Arguments in Support of Child Labour

Read these views from people of the time who thought child labour wasn’t so bad. Can you think of any other reasons why child labour wasn’t a bad thing?

“Working is normal for children. Children have always worked and brought home a wage since time began.”

“No harm comes to children in the mill. If they pay attention to their work then they are perfectly safe. It is only laziness that causes accidents.”

“I believe that employing children is perfectly consistent with good health. They earn good wages. Working on the night shift does no harm, the air and ventilation are the same at one period as at another. I do not think any change in the hours of work is necessary for children. If children want to learn there is no reason why they should not have the energy after work.”

“Children are the most efficient workers. They are well-suited to their work being small and nimble. No adult could do the work so well.”

“It’s work or no food.”

“It is impossible to tell the age of young worker. They can easily lie about their age and what is a manager to do. There is no harm in it if they want to work is there?”

“School is not compulsory and what schooling is available costs too much.”

“Families with children in work can earn a good income and lifestyle. The new factories are full of happy, prosperous people.”

“Why do you allow your children to go to work at those places where they are ill-treated or over-worked?”

— "Necessity compels a man that has children to let them work. “ Joshua Drake interviewed 1832.

“What’s the point in teaching folk to read and write when they’re losing money by not working.”

“Children should contribute to the welfare of the family.”