

# SILK WEAVER TELLS OF WORK CONDITIONS

## Rhode Island Mills Sap Vitality of Workers

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(Worker Correspondent)

PAUTUCKET, R. I., July 5.—I am a weaver in a silk mill in Pautucket, Rhode Island. The textile workers have been pretty hard hit. We are speeded up, our wages cut and then starved by unemployment. I work nights, 7 p. m. to 5 a. m., Saturdays 5:30 a. m. The work is piece-work and each one works as fast as he can. I am all in when morning comes. The watchman in our place, an old man, near 70 years, who used to be a weaver till he got too old and was thrown on the scrap heap, works 91 hours a week for \$19. He works 13 hours a day, 7 days or nights a week, never a day off.

### Women Work All Night.

Here in Rhode Island women are allowed to work nights and there are young girls who work with me till five o'clock in the morning. Then there are mothers with children who work such hours too. Many of the workers are women.

Our work is very hard on the eyes, especially at night with the bad light given us. Many weavers lose their eyesight or must give up their work on account of bad eyes. In silk work sometimes there are as many as 18,000 threads covering only 45 to 60 inches on a single machine. Each one of these threads must be watched and fixed when necessary and so you can see how fine the work is.

The noise in this mill is not so great as in a cotton mill where I worked last. One could not speak because of the noise. Everything was done by signs. Many of us weavers go deaf in time. In the cotton mill, in spite of humidifiers, cotton fills the air and our lungs. Thousands of textile workers suffer from lung troubles, consumption and tuberculosis.

Pay is wretched. Good weavers working full time seldom make over \$32 weekly anywhere. Many make as low as \$14. The average would be between \$20 and \$25.