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Friday, February 19th

Mrs. Brown and Mrs. Smith returned with samples, and we really got underway with Project West Hall. One small mark on the White House -- a place for the Johnsons to be at home -- our little living room. The slipcovers are really falling apart, and the rugs so full of holes that we've put down a small Oriental throw rug to keep from tripping.

They are luscious colors, and I think I can make a selection. She has left them for me to live with by sunshine and grey skies and night lights, and to get the reactions of Lynda and Luci and Lyndon.

And then, the main event of the day was a Seminar tea for Operation Head Start. Over two hundred women came at four o'clock to sit in the East Room and listen to Sargent Schriver and his panel, consisting of Dr. Robert Cook, the chief pediatrician of Johns Hopkins, who himself came from a background of most dire poverty, Dr. Julius Richmond, who will head Operation Head Start, Sister Jacqueline, possibly the most outstanding member, who talked like a machine gun, so rapidly, with enthusiasm and from experience, and softening no shots, and Dr. Mamie Phipps Clark, a Negro woman who has Settlement experience in East Harlem. I welcomed the women with a plea for

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volunteers -- some 20,000 of them -- to reach out to one million young children lost in the grey world of poverty and neglect, and lead them into the human family. It was a very interesting assemblage. Several Governors' wives from far away -- Mrs. Tim Babcock of Montana, Mrs. Roger Branigan of Indiana, Mrs. Frank Clement of Tennessee, Mrs. Orval Faubus of Arkansas -- and I am delighted that she felt like coming, although I wonder what she thought when she looked around and saw that their erstwhile opponent's wife, Mrs. Winthrop Rockefeller, was also present. Mrs. William Scranton, looking very patrician and capable on the front row, Mrs. Hewlett Smith of West Virginia. And then Mrs. John King of New Hampshire. Mainly it was that network of women leaders who cover every segment of our society -- the Catholics, the Jews, the Negroes, women college presidents, Mrs. Hayesbrook, President of the General Federation of Women's Clubs, Elizabeth Baine, the President of American Women in Radio and Television, an executive from the Junior League, Child Welfare League, Business and Professional Women, from an organization of nurses, women in medicine, the American Association of University Women, girls' clubs, Girl Scouts -- the whole roster of opinion-makers and power-wielders in government organizations. The network I have really come to expect at any organization of this kind,

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with especial emphasis on social workers and the medical world.

I was very flattered to see that Doris Fleenon and Mary McGrory were there, and somewhat surprised to see that there were several actresses -- Gina Lollobrigida, Betty Furness, Donna Reed, Mrs. Clark Gable. I later found that this is for a very useful purpose. All of them had made tapes telling what Operation Headstart is. These we played as public service features on radio and TV. Their names, their faces, will attract attention, will get listenership, will bring the fact that Operation Headstart exists to the notice of many more people than a nameless person would, and will associate it with a certain glamor, which will have some appeal in enlisting volunteers. They in turn are not insensitive to the value of being at the White House for tea. So each of us uses our tools, and I felt very grateful to them for doing it.

Dr. ~~Urey~~ Brunfenbrenner, who had provided me with two of the most exciting hours I spent last summer looking at films of education for the Russian young, was present too. Diana McArthur, now working for Girl Scouts, I believe, came, getting stopped at the gate and holding up the line a long time to my chagrin.

A long echo out of my past, Dr. Belinda Straight, now a psychiatrist, whom I used to know as a very young bride at Virginia Durr's

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home, twenty-five years ago.

The meeting opened up for questions, and there were some hot ones, the kickoff being "If you don't do something about birth control and the sterilization of defectives, anything that Operation Headstart does is just a drop in the ocean." Well, that served to let everybody's hair down, and it was a brisk, lively, productive forty-five minutes of questions and answers, after the Panel had all expressed themselves. Sargent Schriver as Moderator, tactful, careful -- but outspoken. It was two hours well invested, I believe, and at least I gave a launching pad, so to speak, to Operation Headstart, which is really my contribution, for I am no authority in any of this -- not a caseworker or a psychiatrist or an economist, not, alas, a good salesman -- but an interested citizen in a special position to give a push.

I slipped into the dining room for a moment to have my picture made with Gina Lollobrigida while she presented me for the President a remarkable edition of Dante's Inferno, some four or five huge volumes, most beautifully illustrated.

Tonight we went out to dinner, scandalously late. We went to the Marshal McNeills, and there were only six people -- the Walker Stones, the McNeills, and the Johnsons. Marshal makes a ritual of

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pouring the wine and carving the roast -- and not a bad idea -- it made a very special meal. And the terrapin to begin with was delicious and rare. But the talk was the best thing, with Lyndon at his best and the rest of us a very willing audience.