

MRS. ELEANOR ROOSEVELT'S OWN PROGRAM

July 25, 1940

Description: Broadcast time 1:15-1:30 PM over the NBC Red Network. In the final episode, ER discusses her mail.

Participants: Eleanor Roosevelt, Ben Grauer, NBC Announcer

(0:24)

[Ben Grauer:] This is *Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt's Own Program*, presented by the makers of SweetHeart Soap.

[Theme music 0:29-0:55]

[Ben Grauer:] Again, the little radio dial lights go on all over the nation as we again bring you Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt. These programs come to you with the compliments of SweetHeart Soap, the gentle soap that's so kind to sensitive skin. And now, at her home in Hyde Park, Mrs. Roosevelt is ready to join us. Ladies and gentlemen, Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt.

[ER:] Good day, ladies and gentlemen. Today, we come to the end of my visits with you on these regular Tuesday and Thursday broadcasts. While I've been at the microphone these past few months, I've visualized you listening as you go about your daily tasks in California, or sit down to rest after the noonday meal is over here in New York state. I've often wished that we might be face-to-face and that you might tell me some of the problems in your daily lives so that we might discuss them. It's always seemed to me that when we formulate questions on any subject that we find difficult to understand, the mere formation of the question helps to clear our thinking. I know of no better way to make one aware of the slim basis of fact on which we sometimes make up our minds than to have to justify our position by answering somebody's questions.

I've been asked on this last broadcast to go over with you some of the mail I have received during the past weeks. There have been a good many letters from all parts of the country as well as from our Canadian neighbors. Many of you have taken the trouble to sit down and write me that you like my broadcasts. I've tried to acknowledge all of these letters to let you know that I appreciated hearing from you. Have there been any critical letters? Oh yes, but very few. Perhaps those who haven't liked the programs have simply turned the dial and stopped listening. A few so-called crank letters that I have received were almost always unsigned. By crank I mean either threatening letters or those which lack reason. All the honestly critical letters have been answered. Sometimes writers tell me about mistakes in grammar or enunciation. Several kind listeners have told me that I pronounce the "t" in often. Some letters have criticized the New Deal. If these writers have mentioned any particular project I've sent their comments to the proper government departments. Many, many writers ask for help or for information. I think they write to me because they know my name and address. If I could supply the information requested, I've done so, and if I could not, I have referred these letters to either public or private agencies which will give them careful attention.

The letters which distress me perhaps the most are those from people who are ill or have members of their family who need and cannot get medical attention. When these writers come from certain parts of the country, either small towns or rural districts where I know there are no available

clinics, I'm often at a loss as to how to reply. As the funds which I have at my disposal are dispersed through certain agencies, I can only send these letters to them for investigation unless the situation seems especially critical. Those who want work and who deserve work often do not seem to know of the existence of public employment agencies. There is one in every state and it is called, for example, in the state of Iowa, the Iowa State Employment Service. Just that address is sufficient. In answering radio mail, the address of public employment offices nearest the writers have been sent. (4:34)

Radio listeners have offered me many opportunities to invest money -- in the chicken business, in a fortune teller's booth, in sideshows, in schools and camps. Often these enterprises are for charity. I've had to turn them down. Very long communications come from those who have solutions for the monetary problem, for war, for unemployment, for youth, for everything. Often these letters contain messages for me to give to the President. They say, "I know you can buttonhole him at breakfast and make him listen." He would be at breakfast all day and far into the night if he even scanned my mail. One charming lady wrote me asking that the President broadcast more often. "The only time my canary will sing is when the President is talking," she wrote. Other people ask for money outright. Some threaten or insinuate that dire things may happen if a check is not forthcoming by return mail. My heart goes out as would yours to people in need. I cannot often give money directly to those who write for it. First, it is difficult to investigate each case. Second, charitable organizations have been formed for just that purpose and it seems more sensible to work through them.

A number of people ask for the President's picture or for mine. We do not have a large supply of photographs on hand. My family and my friends tell me that my autographs won't bring a dime a dozen because I send so many, and I confess I don't see why they should. But before I continue, let's hear what our announcer has to tell us today. (6:18)

[Ben Grauer:] Thank you, Mrs. Roosevelt. Friends, sales are no novelty, but there is something most unusual about the big one cent sale on SweetHeart Soap, and it's this: When you buy SweetHeart Soap in the one cent sale, you can keep the savings working for you for just as long as you like. If you get enough SweetHeart Soap at this big reduction to last you one month, you'll enjoy both the soap and the savings for that length of time. If you do as so many budget-wise ladies are doing and get enough of those big, long-lasting oval cakes to see you through several months ahead, well then you'll have good reason to thank your lucky stars just that much longer. Remember, it's one full-sized cake of SweetHeart Soap for only one cent with every three you buy today. And remember too that SweetHeart is the soap that agrees with your skin. And now, Hyde Park is signaling and Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt returns to the microphone. (7:14)

[ER:] My family are great collectors. So are other families my radio mail tells me. Many women seem to be collecting buttons. As most of my dresses have zippers, I'm a poor source for these collectors. Another fad these days is to collect salt and pepper shakers. I've had to write that I was sorry not be able to add to these many interesting collections.

There are serious letters too. One mother wrote that her boy had been in some prank in the army or navy and was in prison. She wanted him to see him on a day when visiting was not permitted. She could obtain a cheaper roundtrip ticket for this particular day. When I explained the situation to the proper authorities, the visit was arranged. I think also that the case was reviewed, and leniency extended so the prison term was cut short. (8:12)

I have had a number of letters asking me to help locate missing persons. If all of the logical sources for this work have already been used, such as the police departments, newspapers, radio, et cetera, there is nothing more that I can do. A number of writers enclose valuable papers -- deeds to property,

even birth and marriage certificates. All enclosures of any possible importance are returned by registered mail.

One persistent gentleman has written to me several times asking me to tell him the difference between a republican and a democrat. At first, I suggested that he get in touch with the political organizations in his own community so that he might know local as well as national issues. This suggestion was not at all satisfactory. He answered that he had decided that I didn't know the difference either. (9:13)

Lately, I've had a number of letters regarding refugee children from England or France. Many people are working to discover some safe way to transport children from the war zone to America. So far, only a few have entered this country. I am still hopeful that some way will be found to enable us to share our good fortune with the children of warring nations.

I've had many helpful suggestions from the radio audience for my broadcast. I told you many details of life in the White House because you wrote that you wanted to hear them. It is difficult to decide what to do when you have one batch of letters which says "Tell us more about your grandchildren and what they do," and another batch which prefers to hear about ideas rather than people.

A number of men, women and children have wanted to broadcast with me. One delightful Indian chief wished to tell about his tribe. Many singers believe that they could get a start to fame and fortune on this program.

I welcome sincere disagreements of opinion. In my mail I receive objections to married women working, and then letters protesting against any curtailment of freedom for women as well as men. I think women have a right to work if they can contribute to the job. Also, one never knows the number of dependents a family may have. If a woman wishes to work merely to escape boredom, I know that there are many organizations which would welcome her as a volunteer. I suggest work in settlement houses, in the National Youth Administration, the Boy Scouts, the Girl Scouts, the Camp Fire Girls, and any number of other organizations. (11:09)

Whenever I've written or said anything about household employment, I have received many letters. Most often, they're from workers who say they wish that employers would recognize the need for a standardization in this type of work -- organized chores, regular time off, some privacy in living arrangements in the home, and adequate pay.

Occasionally, I get a lovelorn letter. One young woman who wrote that she had just become engaged was frantic because she had read that there was no such thing as love only propinquity. She asked me if I thought that was true, and said that if I agreed she would break her engagement immediately. I answered that the evidence of history was all on the side of love. She is now married.

I was charmed to see one letter which started, "I know you will be glad to have a letter from someone whom you have never met." I do feel in a way that I have met all the listeners of my radio audience. Your letters make me feel near to you. I want to thank you for writing them. I hope that some of my suggestions have helped you. Yours have helped me because they've given me a little glimpse of other people's lives, and sometimes they have made me feel that I'd interested or entertained or even helped some other human being. I hope that we shall soon be together again on the air. So for now, thank you, good luck, and goodbye. (12:47)

[Ben Grauer:] Thank you very much Mrs. Roosevelt. Friends, just for the moment, ignore the one cent sale on SweetHeart Soap and the big savings it offers you. Pass lightly over the fact that today one single

penny buys a full-sized cake of SweetHeart Soap with each and every three at the regular low price. Just concentrate on this fact: SweetHeart is the soap that agrees with your skin. If your skin objects to harsh or ordinary soap, SweetHeart's famous purity, its remarkable gentleness may be just friendly cleansing care you need. It's mild yet effective, merciless to dirt but kind to your skin. And now, if you'd like to enjoy these grand advantages at a big saving you can do that too. Get SweetHeart Soap today and your dealer will give you one full-sized cake for just one cent with every three cakes you buy. Be sure to try try SweetHeart Soap very soon.

[Theme music 13:43-14:11]

[Ben Grauer:] [Music continues softly] And this concludes the twenty-sixth and final broadcast of this series of *Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt's Own Programs*. I'm sure all of you listeners join us in our thanks and in our grateful appreciation to Mrs. Roosevelt for the rare privilege of these visits with her. We also wish to thank every one of you for tuning in so regularly and for your fine letters, as well as for your loyalty to the fine product that has brought you these broadcasts: SweetHeart Soap, famous for fifty years as the soap that agrees with your skin. And so now it's au revoir to [Music crescendos, cuts] *Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt's Own Program*. This is Ben Grauer speaking.

[NBC Announcer:] This is the National Broadcasting Company.

NBC Chimes

[15:06]

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