

ESS. 211
950/2

Copy 1

LABOR MARKET



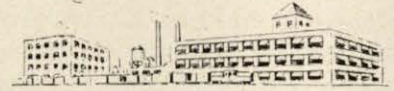
NEWS LETTER

Maine Employment Security Commission 331 Water Street Augusta, Maine



FEBRUARY - 1950

ISSUED BI-MONTHLY



LABOR MARKET HIGHLIGHTS

Unemployment has risen to a very high level this winter, and it is obvious that unemployment problems are becoming more and more pronounced in practically all sections of Maine. Employment conditions in the textile, shoe, and wood industries have improved in recent weeks, and job prospects generally were looking up until strikes and strike threats in basic material industries served to make future production planning almost impossible for many manufacturing plants.

JOBS STILL SCARCE BUT HIRING ACTIVITY NOTED

Job opportunities still are extremely scarce in Maine, but during the latter part of January and the first part of February, production pick-ups in a few major industrial activities—particularly in shoe manufacturing, woods operations, and textiles—resulted in slightly improved labor market conditions in some areas of the State. Because of the high volume of unemployment among workers from a wide range of industries, employers generally are having very little difficulty in obtaining qualified workers to meet their replacement or expansion requirements. The supply of workers in a small number of occupations has been depleted in one or two communities, but these localized shortages can readily be rectified either through recruiting qualified available workers from other areas, or through training and up-grading within establishments.

JOB LISTINGS SHOWED A GAIN IN JANUARY

Jobs listed by employers with the sixteen local employment offices of this Commission totalled 3,132 in January. This represented a gain of nearly 1,300 over December job listings and an increase of 675 over the number of requests for referrals received in November.

Nearly half of the labor needs reflected in listings received in January were for woods workers, but increased demands for shoe workers—and in the latter part of the month for textile workers—were evident. Difficulty was being experienced at the end of last month in certain local areas in recruiting qualified loomfixers, bed lasters (shoe), and fancy stitchers (shoe).

REGISTERED JOB-SEEKERS TOTALLED 31,600 ON FEBRUARY 1

As of February 1, active work applications were being maintained in this Commission's sixteen local offices by 31,600 persons. This was the largest number of workers in several months to be actively seeking employment through the facilities of the local offices. A year ago, active registrants numbered 27,400. Of those currently registered, 2.2 per cent are experienced in professional or managerial occupations; 8.8 per cent are clerical workers or salespersons; 5.8 per cent have previously been engaged in jobs found in various public or private service industries; 23 per cent are skilled production workers from all types of industries; 27.4 per cent are qualified for specific semiskilled jobs; and 32.8 per cent are unskilled workers.

APR 7 1950

UI CLAIMS LOAD HAS RISEN SHARPLY THIS WINTER

Claims received for unemployment insurance benefits have risen appreciably since the fall months, and the current winter volume of claims is around 62 per cent greater than during the comparable period last year. Initial and continued claims received in January totalled 107,100, whereas in January 1949, the UI claims load approximated 66,100. The total load last month was broken down as follows: initial claims — 10,700; continued claims — 96,400. ("Initial" claims are filed at the beginning of a spell of unemployment, while "Continued" claims are filed for completed weeks of total or partial unemployment).

INSURED UNEMPLOYMENT IN MAINE AT A HIGH LEVEL

The number of persons in an insured unemployment status (i.e., filing continued claims) in the last week of January totalled 22,355. This represented an increase of about 26 per cent over the number of insured unemployed claimants filing during the last week of August. This increase, in itself, is not too remarkable, but, when it is considered that between September 1 and the latter part of January over 11,200 persons exhausted their benefits rights for the current benefit year which ends on March 31, 1950 and therefore could not be included in the "insured" group at the end of January, the increase takes on added significance.

UNEMPLOYMENT PROBLEMS CONFRONT ALL AREAS IN THE STATE

Although some areas — such as Washington, York and Aroostook Counties — have been faced with particularly serious unemployment problems in the last few months, the volume of unemployment, as indicated by UI Claims loads and by the numbers seeking jobs through local employment offices, is heavy in practically all sections of the State. Only the

Washington and York County areas meet Federal "distress area" classification criteria at the present time, but various other sections of the State are on the borderline, and could fall into the "distress" category should these areas experience further serious employment reductions.

UI PROGRAM IS EASING THE EFFECTS OF UNEMPLOYMENT

Although public "relief" rolls have been on the increase in the past several months, the unemployment insurance program has done much to protect large numbers of jobless persons, and the State's economy generally, from many of the consequences of widespread unemployment. In December and January, this Commission issued \$2,579,100.00 to cover 173,438 weeks of unemployment. It is apparent — considering that the average weekly benefit payment in these two months was only \$14.87 — that unemployed claimants, individually, received small returns from the program, but in the majority of cases these benefits served to keep the recipients from being completely devoid of income with which they could, while out of work, purchase necessities for themselves and their families.

JOB OUTLOOK MIGHT IMPROVE

Employers in practically all of the State's major manufacturing activities have indicated that employment prospects for the coming months are fairly promising. However, it is apparent that strikes in basic national industries may tend to upset the future production plans of nearly all other industries, and, for this reason, previously anticipated expansions in Maine's fabricated metals and machinery, textiles, paper and allied products, and shoe industries may be retarded. It is almost certain, regardless of developments elsewhere, that there will be a short period in the spring when unemployment in this state will show a sharp upturn. This, however, will be seasonal in character, and is to be expected each year in April and May.

**PRELIMINARY ESTIMATE
OF NONAGRICULTURAL EMPLOYMENT
IN MAINE**

The table showing a Preliminary Estimate of Nonagricultural Employment in Maine, compiled by the Maine Employment Security Commission in cooperation with the United States Bureau of Labor Statistics, is now being issued as a separate 2 page, mimeographed monthly release.

Anyone desiring this information can have their name placed on the mailing list by writing to —

Informational Representative
Maine Employment Security Commission
331 Water Street,
Augusta, Maine.

**NONAGRICULTURAL EMPLOYMENT
TOTALLED 240,400 IN JANUARY**

Full- and part-time employment in non-agricultural industries in Maine totaled 240,400 in pay periods ending nearest to January 15, according to preliminary estimates compiled by the Maine Employment Security Commission in cooperation with the United States Bureau of Labor Statistics. This represented a decline of approximately 3.9 per cent from the nonagricultural employment estimate pertaining to mid-December 1949, and a decrease of around 4 per cent from the employment level of January last year.

**AVERAGE WAGES AND HOURS
WORKED SHOWED GAINS
IN JANUARY**

Estimates based upon information provided by selected employers in Maine indicated slight January increases in the average work-week for production workers engaged in manufacturing activities and in the average earnings of these workers. During pay periods ending nearest January 15, Maine manufacturing production workers received an average weekly wage of \$47.39 as compared to \$46.82 in the mid-week period of December, and \$47.13 in the middle week of January last year. The average work-week in January this year was 40.9 as compared to 40.5 in December and 40.8 in January 1949.

Maine Employment Security 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	4-4571
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
EMPLOYMENT SECURITY COMMISSION
AUGUSTA MAINE
OFFICIAL BUSINESS

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