Mrs. Roosevelt Says Racial Friction Was Basis of Coast Zoot-Suit Rioting

By Evelyn Seeley
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WASHINGTON, June 17.—While Secretary of State Hull yesterday reported to the press Mexico's official concern over treatment of Mexicans in the zoot-suit trouble in Los Angeles, Mrs. Roosevelt was expressing her concern in the White House next door.

"For a long time I have been worried about our attitude toward the Mexicans," the President's wife said. "It's part of our racial difficulty. We are so loath to face the fact that things don't just happen but have basic roots."

She said she realized the zoot-suit riots did not come about solely from race prejudice, but stemmed from a mixture of problems. But she is convinced the race question was the major cause.

"We have in this country a very serious race problem and we've got to solve it," she said. "We'll have it in the world after the war."

Mrs. Roosevelt said that, speaking as a citizen, she will be very sorry to see the National Youth Administration (NYA) liquidated.

"It is a waste not to use NYA plants and personnel for training defense workers," she said. "If this training is given in the factory it slows up production. I think it would be very valuable to admit to training workers of any age."

Asked her opinion as to the workers' right to strike, Mrs. Roosevelt said:

"I thought Mr. Lincoln commented on that rather forcibly. We'll leave it to Mr. Lincoln."

(Mr. Lincoln said, in case you don't recall: "I thank God we have a system of labor where there can be a strike.")

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