

# THE EARLY FACTORY LEGISLATION

*A STUDY IN LEGISLATIVE  
AND ADMINISTRATIVE EVOLUTION*

**MAURICE WALTON THOMAS**

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LEONARD HORNER

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**TO MY WIFE**



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M. W. THOMAS

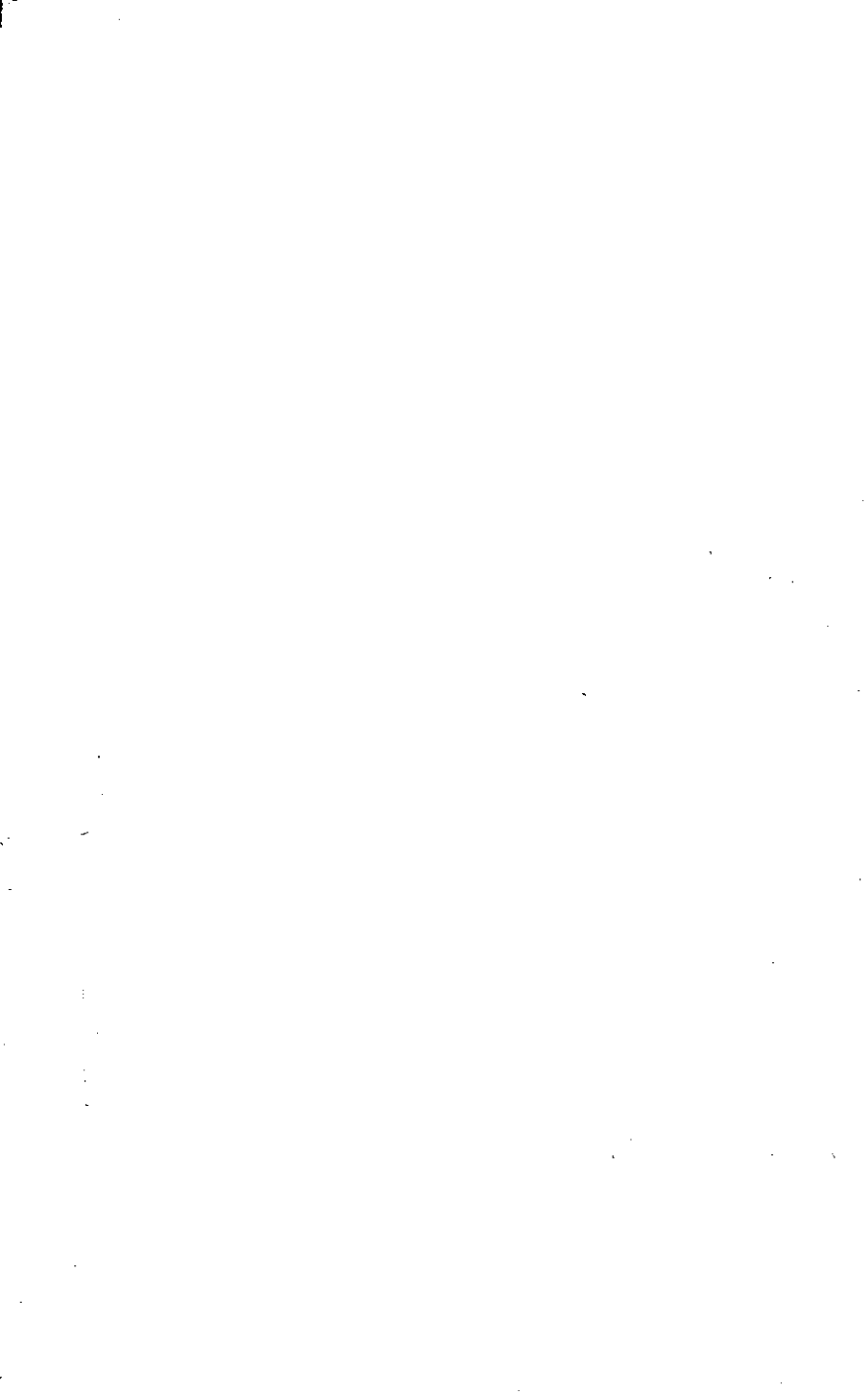
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## FOREWORD

Much has been written of the Industrial Revolution and the growth and evils of the factory system in this country in the late Eighteenth and early Nineteenth Centuries, but the evolution of factory legislation has not, in general, received the same detailed treatment from historians. Although many students of industrial history must have realised the onerous tasks which were imposed on the early Factory Inspectors, they have probably been unable through the medium of the ordinary textbooks either to assess accurately the part played by those officials towards establishing a basis upon which to frame our present Factories Act or to appreciate the influence of their pioneer work on the growth and development of the present-day system and methods of inspection. Mr. Thomas has laid particular emphasis on the activities of the Inspectors during the period from the date of their inception to the middle of the Nineteenth Century and portrayed their difficulties, their experiences and, moreover, their reactions as successive legislative measures, which often gave rise to acute controversy, were placed on the Statute Book. A great deal of information with regard to this period was comprised in the Home Office minute books which recorded the Inspectors' discussions at their bi-annual conferences, and their periodical reports. The author has now culled from these, as well as many other original sources, much that is intensely human and instructive and collated it in one volume. Industrialists and others no less than students of history and economics will find many new and interesting facts in this comprehensive survey of early factory legislation and inspection.

G. P. BARNETT

*H.M. Chief Inspector of Factories*



ROBERT OWEN