

THE ELEANOR ROOSEVELT PROGRAM

March 21, 1951

Description: In the opening segment, ER and Elliott Roosevelt respond to a listener's question about the need for courage in a world at war for democracy. In the interview segment, ER's guest is John Kieran, author of the *Information Please Almanac*.

Participants: Eleanor Roosevelt, Elliott Roosevelt, John Kieran

[Elliott Roosevelt:] Our subject for discussion today, Mother, has been suggested by Mary F. Taber of Pawling, New York. Uh she writes uh, "May I bring up a matter for your consideration? It's essentially an attitude which the average citizen is now tempted to take toward uh needed uh progressive projects in his own community or profession or family plans. The temptation is widespread to postpone action on much needed matters: the building of a new school, adoption of an adult education project, anything under ordinary conditions in th-that an improvement in our standard of living, because of the world crisis and uncertain future. Admitting the uncertainty of that future, do you not think that a good citizen in a democracy today would be accepting defeat in advance to a totalitarian regime if he refuses to go ahead using his freedom to improve his own conditions of life as normally as possible? Does it not seem to you that we here are all of us citizen soldiers in the fight to make democracy prove itself worthy of the trust put in it during this world crisis, and that our most important civilian job is to share in forming a public opinion here, which is sane and informed, and which will buttress our hard challenged leaders and help to justify the world leadership which has fallen to our lot? If we are actively true to that responsibility, then I think we ought to live constructively and confidently, as if sure of the righteous outcome, and continue to improve our environment within the necessary and reasonable limitations of the present situation. If you think this is of sufficient value, won't you comment on the need of courage, not to cringe in fear of a problematical future, but to build toward a safe tomorrow by the sound activity of today. The answer seems to me to point to the way the plain citizen today can enlist in the total war for democracy."

[ER:] Of course I find myself in complete agreement with Miss Taber. I've known Miss Taber a great many years. She uh was a great friend of Miss Laura Wylie [1855-1932], who taught for many years at Vassar um in uh English, and who was one of the most inspiring teachers that I think any student of that era had. And uh Miss Taber has uh much of Miss Wylie's philosophy. Uh I think there is no question whatsoever but what we should go on living courageously, there is always--and that is the way that citizens can best help in the present situation, because if we begin to let down on the improvements that we constantly make in a democracy, in our own uh whole environment, then we will be hurting the possibility of proving to the world that democracy really offers you more [Elliott Roosevelt: Yes.] than any other form of um government or way of life. (3:52)

[Elliott Roosevelt:] Well, uh how far do you go in a time of crisis uh toward uh carrying forward the things that make uh the way of life a better one in this country. For instance ah, in these days of higher taxes and uh-uh greater expenditure on the part of each and every one of us as individuals ah, do you think it right that uh communities should, in addition, increase the burden of taxes in a community to build a new school?

[ER:] I do, if the school is really needed, [Elliott Roosevelt coughs] I think it's essential--[Elliott Roosevelt: Well--]it's one of the essentials. But I would look at it this way: I would weigh whichever one was undertaking um, as to its real need for the life of the community. Now uh I will give you an example: at the present time, in New York City, because the teachers feel their salaries are too low and too much is

expected of them, they are left no time to do much of their work, they have, let's say, gone on strike. In any case, they have said that they will not carry on extracurricular activities. [Elliott Roosevelt: Mhm.] Now, at the present time, when a great many um men and women, um fathers and mothers, are more occupied um then ordinarily, because of the crisis -- A new--a woman may be going to work, a man may be called away from home more than he ordinarily would be--that means that the children are now being denied the very activities in school, I-I mean out of school hour activities, which would safeguard them from being idle.

[Elliott Roosevelt:] And would give them proper supervision.

[ER:] Would give them proper supervision at a time when the home supervision--not because they're just lazy at home, but because they have things that must be done -- um is, of necessity, curtailed. [Elliott Roosevelt: Mhm.] I think that we are making a great mistake not to right that situation because we pay for it in higher taxes, in juvenile delinquency. [Elliott Roosevelt: Yes, uh huh.] And I think that is the way you must weigh the problems uh of your community. If your children are going to be on staggered hours in their school, then you better build the new school, because the children -- an-and the mothers are going to go crazy because they have to provide food at all the different hours when the children come home. [Elliott Roosevelt: Yes.] And give them meals at all kinds of hours and still uh manage somehow to get through. And I think it's um [Elliott Roosevelt coughs] I- I think those things are things that you must deal with-with common sense. You don't do, in times of crisis, just things that might be pleasant to do, but you do things that are going to be of real, lasting, and um permanent value to the people of the community. (7:21)

[Elliott Roosevelt:] Well, I think also that uh you can almost establish the things that should be considered as being--driving forward to make our democracy better, anything that helps future generations to be better citizens, ah helps them to grow up more healthy in mind as well as in body, ah is an investment in democracy. It's something that no matter what the sacrifice is worthwhile. There are also the contributions to community life such as the health of the community, hospital activities [ER: Yes.] Uh all of those things that should be carried forward, and uh adult education is mentioned in this- in this letter has a vast importance in our whole uh situation and also in the future of our country. But it does seem to me that there are things, and there is a tendency, ah on the part of communities, sometimes, to get a little selfish maybe uh, and that is, for instance, to say, well, our city hall is very outmoded, it is not a very uh great contribution to the looks of our city, so we're going to build a new city hall as uh--(8:44)

[ER:] Well, I think that's uh that's bad planning when it comes to that, but I also think, I think I should say this, because it's a thing I've felt very often. I think if we're building a new school, we should build a new school in times like this um with regard to the needs of the children and the essential things for their uh health and work. But we should not go in for marble halls we should um, and uh—

[Elliott Roosevelt:] Wherever possible to not use strategically important materials.

[ER:] Materials, and we should uh-- I would always prefer to have a functional structure [ER coughs] and uh make it as attractive as possible but uh not through expenditure of large sums of money. That is not uh--and put what extra money one had into the quality of teaching, because um I-I have a feeling that at one time we provided very poor teachers to teach in remarkably handsome buildings. (9:59)

[Elliott Roosevelt:] Yes. Well then uh, I think you've come to one more field of activity, uh which is known as housing uh-uh where--low cost housing, where [ER: I think that's essential.] uh we are wiping out slum areas and bad areas for people to live in, and uh if that could be carried forward and there was a clearer concept of why it's important, I think it would be much better for all communities to bend a great deal of attention in that direction--

[ER:] Well, housing is basic to um almost everything else. It touches health, it touches delinquency, it touches um well-being of families, it's um it's almost the basic thing in a community. (10:46)

[Elliott Roosevelt:] Well, in other words, uh-uh we are uh very strongly in support of this letter from um Miss Mary Taber, and uh you feel that it is one that should be followed in every community by the majority of citizens.

[ER:] Oh, and I think we should have courage to live in uncertainty, I think it's just nonsense to um curl up and die because you don't know what's going to happen tomorrow. I've-I've written this, and I think it's true, if we just stop to think that not one of us knows what's going to happen tomorrow anyhow, we might step off the sidewalk, as a friend of mine did the other day and broke her hip, and uh [ER laughs] she didn't expect to break her hip [Elliott Roosevelt: No, that's true.]Stepping off the sidewalk, and we might—

[Elliott Roosevelt:] Still must carry forward.

[ER:] Yes. Utter nonsense, to be scared.

[Break 11:40-12:08]

[Elliott Roosevelt:] Do you want to know something about a particular period in history, facts on economics, definition of a tough crossword puzzler? You'll find the answer in the *1951 Information Please Almanac*, and Mrs. Roosevelt's guest today will tell us about it. Mother, will you make the introduction? (12:28)

[ER:] Very gladly. My guest today is the editor of the *Information Please Almanac*. I am happy to present to you, Mr. John Kieran [1892-1981].

[John Kieran:] Thank you, Mrs. Roosevelt, it's good to be uh back with some old Dutchess County friends.

[ER:] That's very nice to hear. Now first of all, Mr. Kieran, what's new and what's different about the 1951 edition of the *Almanac*?

[John Kieran:] Well, there's always something new in every good almanac, and we trust ours is one. We bring it up to date every year, but we do have one or two things that are different this year. In the first place uh, we have a paperbound edition this year which we never had before, and, of course, at the cheaper price that gets it more widespread, and in the second place, of course, we've had a census you know, and we have the latest figures from the uh Washington on those. And then we have an innovation that, so far as I know, is new among almanacs, and that is a crossword puzzle section. (13:25)

[ER:] Oh, yes. I--what prompted you to put that in? I know you have that.

[John Kieran:] Well, we uh thought that most people who read and write dilly-dally with crossword puzzles at least once a week, and the-- they're often stuck for a two letter word meaning a three toed sloth or [John Kiernan laughs] an Indian weight or one thing or another, so we all got together, the whole office staff, and chipped in the words that we thought would help out a crossword puzzler. (13:52)

[ER:] I think that's an awfully good idea, because I've seen people just sit, pencil poised for hours, trying to think of some particular difficult word like that. But how do you decide what to include in the almanac?

[John Kieran:] Well, there are certain uh stock things that of course always go into an almanac, and uh these you have to put in, just the way the grocer has to have flour and tea and sugar an-and cheese and butter. But after that the grocer has to decide what else he's going to put on his shelves to attract customers, and you have to do the same way with an almanac. You have to have your uh calendar and your astronomical parts, you have to have your world history, you have to have the United States statistics and political and economic and uh you have to have a goodly sports section, I'm glad to say, [ER: Yes.] and so on. The trouble is not what you put in, but what you have to leave out. That's really the heartbreaking-heartbreaking part of that. (14:49)

[ER:] I suppose that is, about making an almanac--the decision on what to leave out must be terribly difficult.

[John Kieran:] It is, really, it's- it's a point of anguish all the way through, as a matter of fact.

[ER:] Mhm. I can-I can well understand that. Well, as a participant on the program *Information Please*, you rarely miss even some of the most obscure questions. Have you a special system for remembering your seemingly limitless fund of knowledge? [John Kieran laughs]

[John Kieran:] Well, Mrs. Roosevelt, you're-you're very kind to me. You see, there are four of us on the *Information Please* radio show and uh, after all, I-I sit there because I'm very quiet and don't exhibit my ignorance lots of the time, but uh no, I-I uh have no uh system for trying to remember anything. People who ask me seem to track me down to what they call a visual memory. For instance, if I quote a line of-verse-- of very familiar verse-- of course, I will see it on a particular page from which I learned it, probably as a schoolboy.

[ER and Elliott Roosevelt overlap]

[ER:] That's wonderful.

[Elliott Roosevelt:] In other words a photographic mind.

[John Kieran:] Well, so they call it. It doesn't mean anything to me, uh but if I-I can see whether it's on a left-hand page or a right-hand page or whether it's high up or low down. (16:05)

[ER:] My goodness, but you must've read an enormous amount, if um if all the things you answer on the radio you see in your mind and in the place where you learned it, I think that must be a marvelous way to remember [ER laughs].

[John Kieran:] Well, I remember things I'm interested in or things I like. Ah a psychologist can explain that I guess. But I happen to be interested in a great many--[ER: A great many things.] a great number of fields, you see, and merely for amusement. I mean, if I don't like a book, I won't read it. It won't do me any good, it'll, as they say, go in one eye and out the other [John Kieran laughs]. (16:40)

[ER:] Well, my husband had a wonderful memory, and he also had uh something which I think you have just touched on. He loved uh birds, and all—

[ER and John Kieran overlap]

[John Kieran:] Oh yes, I know that, I read-read some of his earlier uh bird writings on the birds of Dutchess County. I remember in particular he had some notes on eagles, uh in the highlands of the Hudson.

[ER and Elliott Roosevelt overlap]

[ER:] Here you are, you're telling me-- [ER laughs]

[Elliott Roosevelt:] Do you think uh, Mr. Kieran, do you think that uh maybe uh there's something particular about Dutchess County that made it possible for two people from Dutchess County to have this amazing ability to remember things [John Kieran laughs] as well as you and Father did?

[John Kieran:] Well I don't know, whatever is good is in Dutchess County, I'll tell you that.

[ER:] He had, I always felt, a sort of compartment mind. If he wanted to pull down the shade, he could shut out whatever he was thinking about at this moment and give his whole mind to something else. And then he could pull the shade up and everything was there, just where he wanted it, on whatever subject uh was on his--was--was then coming up. But what I really wanted to tell you about the birds was a funny story, because I used to complain to my husband, he was short-sighted, so he said, and he wore glasses, and he never recognized his friends when they passed him on the street--never! He would um --they would go by, and I would say, "Well, that was so-one-so," and he would be, "Oh, was it?" But he could tell me the kind of a seagull that was flying way up in the sky, which I could hardly see! And he could also tell me what kind of a bird flew nearby. So it wasn't a case of having long-sighted eyes only. And I once said to him: "How is it that you can tell every known bird, and you can't tell any human being across the street?" [John Kieran laughs] He said, "I don't know, perhaps they fly differently?" [Elliott Roosevelt and John Kieran laugh] (18:41)

[John Kieran:] Maybe he liked birds better than some people. [ER and John Kieran laugh]

[ER:] That was a--that was a never-ending subject of comment on my part.

[Elliott Roosevelt:] Maybe the two comments go rather closely together though; Mr. Kieran stated that books he didn't like he couldn't remember any passages from.

[John Kieran:] That's right. [Elliott Roosevelt and John Kieran chuckle]

[ER:] He didn't even read them, now that's--that's wonderful, because that lets one out on a great many things that one was made to read [ER laughs] and go fast! I think perhaps that a lot of young people would be glad to hear you say that, which they didn't have to read certain things. (19:20)

[John Kieran:] Well, I think that is discouraging to have to read a book. I remember I had to read *David Copperfield* in school, and it put me off liking the book for many years. When I finally came around to reading it myself, of course I loved it and I almost know it by heart. But because I was compelled to read it in school at a very early age, I thought it was dreadful work.

[Elliott Roosevelt:] Mhm.

[ER:] Eh you--you go on the theory that one should not be compelled, but what do you do with the modern child who reads nothing?

[John Kieran:] Oh, you must compel children or any animals, and after all we all are animals, to be trained at a certain stage, there's question about that. It did me good to be compelled to read at one stage, otherwise I wouldn't like to read uh now, or later on [ER laughs].

[ER:] Well, I'm glad you feel there is some compulsion necessary.

[John Kieran:] Oh, I'm sure there is.

[ER:] Well, I know that you were a sports reporter at one time. What do you think is the relationship between muscle power and uh IQ, because a great many people seem to think that uh, if you're an athlete, you just can't have any brains, and I haven't always found that true. (20:29)

[John Kieran:] Well, of course, I say just the opposite. Other things being [Elliott Roosevelt coughs] equal, I think that um two men who have, or two boys, who have the same muscle power, as you might call it, and one has a superior brain will undoubtedly be the superior athlete. And I have known wonderful combinations of brains and athletics, and I think the same spirit that--remember that you must also have spirit in athletics as well as brain power and muscle power, and that desire to excel, and to strive to win, is just as important in general life as it is in athletics. (21:05)

[ER:] Well, it's always seemed to me that the intelligent player um very often just uh out thought his opponent in many games.

[John Kieran:] Very often. Very often they do. Of course, there are few sports where it doesn't help very much. If you're a prize fighter, for instance, a good thick skull is really an asset to start with. [ER and Elliott Roosevelt laugh] But then of course the smart uh fighter will win over what they call a dumb fighter, and of course you know Gene Tunney [1897-1978], his uh brainpower accounted for a good deal of his success and also his indomitable spirit.

[Elliott Roosevelt:] Mhm.

[ER:] Well that's um, that's very interesting. I don't happen to know much about prize fights because I don't think I've ever seen one even, but at least I know I've never seen one. But the other day, we interviewed Mr. Ezard Charles [1921-1975], and he promptly offered me tickets to his next fight, because I had to tell him I'd never seen one [ER laughs]!

[John Kieran:] Well he's a very smart fellow Ezard Charles, and a very good boxer, and a-and a-good uh, good champion.

[ER:] Mhm. Well, that's um, that's good. Well, I'm glad you feel with me that it's asset for an athlete to— [Elliott Roosevelt: To have a few brains.] that it's-it's probably better that athletes are better when they have brains, or rather that being a good athlete, they will have brains. Well, to get back to the literary side, I know that you're an expert on the classics. Do you think that today, with really different requirements for education, that classics still hold the same importance that they used to as a basis for good education? (22:43)

[John Kieran:] I think more than ever, Mrs. Roosevelt. Uh I -- after all as Thoreau put it: "What are the classics but the noblest recorded thoughts of the human mind?" Now, we can't ever get too far away from them. We have marvelous gadgets, accessories to civilization that are leading us a little bit away from the fundamentals, and in the classics we find the fundamentals, because uh no matter how many added accessories we put on, marvelous things like radio and television and jet planes, we still haven't progressed far beyond such minds as Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle. [Elliott Roosevelt: Mhm.] So in the human brain, I think, our spirit needs to stick to fundamentals, and I think they will always be found in the classics.

[ER:] I'm delighted to hear you say that, and I have some proof that that is quite uh true, because I went down to St. John's College the other evening, and um there, you know, they uh educate uh on a basis of reading the classics and uh the great books, and I have never seen a group that I considered asked more

intelligent questions and were-were more really educated at their ages. It was quite remarkable for--as a demonstration of what that type of education does.

[John Kieran:] Well, I'm not surprised.

[Elliott Roosevelt:] And now, Mother, may I interrupt for just a minute in your conversation with John Kieran to allow our announcer to have a word, and then we'll come right back to the interview.

(Break 24:19-24:39)

[Elliott Roosevelt:] And now we can return to our interview with John Kieran, and, Mother, you can take over and ask uh some more questions, but I think during this period, John Kieran would like to ask you some questions. [ER: All right.] But first you ask him the questions that you have.

[ER:] All right, I think that's very dangerous, [John Kieran laughs] and I don't know whether I like that idea, but nevertheless, I have got something I want to ask right away. Uh Mr. Kieran, [Elliott Roosevelt coughs] in-in talking about your almanac, uh I was wondering, do you think an almanac of that kind is of interest to children? I know you have grandchildren, and [John Kieran:] Oh yes.] I have grandchildren, and I'm just wondering -- I can remember a tale that my husband was found sitting up in bed reading the encyclopedia and then the dictionary when he was ill once as a little boy. Do you think that some child will sit up in bed and read the almanac? (25:38)

[John Kieran:] Well, of course, it depends on the age of the child, but th-the minute--the year they go to school, when they can read and write and have little problems to solve or little uh compositions to write, then an almanac is a very handy thing for a schoolchild. I-I—

[ER:] Have you tried it out on your own grandchildren?

[John Kieran:] Well, they're not quite up to it yet, as a matter of fact. They've come in a group, you'll be surprised, I have ten now.

[ER:] You have ten grandchildren? How old? What's their age?

[John Kieran:] The oldest would be about five, I think.

[ER and John Kieran overlap]

[ER:] What? Ten?

[John Kieran:] Ah, we're really producing.

[ER:] My, you really are! [ER, Elliott Roosevelt, John Kieran laugh]

[John Kieran:] Yeah.

[ER:] Goodness.

[John Kieran:] They've stepped up production.

[ER:] Gracious. [Elliott Roosevelt laughs]

[John Kieran:] But they do uh--they um, I know that I used the almanac when I was in high school and uh I'm sure high school students use it a lot instead of an encyclopedia. (26:30)

[ER:] Well now, if your oldest is five – I'm still interested in grandchildren.

[John Kieran:] The young one? [ER: Um.] The young one--the youngest one is about uh a little over a week old.

[ER:] Good gracious. Well good luck to the youngest one [John Kieran laughs].

[John Kieran:] Thank you.

[ER:] But now I suppose they're divided among boys and girls?

[John Kieran:] Yes, they're--they are. I'd have to check on them. I know there are two boys and three girls in my oldest son's family, there are two girls and a boy in my daughter's, and a girl and a boy in my other son's.

[ER:] My, you're pretty well uh divided up. Now, are you going to guide their literary development?

[John Kieran:] Oh, no. I raised my children. I'll leave the raising of the others to their parents. I think it's a parent's duty and obligation and, quite often, a pleasure [ER and Elliott Roosevelt laugh]. (27:16)

[ER:] Well now, I'd like to hear about your new television program. Its natural science, which is the subject, isn't it?

[ER and John Kieran overlap]

[John Kieran:] Oh, well yes! It's very good. To tell you the truth, since I went to that I've learned an awful lot. We have a little television uh show that's a film, you see, and it's on all uh sorts of subjects. We do microphotography. That is we show protozoa and using magnifications up to a thousand times, and we show how snow forms and ice forms, and we show moving pictures taken of x-ray screens so you see right through a person. [John Kieran laughs] [ER: Good gracious.] And we have astronomy and chemistry and all things like that, and uh, in order for me to do the soundtracks on these films, I have to know what I'm talking about, and believe me, I've done a lot of studying! [Elliott Roosevelt and John Kieran laugh]

[ER:] I think that's wonderful. I should think it would take a lot of studying, but I do think it's wonderful.

[John Kieran:] Yes, it- it's really very fun.

[ER:] And have you been doing this a long while now?

[John Kieran:] About two years now, yes.

[ER:] And uh it goes, you have a big audience?(28:22)

[John Kieran:] Well it-it goes on -- you know how television stations are, networks or out, so to speak, in television. We sell from station to station. We're on in nineteen cities now.

[ER:] I call that wonderful. And I think it must be very popular with young people.

[John Kieran:] It is. It's quite popular wherever it's shown.

[ER:] Oh, I think that would be a wonderfully easy and pleasant way to learn certain things that I don't know anything about.

[John Kieran:] There's a lot of bird life in it, by the way, and uh sometimes I-I -- you know, you have to know what species the bird is, and if it's a European bird sometimes I have to chase it through uh French uh bird books and German bird books, and what I really need is the Latin name. If I get the Latin name, I know exactly what bird it is.

[Elliott Roosevelt:] Mhm.

[ER:] Oh, you do? Oh.

[John Kieran:] Well--[John Kieran, ER, Elliott Roosevelt laugh]

[ER:] That's wonderful.

[John Kieran:] I mean, I can check it then—

[Elliott Roosevelt:] John Kieran, I think you ought to take over at this point in the program and ask the questions that you've been saving up to ask Mother. (29:18)

[John Kieran:] Well I tell you, there is one question that I would like to ask your mother because of her position at the UN gatherings, and that is, what do you think of the idea of a universal language?

[ER:] Well, I-I have a feeling--I've never been able to -- I've always known people who wanted to introduce [Elliott Roosevelt coughs] Esperanto or something of that sort, and I've never been able to find, among any people that I've talked to, a real enthusiasm for learning uh a new synthesized language. But I do find a-a most astounding increase in the learning of English. Now whether that's because the United Nations is here uh and the delegates absolutely have to learn English to get around in everyday life, and so that those who begin by not knowing a word of any other language are finally making their speeches in English uh after a year or so. But I also find that in traveling round, more and more countries are making um the English language the second language that is learned. And if that happens in-increasingly, we will someday wake up to find that all of the world um they talk both English and a native language, perhaps another language in countries where they are close to other countries. For instance, I think that the natural thing in our country would be, our native language is English, well it would be natural to learn Spanish uh next, and um in-in a country, let's say, in South America, where the native language was Spanish or Portuguese, they would naturally learn English as their second language because we're the nearest to them. Now they used to learn French very largely or German, because they had uh settlers who came from those countries, and so I think they may um continue um with that background, but I think you'll find that your second language is going to be English in almost every country which is not English speaking.

[John Kieran:] And might become the universal uh language—

[ER:] And if it does become the universal language that will mean an enormous amount in the way of understanding, because it makes all the difference in the world, but it won't take away from um one thing which I have found, and that is that you can make great strides in friendship with people if they know that you have tried to learn a few words of their language, whatever it is. And I think if more of us would try to learn, oh Kush--I don't suppose we could hope to learn a great many languages, but just so that we

could um get along and say "good morning" and "good night" and "thank you" and a few other things in many languages. I think it would help in our friendly relations a great deal.

[John Kieran:] I think it would help a great deal, and I think that when we understand each other more clearly we certainly get along. (32:41)

[ER:] Well, for that you need a common language that everybody learns extremely well, because as you know, even people who talk the English language may mean different things by what they've said, and I have known people to make a speech in this country, and afterwards in talking to someone who heard the speech, I've found it interpreted entirely differently, [John Kieran: Oh yes.] because the listener had a certain set of mind and, and the words were interpreted his way, rather than as the way the person who spoke them really intended them.

[ER and John Kieran overlap]

[John Kieran:] Yes and that difficulty is doubly increased when you use two different languages.

[ER:] Will always increase, but it is doubly increased when it's two different languages, and when it has to go through a translator it's enormously increased. I always cite the time when my Russian colleague stopped his own translator and said uh, "He isn't saying what I meant." And then of course all of us were perfectly um uh -- we were helpless because what did he mean [ER laughs]?

[John Kieran:] Well, I'm glad uh. In fact, I rather expected you would be in favor of as close to a universal language as we can get, and I agree with you that I don't think that the manufactured languages will do. A secondary language, now, I think is the nearest approach, [ER: I think it's the nearest approach.] and if we can make that happen I think it would be a big help towards peace in the world if we—

[Elliott Roosevelt:] Well, I've heard several people say that the French language is much easier to learn than English, of other countries.

[ER:] That-that depends on what you um, if you-if you come from any one of the countries that have a Latin basis to their language, French is easy.

[John Kieran:] Well, French of course is quite regular. I would think that English would be a horrible language to learn because it has no rules for-for construction, pronunciation, grammar—

[ER:] And yet more and more countries are learning it.

[Elliott Roosevelt:] Well, I'm sorry to interrupt now because I see that our time is running out and we must turn the program over to our announcers, so Mother will you bid our guest goodbye?

[ER: Thank you very much for coming, Mr. Kieran, I have enjoyed having you.

[John Kieran:] It was nice being here.

[Break 34:42-34:51]

[Elliott Roosevelt:] And now it's time to close the program and remind you that you've been listening to The Eleanor Roosevelt Program, which comes to you each Monday through Friday at this same time, and this is Elliott Roosevelt speaking and wishing you all good day.

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