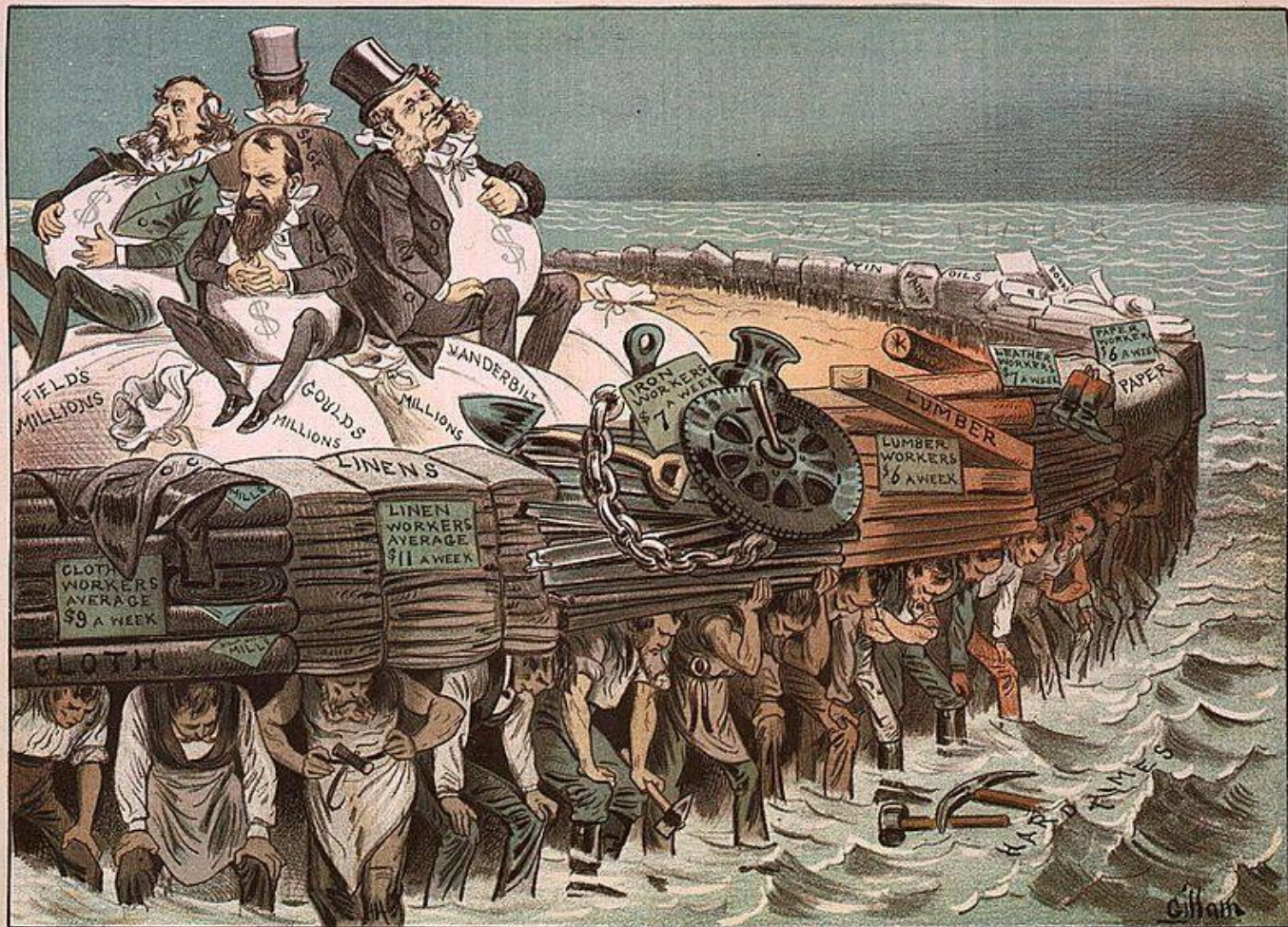


Chapter 1

Working conditions



What were the working
conditions like?



OFFICE OF "PUCK" 23 NASSAU ST. NEW YORK.

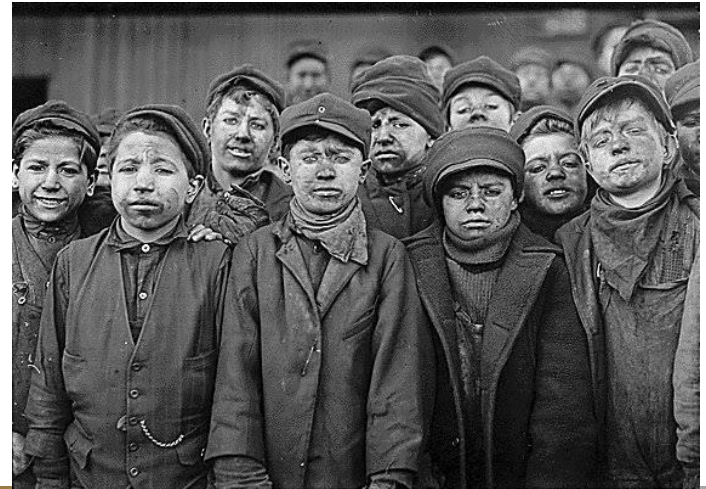
WATCH WERRELL & GUTMAN 1710 23-25 NASSAU ST. N.Y.

THE PROTECTORS OF OUR INDUSTRIES.

Working class

With Industrialism, the new social class known as the working class emerged. This consisted of men, women and children who worked in the factories. Wealthy businessmen formed the business class and became wealthy through the labour of those who were in the working class

The working class were not factory workers. They were also miners, dock workers, railway workers, construction workers, and many more.

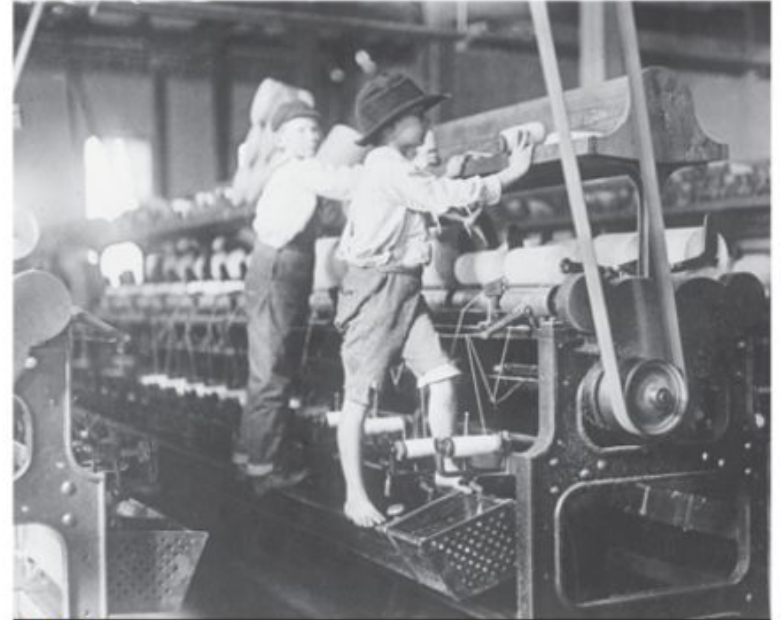


Working conditions

Working class faced **terrible working conditions**

- To increase profits, factory owners imposed gruelling regimens: **low wages, 60-70 hour work weeks and a fast pace of work in unsafe, poorly heated and poorly lit conditions.**

Both men and women were often subject to violence from their bosses



1.62 Children working in a cotton mill.

Working conditions

Women were paid $\frac{1}{2}$ as much as men and children were paid $\frac{1}{4}$ as much.

- The *Report of the Royal commission on the Relations and Labor and Capital in Canada* (1886-1889) reported that a family required an income of \$9 a week just to get by. The average salary for a man was between \$6.50-\$8 which meant women and children had to work in order to meet their needs

Many bosses preferred child labourers because they were cheaper and more obedient than men.

52 Workers in a mill in Montréal, 1891



Working conditions

Workplaces were typically unhealthy. They were poorly ventilated, poorly lit and poorly heated. There were also dangerous machines making workplace accidents common. Workers had no social protection. If they were injured on the job or got sick, they were not paid and could even lose their jobs.





TAKE NOTE!



Child labour

As of the age of 10, the children of some workers were recruited to work in factories, including cotton and wool mills. Long workdays prevented them from going to school. Their working conditions were generally very difficult, and often dangerous. Children were commonly subject to corporal punishment by their employers.



SPECIMENS FROM MR. PUNCH'S INDUSTRIAL EXHIBITION OF 1850.

(TO BE IMPROVED IN 1851).

Workers movement

After 1850, workers became aware that they needed to join forces in order to demand changes in their working conditions. This was the start of the workers movement.

Union associations demanded better working conditions for workers. They called for reduced working hours, insurance in case of illness and recognition of **unions**. Their demands sometimes led to strikes. These unions were poorly organized and when they first started, they were illegal.

An illustration on a light blue background. A large, dark blue hand is shown from the wrist up, with fingers spread. On the palm of the hand stands a small, white silhouette of a worker wearing a hard hat and overalls. The worker is holding a long, dark blue wrench horizontally above their head with both arms. To the left of the hand, there are stylized, light blue leaf-like shapes.

Labor Union

['lā-bər 'yün-yən]

An organization formed by workers in a particular trade, industry, or company to improve pay, benefits, and working conditions.

 Investopedia

Workers' movement

In 1872, unions were legalized when the Canadian government passed the *Trade Unions Act*

The first unions were started in the US and represented male trades like machining. Unskilled workers were generally not unionized

- This began to change in 1881 when the Knights of Labour spread to Canada. It organized both skilled and unskilled workers.
- The main demands made by unions were a reduction in work hours and workdays, restrictions on child labour and higher wages. The main pressure tactic they would use was to strike



Government measures

In the 1880s, the Quebec government and federal government recognized the need to protect workers health and safety and to regulate factory work

- IN 1885, the Quebec Factories Act was passed which set the minimum age for factory work to 12 for boys and 14 for girls. It also made limits on the hours worked in a week
- In 1886, the federal government established the Royal Commission on the Relations of Labour and Capital which recommended the adoption of things like the number of working hours, minimum age and compensation for workers injured on the job



Founded in the United States in 1869, the union organization Knights of Labor established a presence in Canada in the 1880s. Here, its members are demonstrating in Hamilton, Ontario, in its early years in Canada.

???

DID YOU KNOW

Children were often recruited to work in cotton mills from the age of 10, and were required to work 11 or 12 hours a day, just like adult workers. This also meant that they could not go to school. It wasn't until 1885 that the Québec government intervened, passing the *Quebec Factories Act*, which set the minimum age for workers at 12 for boys and 14 for girls. In 1892, children under 16 still made up about eight percent of French-Canadian factory workers. These reforms did not apply to Indigenous children in residential schools, who were forced to perform manual labour well into the 20th century.

Read the text below and then answer the questions.

Testimony of Théophile Charron, Montréal cigar-maker, 14 years old:

— You began working at the age of 11?

— Yes, sir.

— What wages did you get during your apprenticeship?

— One dollar a week for the first year, \$1.50 for the second year, and \$2 for the third year. When I worked extra, I got more.

— Did you have any fines to pay during your apprenticeship?

— Yes, sir. Many.

— Do you remember why you paid these fines?

— Sometimes for talking too much; mostly for that.

— How many hours did you work a day?

— Sometimes 10 hours, other times eight hours. It was just as they wanted it.

— Were you ever licked [struck; hit]?

— Yes; not licked so as any harm was done me, but sometimes they would come along, and if we happened to be cutting tobacco wrong, they would give us a crack across the head with a fist.

Later on in his testimony, Théophile mentioned a cell where children were sometimes confined for several hours.

Source: Adapted from the *Report of the Royal Commission on the Relations of Labor and Capital in Canada*, 1887.

a) Who is giving the testimony? _____

b) How old was the boy when he started working? _____

c) Give examples of the working conditions described in his testimony.



What role to unions play
today? Do individuals still
strike today?



CBS NEWS