

## MRS. ELEANOR ROOSEVELT'S OWN PROGRAM

May 21, 1940

Description: Broadcast time 1:15-1:30PM over the NBC Red Network. In the first half of the show, ER discusses household work as a profession. In the second half she discusses the role of private industry and the government in the construction of new houses and the importance of building low income housing.

Participants: Eleanor Roosevelt, Ed Herlihy, NBC Announcer

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(0:45)

[Ed Herlihy:] This is *Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt's Own Program*, presented by SweetHeart Soap.

[Theme music 00:49-1:15]

[Ed Herlihy:] And again we greet Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt. Today, Mrs. Roosevelt takes time out from her countless other interests to chat with us from the nation's capital. These intimate talks come to you with the compliments of SweetHeart Soap, one of America's favorite beauty soaps for the past half century. Now, we won't keep you waiting the one minute longer. Are you ready, Washington, DC? Then please come in, Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt.

[ER:] Good day, ladies and gentlemen. [coughs] I attended last night the biggest dinner party I've ever attended, though it was not all in one room. Six hundred thousand people all over the country, who are interested in the professional and service projects of the WPA [Work Projects Administration], dined together last night, the highest cost of any meal being twenty-five cents and many of them costing less in order that they might start a week when every project in every community will hold open house and invite the community to find out what service projects mean to them. (2:12)

This morning, the National Advisory Committee met at the White House and I wish you could have heard some of the stories told in connection with these projects. One of them I think I could repeat to you. [coughs] A young white farm boy in the South had gone into an adult education project and said he wanted to learn to read because he'd just acquired a car and had to know how to read in order to get around the country-- good reason for wanting an education. In a short time, someone asked him how he was getting on and he said, "Fine, but I've not yet got all I want. I can tell how fur ["far," imitated with an accent] it is but not how fur to where."

Now, let us go back to my subject for the day. [coughs] There is one thing about every woman's home which I think has never been sufficiently emphasized: namely, that household work is a profession. If you do the household work yourself, you'll find it most satisfying, and you'll be able to do more for your husband and children and to include more outside interests in your life if you learn to schedule your time. If you have a routine for everything you do, you'll be astonished to find how much you can increase your speed. In dealing with little children, of course, it is impossible to hurry them, and one has to realize that in order to allow them to learn to do things for themselves, one is obliged to take a great deal more time letting them struggle over things which could easily be done for them. In the long run, however, this too saves time, and teaching a child a routine is one of the best lessons which can be learned in the home.

In many households throughout the country, one or more people are employed for household work, and this is one of the fields which is not oversupplied, and many people have come to look upon

this as a possible new profession. Two elements enter into the successful development, however, of this field of employment. One is the proper training of the household employee, and the other is the proper training which the homemaker must have as an employer of labor. The approach to the whole situation has been a bad one in the past. There were no regular hours, and the living conditions and working conditions were peculiarly unsatisfactory. That was because the majority of women did not approach the running of a house as a man would approach the running of his business. If one person was taken on to work in the home, the woman of the home was apt to think that that person would do all the work which was to be done without any regard to standards in hours and wages. No man employs an assistant in his business and expects the assistant to take over the whole running of the business, and no woman employing one or more people in her home can ever expect it to run it satisfactorily unless she schedules the time of her employees and has a complete understanding as to what each person in her household is expected to do, sees to it that the living and working conditions are good, and takes a personal interest in those who work with her. This makes the home a good place in which to live.

In the last few years, largely through the interest of the Young Women's Christian Association and a few different groups of women, great strides have been made in interesting women to set up standards for household employees. I believe if we educate the employer, we will soon find a much more satisfactory situation which will mean employment for many women on a more or less professional basis. There are women being trained today to go into homes on an eight-hour-a-day schedule. There are women being trained as specialists for certain specific work in the home such as the care of children or cooking or laundry work or waitresses or housemaids. But the vast majority of workers will be wanted as general house workers doing a little of everything. In certain parts of the country, the household employees will be in the majority colored, but that does not mean that of necessity they must be less well-trained or receive lower wages. If the work is worth doing, it is worth doing well, and it should receive adequate compensation. Where board and room are given, which is of a satisfactory nature, that should be taken into consideration in the agreement on wages. But the important thing is a clear understanding before the worker takes the position.

We have states today which have recognized household employment as a profession and have passed laws which govern such employment. As yet there is no organization in this field, and I imagine because of the close individual association between people, it will difficult for a union to form very definite rules governing this type of organization. Therefore, it is important that there should be education on both sides, a sense of mutual responsibility, and a recognition of the fact that the relationship of individuals in the home has a great deal to do with the atmosphere which exists in that home. But before we continue, I believe New York has a message for us. Let's listen. (7:03)

[Ed Herlihy:] Many thanks, and I'll only take a minute, Mrs. Roosevelt. Friends, it's exactly three weeks ago that Mrs. Roosevelt began this series of broadcasts, and already the letters are pouring in. Letters from folks who've been on the verge of trying the product responsible for these programs: SweetHeart Soap. Thousands of these people are now actually using SweetHeart Soap, and folks, you just ought to hear their comments. "At last," they say, "we've found a bath and beauty soap that's so pure and gentle, so delightfully mild and fragrant that every bath and clean-up is a real joy. And the grandest part of it is the way the whole family enjoys pure, delicately fragrant SweetHeart Soap." Well, all I want to add is this: SweetHeart Soap is yours for only a few pennies a cake. So, try it real soon. Why not today? Remember the name: SweetHeart Soap. And now we take you back to Washington, DC, and our welcome speaker, Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt. (8:08)

[ER:] Now, for a moment, I want to talk to you about the general question of housing. It seems to me that every woman in this country must be deeply concerned with this problem. This is one industry, building, which means a great deal in the way of general employment. The building of houses brings about much employment in allied fields. This country needs about nine hundred thousand new homes a year for at

least a decade. Of these, one third should be for the top income third, one third should be for the middle income third, and in both of these brackets, private capital can find an outlet and make money. The last one third should be for the lowest income group, and here is where the government has come into the field.

Private industry has now built-has not built at all for this group, and so the United States Housing Authority was organized. This authority is now providing about sixty thousand homes a year and these homes rent anywhere from seven dollars a month in certain places in the South to seventeen dollars a month in New York City. These homes are restricted to the people with annual incomes ranging from about five hundred and fifty dollars to one thousand and fifty dollars a year. It has been found necessary to do this so that there should be no competition with private industry. Approximately three hundred and sixty thousand homes a year are now built by private industry for the highest income group. Sixty thousand a year are built for the middle income group. Even the low cost housing, subsidized in large part by the government, helps business because the materials going into these homes have to be bought in the open market and the production of these materials provides employment.

It has been the experience in both England and Wales that this type of building encourages building by private industry. Ever since the United States Housing Authority has been at work, we've been gradually clearing our slums both in urban and rural areas. And this is a relief to the taxpayers, for slum areas are extremely expensive for the community. Out of them come our greatest number of criminals and public charges in hospitals and insane asylums. They cost us more in police protection and fire protection than any other part of our communities. And yet we forget to add all these things in when we compute the cost of the appropriations which are made for low cost housing. (11:02)

It has always seemed to me that this program should make special appeal to the women who know the value of home life and spend so much of their time in the creation of homes. Before a jury of representative women in Washington the other day, I heard a New York City mother tell the story of her family. She lived in one of those old-type tenements that have windows in the front and back only, and the bedrooms in between have no ventilation. Out of her family of six, one child was in a tuberculosis sanitarium, and all the others were in the outdoor classes in the New York City public school system, which meant that they were threatened with tuberculosis. This condition is due in part to malnutrition, but much of it is due to bad housing.

We women realized what this means to the future of this country, and we are the ones to urge doing something about it. If you live in a community where there are housing projects, you should go to see them and become interested in them and register your interest with your representatives, yo-your state and federal government. Projects of this kind depend upon public opinion, and as a woman you probably have a more vivid understanding than has any man of what decent homes mean to the community, and what sanitary conditions mean especially to the children in your community. Next Thursday, I think I shall talk a little about gardens which seems to me something one should think about, even in a city. (12:52)

[Ed Herlihy:] Thank you very much, Mrs. Roosevelt. Folks, we're proud of the fact that SweetHeart Soap has won over five million new users in the last two years. We think it's a fine tribute to this fifty-year favorite soap. But some of you listeners haven't tried SweetHeart Soap as yet, and I want you to know why you should. SweetHeart Soap is pure and therefore mild. It agrees with your skin. SweetHeart Soap is thorough, so it removes stubborn surface impurities that might spoil natural skin charm. And SweetHeart lends you lovely, delicate fragrance for extra pleasure in every bath and clean-up. Five million new users discovered all this just lately, so why not make pure, delicately fragrant SweetHeart Soap your personal discovery too? When you do, we're confident that you'll join those delighted thousands who say there's no other soap like it.

[Theme music 13:59-14:31]

[Ed Herlihy:] [music continues softly] And this brings us to the end of another visit with Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt. Be sure to set your radio dials for this same station, same time, next Thursday when Mrs. Roosevelt again comes to call on all her friends all over America. Meantime, be sure to provide yourself with the fine product that presents these programs: SweetHeart Soap, famous for fifty years as the soap that agrees with your skin. Now it's goodbye until next Thursday when you'll again hear [music crescendos, cuts] *Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt's Own Program*. This is Ed Herlihy speaking.

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

[NBC chimes]

(15:24)

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