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QUEENWOOD - lecture notes by Mr. Francis Lansley, and presented to the Broughton Local History Group on Wednesday, 24th November, 1982.

The poor ^{were} ~~were~~ a serious problem early in the 1800's. The Poor Law was made and Unions set up which had a disastrous effect on the working classes; employers gave them less wages and the worst conditions, by threatening dismissal their families would have to go into the workhouse. In industrial areas, women and young children were forced to work for very low wages. The privileged society was very decadent.

The Rev. Thomas Robert Malthus (1766 - 1834) in his essay on the Principle of Population wrote: "A man is born into a world already possessed; if he cannot get subsistence from his parents on whom he has a just demand, and if the society do not want his labour, he has no claim of right to the smallest portion of food and, in fact, has no business to be where he is." The hymn: "All Things Bright and Beautiful" expresses the same principle - it was accepted by many. But there was an increasing number of people who were strongly opposed to this theory, amongst them was Robert Owen, born in 1771, in Newtown, Powys, mid-Wales, the sixth child of a saddler and ironmonger. Robert went to a small school at Newtown and by the age of 7 yrs. he was teaching other pupils in the school. By the time he was 9 yrs. old he was very advanced and friends of the family lent him books to read. He was particularly interested in nature and the countryside, also enjoyed music and dancing. He left home when he was 10 yrs. and went to Manchester to work in a cotton mill as an assistant machine maker and cotton spinner. At 20 yrs. of age he became manager of Drinkwater's cotton mill in Manchester with 500 employees. At 23 yrs. he was manager and part-owner of the large New Lanark cotton mills. He started in New Lanark the first infant school in the British Isles.

Improved working condition raised the age of child labour to 10 with pay
1815 slump 1824 America