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## Labor Market News Letter, June 1953

Maine Employment Security Commission

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# LABOR MARKET

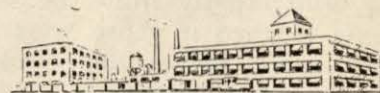


# NEWS LETTER

Maine Employment Security Commission 331 Water Street Augusta, Maine



**JUNE - 1953**  
ISSUED BI-MONTHLY



## LABOR MARKET HIGHLIGHTS

Employment conditions in Maine are more favorable than they have been in several years.

Demand for labor has been exceptionally heavy in seasonal activities.

Certain nonseasonal industries also have had expanded labor requirements.

Unemployment is dropping rapidly with the result that the supply of labor in some occupational categories is becoming depleted.

The job picture is expected to continue to be favorable at least until fall.

### DEMAND FOR LABOR CONTINUED TO INCREASE

Demand for labor continued to increase in Maine during May, and by the first part of June had become rather extensive in most sections of the State. Seasonal factors were largely responsible for expanded labor requirements which have materialized, but it is also true that there has been a firm demand for workers needed in nonseasonal activities. The most numerous job opportunities which have developed have been in construction, logging and lumbering, fish processing, wholesale and retail trade, and service industries. On June 1, the local offices of the MESC held job orders from employers for 8,655 workers. This was the highest volume of job openings on hand at any time in the past twelve months.

### EMPLOYMENT OFFICES ENCOUNTER- ING RECRUITING PROBLEMS

Although the supply of labor in Maine has by no means become depleted, difficulties are being encountered in finding qualified workers for some of the jobs listed in the local offices. Pronounced but, in most areas, temporary shortages of chefs, cooks, waitresses, and other classes of workers needed in restaurants and

hotels became apparent at the start of the current month primarily as a result of an earlier-than-usual spurt in hirings at resort centers. Localized problems likewise are arising in the recruiting of workers for a number of occupations in the metal-working, construction, textile, food processing, and woods industries.

### PEAK REQUIREMENTS NOT YET REACHED

The upswing in demand for labor appears to be gaining momentum and probably will not reach a peak until later in the summer. Further sizeable employment expansions are anticipated in woods operations, contract construction, shoe manufacturing, metal-working, food processing, agriculture, and the various activities which cater to summer vacationists. Also, greater replacement needs in other industries probably will become evident as labor turnover rates increase generally due to the prospective widening of choice in work opportunities. These factors should tend to create an exceptionally active labor market at least until fall and it appears very likely that unemployment in Maine will, before the end of the summer, be reduced to almost an absolute minimum.

JUL 13 1953



## **UNEMPLOYMENT BEGINNING TO DROP**

Claims load trends indicate that the volume of unemployment in Maine has already started to drop rapidly from the seasonally inflated level reached in April when employment requirements in several major industries were down. In a period of just a few weeks — from the last week of April to the first week in June — the number of totally unemployed persons in an insured unemployment status under the State UI program decreased by 44.5 per cent, from 9,840 to 5,462. Unemployment a year ago was regarded as being at a comparatively low level, but the current situation is even more heartening. Last year at this time approximately 4.8 per cent of the workers in the insured labor force under the UI program were totally unemployed, whereas at the present time the comparable ratio is approximately 3 per cent.

## **YOUTHS AN IMPORTANT SOURCE OF LABOR SUPPLY**

In view of the sharp downward trend in the supply of available adult labor, the entrance into the labor market this month of youths who have completed their educational careers has been of utmost importance in preventing an over-all shortage of manpower. Many youths have been, or soon will be absorbed by seasonal jobs, but there also has been a noticeable increase in the number hired by nonseasonal employers who ordinarily attempt to attract only experienced workers to their job vacancies. Such relaxing in hiring specifications has been observed in segments of most of the State's major manufacturing industries, but it is apparent that fuller utilization of youths as a source of labor supply would tend to ease certain localized shortages which are starting to develop in some areas.

## **NONFARM EMPLOYMENT MOVES UPWARDS**

General improvements in the employment situation in this State during the Spring were clearly reflected in the May estimates of total nonagricultural employment compiled by the Maine Employment Security Commission in

cooperation with the United States Bureau of Labor Statistics. Until May, employment trends this year had been downwards, primarily because of seasonal influences in several major industries. Between April and May, however, the trend was reversed, with the over-all number of nonfarm jobs in Maine increasing by 9,000 to a mid-May level of 273,700. Although this advance was appreciable, of perhaps even greater significance with respect to measuring the relative position of economic conditions is the fact that approximately 3,100 more workers had jobs in May this year than in the same month in 1952.

## **OVER-THE-YEAR EMPLOYMENT CHANGES NOTED**

Some industries experienced employment curtailments between May 1952 and May 1953, but such declines — as is evidenced by the twelve-month net increase of 3,100 jobs — were more than offset by gains in other activities. The most noticeable decreases which occurred were in the logging and lumbering, paper and allied products, and shipbuilding industries. Noteworthy expansions, on the other hand, were achieved in the machinery and ordnance, food processing, textile and apparel, and shoe manufacturing industries. There were minor changes during the annual period in a number of other industries, but none of outstanding significance. Employment in the construction industry in May was at just about the same level as a year ago.

## **WORKWEEK AND EARNINGS AVERAGES RELATIVELY HIGH**

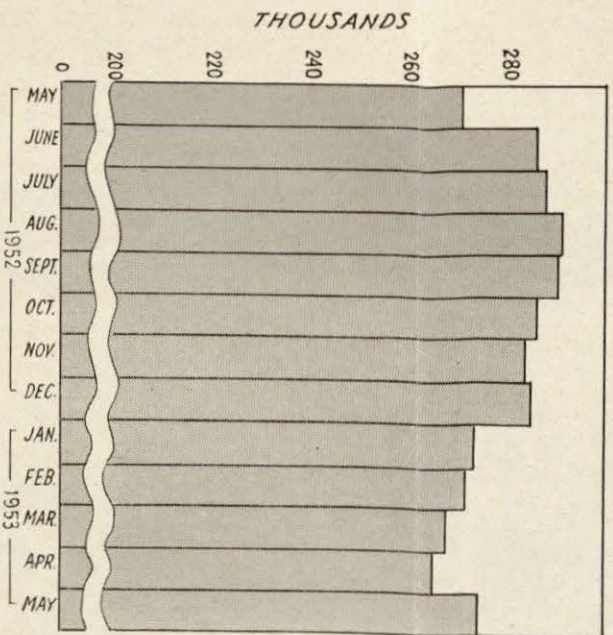
Despite seasonally irregular production schedules in certain industries, the over-all average workweek of production workers employed in Maine manufacturing industries in May was 40.7 hours. This was down from the average number of hours worked per week during the winter, but was higher by 1.2 hours than the May 1952 average workweek of 39.5 hours. The average hourly earnings of production workers in May this year were also above a year ago, increasing in the twelve-month period from \$1.35 to \$1.39. Average weekly earnings in May totalled \$56.57 as compared with \$53.22 last year in the same month.



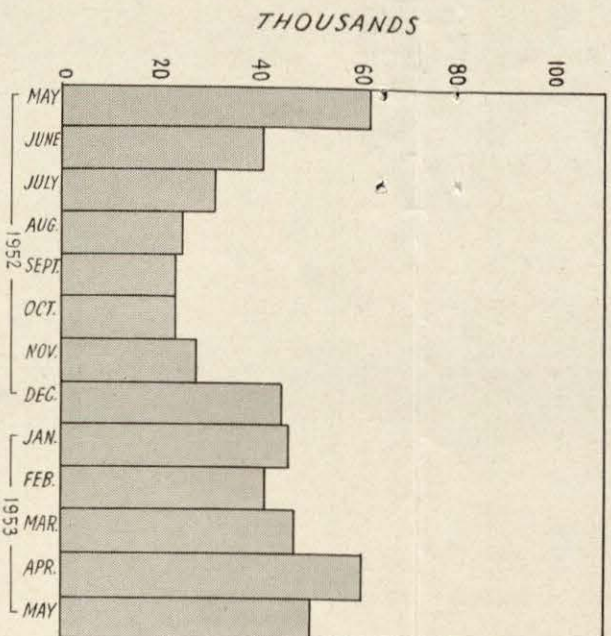
# *Selected Labor Market Trend Indicators*

MAY 1952 — MAY 1953

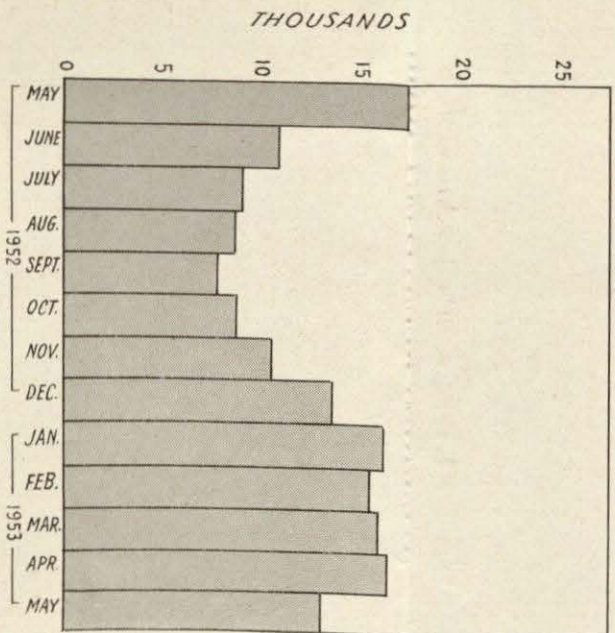
NONAGRICULTURAL EMPLOYMENT



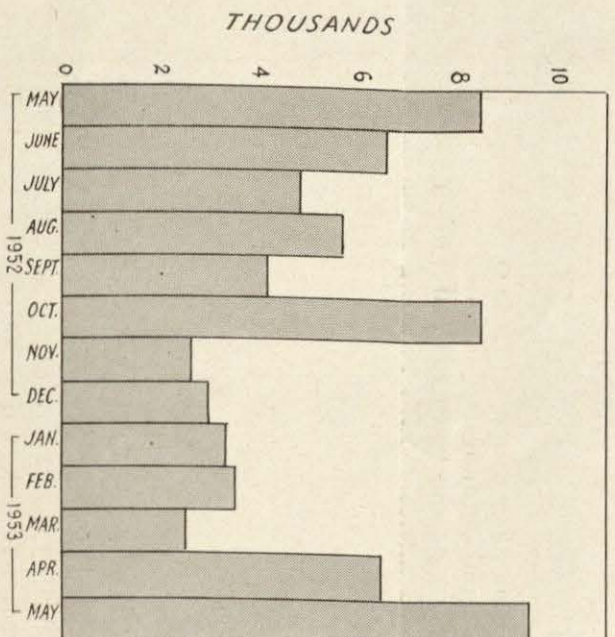
U C CLAIMS LOAD



REGISTERED JOB SEEKERS



JOB OPENINGS RECEIVED





# 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	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  
(SEC. 35.4 (P) (1) P. L. & R.)