MY DAY

Objectors Are Not Same Type Citizens as the Fighting Men

By ELEANOR ROOSEVELT

HYDE PARK, Tuesday — Conscientious objectors feel that Great Britain has become "more enlightened" than the United States, since many of them over there have been able to pursue their own vocations, or do the work which they themselves have chosen to do for the nation during the war period.

British conscientious objectors feel that they have been more useful and that they are treated with greater intelligence by their government and this opinion is shared by conscientious objectors here.

I can not help feeling very sorry for honest conscientious objectors, for I am quite sure many a young man must find it bitter to let other young men of his own age die and fight and give up time in occupations they care little about.

It is only because of these young men, however, who are willing to fight that anyone can indulge himself in a personal viewpoint. Some day, perhaps, the world will be the kind of civilized place in which we can all live in safety according to our own lights. But it isn't that kind of a place today, and so you and I are defended in our peaceful lives at home by those who will do what their government asks of them, no matter what that task may be.

• • •

IT IS true that conscientious objectors have earned and saved much money for the Government. It is true that they have made the lives of patients in state hospitals more bearable than they have ever been before. It is true that those who are willing to work in factories or military medical establishments and some of them actually in danger zones or in the field of battle, have done heroic deeds and are fine people. But they are doing what they want to do. They are not the same kind of citizens as are the men in the armed services. For this reason, Congress has not appropriated money to pay them or to help their dependents on the same basis as the men drafted into the armed services.

It is hard on the families, but that is the price of doing what one believes in. Some men go to prison and will not do anything during the period of war and that again is the price of doing what you believe in. When the day arrives when war is no more, these men may feel that they have hastened it. In the meantime, however, as the world is constituted today they might not be alive or they might be slaves to other more warlike people if some of their brothers were not willing to defend them against other warlike peoples.

INDEXED
87 JUN 27 1944

WASHINGTON DAILY NEWS JUNE 21, 1944