

TEXT OF LADY EDEN'S SPEECH AT THE OPENING OF THE BIF, EARLS COURT,  
February 22 to March 2, 1956

I am greatly honoured that you should have asked me to come here to-day to open the first of the two 1956 British Industries Fairs.

I suppose this Earls Court Fair can be described as the lighter, more glamorous sister. I have no doubt it is the one that will interest me most.

The British Industries Fair is the most important showcase for British goods. Not only for those of us at home - because we can, of course, buy most of these goods in our shops - but above all for the overseas buyers. Here they can see displayed the quality and workmanship for which we are famous, and on which we rely for our vital trade.

I believe that more than 10,000 overseas buyers come to this fair every year. Whether they come from ~~Manchester~~, Munich or Melbourne, they are all welcome. I hope that they will buy a lot. To those who display and those who buy the British Industries Fair means above all new business and an expanding market.

No trade can have benefited more from these contacts than the toymakers. Some of them have been exhibiting at the Fair since 1915. Since then, the manufacture of toys has grown from a small trade, almost submerged by foreign competition, into a thriving industry able to compete in the markets of the world.

I am told that this is the largest display of British toys ever held. I am sure it is also the most diverse and the most ingenious. I am looking forward to seeing the toys and also the numerous other attractive exhibits - jewellery, pottery, stationery and many more.

When we admire all this merchandise, we sometimes forget the very hard work that has gone into producing it. The workers themselves, whose skill is so evident here to-day - the management who devote long hours behind the scenes to solving difficult problems. Let us be grateful to them. Without their efforts British industry would be poor indeed.

Finally, I know you will join me in congratulating the organisers on the excellent arrangements they have made for this Fair. We wish them more and more success in 1956. I have great pleasure in declaring the first part of the 1956 British Industries Fair open.