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# Labor Market News Letter, November 1961

Maine Employment Security Commission

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## LABOR MARKET



## NEWS LETTER

Maine Employment Security Commission

331 Water Street

Augusta, Maine

NOVEMBER - 1961

ISSUED BI-MONTHLY



**Labor Market Highlights**—Between the middle of August and of October, the total work force in Maine declined by 3.5 percent, from 402,200 to 388,000. Nonagricultural employment dropped by about the same ratio, from 347,600 to 334,600. Of this loss of 13,000 nonfarm jobs, 2,200 were self-employed and related workers, and 10,800 were of wage and salaried employees. Agricultural employment in the State regularly reaches a peak in September; the individual crop harvested which contributes most to this regular expansion is of potatoes in Aroostook County, and in second place, in recent years, have been apples, mainly in Kennebec, Androscoggin, and York County areas. In the last five years, farm employment statewide averaged 37,200 in August; 45,100 in September; and 39,600 in October. This year, comparable figures of 33,400 in August, 40,800 in September, and 33,300 in October repeated the normal seasonal pattern, but at a substantially lower level than in the past. Unemployment in the past two months dropped by 5.2 percent, from 21,200 in mid-August to 20,100 in mid-October.

**Nonagricultural Wage and Salary Employment**

—The number of wage and salary workers on the payrolls of nonfarm employers in Maine dropped 3.7 percent, from 289,800 to 279,000 between August and October. The two-month decline, involving 10,800 jobs, was attributable primarily to seasonal curtailments in such industries as lumber and wood products, food and kindred products, contract construction, trade, and service. During this period, jobs in manufacturing industries declined from 109,400 to 103,500, while aggregate employment in non-manufacturing activities decreased from 180,400 to 175,500. This year's October nonagricultural wage and salary figure is very slightly below the preceding decade's median level of 280,000 employed for the month. Also, in manufacturing, the current October level is below the 1951-1960 median of 110,400. For both the total and for manufacturing jobs, virtually all figures above these ten-year mid-points were in the early part of the decade, in 1956 or earlier.

**Underemployment**—Workers eligible for unemployment benefits who worked part-time and who earned less than the weekly benefits to which they might be entitled if fully unemployed are partially or under-employed. In the month of September, such claims represented approximately 15 percent of the total number filed, and

in October this year, they made up 19 percent. A year ago, in October, they had been 21 percent. Establishments classified as manufacturing non-rubber footwear, in which this partial employment is particularly widespread, reported an average workweek of 32.2 hours in October this year. This represented a decline from this August's figure of 36.3 hours and a slight increase over the October, 1960, figure of 31.5 hours.

**Maine's Insured Unemployment Rate, National**—In the middle week of October, insured unemployment in Maine was 5.4 percent of the covered work force. This was the fifth highest State rate in the country, and the highest, as it has been for some time, in New England. This rate was 6.8 percent in mid-September and had been 6.1 percent in mid-August.

**Exhausted Benefit Rights and (Federal) Temporary Extended Compensation Program**—A decline in insured unemployment under the State program since the first of October has resulted from UI exhaustions. In mid-October, there had been 1,533 of these, an increase of 11.1 percent over a year ago. At the end of October, this year's exhaustions were running around 19 percent over the same time a year ago. This year, those exhausting their State



benefits will be entitled to benefits under the Federal Temporary Extended Compensation Program; the number of continued claimants under this coverage swelled from around 200 in early October, representing those who had insufficient calendar year 1960 base period earnings, to around 1,500 in the latter part of the month. From the start of this program on April 10, there had been, through the end of October 4,800 persons who filed claims as exhausting State benefit rights, and who were compensated for 29,000 weeks of unemployment.

**Registered Job-Seekers**—At the end of October, 1961, there were 18,800 persons registered with the local employment offices. This represented a decline of slightly over one percent from levels of 19,000 to 19,100 at the end of August and September this year and October a year ago. Of the current applicants, 49 percent were women. In broad occupational categories, the largest group currently represented was the unskilled,

with 40 percent of total applicants. The semi-skilled category followed, with 19 percent of the total, and next was the clerical-sales with 14 percent.

**Average Workweek and Earnings** — Average hourly earnings of production workers employed in manufacturing industries in the State moved up from \$1.81 in August to \$1.84 in September, and \$1.85 in October. The average number of hours worked per week by these workers was 39.4 hours in mid-October as compared with 39.2 hours in September and 40.5 hours in August. Although average hourly earnings increased during September and October, the drop in the average workweek resulted in lower average weekly earnings. Weekly earnings averaged \$73.31 in August, \$72.13 in September, and \$72.89 in October. In mid-October 1960 the workweek averaged 39.2 hours, average hourly earnings were \$1.79, and average weekly earnings amounted to \$70.17.

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