

IT'S A WOMAN'S WORLD

March 22, 1935

Description: Eleanor Roosevelt answers questions.

Participants: Eleanor Roosevelt, Martha Strayer, Ruby Black, Genevieve Forbes Herrick, Marie Gasch, and Alice Hughes.

MRS. ROOSEVELT:

Good, morning, girls, I am a little late so I will not shake hands all around.¹ I shall begin as usual with the engagements for the week. Tommy, have you brought³ my book? This has been a very quiet week and will be, because of the critical illness of Colonel Howe. I have cancelled all my engagements, so have very little to tell you. Everyone has been perfectly splendid in their understanding of the reason for changing my plans. I hated [unclear] speedy⁶ was fortunate in being able to get Mrs. Caroline O'Day to read my radio speech for the National Symphony Orchestra ~~on Thursday~~ yesterday⁸ afternoon. but¹⁰ The Women's National Democratic Educational Council have postponed their tea until fall when I shall surely hope to attend. Incidentally¹² The only thing not cancelled was Sistie's party and that's going to be postponed. That is all about engagements, ~~now let's have~~ all ready for¹⁴ questions.

MRS. HERRICK: Will Sistie's party ~~be just like any other child's party?~~ when she does have it?¹⁷

MRS. ROOSEVELT: Yes, Mrs. Herrick, -- they will have a Walt Disney movie, play games, and have a simple supper.

MISS MARTHA STRAYER: Mrs. Roosevelt, you told us last week that you have refused to be ghost writer for high school boys and girls who want you to write their prize essays. I have been asked if you have a ghost writer who writes your articles and speeches.

MRS. ROOSEVELT: No, Miss Strayer, I do not. I dictate, or sometimes write in long hand, every word of every article or speech which I make.

MISS RUBY BLACK: I have a query from our bureau in Denver, Colorado, asking if you are going to the Convention of the National Education Association which is meeting in July?

MRS. ROOSEVELT: Well, Miss Black, I do want to go and shall certainly do so if it is possible, but my summer plans are all dependent upon on what the President does.

MRS. MARIE GASCH: Speaking of education, what do you think is the future of adult education? What about vocational training?

MRS. ROOSEVELT: I consider adult education, Mrs. Gasch, one of the most important and necessary things in this country because it is the only way we can educate the present generation to realize what are the needs of children. I feel that the beginning which has been made under the F.E.R.A. should be extended during the coming months. As far as vocational education goes, that is really almost unimportant in comparison with general adult education. If we get general education, in all probability vocational education will be easily acquired.

MISS ALICE HUGHES: The annual question, Mrs. Roosevelt.... What are you going to buy in the way of Easter clothes? Can you tell us about them?

MRS. ROOSEVELT: I have ordered a blue suit, Miss Hughes, but (laughing) it is so long since I ordered it, I have forgotten what it really is like. It has a skirt and jacket and a blue silk blouse.

MISS STRAYER: Is it Eleanor blue? What kind of a hat will you wear with it?

MRS. ROOSEVELT: No, it isn't Eleanor blue -- just light blue. I ordered a hat which will stay on -- that was my principal specification. The other day when I drove my husband in my car with the top down, I spent the entire time, it seemed to me, trying to keep my hat on with one hand which made driving a bit difficult.

MRS. HERRICK: What is the rule for the cessation of official entertainments during Lent?

MRS. ROOSEVELT: We have formal teas, afternoon musicals, and small dinners and receptions but all the large¹⁸ formal entertainments are over before the beginning of Lent.

MISS BLACK: Are the afternoon musicals a new innovation?

MRS. ROOSEVELT: No, they have been given before and the reason I am having them is that there are so many artists who are kind enough to offer to play at the White House and so many people who enjoy hearing them, that we have decided to increase these opportunities this year.

MRS. GASCH: Have you had any important guests since we last saw you?

MRS. ROOSEVELT: Dame Rachel Crowdy had tea with the President and myself. She has just returned from Manchuria and told us some of her experiences there.

MISS ALICE HUGHES: How do you spell her name?

MRS. ROOSEVELT: C - R - O - W - D - Y.

MISS STRAYER: What attitude do you think the women in this country should take on the situation in Europe?

MRS. ROOSEVELT: To answer that concretely would be out of my province because it is a diplomatic question. I can say this, that in order to accomplish anything, women have got to be universally agreed on the thing they want and the main objective has got to be paramount - the personal and lesser considerations have got to be submerged in attaining one end.

MRS. HERRICK: The Senate has passed the Work Relief Bill. There was much discussion of the kind of work relief which could be found for women to take them off the dole. Do you care to comment?

MRS. ROOSEVELT: Of course, I can not comment specifically on that legislation because it is still pending.

MISS BLACK: But can't you say something about what has been done for women?

MRS. ROOSEVELT: Yes, there have been developed in the past year or more a great variety of work projects for women which will probably serve as valuable experience for any future program.

MRS. GASCH: Could you name some of these projects?

MRS. ROOSEVELT: I believe there are thirty or more, some of them are -- sewing rooms; canning and preserving; clerical work in state departments and institutions; schools and libraries; organization and supervision of recreation and playgrounds; serving school lunches; day nurseries, census taking, etc.

MISS ALICE HUGHES: There seems to be a great division of opinion as to the best methods of obtaining some of the things which are included in the social securities bill. Can you comment on that?

MRS. ROOSEVELT: Only generally. I have always been amused to note that those who want a great deal more done, and those who want a great deal less done, find themselves, unconsciously to be sure, working together and ~~preventing~~ delaying²² the accomplishment of a moderate middle-of-the-road program.

MRS. GASCH and MISS BLACK (in unison) : Is the Long-Johnson-Coughlin affair --

MRS. ROOSEVELT: (laughing) One at a time, girls.

MRS. GASCH: Is the Long-Johnson-Coughlin affair as much of a subject of conversation at the White House as it is elsewhere?

MRS. ROOSEVELT: I can't answer that, except "off the record"

(LAUGHTER FROM EVERYBODY)

MRS. HERRICK: I notice by the papers from Boston, Massachusetts, that the little girl who had the serious operation, had received a nice letter and some flowers from you.

MRS. ROOSEVELT: I was very much interested, especially in her brave attitude. I had a nice letter from her mother saying she was pleased with the flowers and that everything was going well.

MISS ALICE HUGHES: Your statement that you are going to lead a quiet life has caused a great deal of comment.

MRS. ROOSEVELT: I do not know exactly why that statement should cause so much speculation. Evidently some people have a feeling that I am going into retirement. I simply meant I was not starting off on any long trips to distant places which would require all of the press girls to follow me ~~with tongues hanging out~~ panting for breath²⁴ during the summer months.

MISS BLACK: Will we have press conference as usual next Monday?

MRS. ROOSEVELT: That will depend on conditions, but I will surely let you know ahead of time.

MISS STRAYER:
Goodbye³⁰

Transcribed by Eleanor Roosevelt Papers Project staff

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Transcribed from a script held in the Eleanor Roosevelt Papers at the Franklin D. Roosevelt Library.

¹ This is a hand written interlineation.

³ This is a hand written interlineation.

⁶ The words “hated” through “speedy” are a handwritten interlineation.

⁸ This is a hand written interlineation.

¹⁰ This is a hand written interlineation.

¹² This is a hand written interlineation.

¹⁴ The words “all ready for” are a hand written interlineation.

¹⁷ The words “when” through “it” are a hand written interlineation.

¹⁸ This is a handwritten interlineation.

²² This is a handwritten interlineation.

²⁴ This is a handwritten interlineation.

³⁰ This is a handwritten interlineation.

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