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Labor Market News Letter, October 1948

Maine Unemployment Compensation Commission

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LABOR MARKET



NEWS LETTER

Maine Unemployment Compensation Commission

331 Water Street

Augusta, Maine



OCTOBER - 1948



LABOR MARKET HIGHLIGHTS

Demand for agricultural workers reached a seasonal high early in October, while labor demands in nonagricultural industries in general leveled off. Seasonal employment declines in industries which normally operate on an expanded summer basis have been a primary factor in lessened demands for nonagricultural workers, and at the same time reductions have occurred in the labor needs of certain nonseasonal industries. The current volume of unemployment is not great but indicates a surplus labor pool in Maine. The number of unemployed is expected to increase significantly in the next few weeks. A few job openings are not being filled in certain areas, despite an over-all labor surplus. A lack of available qualified workers is largely responsible for this condition.

AGRICULTURE Seasonal demand for agricultural workers reached a peak during the latter part of September when potato harvesting became general in major production areas. Recruitment difficulties were encountered at the height of the harvest, but a sufficient number of workers was attracted to the area to assure timely harvesting of the crop estimated at 70 million bushels. Up to September 25 a total of 5,858 Canadian workers, recruited largely in Quebec and New Brunswick provinces, came into Aroostook under bond. In addition more than 5,000 persons from other Maine labor market areas, and from nearly all eastern seaboard states were attracted to the potato producing area through inter-area recruitment initiated by the Maine Unemployment Compensation Commission. While it is not possible to determine the exact number of local and out-of-area workers who engaged in the potato harvest, estimates place this total at about 40,500.

DEMAND SLACK The number of job openings listed with the Commission's 16 local offices showed a definite downward trend during the last two months. As of October 1 Maine employers had current orders for 2,178 nonagricultural workers, excluding logging, lumbering and pulp operations, as compared with 3,478 such openings August 1. Of the jobs open October first 1,061 were in the construction industry, 571 were in manufacturing plants, 299 were in service occupations, 211 were in wholesale and retail trade establishments and the balance of the demand

was in varied types of nonmanufacturing activities. Logging, lumbering, and pulpwood operators have unfilled orders for 7,512 woodsmen placed with 10 of the Commission's local offices. These orders have been cleared for all offices, so that referrals to these woods jobs are made from each of the 16 offices.

DEMAND TREND As of October 1, for a 30-day period, representatives of the Commission's local offices contacted 843 nonagricultural employers to obtain job orders or to perform other services. Aggregate employment (part-time and full-time workers on pay rolls) totalled approximately 74,500 in establishments visited. Information supplied by these 843 employers indicated that by the end of November these same pay rolls would carry but 70,050 names, an estimated drop of nearly 6 percent. Pay roll expansions were predicted by some employers visited, but such employment gains would be more than offset by anticipated reductions. These employers visited, while they do not necessarily constitute a representative cross section of all Maine nonagricultural industries, do give coverage sufficiently broad to warrant a general conclusion that labor demands will decline during fall months.

According to current indications, the greatest decline will occur in the food products industry, a decrease resulting from seasonal cuts in sardine packing. Despite reduced labor requirements in some textile and shoe producing areas, it may be deduced from information given by employers in both fields that extensive pay roll curtailments were not expected in the immediate future.

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FURTHER CUTS

Preliminary estimates compiled by the Commission in cooperation with the United States Bureau of Labor Statistics indicate that 276,100 full and part-time workers were employed in Maine's nonagricultural industries as of September 15. This figure, based on information furnished by selected employers throughout the state, represents a 1.4 percent decline from the August 15 estimate. Monthly declines occurred in ten of the major industrial fields, while employment gains were registered in only three. The table on page four carries the latest estimates for September and August of this year and for September, 1947.

PLACEMENTS

The Commission's local offices placed 3,515 unemployed workers in suitable nonagricultural jobs during September, including 1,124 women and 1,024 veterans. In addition, 14,694 agricultural placements were made, largely workers for potato harvesting. New applications for jobs last month numbered 1,920, including 932 women and 340 veterans, actively seeking work. At the close of September business there were 11,718 active applications for jobs filed in Commission offices. Of this active total, 4,268 applications were made by women, 3,580 by veterans. This is a considerable decrease from the number on the active list August 1,—13,571, including 4,174 women and 4,828 veterans.

INSURED EMPLOYMENT

The number of persons in insured unemployment during the first week of October was 6,381. This represents a sizable decline from a mid-summer insured unemployment level of 9,381. Several factors induced this 33 percent drop. The more important of these factors include retirement from the labor force of youths and women who were in the labor market only during summer months, the absorption of many workers by potato harvesting, and exhaustion of benefit rights by claimants who have drawn total benefit amounts allowable under the Unemployment Compensation law or under the Servicemen's Readjustment Allowance program. MUCC officials anticipate that insured unemployment will increase rather significantly during the next several weeks following curtailment of seasonal occupations and as a result of scattered employment reductions in textiles and shoe manufacturing. The term "insured unemployment" refers to claimants filing for waiting period credits or for benefits under UC-SRA programs.

WORK APPLICATIONS

Indicative of a growing labor surplus in Maine is the current active registration of 11,718 job seekers in the areas served by the Commission's 16 local offices. All occupations in which there are current labor demands are not represented by these job seekers, but the occupations represented cover a wide range. General occupational fields in which current job applicants are classified include; profession and managerial—494; clerical and sales, 1,326; service occupations, 957; skilled, 2,026; semi-skilled, 3,278; unskilled, 3,637. Of the total current active registration 7,450 are men and 4,268 are women. Included are 3,422 World War Two veterans.

HANDICAPPED

The Maine Unemployment Compensation Commission has been endeavoring, in cooperation with other state and federal agencies, to promote an increased employment of physically handicapped workers in industries throughout the state. The primary aim of this program has been to acquaint Maine employers with the abilities of so-called handicapped workers, and to place those workers in jobs where they can produce as well as normal workers. During the past year, the Commission's local offices have placed 1,738 handicapped workers. Of these placements 18 were in professional or managerial fields, 161 in clerical or sales positions, 222 were in service occupations, 218 were in skilled employment, 256 in semi-skilled, and 863 in unskilled work.

JOB OPENINGS FOR HANDICAPPED

Employers who have made it a practice to hire selectively placed handicapped persons report that in the vast majority of cases these workers are as productive as nonhandicapped workers, have less absenteeism, and excellent safety records. Currently, 949 workers with a great variety of handicaps are registered with the Commission's offices. Many of these men and women are veterans with varied educational qualifications and with work experience in many occupations. Representatives of the MUCC local offices welcome opportunities to help employers in finding handicapped workers for specified jobs.

PRELIMINARY ESTIMATE OF NONAGRICULTURAL EMPLOYMENT IN MAINE
SEPTEMBER, 1948¹ (In thousands)

Compiled by the Maine Unemployment Compensation Commission in cooperation with the
United States Bureau of Labor Statistics

INDUSTRY	September ² 1948	August ² 1948	September ² 1947	Percent of Change	
				Aug. 1948 to Sept. 1948	Sept. 1947 to Sept. 1948
Total Nonagricultural Employment	276.1	280.1	272.4	-1.4	1.4
Total—Manufacturing	118.0	120.1	119.6	-1.7	-1.3
Durable Goods	34.0	34.3	34.5	-0.9	-1.4
Lumber and Wood Products	19.9	20.4	19.9	-2.5	0.0
Primary and Fabricated Metal Products and and Machinery	10.4	10.2	9.9	2.0	5.1
All Other	3.7	3.7	4.7	0.0	-21.3
Nondurable Goods	84.0	85.8	85.1	-2.1	-1.3
Food and Kindred Products	14.6	15.4	16.2	-5.2	-9.9
Textile Mill Products and Apparel	29.9	30.2	29.4	-1.0	1.7
Paper and Allied Products	19.1	19.4	19.0	-1.5	0.5
Leather Products	16.2	16.5	16.4	-1.8	-1.2
All Other	4.2	4.3	4.1	-2.3	2.4
Total—Nonmanufacturing	158.1	160.0	152.8	-1.2	3.5
Mining and Quarrying5	.5	.5	0.0	0.0
Contract Construction	15.0	14.8	14.2	1.4	5.6
Transportation and Other Public Utilities	20.7	20.8	20.4	-0.5	1.5
Wholesale and Retail Trade	48.2	49.0	47.6	-1.6	1.3
Finance, Insurance and Real Estate	6.6	6.6	6.4	0.0	3.1
Business, Personal and Misc. Services	26.2	28.3	25.6	-7.4	2.3
Government ³	40.9	40.0	38.1	2.3	7.4

¹ Data presented exclude domestics in private households, self-employed, and unpaid family workers. Employment figures (except for government) relate to full-and part-time wage and salary workers in pay periods ending nearest the 15th of each month. Figures are rounded to the nearest hundred.

² Estimates corrected to October 11, 1948.

³ Includes federal, state and municipal employees. Federal employment figures relate to first-of-the-month pay periods.

MAINE UNEMPLOYMENT COMPENSATION COMMISSION

331 WATER STREET

AUGUSTA, MAINE

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331 Water Street Augusta, Maine

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