

**David Rowland was interviewed by a committee of the House of Commons under Michael Sadler on 10th July, 1832.**

David Rowland worked as a piecer at a textile mill in Manchester, England. Testimony such as this was part of the process that established the first Factory Acts in Great Britain and Commonwealth Nations in the 1830s.

**Source: <http://www.spartacus.schoolnet.co.uk/IRchild.main.htm>**

Question: At what age did you commence working in a cotton mill?

Answer: Just when I had turned six.

Question: What employment had you in a mill in the first instance?

Answer: That of a scavenger.

Question: Will you explain the nature of the work that a scavenger has to do?

Answer: The scavenger has to take the brush and sweep under the wheels, and to be under the direction of the spinners and the piecers generally. I frequently had to be under the wheels, and in consequence of the perpetual motion of the machinery, I was liable to accidents constantly. I was very frequently obliged to lie flat, to avoid being run over or caught.

Question: How long did you continue at that employment?

Answer: From a year and a half to two years.

Question: What did you go to then?

Answer: To be a piecer.

Question: Did the employment require you to be upon your feet perpetually?

Answer: It did.

Question: You continued at that employment for how long?

Answer: I was a piecer till I was about fifteen or sixteen years of age.

Question: What were your hours of labour?

Answer: Fourteen; in some cases, fifteen and sixteen hours a day.

Question: How had you to be kept up to it?

Answer: During the latter part of the day, I was severely beaten very frequently.

Question: Will you state the effect that the degree of labour had upon your health?

Answer: I never had good health after I went to the factory. At six years of age I was ruddy and strong; I had not been in the mill long before my colour disappeared, and a state of debility came over me, and a wanness in my appearance.