challenged the unions:

SOURCE 20

An attempt is being made by labour representatives in and out of the House of Commons to have a clause inserted into the Mines' Regulations Bill prohibiting female labour at the pit's brow, and it is urged [argued] that this is being done in the interests of the women themselves . . . Are these . . . real or pretended champions of women?

The *Daily Telegraph*, 23 March 1886

The *Birmingham Post* took up the question of the pit girls' trousers:

SOURCE 21

From the indignant terms in which the pit girls' costume is denounced by some of the labour representatives, one would suppose that it was something in the nature of a ballet dress . . .

The *Birmingham Post*, quoted in the *Wigan Observer and District Advertiser*, 26 March 1886

It went on to say it was ridiculous to prevent pit girls:

SOURCE 22

From earning an honest living on account of the immodesty of their attire, whilst suffering [allowing] high bred ladies to go to a ball or a drawing room with the most delicate parts of their bodies fully exposed . . .

The *Birmingham Post*, quoted in the *Wigan Observer and District Advertiser*, 26 March 1886

In 1887 a deputation of pit brow girls travelled to London to see the Home Secretary. He told them he would not interfere with their work other than to make it illegal for them to be employed to move railway wagons.

activity

3 How do sources 20, 21 and 22 suggest that public opinion about the pit brow girls was beginning to change?