

1833 Factory Act.

In 1833 the Government passed a Factory Act to improve conditions for children working in factories. Young children were working very long hours in workplaces where conditions were often terrible. The basic act was as follows:

- no child workers under nine years of age
- employers must have an age certificate for their child workers
- children of 9-13 years to work no more than nine hours a day
- children of 13-18 years to work no more than 12 hours a day
- children are not to work at night
- two hours schooling each day for children
- four factory inspectors appointed to enforce the law

However, the passing of this act did not mean that the mistreatment of children stopped overnight. Using these sources, investigate how far the act had solved the problems of child labour.

Factory Inspectors report.

Transcript

My Lord, in the case of Taylor, Ibbotson & Co. I took the evidence from the mouths of the boys themselves. They stated to me that they commenced working on Friday morning, the 27th of May last, at six A.M., and that, with the exception of meal hours and one hour at midnight extra, they did not cease working till four o'clock on Saturday evening, having been two days and a night thus engaged. Believing the case scarcely possible, I asked every boy the same questions, and from each received the same answers. I then went into the house to look at the time book, and in the presence of one of the masters, referred to the cruelty of the case, and stated that I should certainly punish it with all the severity in my power. Mr Rayner, the certificating surgeon of Bastile, was with me at the time.

Extract from a Factory Inspectors report – British Parliamentary Papers (1836) No 353