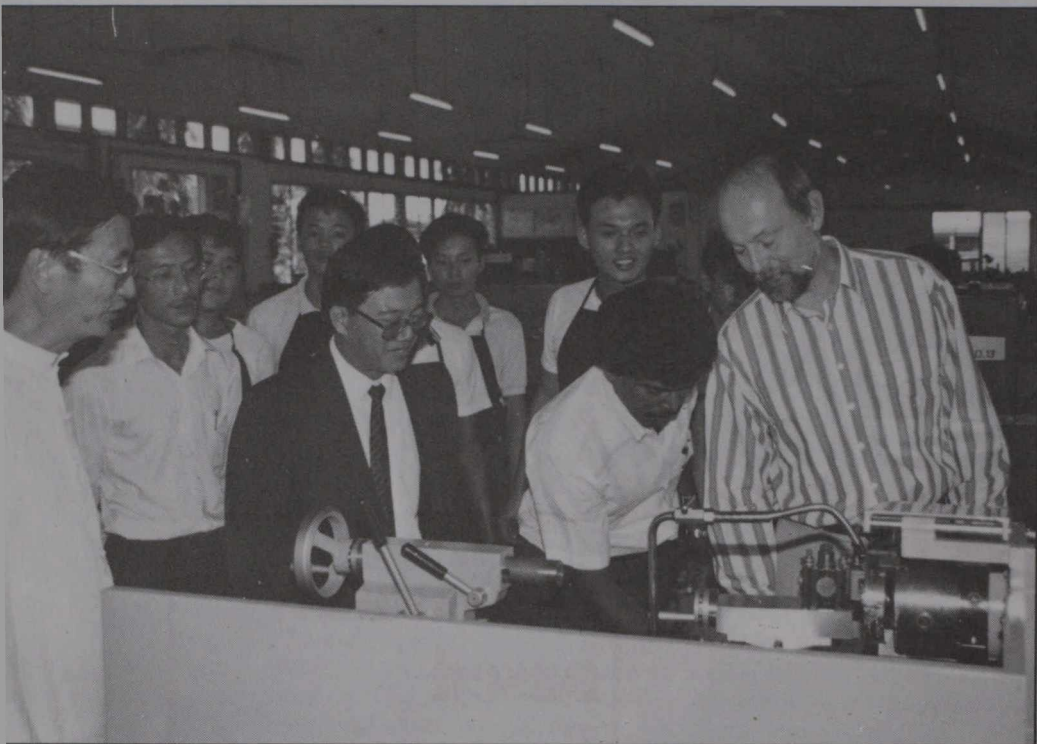


HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE

Training for the Future



High Commissioner Lambert (far right) dedicates new engineering equipment at the Montfort Boys Town. Looking on are Mr Anthony Tan, Principal/Superintendent of the school (wearing dark coat) and Brother Mark Tee, Director of Montfort (far left).

The Montfort Boys Town was established three decades ago by the Brothers of St Gabriel, a Canadian religious order. This voluntary, non-profit welfare organization, located near Kuala Lumpur, provides social development and industrial training to orphans and youths from underprivileged families in Malaysia. Currently, about 250 young men aged between 15 and 20 years reside full-time at Montfort.

Although direct Canadian involvement in the management of the school ended several years ago, the Canadian High Commission in Malaysia continues to provide substantial financial assistance to Montfort. In the early 1970s, a grant of \$95,000 was made by CIDA's Special Projects Branch towards building of a hostel, assembly hall and an agricultural/farming facility. In 1983, a Canada Fund contribution was made towards the purchase of offset printing equipment. On October 2, High Commissioner Garrett Lambert attended the dedication of Canada's most recent contribution — engineering equipment donated through the High Commission's Canada Fund.

This contribution is particularly appropriate in view of Montfort's role, through its Vocational Institute, to provide technical training in industrial skills. The training undertaken by these students is thorough and will enable them to gain productive employment on leaving the school. They will also contribute to the supply of skilled labour available in Malaysia.

Vietnamese Refugee Orientation

The Canadian Cultural Orientation Program for Vietnamese boat people was set up under a Canada Fund for Local Initiatives grant from the High Commission in Kuala Lumpur. The program, located at Sungei Besi, Malaysia, is moving into its second year of productive operation.

The program is administered by a coordinator fielded under the auspices of the World University Services of Canada (WUSC). He is assisted by members of the local Canadian community as volunteer teachers.

Following a set curriculum, the teachers provide a diversified range of information for refugees selected for resettlement in Canada. Subjects covered range from learning functional and practical skills, such as how to carry out an effective job search or how to use a bank, to social orientation, such as how to enhance their own cultural identity within the Canadian mosaic.

Attempts are also made to reduce attitudinal problems stemming from dislocation. Being homeless and waiting in a state of transition for up to two years is a major psychological strain on refugees. Canada-bound refugees are helped to focus on the positive aspects of their lives by maintaining an encouraging attitude on their present situation and determining what their goals and directions in Canada will be.

The program averages an attendance of 120 every month; its popularity is indicated by the 90 per cent attendance rate at its voluntary classes. The program's administrators have found that identifying non-registered participants is a greater problem than truancy.

The next year poses challenges for the program — the expected increase of refugees who will be coming to Sungei Besi and plans for the eventual closure of the Pulau Bidong refugee camp. However, the program is confident it can meet these challenges.