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Labor Market News Letter, June 1951

Maine Employment Security Commission

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LABOR MARKET

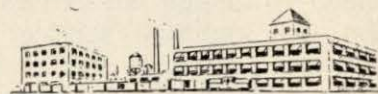


NEWS LETTER

Maine Employment Security Commission 331 Water Street Augusta, Maine



JUNE - 1951
ISSUED BI-MONTHLY



LABOR MARKET HIGHLIGHTS

In the last few weeks there have been definite signs of a tightening labor market in some sections of Maine but, state-wide, there is still a sizeable supply of labor available.

Demand for labor has been quite heavy, particularly in those industries which normally have expanded labor requirements during the summer months.

Youths and women are entering the labor market in fairly large numbers with the result that the supply of labor is not being reduced at the same rate that employment is increasing.

Nonagricultural employment has taken a sharp upswing and is at its highest level of the year thus far.

The employment outlook for the next few months is very promising. Further expansions in seasonal industries, along with predicted stable conditions in major nonseasonal activities, should cause general improvements in economic conditions.

Unless unforeseen developments of an adverse nature occur, the volume of unemployment in Maine should drop this summer to its lowest point since the end of World War II.

LABOR DEMAND

Expanded labor requirements in a number of important industries which normally experience seasonal pick-ups in the spring period each year have stimulated the labor market in Maine during the past two months. In May alone, the local offices of the Maine Employment Security Commission received requests from employers to refer workers to 7,370 job openings, and in the preceding month 7,270 vacancies were listed with the offices. Industries having the heaviest demand included: lumber and wood products, food and kindred products, and contract construction. Although accelerated demand has been due largely to seasonal factors which exert an influence upon the labor needs of various major industries each spring, hiring activities have been higher than a year ago, as is illustrated by the fact that job openings listed in the local employment offices are running, at

the present time, about 43 per cent above last year.

CURRENT JOB OPPORTUNITIES

Job opportunities, represented in the openings on hand in the employment offices of this Agency, are available currently to many different classes of qualified workers. At the moment, approximately 3,600 workers are needed in the many establishments which utilize the public employment service in obtaining labor to meet their replacement and expansion requirements. Of the known job openings available, 51.8 per cent are for persons without prior work experience; 20.3 per cent are in the business, personal, amusement, and related service industries; 17.3 per cent are in skilled and semiskilled occupations; and the remaining 10.6 per cent are scattered among the clerical sales, professional, and managerial fields.

SUPPLY OF LABOR

Although the number of unemployed workers absorbed during the past several weeks has been comparatively large, and despite continued — though not extensive — out-migration and military service enlistments and inductions, there is still a sizeable supply of labor in Maine. Youths from high schools and colleges, along with women who usually become available for summer employment in seasonal industries, have entered the labor market in increasing numbers during the last few weeks and have, therefore, augmented the State's labor force. As of June 1, nearly 15,800 persons were registered with the sixteen local employment offices as available job-seekers. This represented a 4.8 per cent decline from March 31 when 16,600 job-seekers had applications for work on file in the offices.

ADEQUACY OF LABOR SUPPLY

Except in a few communities where employers are unable to obtain from local sources experienced workers for certain classes of jobs, the supply of labor from which Maine employers may draw is entirely adequate, numerically, to meet existing labor requirements. It is extremely unlikely that a shortage of manpower will develop in this State in the foreseeable future, but during the coming summer months — when seasonal activities are at a peak — a tightening labor market is in prospect. As a result, some employers, in meeting their labor needs, probably will have to fill vacancies in skilled and semiskilled jobs through training and upgrading and utilize more inexperienced workers as replacements for those who are promoted.

CLAIMS LOAD TRENDS

Because of the start of a new benefit year on April 1, Unemployment Compensation monthly claims loads in April and May were considerably higher than in the first three

months of 1951. However, illustrative of general economic improvements in Maine over a twelve-month period is the fact that the current volume of UC claims being filed by unemployed persons is running approximately 41 per cent under a year ago. In April and May of the current year, claims totalled 57,900 and 66,500 respectively. For the corresponding months in 1950, claims loads were: April — 104,400, and May — 105,800.

NONAGRICULTURAL EMPLOYMENT

Employment in nonagricultural industries in Maine rose to 260,400 in the middle week of May, according to preliminary estimates prepared by the Maine Employment Security Commission in cooperation with the United States Bureau of Labor Statistics. This was the highest level reached thus far in 1951 and was 5.6 per cent above May 1950 employment of 246,700. Between April and May, this year, over-all nonfarm jobs increased by 6,300. The most pronounced increases occurred in the following industry groups: lumber and wood products; food and kindred products; contract construction; personal and business services; and government. Most of the gains were seasonal in character.

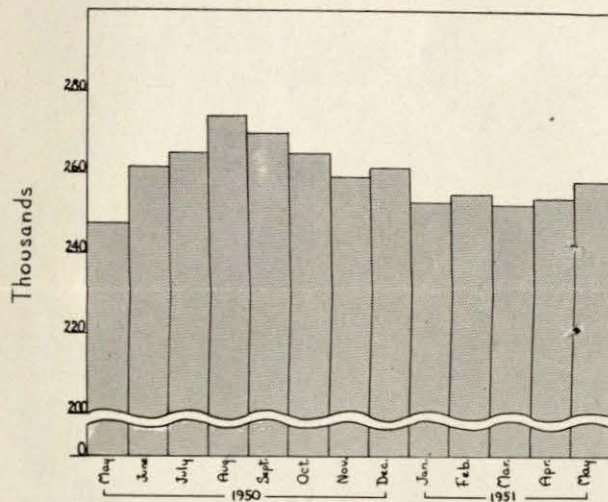
AVERAGE WORKWEEK AND EARNINGS

There were slight declines between April and May in the average hourly and weekly earnings of production workers engaged in manufacturing activities in Maine. Also, the average workweek of such workers dropped during the period. In May, the average hourly earnings were \$1.30 as compared with \$1.32 in April. Weekly earnings declined from an April average of \$53.56 to \$51.75 in May, and the average workweek dropped from 40.7 hours to 39.9 hours. Decreases were attributable primarily to increased employment in certain seasonal occupations for which wage rates and the average workweek are somewhat lower than in nonseasonal industries.

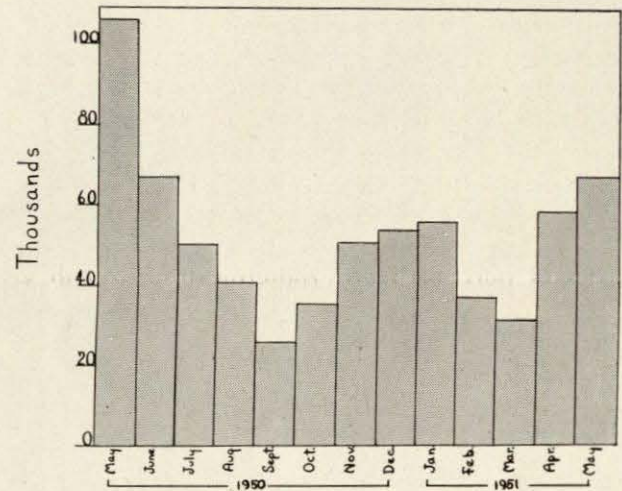
Selected Labor Market Trend Indicators

MAY 1950 — MAY 1951

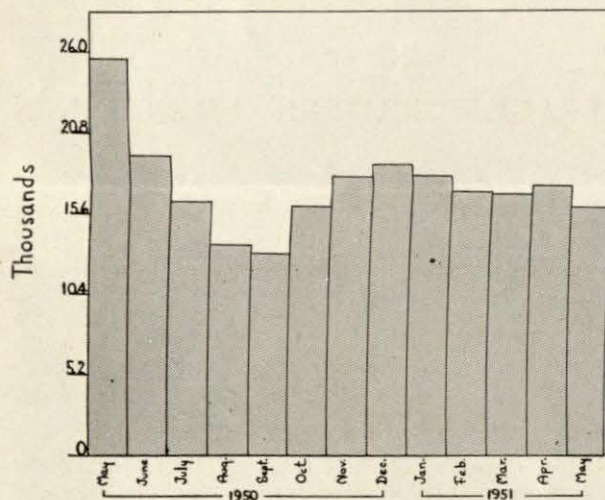
Nonagricultural Employment



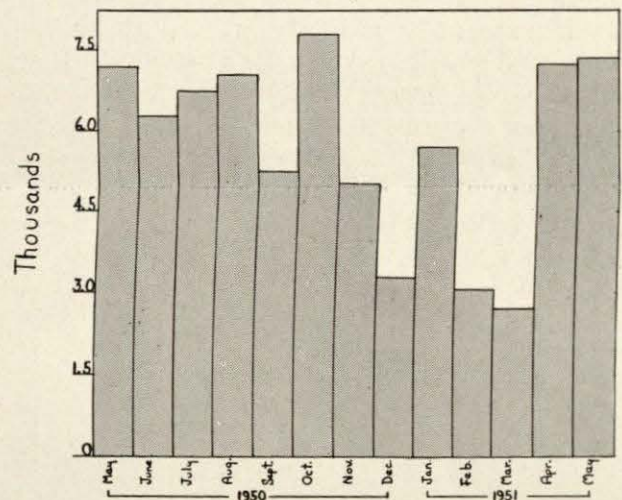
U C Claims Load



Registered Job-Sekers



Job Openings Received



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	177 Main 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.)