

PRESS RELEASE



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The Secretary of State for External Affairs, the Honourable Howard Green, has released the text of a message on the occasion of the opening today in Sibliin, Lebanon, of a new Vocational Training Centre for Palestine Refugees, the construction of which was made possible by special Canadian contributions to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East. Officially representing the Government at the opening ceremonies will be Mr. Paul Beaulieu, Canadian Ambassador to Lebanon and Iraq.

Sibliin Vocational Training Centre has been constructed by UNRWA as part of a programme announced in 1960 to increase the educational and vocational training facilities available to refugee youths. Canadian support was given to the UNRWA programme from its inception and in answer to an appeal from Dr. Davis, Commissioner-General of UNRWA, the Government provided a special gift to UNRWA in connection with World Refugee Year of \$1 million in the form of wheat flour, on the understanding that the gift would be used for the establishment of vocational training centres. Sibliin is the first such centre to be constructed. A second is under construction at Homs in Syria.

The following is the text of the message:

"On the occasion of the opening of Sibliin Vocational Training Centre I am happy to convey to the Government of Lebanon the cordial greetings of the Government of Canada. I would like to express a special word of appreciation to His Excellency, Mr. Kamal Jumblatt, whose generous gift of land has made him a partner of Canada in the construction of the Centre. I would also take the opportunity to congratulate the Commissioner-General of UNRWA and his able and devoted staff on the completion of this

stage in UNRWA's accelerated programme to increase its educational and vocational training facilities.

UNRWA's programme has won Canadian support from its inception. In 1960 Dr. Davis expressed the hope that the talents of refugee youths could be salvaged by a programme of general education and specialized training that would fit them for employment in an era of technological progress. Canadian endorsement of this programme took the form of a special gift to UNRWA in connection with World Refugee Year of one million dollars worth of wheat flour to make possible the construction of vocational training centres.

Siblin is the first of two Canadian financed training centres to be built by UNRWA. On this, the day of its inauguration, it stands as a symbol of international cooperation to improve the lot of distressed human beings. That Canada has been able to participate in this as in other aspects of UNRWA's work is a source of pride and satisfaction to all Canadians."