

PSF Subject File: Worlds Fair

Retired



DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE  
WASHINGTON  
UNITED STATES  
NEW YORK WORLD'S FAIR COMMISSION

June 28, 1939

PSF:  
World's Fair  
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THE WHITE HOUSE  
JUN 28 11 19 AM '39  
RECEIVED

The President,

The White House.

Dear Mr. President:

I am returning herewith the correspondence from Mrs. Rhodes concerning the treatment of foreign exhibitors at the New York World's Fair.

So far as I can discover, the United States Commission has no jurisdiction over the relations between the Fair Corporation and the foreign exhibitors, but we can at least help you obtain the facts. Ed Flynn thinks he may be able to get some quiet investigation under way before he leaves for Europe on Saturday.

I shall report our findings to you as soon as possible.

Sincerely,

*HAWALLAC*

Secretary.

Enclosures

THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

June 23, 1939.

MEMORANDUM FOR THE SECRETARY OF AGRICULTURE:

I am very much worried about the treatment of the foreign exhibitors at the World's Fair in New York. I think you are the Chairman of the U. S. Commission. Perhaps you could start some quiet investigation into the feeling of the foreign exhibitors and the causes.

This letter from Mrs. Rhodes is merely one of many samples. It is not for use so please send it back to me.

F.D.R.

# BUREAU OF FASHION TRENDS

*June Hamilton Rhodes*  
MANAGING DIRECTOR

June 21st, 1959

Dear Missy:

I am not "aiming to be a first class nuisance", but honestly, this Grover Whalen business with foreign exhibitors is a scandal.

I know the President knows how badly it has been handled, but when the Fair wants a few million dollars from the State and Federal Governments, the President can have all the signed affidavits he wants from every foreign exhibitor in the fair. The greatest obstacle toward the fair's success is Grover Whalen. I live with this and I know.

I promise not to write any more letters of complaint or advice.

Love and best wishes for a happy summer.

Devotedly,



jhr:me

Miss Marguerite LeHand  
Secretary to the President  
The White House  
Washington, D. C.

# BUREAU OF FASHION TRENDS

*June Hamilton Rhodes*

MANAGING DIRECTOR

June 21st, 1959

Dear Mr. President:

Last Sunday at your historic picnic for the King and Queen, Mrs. Thompson came up to Malvina and raised considerable rumpus because you had not walked out into the middle of the Atlantic Ocean and rescued those nine hundred refugees who were on their way with no place to go. Of course, even I know you couldn't do that, but probably when you know what is on my mind, you will think I am as bad as Mrs. Thompson.

Possibly you do not know that we persuaded the DeBeers Consolidated Mines, Ltd. and Associated Companies and The Diamond Corporation, Ltd., to take half of the House of Jewels at the New York World's Fair and since this is my promotion at the World's Fair from its inception, I have been directly associated with Mr. H. T. Dickinson, Technical Director and Chairman of the Board, and Mr. F. S. C. Rogers, Accredited Agent, of the DeBeers Consolidated Mines, Ltd.

They feel exactly about the fair as do all of these other gentlemen for whom Dr. Neil Van Aken, president of the Foreign Government Commissioners Club, spoke last week. Everything that has happened at the fair with relation to foreign exhibits has been unpleasant, ungracious, and in the case of the Diamond Syndicate, downright rude and uncooperative. Their feeling against the whole thing is pretty keen and they are amazed at the American methods of fulfilling contracts. We have had direct reports also from the Australian exhibitors with whom we are affiliated through our Wool account.

In column four on the front page of the New York Times of Thursday June 15th, we saw, "\$10,000,000 'Excess' laid to Fair Labor". This is the last of a long series of justifiable complaints.

There are some people who have rated Mr. Grover Whalen as a great genius. Certainly he has a great genius for doing the wrong thing at the wrong time and unless he is removed from our fair, it will continue to lose Hundreds of Thousands of dollars a day. Foreign exhibitors will not participate the following year, and every day, ill will and distrust are built up in the minds of the very people with whom we are trying to establish only the friendliest of relations in the interest of international peace.

I know that you have read, and probably have reports which will coincide with the statements I am making, but I can give you signed statements from every one of these exhibitors which will corroborate everything I have stated.

Furthermore, there are artists who have come over here, have been treated with neglect, if not contempt. The net result of the reaction of every foreigner in this fair is that he has come to America which is a rude, discourteous country and has been "gypped" from start to finish.

You have done so many things that seemed impossible that I believe you could do something to in some way compensate these exhibitors from great foreign organizations and friendly countries for the apparent dishonest treatment they have had from this Fair Corporation. Naturally an organization like DeBeers feels that it rates some courtesy. Whenever Mr. Rogers has requested any assistance of any kind, not only for this exhibit but for the DeBeers large industrial exhibit, they have been told that the World's Fair is a very big organization and that it is difficult to get anything done. This is rather amusing when you think you could drop the World's Fair down any one of the Kimberley shafts and that in ten minutes you would probably be unable to locate it.

The insular and provincial point of view of the officials in general is unbelievable. I presume I can't say insular because the fair isn't really on Manhattan, is it?

I feel ashamed to write you when you are so terribly busy and I hope you will forgive me but this thing has become so malodorous and the feeling on the part of the foreign exhibitors is so keen that I fear our State Department may eventually have to cope with some of the difficulties arising out of this very New York World's Fair.

Very sincerely yours,

jhr;me

President Franklin D. Roosevelt  
The White House  
Washington, D. C.

