

The Factory Act of 1819

(*Statutes at Large*, 59 Geo. III, c. 66, LXXIII, pp. 418-419; in A. Aspinall and E. Anthony Smith, eds., *English Historical Documents*, XI, 1783-1832, New York: Oxford University Press, 1959, pp. 734-35.)

An Act to make further provisions for the regulation of cotton mills and factories, and for the better preservation of the health of young persons employed therein. [2 July 1819]

. . . Whereas it is expedient that some further provision should be made for the regulation of mills, manufactories and buildings, employed in the preparation and spinning of cotton wool: be it therefore enacted ... that from and after I January 1820, no child shall be employed in any description of work for the spinning of cotton wool into yarn, or in any previous preparation of such wool, until he or she shall have attained the full age of 9 years.

II.... No person, being under the age of 16 years, shall be employed ... for more than 12 hours in any one day, exclusive of the necessary time for meals; such 12 hours to be between the hours of 5 o'clock in the morning and 9 o'clock in the evening.

III.... There shall be allowed to every such person . . . not less than half an hour to breakfast, and not less than one full hour for dinner . . . between the hours of 11 o'clock in the forenoon and 2 o'clock in the afternoon.

IV. [Time lost in water-driven mills by reason of the want or excess of a due supply of water, may be made up at the rate of one additional hour per day.]

V. [Ceilings and interior walls to be lime-washed twice a year.]

VI. [A copy of abstract of the Act to be hung up in every factory.]

VII. [Masters breaking the law to be fined not less than £10 and not more than £20, at the discretion of the justices. Informations for offences to be laid within three months of the offence.]