

TABLE 4.—*Manufacturing employment in Presque Isle, Maine, before and after
airbase shutdown, Mar. 30, 1961*

Year:	Number employed
1957.....	189
1958.....	266
1959.....	253
1960.....	246
1961.....	400
1962.....	871
1963.....	1,137

Source: Census of Maine Manufacturers.

In addition, because the law provides that States or communities can take over surplus military property without charge if it is to be used for educational or hospital services, the State of Maine was able to use some of the property to establish the Northeastern Maine Vocational Education Institute. Moreover, the base was used to develop excellent commercial airport facilities. Thus, intelligent and aggressive local, State, and Federal leadership combined to achieve a minor miracle in industrial development.

HOW TRANSFERABLE?

What part of the Presque Isle experience can be applied to other communities affected by a defense installation closing? Of course, not every area has as much unrealized manufacturing potential as Presque Isle with its potato and hardwood resources. On the other hand, most communities have the advantage of being considerably less isolated. Moreover, the current prosperous state of the economy and the resulting labor shortages will make adjustment easier than in periods of recession.

Every affected community can benefit from the positive efforts of its leaders in a carefully planned industrial development effort. Also the Office of Economic Adjustment in the Department of Defense is available to assist in these efforts. Not only does this Office provide technical advice, it may also be able to expedite and coordinate various types of Federal assistance from other agencies, as it did in the case of the ARA loan for the Presque Isle potato processing plant.

The availability of good industrial land and buildings is a prime asset in any industrial development program. In most cases, when a base is closed, the Department of Defense liquidates its holdings of land and buildings. Because the buildings are defense oriented, their fair market value for peaceful purposes is typically substantially less than the original cost. The immediate resale price is also considerably lower than it would be if the property were subdivided and held for a period of 5 to 10 years. Consequently, the community may be able to obtain a potentially valuable complex of land and buildings if imagination is used to redevelop such surplus property. Affected communities that can bring about a relatively smooth transition may develop new approaches to industrial development that will prove invaluable if and when general disarmament necessitates similar adjustments on a more massive scale.