

THE ELEANOR AND ANNA ROOSEVELT PROGRAM

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Description: In this segment, ER discusses whether or not women are meeting their responsibilities with Dorcas Campbell, assistant vice president of the East River Savings Bank.

Participants: ER, Dorcas Campbell

[ER:] Thank you, Anna. The other day, at the New School for Social Research in New York, a small, delicate-looking and attractive woman got up to address a luncheon meeting. Throughout the speech her listeners, a large room of women, were especially attentive and interested. And afterwards, one of the school's officers, Mrs. Joseph Urban, told the speaker admiringly, "But, my dear, you look so gentle." You see the speaker, Miss Dorcas Campbell, has just--had just concluded a speech that was anything but gentle on the subject of women meeting their responsibilities in our national life. I'm going to let Miss Campbell answer that question in her own way, and she's well-qualified to do so. Miss Dorcas Campbell holds a position which is highly unusual for a woman: she's assistant vice president of a New York bank, the East River Savings Bank. Well, Miss Campbell, are women meeting their responsibilities?

[Dorcas Campbell:] Mrs. Roosevelt, I am sorry that I must tell you I think they are not. I think, however, that they could meet their responsibilities if they would. At the present time I would say that they are second-rate citizens and have a second-rate citizen's attitude towards their responsibilities, primarily because they do not control their money. The control of money gives power, you know, and women do not have that control.

[ER:] That's a challenging answer certainly, but I think that as women we should consider it carefully. Will you tell us now something about yourself? How did you get to be a bank vice president?

[Dorcas Campbell:] Well I must admit that's a rather strange procedure. I went from social work in the business of taking care of people who did not have money into the banking business where people do have money. But I found that there was a similar service required, whether people have money or do not have, they need service. I went in to give service and it was a very happy incident in my life. (02:09)

[ER:] Well, quite obviously, as your own career proves, women may be economically illiterate but they're not necessarily economically stupid by any means. In what way Miss Campbell, do you think women are failing to meet their responsibilities?

[Dorcas Campbell:] Unfortunately, I'll have to agree with you that women are economic illiterates. I think that that has been because too long men and other women have told them they could not understand anything about money, that finance was beyond their little heads. They might understand how to spend money for the day's activities around the house, but for nothing more than that. And that is not true, it is not necessary. On the other hand we know that women read only--for instance, 7% of women read the financial pages of the newspapers. And that is a very bad record because there we really understand what our savings accounts, our checking accounts, our stockholder's investments, and other financial concerns are in connection with uh free enterprise. And if we are interested in free enterprise, we should understand our money, which is invested in this.

[ER:] I understand that numbers of women in that luncheon audience the other day, far from being insulted, agreed with your remarks about their economic illiteracy and vowed, as one step in the right

direction, to start reading the financial pages tomorrow. What other solutions do you suggest to this problem, Miss Campbell?

[Dorcas Campbell:] There are a number of things that would be very easy for women to do. We won't begin with the next generation; we should begin with adults. And one way and an immediate step is to stimulate the organization of courses of financial information for women. This could be done in schools, it can be done in study groups, it can be done by a group of women. It can be urged upon colleges and mothers can even begin with the PTAs to say, "Get my child some education in the economic field." She or he will have to face the economic world forever, and it is an important step for them. Then too, women can read, and they can write, and they can know more about their own immediate problem. They can learn about their money, not just turn it over to trustees, investors, husbands, sons, for whatever they wish to do.

[ER:] Well, that certainly puts a good deal more responsibility actually on women. I think one of our troubles is that women don't trust uh women as much as they trust men. I watched it when Francis Perkins was in the uh cabinet. Uh, she got into more trouble with women, really, and their lack of appreciation of the work she was doing, largely because they didn't know what the work was she was doing. And I think that is one of the things that we must encourage, don't you, Miss Campbell?

[Dorcas Campbell:] It is absolutely necessary. Women must learn about women, and learn to have trust in each other.

[ER:] Well I certainly agree with you. And I hope that's a step that we will take. Although we have much yet to learn and accomplish, I think it speaks well for women that not only they can take severe criticism, but they can recognize its justice and really want to do something about it. There's no better proof that a woman can have financial knowledge and ability than you yourself, Miss Campbell, who, although you do look so gentle, have been successful in a very hardheaded business. Thank you for being with us today, [Dorcas Campbell: Thank--] and now back to my daughter, Anna in Hollywood. (6:12)

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