

TALKS BY MRS. ROOSEVELT

May 26, 1937

Description: Eleanor Roosevelt speaks on the subject of Interesting Women in Washington.

Participants: Eleanor Roosevelt, Virginia Barr, Florence Harriman.

BARR:

This is Virginia Barr of the Pond's Company speaking from Washington, D.C. and bringing you – Mrs. Franklin D. Roosevelt. Tonight Mrs. Roosevelt has with her a Washington friend. Mrs. J. Borden Harriman, the new Minister to Norway, and together they will tell you about some of the women who are doing interesting things in Washington.

First may I say a word about the coming week-end holiday? You're probably going to spend a good part of it out of doors - motoring, or hiking, or playing tennis, ~~or whatever~~. If you are wise you'll give your skin special care with Pond's Vanishing Cream – as so many beautiful society girls do who go in for sports.

I say Pond's Vanishing Cream, because that's the cream that melts off those little flaky particles of dead skin that make your face feel so rough after a day in the open.

The way to use it is just this: – Before you go out, smooth on Pond's Vanishing Cream. It protects your skin, and holds your powder too. When you come in, clean your face and smooth on some more Pond's Vanishing Cream. In a jiffy your skin will be soft and smooth, ready for the grandest party. And then, of course, last thing at night, after your usual cleansing, smooth on Pond's Vanishing Cream again. In the morning, your skin is as soft and fresh as a flower. Don't forget – Get your jar of Pond's Vanishing Cream tomorrow.

And now I have the great privilege of presenting – Mrs. Franklin D. Roosevelt!

(8 MINUTES FROM MRS. ROOSEVELT ENDING WITH INTRODUCTION OF VIRGINIA BARR)
MRS. ROOSEVELT:

Good evening. I am glad to have with me this evening Mrs. J. Borden Harriman, whom I have known for many years, and who leaves Washington tomorrow on her way to represent our country in Norway.

We have had one outstanding woman in Denmark, Mrs. Ruth Bryan Owen, who made a great success of her representation of the United States, and I feel sure that in Norway Mrs. Harriman is going to do the same.

Mrs. Harriman's keen interest in government, labor, and people as a whole, dates from the time she was a little girl in New York City. She made her first contacts with state and national problems at her grandfather's breakfast table. Edward S. Jaffrey used to sit there, behind a great silver hot water kettle, and between kippers, toast, oatmeal and his tea, he kept up a steady running commentary on the state of the nation, reading from his paper and interpreting the news for those present.

I remember when I was in Washington as a young woman, President Wilson appointed her as a member of the Federal Industrial Relations Committee, the first woman ever named to a Federal Commission.

And when Mrs. Harriman leaves for Norway, Washington is going to lose a most delightful hostess. Mrs. Harriman's Sunday night suppers are quite a Washington institution. At these gatherings men and women with different points of view get together and talk things out. You've had some most interesting combinations of people, haven't you, Mrs. Harriman?

MRS. HARRIMAN:

mutual interview²

MRS. ROOSEVELT:

You'll miss those parties too, I know.

MRS. HARRIMAN:

Oh, yes, terribly, but what I'm going to miss most in Norway I think is not being within flying distance of my daughter and her children.

MRS. ROOSEVELT:

Why, they live in California, don't they?

MRS. HARRIMAN:

Yes, but you and I don't think anything of flying to the West Coast to see the grandchildren, do we?

MRS. ROOSEVELT: (LAUGHS)

Oh, no!

You know, Mrs. Harriman, I'm asked so often, particularly by women coming to Washington, what women here, I think they'd be most interested in meeting.

MRS. HARRIMAN:

Oh, there are so many. – It's true, isn't it, that under this administration more women have been appointed to high administrative office by the President than ever before?

MRS. ROOSEVELT:

Yes, that's true without any question.

MRS. HARRIMAN:

Why do you think this has taken place?

MRS. ROOSEVELT:

Well, I think his experience as Governor of New York taught the President that women could be as useful in public office as men. Frances Perkins was Labor Commissioner of New York, you know, and I think her work influenced the President in women's [favor]³ [very much].⁴

MRS. HARRIMAN:

So many people have a very definite picture of Miss Perkins, but you know, I think many would be surprised to find her such a human person with such a quick sense of humor.

MRS. ROOSEVELT:

I remember some man was talking to her one afternoon and he said, "Women aren't strong enough for public life". Miss Perkins smiled and replied rather drily, "While a woman may not be physically strong enough to lift a piano, after all she doesn't have to very often."

MRS. HARRIMAN: (LAUGHS)

Another person I admire so much is Josephine Roche, the Assistant Secretary of the Treasury.

MRS. ROOSEVELT:

Her background is one of the most fascinating of any woman I know. You remember just after she got her Master's degree from Columbia in economics and sociology, she became Denver's first Police Woman.

MRS. HARRIMAN:

Yes, she was known in Colorado as "That Roche Girl".

MRS. ROOSEVELT:

Then, when her father died in 1927, she inherited his interests in the Rocky Mountain Fuel Company, and in 1929 to everyone's amazement, she became the President of that company. She was a new kind of President too.⁵ and [W]⁶ then other companies were cutting wages, Miss Roche raised them in her company. And she not only preached and practiced higher working standards, but her company made money on them. The miners in Colorado used to parade about shouting their battle cry – "Buy Josephine's Coal"!

MRS. HARRIMAN:

She's often been called America's Business Woman Number One!

MRS. ROOSEVELT:

——— Both the Director and Assistant Director of the Mint are women. Almost every one I am sure knows of Mrs. Nellie Taylor[e]⁷ Ross and her efficient work. Her assistant, Miss Mary L. O'Reilly is a very colorful woman who has been in the Treasury Department for thirty five years. I have been told that she can tell one instantly the price of silver in any part of the world. She has made a study here and abroad about of⁸ technical questions of coinage and she and Mrs. Ross direct the handling of gold and silver bullion for export and import and determine its quality.

MRS. HARRIMAN:

You know, I think one of the most characteristic things about Washington women is their enthusiasm.

MRS. ROOSEVELT:

Yes, it's a very contagious thing! Mrs. Woodward, you know Ellen Woodward – the director of women's and professional WPA projects – She inoculates me with new enthusiasm every time I see her.

MRS. HARRIMAN:

Some of that I think is her southern charm and red hair.

MRS. ROOSEVELT: (LAUGHS)

Yes, but she has that great ability for getting along with people and doing things. I've always admired her since I heard her say that anyone could study and analyze conditions, but the tragic part came when you didn't do something about them after you knew them.

MRS. HARRIMAN:

Isn't Ellen Woodward a fine pianist, too?

MRS. ROOSEVELT:

Yes but she doesn't have time to play any more. She used to teach music you know, and I think that experience colors her understanding of the artists with whom she now works on relief projects.

MRS. HARRIMAN:

Another woman I think is interesting is Mrs. Ruth B. Shipley in the State Department.

MRS. ROOSEVELT:

She represents a career woman in government. In 1914 she started in the State Department as a clerk and today is head of the passport division. Besides issuing passports her division helps Americans in trouble abroad and assists people to establish citizenship. For example only yesterday she told of a foreign born woman who married an American in 1918. He died and none of his family was living. After a great deal of difficulty Mrs. Shipley helped this woman to find a yellowed newspaper of 1894 which gave an obituary of her husband's mother so she proved her citizenship.

Mrs. Harriman, what qualities in the women we know in Washington do you think are the most important?

MRS. HARRIMAN:

The quality I admire most is moral courage. There are two women who I think have it to an unusual degree. One is Dorothy Detzer. Why, at that Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, she works day in and day out. Nothing discourages her. Nothing deters her. I often think she'll win her cause for the simple reason that she'll tire everyone else out.

MRS. ROOSEVELT:

Persistence is necessary to a crusader. Who is the second woman?

MRS. HARRIMAN:

Leila Pinchot--Mrs. Gifford Pinchot. A friend of mine who once said that the Pinchots are the only human beings he admires as he does fine horses. "They're magnificent" he said, "Always mobilized".

MRS. ROOSEVELT:

That's quite a compliment.

MRS. HARRIMAN:

To me Leila is a fore-runner of a new race of creatures who will finally master the machine age. And do you know I think she covers almost as much territory as you do, Mrs. Roosevelt. I've worked with Leila for years in different things, and there's one thing I've always noticed about her. She never suggests

anyone doing anything that she won't do herself. With factory girls, for instance she wouldn't say, "You go picket that factory." She'd say, "We'll picket the place" and she goes right along with them.

MRS. ROOSEVELT:

That's the way to get people to work with you. Another woman who influences many thousands of women in this country is Dr. Louise Stanley.

MRS. HARRIMAN:

You mean the head of the Home Economics Bureau?

MRS. ROOSEVELT:

Yes. Of course she's done wonderful work in research on foods, diets, and clothing, but her greatest interest is the welfare of the American Child. The project she is working on now, I think is very interesting. She is directing a measurement study to find out the average size of a child at a given age. Her department is planning to measure 100,000 children to get this data.

MRS. HARRIMAN:

I think one of Washington's most charming women is Caroline O'Day--your New York State Congressman at large.

MRS. ROOSEVELT:

Caroline is one of my warm personal friends. We have been through some very amusing and some very trying times together. There's one story on Caroline I always like. Organizing the Democratic women in upstate New York--She called at one house where the lady happened to be giving a party. She was very suspicious of Caroline and wouldn't even ask her in. Caroline was so hot and tired she would have been most grateful for a glass of water, but none was forthcoming. But about a year later, when Caroline's work had progressed, this very same woman gave [her]¹⁵ a party ~~with her as the guest of honor.~~ But now, Mrs. Harriman, Virginia Barr has a word to say before we continue our talk.

(INSERT MIDDLE COMMERCIAL)

MIDDLE COMMERCIAL

BARR:

Thank you, Mrs. Roosevelt.

Every now and then, one of the many girls I run across, who are always asking me what to do for their skin, comes back at me with a question like this: "Did you say to use Pond's Vanishing Cream at night too? I thought it was just a powder base."

Now Pond's Vanishing Cream is a grand powder base. But if you are not using it other times too, to soften your skin, and to smooth away the little roughnesses caused by exposure, then you are missing out on two of its most valuable properties.

You see, Pond's Vanishing Cream melts off the little flaky particles of dead skin that rough up your skin after a day out of doors. And it's a grand skin softener! I can't think of a better cream to use overnight after your usual cleansing. For one thing, it's not greasy. And then, you can put on a little more at night than you do in the day time under your powder.

Start right away to use Pond's Vanishing Cream for overnight as well as for a powder base. Smooth it in specially around your eyes and the corners of your mouth. You'll be surprised at how it helps your skin.

And now, once again, we have the privilege of hearing Mrs. Roosevelt!
(8 MINUTES FROM MRS. ROOSEVELT ENDING WITH INTRODUCTION OF VIRGINIA BARR.)

MRS. ROOSEVELT:

Mrs. Harriman--you're still one of our Washington women even if you are about to embark for a foreign post. I think people would be interested in hearing what qualifications you think a woman should have to represent the United States.

MRS. HARRIMAN:

I think she should have had her mental window wide open for a long time, so that she can understand all points of view. And in representing the people of one country to those of another, she should have a genuine curiosity, interest and love for all human beings. She should know her country well

and be able to answer questions of every sort--everything from farming conditions in the middle west, to the way certain industries are organized to the way people live in Chicago or Needles, Arizona.

MRS. ROOSEVELT:

That seems a rather large order, doesn't it?

MRS. HARRIMAN:

Yes, and frankly, that's just the beginning. And, furthermore, I believe that I should be so familiar with business and social conditions in Norway that I can put Americans who come to visit in touch with whatever is new in any field. That is quite an undertaking, because the Norwegians are among the most progressive people in the world.

MRS. ROOSEVELT:

~~In looking back over your life--what experiences do you think have been¹⁹ most helpful in fitting you for the situation that faces you [today]²⁰~~

MRS. HARRIMAN:

~~When I was a very young girl I went to a lecture and a man said: "Jane Adams is the first citizen of America". That impressed me tremendously, and I started out to find out why that statement was true. I learned all I could about Jane Adams, which is an education in itself.~~

MRS. HARRIMAN: (contd)

~~Then when I was working in St. George's Episcopal Church in New York, I first visited tenements. Seeing first hand the misery and need of less fortunate people and working with them taught me more than almost anything I've ever done.~~

But, Mrs. Roosevelt, I'd like to ask you one question. If you were advising some woman, coming to Washington to fill an official position what would you think most important to tell her?

MRS. ROOSEVELT:

I think I'd emphasize this. Never allow your personal feelings to interfere with anything that may help the cause you are serving. I have known many people who because they were not given personal credit for some achievement turned against the very cause they had most at heart.

In Washington those in official positions serve the whole people, and in performing that service individual ambitions or prejudices must be subordinated.

Mrs. Harriman, I understand that recently some of your friends who have enjoyed your Sunday Night Suppers organized a farewell party to you.

MRS. HARRIMAN:

Yes, it was a lovely thought, and I shall always remember it. I was so very highly complimented, because they gave the party at my house, and organized it exactly as I have always planned my parties. ~~They had the invited people who had been there at times before--and there was just as much difference of opinion--and just as much discussion--as ever before.~~

MRS. ROOSEVELT:

And [there were]²⁴ some very appropriate tributes to you. And in the presence of those who are listening to us, I should like to repeat one of the toasts that was proposed to you at that farewell party. Mr. William Hard was the author of this one:

MRS. ROOSEVELT: (contd)

Who fed the democrats when they
Had nowhere else their hands to lay
Upon a supper sandwich tray?
Our Daisy!

Who now explores the city plans
Of highways, byways, slums, tin-cans,
And gathers in Republicans?
Our Daisy!

Who cares not if they're In or Out

As long as they will raise a shout
And throw their talking-selves about?
Our Daisy!

Who teaches the apologists
Of economic royalists
To like the Revolutionists?
Our Daisy!

Who treads a path that cannot end
Because, however it may bend,
It always leads her to a friend?
Our Daisy!
(PAUSE)

And now we must go--Mrs. Harriman leaves for New York tomorrow, and she sails from there next Wednesday noon for Norway, and with her go our very best and warmest good wishes.

Next Wednesday night, I am going to have with me here a young college man John P. Southmayd and he and I are going to discuss one of the most pertinent of all questions--Peace in the world today. Goodnight.

CLOSING COMMERCIAL

BARR:

The Pond's Company will bring you Mrs. Franklin D. Roosevelt again next Wednesday at this same time. She will lead a discussion of a subject which she herself has very much at heart – Peace. I believe all the women who are listening in tonight and many more will want to hear that discussion. And now, don't forget tomorrow to get your jar of Pond's Vanishing Cream and begin using it day and night for the soft, smooth skin you want to have.

This is Virginia Barr of the Pond's Company, saying "Goodnight."

ANNOUNCER:

This is the National Broadcasting Company.

Proofread by: IK David and Sarah McCracken

Transcribed from a script held in the Eleanor Roosevelt Papers at the Franklin D. Roosevelt Library

² The words "mutual interview" are a handwritten interlineation.

³ Circled and indicated to move before "women"

⁴ Circled and indicated to move before "in"

⁵ This is a handwritten interlineation, written over a crossed out unintelligible line.

⁶ The letter "W" is a handwritten interlineation.

⁷ The letter "e" is a handwritten interlineation, written in place of the "r" in "Taylor".

⁸ This is a handwritten interlineation written in place of "about".

¹⁵ This is a handwritten interlineation.

¹⁹ This is a handwritten interlineation.

²⁰ This is a handwritten interlineation.

²⁴ The words "there are" are a handwritten interlineation.