



IN SANA'A

At the official opening of the ICRC artificial limb workshop in Sana'a, the successive stages in the production of an artificial limb are being demonstrated by the orthopedic expert.

(Left to right: Mr. Gehrels, Mr. Mohsen al Aini, Prime Minister of the Yemen Arab Republic, Mr. Isler, ICRC delegate, and Mr. Thabet, Minister of Health.)

The workshop where the artificial limbs are made.





Amputees fitted with provisional artificial limbs playing football under the watchful eye of the physiotherapist, Mr. Taverniers.

Young Yemenis learning how to manufacture artificial limbs.



An Artificial Limb Workshop in Sana'a

Already in 1964 the International Committee of the Red Cross, in co-operation with the Red Crescent Society of the United Arab Republic, helped Yemeni war wounded who had had to undergo amputation. Several groups of such disabled casualties went at that time to Cairo where they were treated before being fitted with an artificial limb in a rehabilitation centre near the Egyptian capital. The ICRC bore the cost whilst the U.A.R. authorities provided air transport between Cairo and Sana'a.

A similar programme was considered in May 1968 when the Yemen Arab Republic Ministry of Health asked the ICRC's help for the benefit of the increasing number of disabled. What was required was to replace or repair the artificial limbs which had been made in Cairo and to provide about 150 casualties with artificial limbs.

An ICRC doctor-delegate on a temporary mission to the Yemen was directed to examine what assistance would be the most suitable. After a thorough study he recommended the setting up in Sana'a of a workshop for the manufacture of simple artificial limbs.

That implied not only the despatch of machines, tools and material, but also one or two technicians, one of whose tasks would be to train young Yemeni workers to take over from the experienced technicians when the workshop was handed over to their Government.

The ICRC therefore engaged a Netherlands specialist in the manufacture of artificial limbs, Mr. Gehrels, who had already worked for the Red Cross in Nigeria. He chose the necessary material and went to Sana'a in March 1970 where the authorities made large rooms available. He immediately set about fitting them up and recruiting Yemeni nationals for training.

In June the artificial limb centre—the first set up by the ICRC in that part of the world—began production of artificial limbs and was strengthened by the arrival of a physiotherapist, Mr. Taverniers, who had previously worked for the ICRC rehabilitating disabled persons in Nigeria. His mission was to prepare amputees by

appropriate exercises for the fitting of the artificial limb and thereafter to assist the patient to become accustomed to it.

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A few statistics will demonstrate the value of the work undertaken:

In August three amputees left the centre fitted with artificial limbs enabling them to live a normal life. Eight patients were training to acquire confidence and greater independence while 22 others were awaiting the manufacture of their limbs. The number of amputees registered with the centre is 60.

Six apprentices (carpenters and mechanics) and one disabled patient are being taught the techniques of limb manufacture and physiotherapy. The apprentices are keenly interested in their work; they are taught English and will soon be given anatomy courses.

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The workshop was officially inaugurated on 8 August in the presence of the Prime Minister and the Ministers of Health, Information and Culture as well as representatives of the World Health Organization and the United Nations Development Programme.

The Head of the ICRC mission in the Arabian Peninsula, Mr. A. Isler, described briefly the ICRC's work for war disabled and thanked the authorities for their valuable assistance in making the workshop possible. The Minister of Health, Dr. Thabet Mohsen Najer, then thanked the ICRC for its work over several years in the Yemen Arab Republic, one of the most useful examples of which was the artificial limb workshop.

When the Prime Minister, Mr. Mohsem al Aini, had cut the symbolic ribbon and declared the centre officially open, the guests visited the workshop and the physiotherapy section where Mr. Gehrels and Mr. Taverniers explained the production processes and the successive phases of intensive training followed by the amputees. The patients who had already been fitted with artificial limbs demonstrated their ability to use them in a display of hand-ball and football.¹

¹ *Plate.*