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# LABOR MARKET

# NEWS LETTER

Maine Unemployment Compensation Commission 331 Water Street Augusta, Maine



**JUNE - 1949**  
ISSUED BI-MONTHLY



## LABOR MARKET HIGHLIGHTS

EMPLOYMENT CONDITIONS in Maine showed definite improvement during the latter part of May and the early part of this month. Lay-offs in various year-round manufacturing plants were more than offset by employment expansions in a number of seasonal activities, and while the outlook is somewhat uncertain as to future labor requirements in some of this State's major industries, further gains are anticipated in those industries which normally provide large numbers of job opportunities during the summer.

One of the most encouraging developments during May was a slight, but unmistakable, increase in over-all non-agricultural employment in Maine. During pay periods ending nearest to May 15, approximately 244,900 persons were engaged in full- or part-time nonagricultural jobs, whereas during the middle of April the number of employed nonagricultural workers was 242,300.

### LABOR MARKET CONDITIONS SHOW IMPROVEMENTS IN MAY

OVER ALL LABOR MARKET conditions in Maine showed some improvements during May, but employment opportunities were, for the most part, confined to seasonal industries. Hirings in those seasonal activities which usually expand in the spring were fairly heavy, although somewhat under last year. During the latter half of the month, however, such hirings were extensive enough to more than offset new lay-offs that occurred in other industries.

### UNEMPLOYMENT CLAIMS LOAD STARTING TO DROP FROM PEAK MAY LEVEL

ALTHOUGH the combined Unemployment Compensation — Servicemen's Readjustment Allowance claims load reached an all-time monthly peak in May, there appeared to be a definite downward trend developing towards the end of the month in the number of persons filing claims each week. Additional large-scale lay-offs in major industries could easily change the picture, but prospects at the moment for further reductions in the number of unemployed claimants are rather encouraging.

### REGISTERED JOB-SEEKERS ALSO SHOW A DECREASE IN NUMBER

THE NUMBER of Maine residents registered for work with the sixteen local offices of this Commission decreased during May by 11.5 per cent. At the end of the month, 35,627 persons had active applications for work on file with the Agency. Compared with a year ago, when 22,477 workers were seeking employment through the facilities of the local employment offices, the number currently registered must be considered as at a relatively high level. Youths entering the labor market following the close of the school year should cause a marked increase in the supply of available labor during the current month, but a large proportion of these young men and women should be absorbed readily in summer jobs.

### NUMBER OF CLAIMANTS DECLINED BY 11.1 PER CENT WITHIN THE MONTH

INDICATIVE of the extent of labor market improvements within the month is the fact that at the beginning of May around 33,200 totally or partially unemployed workers were claimants under the Unemployment Compensation or Servicemen's Readjustment Allowance programs, while for the last full week of the month 29,500 persons filed claims. The number of Claimants, therefore, declined by 11.1 per cent. At the end of the period, approximately 94 per cent of the claimants were in an insured unemployment status. That is, this proportion of the total number had been filing claims during an uninterrupted spell of unemployment which started in some prior week.



## **SUPPLY OF LABOR MORE THAN SUFFICIENT TO MEET DEMAND**

ALTHOUGH recruitment problems are still encountered with respect to filling job openings in remote areas and in towns removed from sources of labor supply, the State's reserve of available labor remains more than sufficient — both qualitatively and quantitatively — to meet current or prospective demands in virtually all industries. The different occupations represented by the workers registered with this Agency at the end of May covered a wide range. Among those registered were 773 persons qualified for various professional or managerial jobs; 2,683 clerical and sales workers; 1,812 persons with experience in public and/or private service industries; 6,964 skilled workers from practically all industries which utilize workers of this class; 10,857 semiskilled persons; and 12,538 unskilled workers. Of the total number of job applicants, 11,671 were females.

## **MAINE'S LABOR RESERVE IS ATTRACTING THE ATTENTION OF PROSPECTIVE EMPLOYERS**

PROSPECTIVE EMPLOYERS, desiring concrete information with respect to the supply of labor in various communities which they have under consideration for possible plant locations, have contacted this Commission in increasing numbers during recent months. The growing volume of requests for such labor market information provides ample proof that Maine's foremost resource — its labor — has a distinct appeal to employers in all industries who are concerned with the problem of selecting manufacturing plant locations. In each instance where detailed surveys have been conducted, the prospective employers have been very favorably impressed by type of workers available.

## **DEMAND FOR LABOR STRENGTHENS DURING MAY AND THE EARLY PART OF JUNE**

LABOR DEMAND, as measured by job openings listed with the local employment offices of this Commission, picked up during the last half of May, and present indications point to a continuing increase in the number of job opportunities available. Requirements have been confined, for the most part, to seasonal industries, but needs for additional workers in a few other industries also have been made known to local offices during the past several weeks. During May, openings listed totalled 7,201. Of these, 451 were in the construction field; 3,538 were in the lumber and wood products industry; 1,612 were in various other manufacturing activities; and 1,600 were in nonmanufacturing industries.

## **NONAGRICULTURAL EMPLOYMENT INCREASED IN MAY BY 1.1 PER CENT**

PRELIMINARY ESTIMATES compiled by the Maine Unemployment Compensation Commission in cooperation

with the United States Bureau of Labor Statistics place full- and part-time employment in nonagricultural industries in Maine during pay periods ending nearest to May 15 at 244,900. This figure reflects an increase of 2,600 over the nonagricultural employment estimate relating to the middle of April. While the gain was not relatively great — employment increased by only 1.1 per cent — it nevertheless represented the first break from the downward trend which has been in evidence each month since August of last year.

## **SEASONAL PAY ROLL EXPANSIONS ACCOUNTED FOR MOST OF THE INCREASE**

THE OVER-ALL EMPLOYMENT increase in May was due, in major part, to seasonal pay roll expansions in a number of different industries. Rehires in logging and lumbering operations, following the usual spring slack period, accounted for a gain of 1,000. Employment in the construction field rose by 900, and various service establishments (hotels, laundries, garages, amusement places, sporting camps, etc.) had an aggregate increase of 900. Other activities which experienced gains of a seasonal nature were: food processing — 400; other nondurable goods manufacturing (such as manufacturing of mixed fertilizers and other chemicals) — 200; transportation and other public utilities — 500; and wholesale-retail trade — 300.

## **EMPLOYMENT CURTAILMENTS OCCURRED IN SOME INDUSTRIES**

THERE WERE employment reductions between April and May in some of the State's major industries. Shoe manufacturing employment, following its customary spring trend, dropped by 800; an aggregate decline of 600 occurred in establishments engaged in the production of metal products and/or machinery; the number of workers engaged in the pulp and paper industry decreased by 100; and a similar decline occurred in the finance, insurance, and real estate industry. Curtailments during the period in cotton textiles were balanced by gains in woollens and apparel manufacturing.

## **NONAGRICULTURAL EMPLOYMENT IS STILL RUNNING BELOW LAST YEAR**

NONAGRICULTURAL employment in this State is still considerably below last year's level. In May 1948, approximately 256,200 workers were engaged in nonagricultural activities, whereas the number of employed nonagricultural workers during mid-May pay periods this year was, as stated, 244,900. The twelve month decline — amounting to 11,300 — was due to reductions in a majority of industries. Only one group — shoe manufacturing — had an appreciable gain during this period. Employment in shoe manufacturing plants (Leather Products Industry) rose by 1,200.



**PRELIMINARY ESTIMATE  
OF NONAGRICULTURAL EMPLOYMENT IN MAINE  
May, 1949<sup>1</sup> (In thousands)**

Compiled by the Maine Unemployment Compensation Commission in cooperation with  
the United States Bureau of Labor Statistics

INDUSTRY	May <sup>2</sup> 1949	Apr. <sup>2</sup> 1949	May <sup>2</sup> 1948	Percentage Change	
				Apr. 1949 to May 1949	May 1948 to May 1949
Total Nonagricultural Employment.....	244.9	242.3	256.2	1.1	-4.4
Total Manufacturing.....	98.4	98.3	105.9	0.1	-7.1
Durable Goods.....	28.0	27.6	30.8	1.4	-9.1
Lumber and Woods Products.....	16.9	15.9	17.5	6.3	-3.4
Primary and Fabricated Metal Products and Machinery.....	7.9	8.5	9.5	-7.1	-16.8
All Other.....	3.2	3.2	3.8	0.0	-15.8
Nondurable Goods.....	70.4	70.7	75.1	-0.4	-6.3
Food and Kindred Products.....	7.6	7.2	7.7	5.6	-1.3
Textile Mill Products and Apparel.....	25.2	25.2	29.7	0.0	-15.2
Paper and Allied Products.....	17.0	17.1	18.4	-0.6	-7.6
Leather Products.....	16.0	16.8	14.8	-4.8	8.1
All Other.....	4.6	4.4	4.5	4.5	2.2
Total Nonmanufacturing.....	146.5	144.0	150.3	1.7	-2.5
Mining and Quarrying.....	.6	.6	.5	0.0	20.0
Contract Construction.....	9.8	8.9	11.0	10.1	-10.9
Transportation and Other Public Utilities.....	19.3	18.8	19.8	2.7	-2.5
Wholesale and Retail Trade.....	46.3	46.0	48.4	0.7	-4.3
Finance, Insurance and Real Estate.....	6.6	6.7	6.6	-1.5	0.0
Business, Personal and Misc. Services.....	23.5	22.6	24.3	4.0	-3.3
Government <sup>3</sup> .....	40.4	40.4	39.7	0.0	1.8

<sup>1</sup> Data presented exclude domestics in private households, proprietors, self-employed, and unpaid family workers. Employment figures (except for government) relate to full- and part-time wage and salary workers in pay periods ending nearest the 15th of each month. Figures are rounded to the nearest hundred.

<sup>2</sup> Estimates corrected to June 15, 1949.

April estimate used for May since complete information relative to the latter month was not available as of June 15, 1949.



## GENERAL EMPLOYMENT OUTLOOK SOMEWHAT UNCERTAIN

EMPLOYMENT PROSPECTS for the next few months, except in such seasonal industries as food processing, construction, agriculture, and activities associated with the summer tourist and resort trade, are somewhat uncertain. According to information obtained from many of the 870 nonagricultural employers visited by local

office representatives during May, there is little likelihood that employment conditions will improve this summer in the State's leading manufacturing industries, and it is quite possible that further production curtailments will be effected in some manufacturing fields. Although there may be a pick-up in the fall in job opportunities, there appears to be no general feeling of optimism now with regard to wide-spread improvements at that time.

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## Maine Unemployment Compensation Commission

### EMPLOYMENT OFFICES

<i>Location</i>	<i>Address</i>	<i>Telephone</i>
Augusta	331 Water Street	1200-41
Bangor	182 Harlow Street	6435
Bath	174 Front Street	1748
Biddeford	275 Main Street	2070
Calais	87 Main Street	427
Caribou	Main Street	3331
Ellsworth	City Hall, Room 7	333
Houlton	32 Bangor Street	3606
Lewiston	19 Park Street	4-6971
Machias	Main Street	167
Portland	615 Congress Street	2-0186
Rockland	437 Main Street	105
Rumford	244 Waldo Street	805
Sanford	25 Washington Street	1045
Skowhegan	29 Water Street	368
Waterville	79 Temple Street	1886

After Five Days Return To  
MAINE  
UNEMPLOYMENT COMPENSATION COMMISSION  
AUGUSTA MAINE  
OFFICIAL BUSINESS

EMPLOYMENT SECURITY MAIL  
UNITED STATES POSTAGE  
ACCOUNTED FOR UNDER  
ACT OF CONGRESS  
(PAR. 13, SEC. 579, P. L. & R.)