

THE ELEANOR ROOSEVELT PROGRAM

July 13, 1951

Description: In the opening segment, ER and Elliott respond to a listener's question regarding recent material aid to India. In the following segment, ER issues her community service citation to Mrs. Herbert Levison, president of the woman's auxiliary of the fifty-two association, a group that offers services to wounded veterans. In the interview segment, ER and Franklin Gregory, a public relations representative for CARE, discuss the desperate situations faced by civilians living in war-torn regions. In the closing segment, ER comments on a listener's letter regarding the importance of foster care.

Participants: ER, Elliot, Mrs. Herbert Levison, Franklin Gregory

[ER:] How do you do? This is Eleanor Roosevelt. Every Monday through Friday, my son Elliott and I have the opportunity to visit with you here in my living room at the Park Sheraton hotel in New York City. Each day it is our desire to bring interesting guests that we are hopeful you will enjoy meeting. Elliott, will you tell our listeners today's plans?

[Elliott Roosevelt:] For nearly two years Frank--Franklin Gregory has been CARE's public relations representative in South East Asia and the Far East. He has seen hunger and starvation in India, the plight of homeless refugees in Pakistan and the misery of thousands of the poor and ragged. More recently he visited Korea to gain first-hand information on the conditions among the hundreds of thousands of retched refugees in that country. Mr. Gregory is with Mrs. Roosevelt today to tell us about what he saw. Before Mrs. Roosevelt introduces Mr. Gregory, she and I will discuss, as usual, a letter sent in by a listener posing a question. Now here is our announcer.

[Break 1:10-1:23]

[Elliott Roosevelt:] The letter of which Mr. Roosevelt and I will discuss today rather takes me over the jumps. It is from Helen G. Claire of New York City, she writes: "The argument presented by your son today was really quite ridiculous, and I'm somewhat amazed to find you accepted it over the air as it made you equally as ridiculous. If the US government wishes to tie strings to a free gift of grain to India can that possibly compare to the theoretical case of India tying strings to materials purchased by the US Government or industry from them. These cases can never be compared in my opinion, and I'm sure you must in your heart agree. Free gifts and dollar and cents purchase are at opposite ends of the pole, Mrs. Roosevelt, and you might point that out to your son. I'm sure he will see the point. Further experience has proven, to our government's consternation, that it is not stupid to place strings on such gifts, such as where, when, and to whom it is distributed. If we wish to reach the mass of the people in India, one must make this reservation on our gift, and contrary to your statement this string has the approval of the American people.

[ER:] I don't think the lady is right. In the first place, we were not making a free gift, we made a loan. We gave the people of India a loan so that they could buy from us uh the grain that they needed. They had asked for a gift, but we didn't make the gift. So when we are carrying on a business transaction which is to our advantage, um as well as to that of the people of India because there are raw materials in India which we are most anxious to get. And so that being the case, the argument as to what kind of strings we put, uh how would you, my dear lady, like to be told that because you were going to be granted a loan, which would permit your people not to starve, you must therefore conduct your politics in a certain way. You wouldn't like it at all, and we wouldn't like it at all, and I don't think the Indian people like it at all

[Eleanor laughs]. And that is what seems to me, for a democratic country to suggest, even if it had been the gift they originally asked, I-I think we would have said we will starve before we agree that we have to conduct our politics uh in a certain way in order to be given, by a democratic nation, the food to keep us from starving. And when it came to actually accepting a loan and tying strings to it of that type, I don't think it was a possibility and I was very happy when it didn't happen and I'm quite sure that the people of this country were happy because had it been anything else it would be in line with the dictators and not in line with the democratic procedure. (5:00)

[Elliott Roosevelt:] Well, uh the question about distribution, ah, I think um could be taken up and that is that uh wherever we distribute uh --

[ER:] Well, that goes back to the days of UNRRA [United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration]. Uh what the lady is thinking about is, that in the days of UNRA certain supplies were distributed, um, and we later felt that they'd gone to strengthen dictatorships[Elliott Roosevelt: Right.] and communist areas as--and there was a question as to whether it had been wise in every case to do that and we then decided that um perhaps even in a gift, um and because UNRRA was not only our gift, but it was the gift of a great many nations to devastated areas, which were devastated by the war. And we decided however that certain things had to be stopped. For instance, abuses arose in certain countries where a government would resell UNRRA's supplies [Elliott Roosevelt: That happened in China as I believe.] and it wouldn't reach the people proper, do you see? That happened under Chiang Kai-Shek's government and it happened also uh in Italy, I think, and in various other places. Uh now, that is a different kind of thing, because that was the joint giving of a great many nations to the people of a country and what we did there was to say that we felt an obligation to see that a nation actually, a--distributed supplies as they were given, free in the country and we had a right to supervise as--which um was an agreed thing between nations before the gift was made and the gift was accepted, but that was really a very different thing from this Indian loan or the restriction which was proposed, which was a genuine restriction on their political um action and [ER clears her throat] their attitude brought about by the pact [ER coughs] that India's prime minister um had not been willing to take a certain attitude towards Communist China and now um, I don't think um we would be willing to be dictated to as to what our attitude should be towards Communist China or towards any-any government[Elliott Roosevelt: No]and therefore it did not seem to me a very wise restriction. (7:56)

[Elliott Roosevelt:] Well, in your opinion ah, was the ah grain that was sent from the Soviet Union, I've never had it satisfactorily explained to me, to- to India, was that grain loaned or was it uh a gift?

[ER:] I do not know. I, um, I have understood that, um, there was some kind of barter arrangement there that certain things were given--were returned, but I'm not sure of that and it may have been a straight gift. I do not know. I don't know the answer.

[Elliott Roosevelt:] Do you think that uh our government would have been in a stronger position instead of making a loan uh to permit India to buy this wheat from us, do you think it would have been a stronger move on the part of our government to give an outright gift of this wheat.

[ER:] If we had really wanted to gain goodwill and show that our chief interest was a humanitarian interest to keep people alive and we'd been able to do it immediately on the request, I think probably we would have gained enormously in goodwill in India. If within a month after it had been asked for we had given even a part of what had been asked as a gift, but once it was prolonged in the way it was and it was evident that we were not thinking of it purely as a humanitarian act, then I think it's always better to deal on a purely business-like basis, and that being the case, I think the loan is a much more business-like way to do it and at this time I think it was the best way.(10:06)

[Elliott Roosevelt:] Now, in summing up, ah, you do agree, ah, that where we do make a business transaction that it is always advisable also to uh go further and secure in dollar purchases on our part, as much uh favorable purchasing power for us as we can on the products that we need from India?

[ER:] Certainly, certainly, that's a business transaction.

[Elliott Roosevelt:] Right, now I'm interested in-in ah, just briefly, in saying, would you feel that it would be well for us to have a policy of a certain amount of humanitarian free giving on the part of our government uh wherever the need arises and follow that by business transactions of this type?

[ER:] Yes, though I would rather see us do it through the United Nations. I would rather see the free-giving done on a cooperative basis through the United Nations.

[Elliott Roosevelt:] Well, why shouldn't uh all of these transactions be set-up and carried whether they are free gifts or whether they are business transactions? [ER: Well because--] Have them carried out in cooperation between all the nations.

[ER:] Well, where it's a question of a long time development program which a number of nations are going to enter into, I think it is better when it's done through the United Nations, but where it is a question of a perfectly ordinary business transaction, ah, then I think it's entirely legitimate as all trade and commerce, eh, it's just one of the--of the commercial transactions of a nation and that, I think is on a different basis

[Elliott Roosevelt:] Well, I hope this answers uh, the letter of this lady, uh and now I see that our announcer would like to say a word and then we're going on to our very interesting interview of today.

[Break 12:12-12:19]

[ER:] And now, for our community service citation, I'm very proud to present the award this week to a group who have adopted for their motto, "the wounded shall never be forgotten" and who have voluntarily accepted the tremendous responsibility of living up to that motto. Their name is the Fifty-Two Association and fifty-two weeks of the year, this association of business and professional men and women carries out a two-fold program of entertaining the wounded from nearby hospitals and helping veterans get jobs, often in spite of physical handicaps. Mrs. Herbert Levison, president of the Women's auxiliary, is here with me today to accept the award for the Fifty-Two Association of New York Incorporated. Mrs. Levison, won't you tell us please, about the association's work and what you've been able to do as a group to see that our wounded shall not be forgotten?

[Mrs. Levison:] Thank you, Mrs. Roosevelt. It is a very great honor to receive this citation from you, for Fifty-Two and the Women's Auxiliary of Fifty-Two. As you know, from a simple beginning with fifty-two men in February of 1945, we now number one thousand men and twelve hundred and fifty women in New York, with other chapters of Fifty-Two in Chicago, Buffalo, Miami, and we hope soon in Boston. In addition to our parties, almost every day in the week we conduct a free job placement and counseling service, present incentive awards, and provide other special rehabilitation services. Since 1945 Fifty-Two of New York has served more than eighty thousand wounded with entertainment and job assistance. Our summer program includes picnics, outings, and weekly fishing trips for the wounded. Our parties are given both in and out of veterans and service hospitals. We have done what we have done without any public solicitation of funds. The bulk of our budget comes from our own membership dues. The men pay fifty-two or twenty-six dollars a year. The women pay annual dues of ten dollars. Money alone, necessary as it is, is not enough. Our members gladly and eagerly devote thousands of hours every year to serving the wounded in many personal ways. Of course, our membership, like all our activities, is completely

democratic. It is non-sectarian, non-political, interracial, and non-profit. We welcome all public-spirited men and women who would join with us so that the wounded shall never be forgotten. There are many community groups serving the wounded. The wounded need all of them and more. All of us must help to surround the wounded man with normality, to get him back on his feet and get him a job, most of all to return him to the normal life of the community. In this way, truly the wounded shall never be forgotten.

[ER:] That's a wonderful, uh, record of work and a wonderful thing to be trying to live up to. Thank you Mrs. Levison.

(Break 15:41-15:49)

[Elliott Roosevelt:] As always happens in war-torn countries, the civilian population bears the brunt of great suffering and-and privation, loss of their homes and possessions. For a firsthand account of how the Korean civilians are faring, Mrs. Roosevelt has as her guest today, a gentleman who has just returned from there. He has also observed conditions in India, Pakistan, and Japan. Mother, will you introduce your guest to our listeners?

[ER:] Thank you, Elliot. 'Tis with pleasure that I present Mr. Franklin Gregory, who is the public relations representative for CARE in Southeast Asia and the Far East, Mr. Gregory

[Franklin Gregory:] Thank you, Mr. Roosevelt.

[ER:] I'm very glad to have you here today. Mr. Gregory, what are the most pressing needs of the Korean refugees at the present time?

[Franklin Gregory:] Uh, I would say from what I saw over there that the most pressing needs are those basic essentials: food and clothing. Uh, at the moment, clothing seems to be uh number one--taking number one priority, but uh food is-is uh coming up as a necessity. Uh, The United Nations uh Civil Assistance command in Korea told me that uh they expect a clothing crisis and a blanket crisis next winter, that they're looking forward to a crisis in the food supply as of the summer 1952.

[ER:] Well that um, that will be serious won't it. Food--food crisis in the summer in-in the summer of '52 and clothes um, clothes and blankets now um, that comes, um-- that really means uh that, we ought to be considering ahead of time uh what the needs will be. Now, what could we do ahead about food, let's begin on that.

[Franklin Gregory:] Well, from my standpoint of course we could buy care-packages and send them there uh, and we have of course plenty of time to plan ahead for that. We also have time to plan ahead for the clothing and blanket situation.

[ER:] We do have um--?(18:24)

[Franklin Gregory:] By ordering our goods now, uh whatever the supplies are, whatever the agencies are. We will have until next uh next fall to get them over there.

[ER:] Well, let's go back again to food because it seems to be one of the essentials to know, is whether all the food has to be imported, for instance with--through care packages or whether they're going to be able to grow any in Korea.

[Franklin Gregory:] Uh, they estimate that the food crop this year will be about 50 to 60 percent of normal. A couple or three months ago it looked like they might uh have as much as an 80 percent crop, but uh every time a uh new figures come in the estimate gets lower and lower.

[ER:] Now is that because of the um drifting back and forth through the war that they haven't settled or is it uh because of the weather conditions?

[Franklin Gregory:] It seems to be more or less uh a manpower shortage [ER: Manpower?] the people are just not getting up in the rice-lands, as--so many of the rice-lands uh--so much of the rice production land is right up around the thirty-eight parallel, and ah [ER: Oh I see] people just aren't, they're [ER:] People can't get there, they're afraid to get there] they can't get there.

[ER:] Besides, there might be--everything might be wiped out that they did.

[Elliott Roosevelt:] That and it interests me also from the stand point of uh--as I understand it they depend for staples really on the rice crop, that's the one of their main foods.[Franklin Gregory:]That's their staple crop, yes.] Well uh, how--will care-packages provide mostly rice or will they make substitutions--?

[Franklin Gregory:] No uh as a matter of fact, our CARE-Korean package has no rice at all in it. It has uh various other uh components to make a uh complete diet. The rice will have to come in there from other sources and the United Nations is supplying the rice. Uh, that's an interesting point in there also, there's um the price of rice in recent months has doubled and that has played hob with the uh United Nations estimates. They have so much money just like anybody else to put in there. And uh so, that's one reason why they're banking on a crisis in 1952, because of the rising prices.

[ER:] Well, and that-that I suppose is because of war-conditions even in the other areas of[Franklin Gregory: World conditions] of world conditions the production of rice, for instance in South-West Asia, um will be much lower because of the um unsettled conditions.(21:14)

[Franklin Gregory:]And there's India's great demand of course, which is uh taking up an awful lot of the worlds production--

[ER:] Well now, let me ask you something, you provide um a balanced diet through your care packages, but do the people know how to use what you provide, and are they willing to use it? Because you have to take into consideration I suppose, different religious prejudices and also um the actual knowledge--I've heard, for instance, of one case in India, where some food had been sent from the United States and their total lack of knowledge as to how to cook the food they received resulted in several people's deaths from actual um use of-of foods they didn't know how to cook.

[Franklin Gregory:] Uh that is true, particularly in your rice-growing areas where we're trying to introduce wheat. Uh I know of cases in-in uh southern Madras, where the village women uh will uh overfeed their families and uh I think it's uh a six ounces of rice, and they'll take that much wheat, and I'm not a dietician, I don't know exactly how it works out, but I know that they're--in the first place there's a psychological effect, the families just don't want to change over to what is available when they were for generations used to a different diet.

[ER:] Well, that's just what I wondered, to come back to Korea a little um, we'll return to the other countries later, but come back to Korea. Do you meet that same difficulty in Korea?

[Franklin Gregory:] Not so much in Korea. Uh, as far as- as far as our organization's packages are concerned, I think most of them are going into institutions, where they can be used; refugee colonies,

orphanages. [Unclear term: UNCA] told me that, um, our package is of uh, particularly valuable for institutional use, whereas um things in greater bulk, like uh hundred pound sacks of other grains uh can be doled out in a handier manner on a mass--on a sort of soup-line basis.

[ER:] I see um well, it looks to me like a very difficult, uh--

[Franklin Gregory:] Now you- you mentioned the inability of some of the villagers, many of the villagers to use the items which we send over there; that's true of powdered-milk for example. Powdered-milk must go to an institution where there's a doctor or a nurse where who knows how to handle it.

[ER:] Well, um, now powdered-milk, is one of the things, I imagine you have to send because of the children [Franklin Gregory: That's true.] now are you able to get these people into refugee colonies or are they now scattering to their little bits of land where every--where they held them and um is it becoming more and more difficult to reach them.

[Franklin Gregory:] No, it's not becoming difficult to reach them because they never travel very far from their own villages, they stay put even in the face of starvation conditions. Um, I spent some time last winter in a village in norther Bihar where twelve persons had died of starvation according to the press, according to the government they had died of malnutrition. Um, I got there with the food supplies and uh just in time I think to save the village, the entire village, from uh a really horrible time. It was, um, it took five weeks to get the supplies up from Calcutta, about three hundred and fifty miles, because of transportation difficulties. It took four trains and a steamboat on the Ganges, um then it was a long haul by uh the worst highways I ever saw, forty miles to this village. Uh, when we got there we were able to dole the rice out by opening the packages and each family got something, but items like ah items like powdered milk we just set aside for the local dispensary and children were going to get it that way. Um, but there are so many scores of thousands of villages like that in India.

[ER:] Do they have a local dispensary in every village?

[Franklin Gregory:] Eh, usually the uh district magistrate of each district has a, somewhere around, a little building with a doctor, um a native doctor, who is in charge of all the health for their district. It's usually an undermanned situation uh one doctor maybe to every to every two or three hundred-thousand people, something like that.

[ER:] Two or three hundred-thousand? Well that um that of course I heard a good deal about the health situation in India during the world health meeting in Geneva when I was at the Human Rights Commission meeting and the um representative of course from India was the head of health uh work. And uh her description of the lack of medicine and the the--the lack of facilities was quite appalling; it gave me quite a feeling that it was impossible, practically, to meet that situation.(26:51)

[Franklin Gregory:] This particular village I mentioned, Taldea, that entire area was undergoing a small-pox epidemic at the time. The doctor was doing what he could for it but never the less, I think there had been twenty-five or thirty deaths just in that immediate area within the three or four weeks preceding my visit

[ER:] And I'm sure they didn't even have the serum that was needed for vaccinations, enough food--

[Franklin Gregory:] They're always asking for medicines of all kind wherever I go.

[ER:] Well, now that I've [unclear term]--

[Elliott Roosevelt:] Now, if you don't mind, I'm going to pause for just a moment for a very important message from our announcer, then we'll come right back to the interview.

(Break 27:32- 27:41)

[Elliott Roosevelt:] And now we'll return to our interview today uh between Mrs. Roosevelt and Mr. Franklin Gregory, who has just come back from Korea uh as the representative of CARE and uh I think mother, you have many more questions to ask of Mr. Gregory.

[ER:] Yes, we've been talking Mr. Gregory, about the food and the clothing situation, we haven't touched on what must, in Korea, be a very serious situation because people have been driven from their homes and I suppose in most cases, their homes have been destroyed. Now, what happens in that case about the housing uh even if they can get back to the land?

[Franklin Gregory:] I wasn't far enough uh north in South Korea to be able to answer that question, but about the housing situation among the refugees uh in southern South Korea, I know-I know something. They uh came down, everybody, hundreds of thousands from both North Korea and from uh northern South Korea. Um, the town Pusan is a city of about three hundred and fifty thousand to four hundred thousand prewar population and its population, when I left, was about 900,000 nine hundred thousand permanent and temporary. The refugees had dug into hillsides, into caves. They'd uh erected um little huts not much larger than doghouses, out of uh woven st--woven rice straw. They'd use burlap, they'd use uh tin, iron, corrugated iron, the uh boards from old boxes to throw any kind of a shack together, and you see them all over Pusan living like that now in the most unsanitary and most retched conditions. They have to uh get down on their hands and knees to get into their little shelters.(29:41)

[ER:] And are the shelters--I don't know of course what the climate is like, do they have a rainy season, if they do [Franklin Gregory: They do and that season is going on now] does it keep them dry. Well now um, you said burlap, burlap certainly wouldn't keep them dry.

[Franklin Gregory:] It doesn't.

[ER:] It doesn't?

[Franklin Gregory:] No.

[ER:] And if it can't keep them-- there is a very cold season in Korea, it can't keep them warm.

[Franklin Gregory:] Can't keep them warm.

[ER:] Well, I should say that your-your situation was uh as far as housing went was pretty terrible.

[Franklin Gregory:] Well the native, the permanent resident housing situation is bad enough in almost any oriental country and uh and when you get a situation like you have down there now, it's uh its almost animal. I wandered into a Buddhist temple groups were about three hundred people had just come in and taken over the space and used the um the walls of the temple as one wall uh for their lean-tos. Uh, I just don't know how they get by they must have a terrific amount of fortitude, physical fortitude. I don't-I don't think most Americans could live like that.

[ER:] Well, do you suppose it's just um they-they lie close together and just the effect of the animal heat that keeps them alive, or what?

[Franklin Gregory:] It's quite possible, when you get fifteen or twenty people crowded in a tiny room, ten feet by eight feet, that uh the warm of body temperature [Unclear term muffled by cough in the background] people. From uh great suffering, from the actual death--.

[ER:] It's a horrible thought really of, um--is-is Buddhism the religion of that whole area?

[Franklin Gregory:] There is a great deal of Christianity there, but Buddhism is the--is the, uh, national religion, I mean they--the people are mostly Buddhists. There is a great deal of sort of animistic uh philosophy, it's uh it's rather a crude-cruder type of Buddhism than you'd find for example, in Siam [ER: I see] or in Ceylon, or--.(32:00)

[ER:] Well, it's a higher type.

[Franklin Gregory:] well it's uh yes, much [muffled] more advanced type.

[ER:] Well, all of us of course I think have seen pathetic pictures in the newspapers and the magazines, particularly of the children and what uh what's happening, there must be an enormous number of orphans. What's done for those children?

[Franklin Gregory:] Well, they try to put the children in orphanages, the war-orphans and there were oh before the war many orphans uh in other institutions. Among the uh refugee-orphans, they try to colonize them uh in tents or in straw huts um many of them on the islands of Kakoji and Jeju, which are off the uh southern tip of uh Korea. These children, however don't have much, uh the educational facilities are almost nil on the--among the refugee children.

[ER:] Is illiteracy very high in Korea?

[Franklin Gregory:] Illiteracy is very high, I don't know what the rate is, but it's uh it's uh much higher than in a country like Ceylon for example, which is probably the most literate country in Asia.

[ER:] Well someone, I think told me that it ran about 95 percent in Korea.

[Franklin Gregory:] I would say that it was somewhere about eighty-five to ninety-five percent somewhere, about the same as India. Uh--

[ER:] Now, India says they're about ninety percent now.

[Franklin Gregory:] The people of course have been a subject phrase for the last fifty years, till their new won freedom and uh like more subject (unclear term: raises were held down). Books they just didn't have, up to date books and the idea in the higher education institutes, even in Seoul, we came across uh college libraries that had books on mining that were in Japanese language um printed back in the 90's. And uh, min-minerol- minerology, and metallurgy, and mining, are very important to the Korean economy, but the um youngsters couldn't get the education in the--in a basic industries because of lack of facilities.

[ER:] Now how do you feel about these orphans, are they getting any kind of proper care? [Unclear term]

[Franklin Gregory:] They're getting--they're getting food and clothes and, ah, I think they're uh faring better than,uh--

[ER:] Than in their own families perhaps.

[Franklin Gregory:] Possibly yes. Mh-hm.(34:43)

[ER:] Do you think they will survive? What--It looks to me that the expectation of life which is, as I understand it in India only thirty years [Franklin Gregory: twenty-seven, thirty, something like that] is even lower in Korea.

[Franklin Gregory:] That I couldn't say.

[ER:] But you feel that um that they are pretty uh-- do you feel that they're a sturdy race and-and will survive this horrible upheaval that has happened to them?

[Franklin Gregory:] They'll have to have help- they'll have to have outside help for a long time to come. I don't think that they can survive uh by themselves.

[ER:] They'll have to have help? Now, what can be done about the education of the children, what is being done?

[Franklin Gregory:] Well, they are trying to get in Pusan for example education back on a fairly normal keel. Uh, when I left they had thirty-three schools, last year--last winter, schools weren't working. The military had taken over all the school buildings, which are the sturdiest buildings in Korea; they've taken them over for military purposes. Um, but they managed to get uh, when I left six weeks ago thirty-three uh schools operating. Most of them were operating in warehouses, in churches, or uh in tents, and uh you went around Pusan you saw many outdoor classes.

[ER:] Now, [Unclear term: chiefly taught] at the elementary level or do they go up--

[Franklin Gregory:] I'm speaking, yes, of the elementary level. A higher [ER:] Nothing--] education seems to have just bottomed out lately.

[ER:] And secondary?

[Franklin Gregory:] Um, middle school, yes.

[ER:] Purely the elementary level is now functioning [Unclear term: you're certain--]

[Franklin Gregory:] About sixty thousand children are going to school now, but there's an interesting thing there. There are one hundred thousand refugee children in the town of school age and only five thousand enrolled are going to school.

[ER:] Only five thousand?

[Franklin Gregory:] There are about ninety-five thousand children of school age who are just out on the streets.

[ER:] Well now, is that because their parents aren't interested or [Unclear term]--

[Franklin Gregory:] It's because the parents are not able to afford the--afford an education for their children. They have a rather unusual educational set-up there where the uh teachers are so poorly paid that the side-money is given by the parents as--to have the teacher accept the children in her classes--(37:19)

[ER:] Good heavens--

[Franklin Gregory:] Now the people--the refugees [ER: Don't have the money.] they're just [Unclear term: out]--

[ER:] Now what can we Americans do to help this situation. It's hard to say

[Franklin Gregory:] It's hard to say, unless we just send in, uh, a shipload after shipload of educators and uh, and built more facilities--

[ER:] And it would be almost impossible for them to function uh because very few of our educators know uh the language. You--you still want us to send care-packages.

[Franklin Gregory:] Well, I think it's very necessary.

[ER:] Very necessary. Well, I'm sorry, our time has come to an end, but I must say this is a very unhappy picture and one which I hope our government and the United Nations are deeply concerned with.

[Elliott Roosevelt:] Thank you very much for being with us today Mr. Gregory, and we hope that you'll come back again and give us some more information on some other countries in Asia.

[ER:] A happier picture, I hope.

[Franklin Gregory:] Thank you

[Break 38:24- 38:30]

[ER:] In the few minutes we have left today, I would like to read to you a letter I received from Mrs. George E. Davisson, who heard my discussion with Emilia Egel of the Department of Welfare. She writes, "Francis Corner Road RD4, Freehold, New Jersey. Dear, Mrs. Roosevelt, I especially enjoyed your broadcast today because your guest, who spoke about foster homes for children discussed a topic I think should be brought to the attention of the public more and more until every family has given some serious thought. I haven't had any foster children myself, but I have five children of my own, ages eleven, nine, four, two, and five months, however I am familiar with the subject. My sister and her husband have had several children from a children's home, their ages varied from two month old infants to a seventeen year old girl. When your guest spoke of the need of home care and love for infants, I couldn't help wishing I could ask her to emphasize this point more. I don't think it is understood by the average person, for example, my sister's first foster child was a perfectly adorable eighteen month old baby; his name was Jimmy. When she took him, she was told that he had never been outdoors, that was not intentional neglect by the home, it was just because they had no one to take him out and I suppose the home was short-handed. That is one reason why the children need foster homes instead of the routine life of an institution. Also, I believe the first years of the child's life should be in the security of a private family because children who grow up with the sense of a family unit. Little Jimmy, as he grew, did not distinguish one person from another in the way he should, he was a happy lovable child, but seemed to love everyone indiscriminately. When he rode on the bus with my sister he made friends of everyone very happily as if they were all family. I'm afraid I can't explain it well. Jimmy was not up for adoption and finally he taken by a relative. Before he left my sister's home permanently, he was taken to visit the relative a few times, he went very willingly, my sister of course was happy that it didn't stress Jimmy to make the change, but she felt [Unclear term: abtube, obtube] because she feared that although he was happy and content, he would never be able to feel any deep affection to his family. She believed his attitude was due to spending

his first eighteen months of life in a children's home where they couldn't possibly give him individual attention.

I feel very strongly that more people should realize the importance of giving these children foster homes. We open our pocket-books for aid to children in the war-ravaged countries of Europe, which is wonderful, but we could do so much in our own country by opening our hearts and homes to children who need us right here. Somehow American people don't like to give themselves. It's easier to give money when we can spare it. Offhand I know of two families in my acquaintance who could take foster children. One has only one daughter who's grown now and married, who left a great vacant place crying to be filled by a foster child. Which brings to mind another point, I don't feel that placing children with foster parents up to the age of sixty, foster parents should not be older than fifty years of age. This opinion is a result of a recent visit with my children's grandparent. There is too great a space between young children and people over fifty. Most older people lack patience with youngsters, especially as a steady [Unclear term: diet, parent] Of course there may be a few exceptions. If more young people could be persuaded to take foster children, there would be no need of posting them with people over fifty. So many people who have no children don't know what they're missing and most are not willing to find out. I have wanted to write so many times to voice an opinion in your discussions and tell you how much I enjoy your broadcast, but never so urgently as I did after hearing the program today. Sincerely, Katherine Davisson, Mrs. George E. Davisson

P.S. The children mentioned were in another state, neither New Jersey nor New York. Regarding the discussion you had long ago about a training period for all girls, similar to a training period for boys in the Army, I hope it never becomes an actuality. If we are really a free country, it should never be. Men have always been the protectors and if it's necessary for all men to have army training, it's necessary and that's that, but to have our daughters regimented seems distinctly anti-free to me and very much like the system Russia has and we know they are not a free country. Many girls volunteered during the last war and if that's what they want to do and feel an urge to serve their country in that way, then they should be allowed to do so but I doubt that many people feel that every girl should go through the training period of any--of any kind that is compulsory. We really can't call our country free if girls' training is compulsory." That's a very fine letter, but just the last part of it makes me a little sad, because she seems to have turned against giving girls a chance to have some kind of community training because she thinks it fits into the Russian system. Now, we mustn't be blind to the fact that, um, none of us are free. We are free to the extent that we, in this country, do what we do because we decide it's good to do and we do it of our own free will. In Russia, it's true they are not free because the individuals do not make the decisions made for them by a very small group of people. But here, if we found that our girls were happier and better able to face the world by being given a period of civilian training of any kind, um, they would do it of their own free will, just as they went in of their own free will just as they did in the last war and therefore I think we need to have a little more discussion on this point to clarify what we really mean by a free country because no one loves a free country more than I do. But, I think we have to really understand what we mean by it.

(Break 45:48 - 46:10)

Transcribed from holdings at Franklin D. Roosevelt Library (FDRL)

File(s): 72-30 (198)

Transcription: Gabriel Plunkett

First edit: Meg Brudos

Final edit: Seth LaShier