

THE PAN-AMERICAN COFFEE BUREAU SERIES

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Description: ER answers questions regarding the well-being of children during wartime and what housewives can do for civilian defense.

Participants: ER, Helen Elizabeth (Betty) Lindley, Dan Seymour

[starts mid-sentence]

[Dan Seymour:] -- Mrs. Franklin D. Roosevelt's regular Sunday evening broadcast, sponsored by the Pan-American Coffee Bureau, representing seven good neighbor coffee-growing nations. Mrs. Roosevelt has as her guest on this program Mrs. Ernest K. Lindley. Mrs. Lindley is the mother of three young children, and like hundreds of thousands of American mothers, she has some pretty important questions to ask Mrs. Roosevelt about family and home defense. But first, we would like to say a few words about the Americas' favorite -- yes, and the Americas' most necessary drink -- coffee. (0:29)

The news picture from the Battle of Pearl Harbor, which had particular significance to us, was a picture published in a recent issue of the *New York Times*. The caption read, "Aboard a battleship, time is taken out for coffee." And there, standing about the huge coffeepot, were a group of our sailors, eagerly enjoying steaming cups of coffee. "Time out for coffee" is truly an important slogan to our navy and to our army. For coffee gives that extra energy, those extra-steady nerves our servicemen need as they go into action. "Time out for coffee" should be an equally important slogan in your home or in your factory or office. For coffee will help you get more out of your work, more out of every precious moment of relaxation, try an extra cup with your evening meal tonight. Take time out for an extra cup during your busy hours tomorrow. See for yourself how much coffee helps you in extra energy, in extra-steady nerves. And now we present, Mrs. Franklin D. Roosevelt.

[ER:] Good evening, ladies and gentlemen. In recent broadcasts, I've discussed various aspects of the great work which is now being undertaken by men and women all over the country for civilian defense. This evening, I wish to discuss another aspect of civilian defense, and one which I know has deep significance to all of us: American children in war. Letters keep pouring into our office in Washington asking for some kind of outline of directions as to what to do with and for children. This has been worrying a great many people. So, this evening, I've asked a typical mother of young children to come here to the studio with me, and to ask me the questions which have been worrying her. But first, I do wish to say that the Civilian Defense Office has asked for the loan of one or two of the best people in the Children's Bureau of the Department of Labor to help us with this problem, and that we are now sending out recommendations as to the best way of handling our children during this troubled period. Mrs. Lindley, suppose you ask me a few questions of the kind which have been troubling you about the care of your children in wartime America?

[Betty Lindley:] First, Mrs. Roosevelt, just how much should I let the present world situation affect my children's lives? (2:44)

[ER:] Our office advises that children should continue to live as normal lives as possible. We are fortunate indeed because, so far as we can now see, our children will have the best possible diet. We're going to learn more about it, and for that reason, they should be better fed than ever before in their lives.

Secondly, children should lead regular lives, they should go to school. Preparations are being made to take care of them there, and they are as safe there as they would be at home.

[Betty Lindley:] Then you think, Mrs. Roosevelt, if my children are in school during an air raid, I can be confident they will be well-cared for?

[ER:] The answer, Mrs. Lindley, is that schools have worked out careful plans should an emergency arise. They've practiced air raid drills; they've chosen center corridors or such rooms where children can remain. If the schoolhouse for some reason is not considered as safe as some other nearby place, arrangements have been made for going to that nearby place.

[Betty Lindley:] I see. Mrs. Roosevelt, there's an even more personal question that's been bothering me. How can I keep my children from being afraid during a blackout?

[ER:] That's a very important question. In the case of schools, I think it must be worked out through certain programs which will be suggested by the Office of Civilian Defense, and carried out as seems best by individual schools. The main thing is to make the children feel that this is just a precaution, like a fire drill, and if they are amused and interested, they will not be frightened. Children should be kept occupied in the home as well as in school, and if you do have an air raid warning, take them into the room you've chosen as the safest place. Read aloud to them or play quiet games with them. Remember that books are very valuable in times such as these because if you are really interested in what you are reading, you will forget what is going on around you.

[Betty Lindley:] Are there any plans for identification should my children get lost during a blackout or an air raid test?

[ER:] In many places, the schools have already sold to parents metal tags bearing the name, address, and telephone number of the child. There will shortly be available to the civilian defense councils attractive tags which every child, boy or girl, will be glad to wear if they haven't already procured some other form of identification tag. (5:15)

[Betty Lindley:] I didn't know that these tags had been made. I'll certainly see that my children have some immediately.

[ER:] I know all mothers will want to have their children wear these little identification tags. Mrs. Lindley, you prefaced one of your questions with the remark that it was a personal question. I'd like to make one statement, which is a really personal one-- not for you, but for all mothers: many of us have a tendency to let our children stay up late at night, so it is wise to see that your children go to bed early and get plenty of sleep. If a mother wants to build up steady nerves in children, she should get them into the habit of sleeping long hours and of going to bed early in the evening.

[Betty Lindley:] I think that goes for all of us these days, Mrs. Roosevelt. We all need to build up as much resistance as possible. But here's a question that is really not mine, but a friend of mine's. She has a home in the country. She wishes to know if civilian defense can make use of her home, which she's willing to put completely at the disposal of the government, for children who might have to be moved from dangerous areas.

[ER:] This question, of course, is based on the possibility of having to move children in considerable numbers from their homes, and perhaps even separate them from their families. The chances are very remote of that happening in this country. At the moment, the best plan is for children to remain with their parents, and this kind offer of a country home would only be useful if we found we had children who, for

some medical reason, needed to be moved out of their present environment. Or perhaps, we might need convalescent homes later for the men of our armed forces.

[Betty Lindley:] And here's another question not one but many friends of mine have begged me to ask you this evening, Mrs. Roosevelt. They all want to do some kind of civilian defense work, but they're housewives busy running a home, taking care of their children, and naturally this fills most of their time. Still, they feel they are not living up to what is expected of them today, and they are searching for ways to show their patriotism. What is your advice to these women?

[ER:] This seems to me a very simple problem. We all know that the first thing each of us has to do is to do the job well which is our own particular job. If it is the running of a home, or if it is doing the more or less humdrum job which earns us a living, that is our first responsibility, and we should do it to the best of our ability. There is a special recognition, however, for the family that realizes that the home can be made stronger for the sake of the nation. If, for instance, the mother is willing to take a short correspondence course on nutrition, on better and more sensible buying, and if she not only lives up to these standards but gets her family as a whole to sign the consumer pledge which means that they will eat the things that are good for them, that they will cooperate in any savings program in the home, that they will help her to make this unit a strong link in the chain of American homes then that house may proudly display in the window the Office of Civilian Defense poster which proclaims that in this household the requirements of civilian defense are being met by all members of the family. (8:38)

[Betty Lindley:] But suppose a woman has a particular talent or training that makes her especially useful to the government? For instance, I know one woman who is a retired trained nurse. She would be willing to place her children, during the day, in the proper kind of nursery or school and contribute her abilities to national defense. Yet, uh she finds the daycare facilities in her community are overcrowded. Is the government planning to do anything about this?

[ER:] In areas where there are enough people who are needed either for civilian defense volunteer work or in regular industrial work, there will undoubtedly be established day nurseries or nursery schools where children can be taken care of in the daytime in order to free mothers for work in which they are skilled. This will make it possible for people such as retired trained nurses to volunteer to do a really good job during the daytime.

[Betty Lindley:] Thank you for answering these questions. I know many mothers listening to you this evening will not only have better understanding of what the government expects of them, but will also realize much more keenly the work they are doing in their own homes is in itself a pretty important contribution to national defense.

[ER:] Thank you, Mrs. Lindley, for bringing your questions here where I could answer them publicly. And may I remind you and all the mothers listening in that the civilian defense officials in your own communities have the literature concerning childcare during air raids, et cetera, which I mentioned earlier in the broadcast. Be sure to ask for this helpful information. And now, I would like to speak for a minute not only to the mothers of the nation, but to everyone.

We are now launched on the New Year. None of us know what this new year will bring. To many of us, as it came in, no matter how well we observed the old traditions that should bring our home good luck, there was a sense of foreboding that few years in the past have brought us. Some of us may be worried as to what will happen to our business. Others may be finding the rising cost of living is making a fixed income a nightmare in arithmetic. Many of us have boys in the military services. I am sure people will say to us how glad we must be and how proud it must make us to have them at points of danger. I don't know how this is for other people, but perhaps some of you feel just as I do. I would not have my children shirk responsibility, and I'm glad that having received much in their lives, they feel an obligation

to make a return. They've made their own decisions, however, in which I have had no part, and they can feel satisfaction and pride, and their wives and children, who make sacrifices also, can justly feel proud. In this connection, I've done nothing of which I might be proud, and I can only willingly acquiesce in allowing them to make their decisions freely, and keep from making such decisions more difficult. I'm not glad that such decisions had to be made and that the world is as it is fills me with profound sadness. I'm afraid for those I love -- who isn't? I know that I would not live in a Hitler world, however, and I would not want them to feel otherwise. So, while I cannot bid any women to be glad or proud, still all of us can strengthen ourselves by recognizing that we are a part of something greater than any individual. We can find courage to live our lives in the belief that the sacrifices of today are made for the good of humanity in the future. What we must all fight for is steadiness of heart and of purpose, to see us through the uncertainties of today, and a secure faith and hope in the future. That hope must be founded in the belief in the intrinsic value of all human beings, in the certainty that democracy as a form of government and as a way of life can give us the kind of liberty and dignity which makes foreboding and fear and sacrifice worthwhile. (13:06)

[Dan Seymour:] Thank you Mrs. Roosevelt and thank you Mrs. Lindley. In the excitement we all naturally feel these days, perhaps some of us are overlooking the importance of our own normal duties as mothers and fathers, just ordinary civilians keeping the home fires burning. To all of us, whether working in the front lines of civilian defense or doing the grand old American job of raising a strong, fine family, the Pan-American Coffee Bureau has something of real importance to say. Just as the armed services use coffee to give our soldiers and sailors and marines extra energy and extra steady nerves, just as more and more factories under the pressure of the vast arms-building plan are placing coffee dispensers where their men can get the coffee they need to help them in their work, so the American home should take full advantage of the benefits of America's necessary drink. Be sure you have plenty of coffee on hand for all times, for all hands. Be sure you drink plenty of coffee yourself, for coffee will help you get the most out of your daily work. Coffee will add to the pleasure of your moments of relaxation. Next week, Mrs. Roosevelt will be with us again at this same time.

[Unknown announcer:] This is the Blue Network of the National Broadcasting Company.

[NBC chimes]

(14:22)

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