*Experience the Life of: John Fielden*

*John Fielden, although himself a Lancashire factory owner, was one of the staunchest fighters for protective legislation for the cotton worker. His difficulties are such as today in the Southern states of the United States are commonly urged by manufacturers.*

***A Cotton Manufacturer on Hours of Labor***

[John Fielden, M.P., *The Curse of the Factory System*. London, 1836,pp. 34-35.]

Here, then, is the "curse" of our factory-system; as improvements in machinery have gone on, the "avarice of masters" has prompted many to exact more labour from their hands than they were fitted by nature to perform, and those who have wished for the hours of labour to be less for all ages than the legislature would even yet sanction, have had no alternative but to conform more or less to the prevailing practice, or abandon the trade altogether. This has been the case with regard to myself and my partners. We have never worked more than *seventy-one* hours a week before Sir JOHN HOBHOUSE'S Act was passed. We then came down to *sixty-nine*; and since Lord ALTHORP's Act was passed, in 1833, we have reduced the time of adults to *sixty-seven and a half hours* a week, and that of children under thirteen years of age to *forty-eight* hours in the week, though to do this latter has, I must admit, subjected us to much inconvenience, but the elder hands to more, inasmuch as the relief given to the child is in some measure imposed on the adult. But the overworking does not apply to children only; the adults are also overworked. The increased speed given to machinery within the last thirty years, has, in very many instances, doubled the labour of both.

http://www.victorianweb.org/history/workers2.html