

LABOR MARKET



NEWS LETTER

Maine Employment Security Commission 331 Water Street Augusta, Maine

JUNE - 1954

ISSUED BI-MONTHLY



The labor market — in Maine, stimulated by hirings during the last few weeks in both seasonal and nonseasonal industries, appears to be making rapid strides in shaking the lethargy by which it has been characterized in the past several months. Although the upswing in activities has not shown unprecedented force, employment gains have been made on a fairly broad industrial front, unemployment is definitely on the decline, and the job outlook is improving.

Weekly claims load trends — have been downwards since early May. The volume of unemployment, reflected by claims filed for unemployment insurance benefits, still is considerably higher than a year ago, but a comparison of claims loads in 1953 and 1954 reveals that the spring decline this year from peak levels has been sharper than last year. Between May 1 and the middle of June weekly claims dropped by approximately 44 per cent as compared with a 36 per cent decline for the same period in 1953.

Insured unemployment — which, in January and February, was higher than in the comparable months of the "recession" year, 1949, now is running about 22 per cent below the 1949 level. Last month the average weekly number of persons in an insured unemployment status was 17,550. By the middle of the current month the weekly average dropped to 13,220, which was, however, about 63 per cent above the corresponding average a year ago.

Demand for labor — despite the adverse effects of inclement weather throughout the spring upon various types of outdoor work, has become rather brisk. During May employers placed orders with the local offices of the Maine Employment Security Commission for 3,745 resident workers — a rise of 123 per cent over April and an increase over March of 142 per cent. In addition to the 3,745 openings received, 1,686 jobs to be filled by bonded Canadian woodsmen if local workers could not be recruited were filed by woods operators during May. Job listings in June continued to point to further advances with the greatest being in seasonal industries.

Nonfarm employment in Maine — rose by 3.7 per cent in the thirty-day period, April 15-May 15, according to latest estimates compiled by the Maine Employment Security Commission in cooperation with the United States Bureau of Labor Statistics. In mid-May, workers with jobs in nonagricultural industries in this State totalled 265,800 as compared with 256,200 in the middle week of April. May employment was, however, down by 3.2 per cent from a year ago when 274,600 persons were on the pay rolls of nonfarm employers.

Employment gains — were recorded between April and May in both manufacturing and non-manufacturing activities. Over-all manufacturing employment rose by 4.8 per cent, from 97,900 to 102,600. This was the first time in ten months that jobs in manufacturing have shown an increase. Employment in nonmanufacturing continued to display strength, moving upwards by 3.1 per cent, from 158,300 to 163,200. The only industry which experienced a sizable reduction was shoe manufacturing, which, due to seasonal factors, normally is off in May.

Job opportunities — appear to have been less numerous in some activities than in the late spring periods of the last few years, but, nevertheless, recent improvements in the general employment picture have occurred as a result of varying degrees of expanded labor requirements in many different industries. Demand for construction workers has been particularly heavy — in fact, more pronounced than usual — and job increases during the past several weeks have been rather extensive in the lumber and wood products, and fish packing industries, and in businesses which are dependent upon the patronage of summer vacationists.

(over)



The total supply of labor — is great enough to meet all current and foreseeable demand. Localized occupational shortages exist, but these are affecting only a few establishments — mostly hotels and restaurants. As of June 1, persons registered for work in the local offices of the Maine Employment Security Commission totalled 20,955, which, incidentally, was the smallest number of applicants available for job referral since the first of the year. The registered supply of labor was greater, however, by 61 per cent than on June 1, 1953.

A surplus of labor — although perhaps lower than at present, should continue to be evident in Maine even when labor needs in seasonal industries reach a peak later in the summer. Comparatively few of the youths who have entered the labor market following the June closing of schools and colleges have registered for work in the local employment offices, but it is apparent that such young men and women have lifted the potential supply to a point far above any probable aggregate demand which might reasonably be expected to develop.

Maine Employment Security Commission

EMPLOYMENT OFFICES

<i>Location</i>	<i>Address</i>	<i>Telephone</i>
Augusta	331 Water Street	3-4511—Ex. 41
Bangor	131 Franklin Street	6435
Bath	174 Front Street	1748
Biddeford	275 Main Street	4-4571
Calais	129 Main Street	427
Caribou	Main Street	3331
Lewiston	19 Park Street	4-6971
Portland	500 Forest Avenue	2-0186
Rockland	437 Main Street	105
Sanford	25 Washington Street	1045
Skowhegan	29 Water Street	7-3368
Waterville	177 Main Street	1886

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