

THE ELEANOR AND ANNA ROOSEVELT PROGRAM

February 11th, 1949 (catalog date)

Description: In this segment, ER discusses advertising practices and the need for American businesses to expand into international markets.

Participants: ER

[ER:] Thank you, Anna. When I was on the train the other day I had an interesting talk which brought to my mind some things which I'd like to share with other people. Um a young man came in to talk to me about uh some of the things his company eh was suggesting, namely, that now uh things had changed in the business world. During the war, uh you had to have your salesman prepared to try to make people happy with less than they wanted because there never uh was a possibility of giving people the things they really wanted in the quantity they needed. Now, we're reaching the point where people have um got most of the things that they need and the salesmen are being uh told that uh they must be able to persuade people that they really want more than they actually need. Now it seems to me that that, from the economic standpoint, is not very wise. It seems to me that what we ought to be doing in our big businesses and our small businesses, is to try to find new things which people may really be able to use and need. Or to sell to more people, but not to oversell the people who have been our customers because if they find that they can't dispose of what they have bought, or that they don't need themselves what they have bought, then we've lost a customer for a long time. (1:59)

And then I think too, that we should uh-- our business organizations should have thought ahead and should now begin - if they haven't already - to think about developing other markets. My husband told me a story about his conversation with King Ibn Saud of Saudi Arabia which always interested me. He said he talked to the king about the development of his country, and the old king drew himself up and said, "I am a warrior, I will always be a warrior." That is the reason that they sell all their oil. He doesn't want to uh do anything but what he has always done and my husband admired him and appreciated his feeling, but he said uh, "Your people are going to need some of the things that people have in the other parts of the world." And Ibn sa—King Ibn Saud said, "I have a son who is interested in farming, talk to him." As I was told there were quite a number of sons, some forty I think, and uh my husband then tried to suggest that uh, in that country, reforestation might be a very great help in future development. And King Ibn Saud again said, "I have a brother uh who is interested in trees, talk to him." And uh so my husband did do a little talking, but uh I think it will probably be some time before these peoples of the world who are our market of the future really um understand uh that we will help them to develop their own resources in order that they may have some of the things which would make life pleasanter and more convenient and healthier in many cases for them. And in doing that, we will not only be advancing civilization, but we will be meeting our own economic problems in a sane and sensible and orderly fashion and we will also be helping other nations who are producing-- manufacturing nations as we are, and we will be giving them new outlets as well as developing new outlets for ourselves.

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File(s): 80-5(28) Track 2

Transcription: Emily Whaley
First edit: Anna Karditzas
Final edit: Ruby Johnson