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## Labor Market News Letter, October 1950

Maine Employment Security Commission

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# LABOR MARKET



# NEWS LETTER

Maine Employment Security Commission 331 Water Street Augusta, Maine



**OCTOBER - 1950**  
ISSUED BI-MONTHLY



## LABOR MARKET HIGHLIGHTS

Economic conditions in Maine continue to be exceptionally bright. Employment has dropped off slightly due to seasonal factors, but the decline has been less pronounced than would normally be expected in the early fall period.

The supply of labor has decreased rather appreciably since spring, but there is still an over-all surplus of available workers in the State. The reduction in Maine's labor reserve has been caused by hirings in both seasonal and nonseasonal industries within the State and by the movement of workers to out-of-state war goods production centers.

The job outlook for the rest of this year is very promising, and, except in those industries which usually cut their operations in the winter months, employment levels during the first few months of 1951 should remain comparatively firm.

### LABOR MARKET ACTIVITIES STILL AT A HIGH LEVEL

The upward swing in labor market activities, which started last spring and gained momentum in the summer, continued through September and into October. There have been indications of a tapering off in hiring rates generally, but labor market activities still are at a comparatively high level. Seasonal factors have been especially prominent in producing the slight downward trend which has developed in the past few weeks.

### LABOR REQUIREMENTS HAVE BEEN BRISK

Job opportunities have become less numerous than during the summer months but employers in various sections of the State still have vacancies opening up from day to day for a relatively large number of workers. Last month, the sixteen employment offices of the Maine Employment Security Commission received orders for over 5,200 workers who were needed in nonagricultural industries. Although somewhat below mid-summer labor requirements, listed openings last month exceeded job orders of a year ago by approximately 2,000.

### DEMAND FOR LABOR EXISTS IN NUMEROUS INDUSTRIES

Numerous industries in Maine are represented by the job openings listed with local employment offices. Workers are needed in manufacturing establishments producing civilian goods as well as in plants engaging in the processing of war material. Requirements likewise are fairly extensive in various non-manufacturing fields. Approximately sixty per cent of the known demand for labor is for workers needed in manufacturing occupations, whereas the balance of the needs are for persons required in nonmanufacturing jobs.

### DEMAND FOR HANDICAPPED WORKERS HAS RISEN SHARPLY

The advantages of using handicapped persons in job openings for which they are qualified are becoming increasingly apparent to many employers who stand a real chance of losing some of their present workers either to the armed forces or to war jobs in other States. Consequently, there has been considerable interest manifested in the hiring of men and women who although physically handicapped are thoroughly competent to handle specific jobs.

Nov 13 1950



## **SEASONAL REDUCTIONS HAVE BEEN LESS PRONOUNCED THAN USUAL**

Employment reductions in agriculture, food processing, and retail trade and services in resort areas have been primarily responsible for a small drop in the total number of persons employed in Maine. The decline has been less pronounced than usual, largely because conditions have remained exceptionally firm in many other industries which, although basically nonseasonal in character, sometimes tend to weaken at this time of year. Also, because mid-summer peaks in seasonal industries this year were under the top levels reached in the past several summers, seasonal curtailments are having less of an effect upon the over-all employment situation.

## **DOWNWARD TREND IN UNEMPLOYMENT HAS BEEN STEADY**

Contractions in this State's supply of available labor still were occurring in the early fall period. The cumulative effect of such contractions, which started last spring, was appreciable enough to bring unemployment to its lowest point in two years. It is expected that a trend break will manifest itself soon and that the volume of unemployment will start to rise in the next several weeks. At present it appears doubtful that peak unemployment in the coming winter months will be as high as during the past two or three years, but it is almost certain that seasonal influences will force unemployment well above the current level.

## **LABOR FORCE WITHDRAWALS HAVE OFFSET EMPLOYMENT CURTAILMENTS**

That there has been a slight decline in aggregate employment while unemployment also has been following a downward trend can be accounted for largely by worker withdrawals from the Maine Labor Market. As is customary each year, a large proportion of the youths and women who entered the labor market in the spring returned to their educational or homemaking pursuits — thus separating from the labor force — as soon as the summer ended. Just prior to withdrawing from the labor force, some of the workers had been in an unemployed status while others had been engaged in summer jobs.

## **MIGRATION OF MAINE WORKERS TO AREAS PRODUCING WAR GOODS HAS BEEN NOTED**

The increase in the production of war goods in New England areas other than in Maine has created a rather sizable demand for persons with skills utilizable in aircraft and munitions plants. A relatively large, although indeterminable number of qualified Maine workers have responded to this demand and, therefore, have left the State. Most of those who have migrated are workers who had worked out-of-state during World War II. Unless unforeseen developments occur in the near future additional workers in this class will leave Maine in the coming months.

## **MILITARY SERVICE WITHDRAWALS HAVE HAD LITTLE EFFECT ON LABOR MARKET**

Vacancies are being created in the civilian labor force as young men leave for military service, but, to date, the volume of inductions into the armed forces has not been great enough to be felt to any extent in the labor market.

## **IN-PLANT TRAINING PROJECTS HAVE EASED SHORTAGES IN SOME OCCUPATIONS**

Shortages of qualified workers in a few highly skilled occupations, primarily in the shoe and textile industries, have eased in the past few weeks. This development, which occurred in the face of a continuing reduction in the total supply of labor, occurred as a result of the adoption of in-plant training projects by employers whose production was being retarded by labor supply deficiencies. It appears that labor shortage problems which are likely to arise in the immediate future can be resolved just as most of those of a couple of months ago were corrected — through training and upgrading.

## **AROOSTOOK POTATO HARVEST PROVIDED JOBS FOR MANY**

The harvest of potatoes in Aroostook County which got fully underway during the middle of September and was completed in October, provided jobs for a large number of workers



not only from the northern section of the State but also from many other parts of Maine. Because employment conditions generally were favorable in all industrialized centers it was more difficult to recruit harvest hands this year than last. However, all requirements for farm workers were met satisfactorily either from local sources or through the importation of labor from other areas.

### **TOTAL LABOR SUPPLY IN MAINE HAS SHOWN A DECIDED DECLINE**

The supply of available labor in Maine, as measured by the number of persons registered for work in the local employment offices of this Commission, has shown a marked decline during the past several months. At the beginning of the current month a little over 13,000 persons were seeking jobs through the facilities of the local offices. This represents a decline of more than sixty per cent in the number of registered applicants since May 1, and a drop of 2,200 since August 1.

### **WORKERS STILL AVAILABLE FOR MANY TYPES OF JOBS**

Despite the recent decline in the labor supply, it is apparent that fully qualified workers who could be used readily in jobs for which they are suited are still available in the labor market. Of the total number currently seeking jobs through this Agency's local offices, fifty-seven per cent are males. The applicants are classified according to occupational categories as follows: professional and managerial — 3.7 per cent; clerical and sales — 14.1 per

cent; service — 8.7 per cent; skilled — 15.3 per cent; semiskilled — 25.6 per cent; and unskilled — 32.6 per cent.

### **INSURED UNEMPLOYMENT RATIO AT LOWEST POINT OF THE YEAR**

The ratio of insured unemployment to average monthly employment covered under the Maine Employment Security Law dropped to its lowest point of the current year in the latter part of September. During the last week of the month approximately 2.8 per cent of the total number employed in an average month were in an insured unemployment status. This represents a sizable decline from the current years' peak reached in April when the insured unemployment-employment ratio was 16.5 per cent. By way of comparison, the ratio of a year ago was 6.3 per cent.

### **UNEMPLOYMENT SHOULD INCREASE SEASONALLY BUT JOB OUTLOOK IS PROMISING**

Seasonal curtailments in the next several weeks in a number of important industries undoubtedly will result in increases in the number of unemployed, but the job outlook in nonseasonal industries appears to be quite favorable. Production orders, which will take months to fill, are held by major establishments in several of the State's largest industries, and according to information obtained from nearly 1,100 nonagricultural employers during September, by local office representatives, over-all demand for labor during the rest of this year should remain quite strong in most sections of the State.

## **ARE YOU AN EMPLOYER ?**

24 months ago — Maine had 2,495 handicapped people registered for work — 1,444 of these were Veterans.

October 1 — Only 707 physically handicapped were registered — and only 267 were Veterans.

Nearly 2,000 have been placed in jobs the past two years. They have established a splendid record of performance. All they needed was the opportunity.

***Employ the Physically Handicapped -- It's Good Business***



# 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. 78 & R.)