

6:45

ELEANOR AND ANNA ROOSEVELT PROGRAM

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MRS. ROOSEVELT: I have just come back from visiting something so heartening and impressive that I am particularly anxious to tell our American radio listeners about it.

Yesterday, with MONSIEUR VINCENT BROUSTRA and a group from the United Nations, I drove down to the city of Amiens, a French city of about 100-thousand ^(people) ~~population~~, which was terribly damaged during the war. Amiens has done a magnificent job of reconstruction, and held open house yesterday for the people of the UN to show them how much the citizens have done in rebuilding their city.

The drive down was quite cold--there was a heavy frost covering the countryside--but what we saw when we arrived was so encouraging that it certainly made up for any discomfort we felt on the drive down.

Amiens has a tragic history, as it lies directly in the path of invasion from the East and has been destroyed periodically ^{(since} ~~dating back to~~ Roman times.

MRS. ROOSEVELT: Undaunted by the ruin around them, they began to rebuild, led by a group of determined citizens and a remarkable man named PIERRE CAZAUX. Monsieur CAZAUX is the delegate from Amiens to the French Ministry of Reconstruction, and he worked unceasingly to start the work of rebuilding the city. The City Council, the architects, and, above all, the people fell to work with a will. But they were not content merely to rebuild Amiens as it was. The town planner, PIERRE DUFAU, drew up plans for a new city...more spacious, modern and beautiful. Thousands of people, thrown out of work when their places of employed were destroyed, went to work cleaning up the rubble. Special factories took the rubble and turned it into 20-thousand new bricks a day. A center was built to hold 300 workmen and turn out 15-hundred meals a day. Another center was built to train hundreds of apprentices to speed the work of rebuilding. The result was that Amiens was almost like a new city when our group from the UN visited it.

MRS. ROOSEVELT: We drove through the city for almost an hour while MONSIEUR PETIT, the Minister for Reconstruction, showed us how the work was progressing. Where old streets had been wrecked, wider streets were built. Where blocks of old homes had been burned, new and modern apartment houses had gone up. All of the homes that were not totally destroyed have now been repaired. There are still stretches of wreckage, which show how complete the destruction was, but they are being turned into streets, parks and buildings. MONSIEUR PETIT explained to me that some of the homes and apartments were given outright to those who had lost their dwellings, while those able to pay do so. The public buildings and apartments are all of the latest design and construction and comparable to anything we have in America. We were shown through one of the apartments and it was thoroughly modern, down to fluorescent lighting and tile bathroom.

After touring the city we were greeted at the City Hall by Mayor Maurice VAST, while the band played "Marching Through Georgia", which made me rather relieved that none of our American group was southerners, as international relations might have been somewhat strained!

MRS. ROOSEVELT: There was also a delightful luncheon, at which I learned something which rather horrified me. I recently commented humorously in my column on how long the French take to dine, meaning it chiefly as a compliment to their cooking and their genius for enjoying life. So imagine my horror to learn from MONSIEUR BAUER of the Reconstruction Ministry that orders had gone out from the French Foreign Office that henceforth when I was dining at any function they were to have less courses and to serve the meal more rapidly! I can hardly believe this edict was in effect at Amiens, however, since there was no feeling of haste in the luncheon which was both delicious and graciously served.

I think all of us from the UN left Amiens not only with a feeling of gratitude for the city's hospitality but with amazement and respect for the tremendous job of reconstruction it has done. Let us hope that this is the last time this great-hearted city of Amiens must be rebuilt from ruins.

And now back to my daughter Anna in Hollywood.