

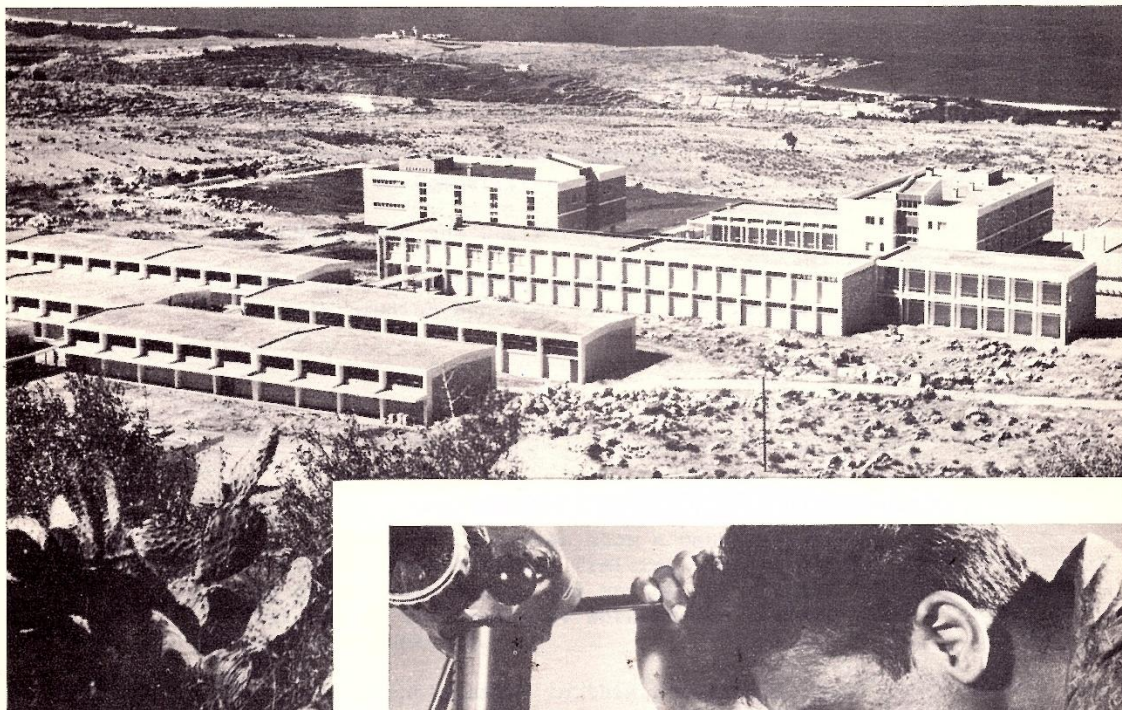


PALESTINE REFUGEES TODAY

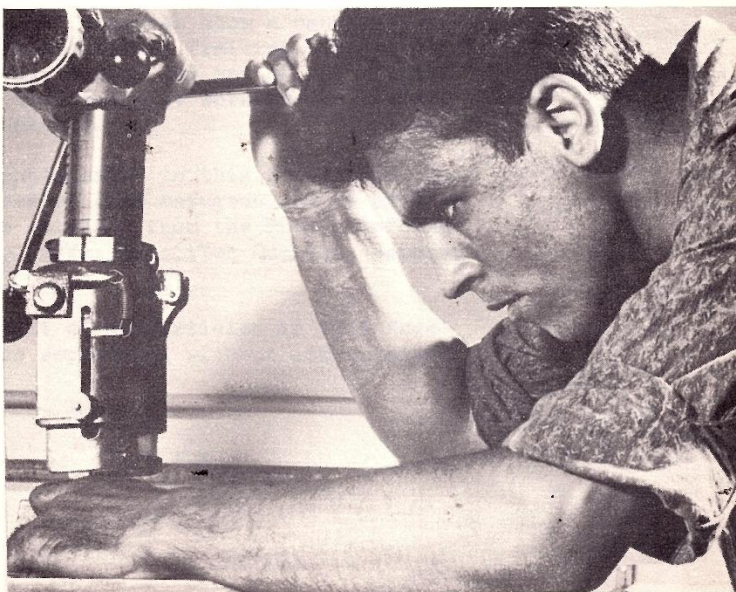
An UNRWA Newsletter

No. 20

OCTOBER 1962



NEW UNRWA
VOCATIONAL
TRAINING
CENTRE
OPENED IN
LEBANON



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The cover pictures show a panoramic view of the Sibli Vocational Training Centre, which was opened this month, and one of the first trainees at the centre at work in the fitter/machinist workshop.

All photographs in this Newsletter, and other pictures of Arab refugees and of UNRWA's work, may be obtained from the Public Information Office, UNRWA, Museitbeh Quarter, Beirut, Lebanon.

The text of all articles in this Newsletter may be reproduced without acknowledgment.

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COMMISSIONER-GENERAL'S ANNUAL REPORT ISSUED.

Against a background of increasing financial difficulties, UNRWA continued during the past year to provide essential relief services to the Palestine refugees, and pushed ahead with its programme of assistance to maturing refugees, Commissioner-General John H. Davis told the United Nations General Assembly in his Annual Report, which was issued in early October.

In the report, which covers the period 1 July 1961 to 30 June 1962, Dr. Davis said that the three-year programme to assist young refugee adults will be completed by 30 June 1963, when the Agency's current mandate expires.

This programme aims to expand vocational training facilities, increase the number of university scholarships and make essential improvements in the general education system.

Dr. Davis said that by 30 June 1963, UNRWA will have one more training centre than originally planned, bringing the number of UNRWA centres to 11. (See article on Page 10). The 11 centres, together with other training institutions subsidized by UNRWA, will have places for about 4,400 refugee trainees, and an annual graduation rate of some 2,200 young refugees. There were only 300 graduates in 1960.

In other phases of the three-year plan, the number of university scholarships has been increased to 500 a year, compared with 350 in 1960, and modest improvements have been carried out in the general education system, although this aspect of the programme has been hampered by a lack of funds.

However, the need to provide greater facilities for education and vocational training has put the Agency in a critical financial situation, said Dr. Davis.

"UNRWA's needs for education and training are constantly increasing, whereas its regular income from government contributions and other sources is almost entirely stationary," he added.

The report states that over the three-year period ending 30 June 1963, UNRWA expects to spend some \$11 million in excess of receipts from regular

sources. This will be offset, in part, by funds from extra-budgetary sources, including World Refugee Year. About \$5.5 million have been raised from such sources so far, and Dr. Davis said he hopes to raise another \$1.5 million before 30 June 1963.

The remaining \$4 million deficit will be covered by drawing down the Agency's working capital reserve "to a critically low level", states the report. Dr. Davis told the Assembly that if UNRWA's mandate is renewed, the Agency will count almost entirely on governments for funds. He urged contributing governments to increase their donations by a total of \$3 million a year, which represents about nine per cent over the present annual contribution rate of \$34 million.

Dr. Davis said that UNRWA's education programme would have to be cut back if the Agency's 1963 budget is not met in full, since relief services are already at a minimal level.

"Such a development would spell tragedy to the individuals to whom education was denied, and would make still more difficult the whole refugee problem," said Dr. Davis. "Therefore it is imperative that the full budget of UNRWA be covered for 1963. To do this will require contributions totalling nearly \$37 millions from governments."

On the subject of UNRWA's mandate, Dr. Davis said the relief and education functions now performed by the Agency must be continued "well beyond 30 June 1963 if deserving refugees are not to suffer physically or be denied much-needed educational opportunities and if reasonable stability is to exist in the region."

He added that the General Assembly must consider whether these services can best be carried out by UNRWA or by some other means. The Assembly will decide whether or not to extend the Agency's mandate at its present session.

Reviewing the refugee situation as a whole, Dr. Davis said that the continuation of the problem is due mainly to three basic issues: the impasse resulting from the deep feelings of the people of the Middle East about the problem; the general unemployable - as well as unemployed - status of dependent

refugees, and particularly of the young adults; and the overall economic limitations of the "host" countries to absorb refugees in addition to their own growing populations.

"It is the Arab people as a whole, and not just the million-odd displaced refugees, who feel deeply that an injustice has been committed against the Arabs of Palestine," said Dr. Davis.

The refugees continue to demand the implementation, as yet unrealized, of Paragraph 11 of the General Assembly's Resolution 194 (III) of 1948 referring to repatriation or compensation for the refugees.

The second basic issue, the unemployable status of the refugees, is particularly tragic in the case of maturing youth, states the report. There are some 30,000 young refugees maturing each year, many of whom will be handicapped for life because they have not been able to acquire skills in the traditional manner by working alongside their fathers, since most of their fathers have been unemployed for the past 14 years.

"Even worse, a high percentage have not learned the habits and self-discipline which are a prerequisite to working," said Dr. Davis. "The result is that these young persons are not just unemployed, but many are virtually unemployable as well."

Dr. Davis called the unemployable status of young refugee adults "a major factor contributing to the plight of the refugees."

Political aspects aside, a third basic problem is the limitation of the host countries to absorb the refugees, states the report. Dr. Davis said he still believes that most refugees must cross an international boundary if they are to find suitable employment without resort, on the part of the host countries, to uneconomic investment of "considerable magnitude".

He added that any absorption of the refugees into the economy and society of the Arab world would not dispose of "the underlying, more basic issues of the Palestine problem."

It is the impasse resulting from the deep feelings of the people of the Middle East on these issues, far more than the continued existence and dependent status of a million Palestine refugees, that "today continues to undermine peace and stability in the Middle East and in the world," concluded Dr. Davis.

IN BRIEF

Commissioner-General in New York.

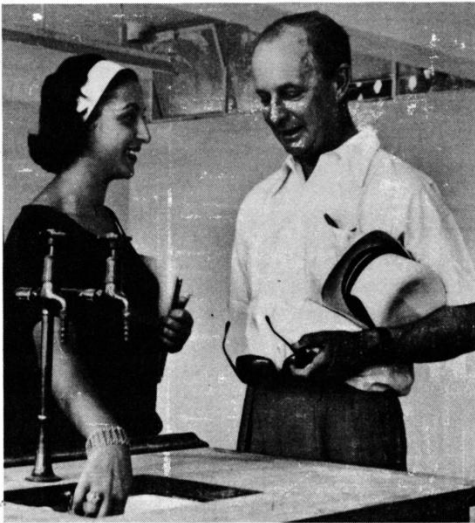
Dr. John H. Davis, the Commissioner-General of UNRWA, flew to New York at the end of last month, following brief stops in Switzerland, the Federal Republic of Germany, the Netherlands, Belgium, Denmark and the United Kingdom, where he had talks with government officials and the representatives of voluntary agencies. Dr. Davis will attend the sessions of the United Nations Special Political Committee and the General Assembly when his Annual Report is considered.

UNRWA Film Shown at Festivals.

"Tomorrow Begins Today", a 15-minute documentary film in Eastmancolour about the Palestine refugees, produced by UNRWA, has been shown recently at two major film festivals: Berlin and Edinburgh. Reports from the two festivals indicate that the film was well received by the audiences. "Tomorrow Begins Today" is also being shown regularly as part of the United Nations exhibit at the Seattle World's Fair.

Prints (35 mm. or 16 mm.) of this and other UNRWA films can be purchased or rented. Enquiries should be made to UNRWA Headquarters in Beirut, UNRWA Liaison Offices in New York or Geneva, or to your nearest UN Information Centre.

Visitors



Viscount Astor, Chairman of the Standing Conference of British Organizations for Aid to Refugees, and Lady Astor, spent a week in the Middle East, discussing the refugee problem with senior UNRWA and government officials, and inspecting the Agency's operations in Lebanon, the Syrian Arab Republic and Jordan. Lord and Lady Astor showed particular interest in the Damascus Vocational Training Centre and the Girls' Teacher and Vocational Training Centre in Ramallah, Jordan. Substantial contributions towards the establishment of these centres were made by the United Kingdom World Refugee Year Committee. Lord and Lady Astor have shown their keen personal interest in the refugee problem by donating four vocational training scholarships. The picture shows Lord Astor talking to a teacher at the Girls' Centre.

Monsignor Joseph T. Ryan, Executive Secretary of the Catholic Near East Association, and Father John Nolan, his assistant, inspected the work of Catholic relief organizations in the Middle East. Among them is the Pontifical Mission for Palestine, which renders aid to the refugees, both directly and jointly with UNRWA. Both Monsignor Ryan and Father Nolan attended the ceremony marking the opening of the Pontifical Mission Centre for the Blind in the Gaza Strip this month. The centre, which will help both refugees and residents in the Gaza Strip, was established by the Pontifical Mission with UNRWA's assistance.

Mr. John Metzler, Director of Material Aids for the Church World Service, saw the Agency's operations in Lebanon and Jordan while on a study tour.

Mrs. Molly Thayer, the American writer, gathered material for articles on the refugees during her visits to UNRWA camps, vocational training centres and schools.

Donations.

The National Council of the Churches of Christ, (U.S.A.) has donated \$15,000 to provide vocational training scholarships for 30 refugee girls. The funds are a portion of an offering made in churches throughout the United States on the World Day of Prayer last March. The girls will be enrolled in the secretarial and dressmaking courses at UNRWA's new Vocational and Teacher Training Centre for Girls, in Ramallah, Jordan, when the centre opens later this month.

Two young refugees, Youssef Kalak, who lives in Jordan, and Maurice Barakat, from Lebanon, flew to Switzerland recently, where they will spend a year studying in a Swiss university, on scholarships donated by the Government of Switzerland. The scholarships cover the entire costs of the year's study, including transportation costs.

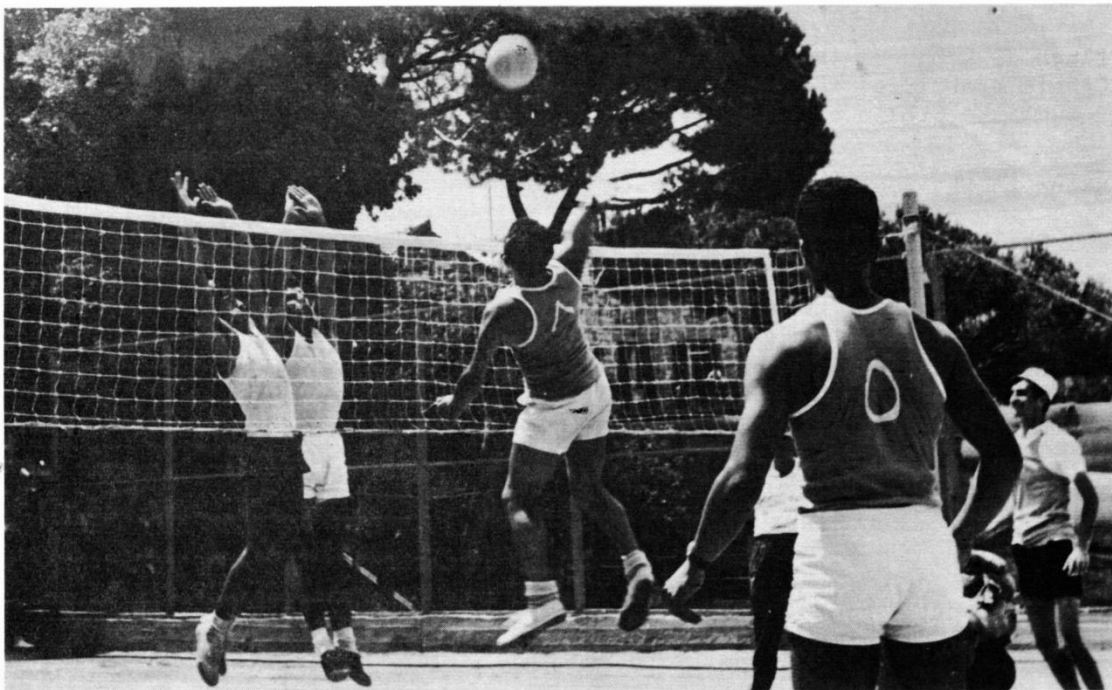
Mrs. D. C. Henderson, of King, Ontario, Canada, has donated a further five vocational training scholarships, amounting to \$2,500, to cover the second year's training of the five refugee trainees whom she sponsored last year. The five, enrolled in UNRWA's Damascus Vocational Training Centre, will complete their courses in architectural draughting and business and office practice next year.

First "International" Refugee Sports Competition

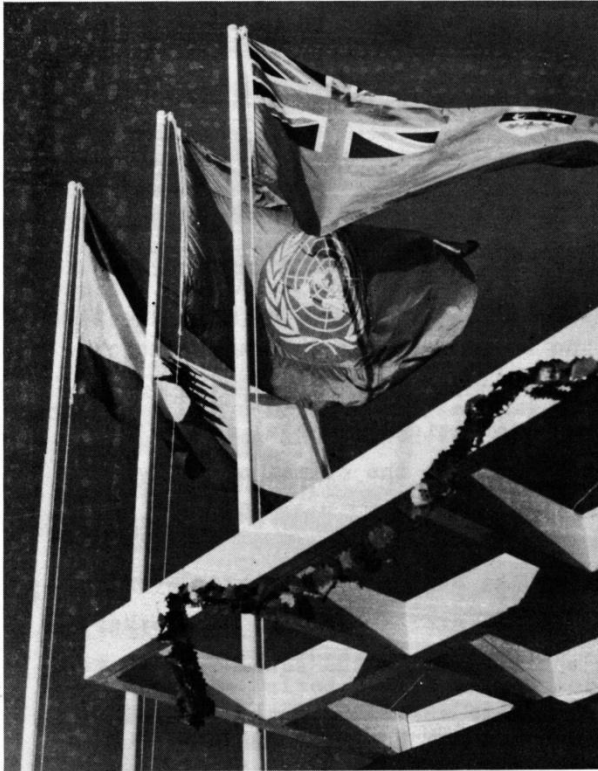
Refugee sports enthusiasts from all four host countries gathered in Beirut recently to take part in the first "international" Palestine refugee sports competition. For the three-day competition, UNRWA brought together a football team, a volleyball team and a basketball team from each country. A squad of 34 young men, comprising players, coaches, substitutes and a leader, was brought from each country by UNRWA transport facilities, to keep costs to a minimum.

The players were chosen from the Youth Activities Centres, which UNRWA operates in 39 of its 57 camps. The centres organize sports programmes as part of a larger programme of recreational, social and cultural activities. The recent competition in Beirut was the climax of two years of sports activities in the centres.

The fact that the teams from the Gaza Strip won all three sporting trophies did not dampen the enthusiasm or the sportsmanship of the other players, for the Sportsmanship Trophy was awarded to the squad from Jordan.



THE MAPLE AND THE CEDAR



The flags of Lebanon, the United Nations and Canada symbolized the cooperation which made the Siblin centre possible.

operation in the four host countries.

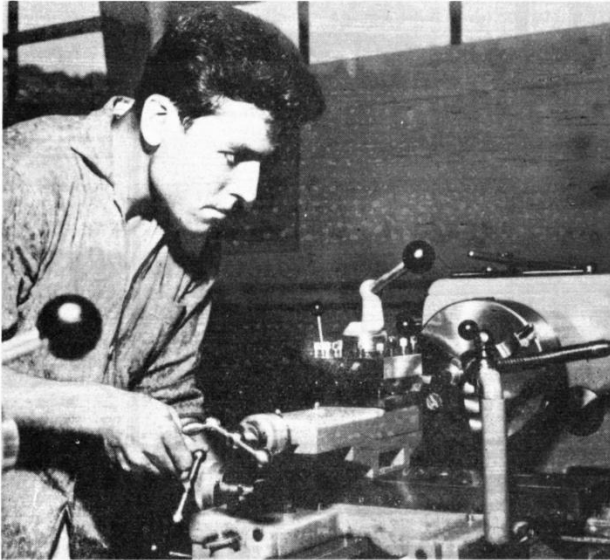
The building and equipping of the centre were financed by Canadian donations during World Refugee Year, including \$450,000 worth of flour from the Canadian Government, some \$153,000 from the Canadian World Refugee Year Committee, and \$70,000 from the Canadian Junior Red Cross.

The plaque unveiled at the ceremony pays tribute to the Canadian donations, and to the donation of the 15-acre site by Kamal Jumblatt, a

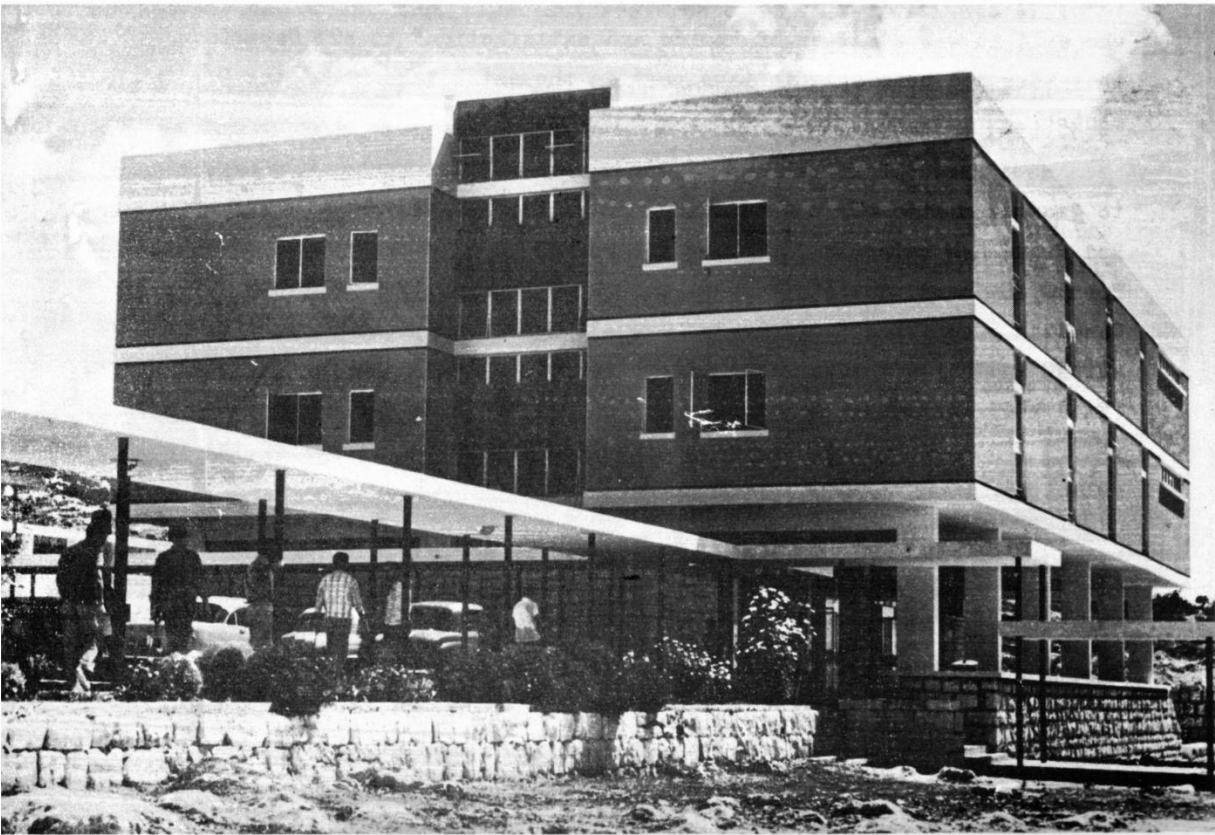
The maple and the cedar, the national symbols of two countries half a world apart -- Canada and Lebanon -- now stand side by side as evidence of the international cooperation which resulted in the opening early this month of the first UNRWA vocational training centre in Lebanon.

The two symbols, together with the familiar emblem of the United Nations, are engraved on a plaque which was unveiled by the Prime Minister of Lebanon, Rachid Karamah and the Canadian Ambassador, Paul Beaulieu, as they declared the Siblin Vocational Training Centre open.

The centre, 20 miles south of Beirut in the foothills overlooking the Mediterranean, is one of nine UNRWA centres now in



A trainee in the fitter/machinists' course begins to learn the operation of a lathe (left). Much of the equipment in the workshop was a World Refugee Year contribution from the Federal Republic of Germany. The centre has two dormitory blocks, similar to the one shown below. Each block has a common room and there is a sick bay for trainees with minor ailments.



Minister of the Lebanese Government. Additional donations of equipment came from the Federal German World Refugee Year Committee and the Swedish Red Cross.

The Siblin centre offers a total of 15 trade courses, ranging from plumber and auto mechanic to electrician and fitter/machinist. It has an enrolment of 288 trainees this year, and will reach full capacity with 396 next year.

The cluster of modern buildings which forms the centre includes two dormitory blocks, where the young refugees sleep 16 to a room in double-tiered bunks, 17 workshops, 12 classrooms, a dining room which serves double-shift meals, administration quarters and a playing field.

During the opening ceremony, which was attended by some 500 guests, including members of the diplomatic corps, senior members of the Lebanese Government and trainees and instructors, the Canadian Ambassador read a statement from Canada's Minister of External Affairs, Howard Green, who said it was a matter of "pride and satisfaction" to all Canadians that they had been able to take part in the establishment of the Siblin centre.

These links between Canada and the Siblin centre are expected to grow even stronger now that the centre has opened. The Canadian Junior Red Cross has recently pledged a further \$50,000 to provide scholarships for 50 trainees at the centre for their entire two-year courses, and other Canadian groups and individuals have also given or promised such scholarships, including the Canadian Federation of Business and Professional Women. (Each \$500 scholarships pays for one year's training for one refugee. In return UNRWA sends the donor a picture and a brief biography of the trainee selected).

The countries of the maple and the cedar, though half a world apart, are closely linked by their desire to help young refugees prepare for a better future.

NEW TRAINING CENTRE TO BE BUILT WITH SWEDISH DONATION

The Government of Sweden has pledged almost \$800,000 in technical assistance funds to UNRWA for the establishment of a new training institute in Lebanon for refugees.

The contribution, to be made through the Swedish Government's Agency for International Assistance, will cover the cost of building and equipping the Technical and Teacher Training Institute, pay the first two years' operating costs, and provide five Swedish training specialists for a minimum of two years. The total costs are expected to exceed \$792,000.

Work will begin within a month on the construction of the new centre, which will be located at Siblin, about 20 miles south of Beirut.

One of the most important features of the new institute will be the one-year course for vocational training instructors and foremen. Fifty refugees, all graduates from other UNRWA training centres, will fly to Sweden each year to spend a year working and training in industry. They will take the course at Siblin on their return, giving them four years of training and experience when they graduate. The Government of Sweden has agreed to pay the return transportation costs for the first two years of the programme, and the first group of 50 refugees left for Sweden in early October.

Among the young men who went to Sweden are fitter/machinists, sheetmetal workers, welders, architectural draughtsmen, auto mechanics, radio/TV mechanics and blacksmith/welders. Thirty six are from Jordan, and 14 from the Gaza Strip.

The Commissioner-General of UNRWA, Dr. John H. Davis, has called the centre "important to the whole vocational programme of the



Mr. Gösta Brunnström, the Swedish Ambassador to Lebanon, was at Beirut airport to wish the 50 trainees bon voyage as they left for Sweden.

Agency", since many of those who graduate as instructors are expected to meet the need for well-trained teaching staff in other UNRWA training centres. Others will be available to meet the increasing need for trained instructors and foremen throughout the Arab world.

In addition to the 50 in the instructor training and foremen's course, there will be 150 young men training to be elementary school teachers, 32 in a course for telecommunications technicians, and 32 learning to be handicraft teachers, bringing the total enrolment to 264 in 1964.

The Technical and Teacher Training Institute will be built on a 13-acre site adjacent to UNRWA's Sibling Vocational Training Centre, which enrolled its first trainees in September.

The basic construction of the new centre will be completed by mid-summer 1963, and it will be opened in the fall. Though sharing the same water and power supplies, the two Sibliin centres will be independent of each other. The new centre will have its own dormitory block, and dining and administration quarters. There will also be a library, a common room, a classroom block, three block of workshops, and three staff houses.

It is expected, however, that the two centres will share a keen rivalry on the sports fields.

The Swedish grant, the largest technical assistance contribution yet received by UNRWA, was made following last April's visit by senior officials of the Swedish Agency for International Assistance to Lebanon and Jordan. A similar technical assistance grant of \$80,000 and special contributions in kind valued at \$141,000 from the Government of Switzerland earlier this year were also devoted to vocational training.

The technical assistance contributions reflect a positive appraisal of UNRWA's role as a regional organization which, as a by-product of its aim of providing opportunities for young refugees, is producing a much-needed supply of technical and industrial skills for economic development within the Middle East.

The Commissioner-General of UNRWA has proposed that governments with technical assistance funds at their disposal send representatives to the Middle East to judge for themselves the merits of UNRWA's vocational training programme as a project suitable for assistance.

The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) is a special, temporary, non-political body established by the General Assembly of the United Nations in December 1949. In co-operation with the host governments (Jordan, Lebanon, the Syrian Arab Republic, and the United Arab Republic) it carries out its two-fold task: immediate: to provide food, health services, education, training and shelter for the refugees; long-term: to assist the refugees to become self-supporting.

UNRWA began work in May 1950 and its present mandate expires on 30 June 1963.

Further information may be obtained from:

UNRWA Liaison Office
Palais des Nations
Geneva
Switzerland

UNRWA Public Information Office
Museitbeh Quarter,
Beirut
Lebanon

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(For information purposes - Not an official record)