

Mr. NOSEWORTHY: There were one or two classes of people to whom I wished to refer, not at all by way of criticism of the government's policy, but because I question the wisdom of the course we are following at a time when man-power is badly needed. Reference has already been made to the refugee internees of whom the minister spoke. My information is that there are still a considerable number of these people whose history has been checked and with regard to whom there is no reason to believe that they should not be freed from internment and put to useful work. There are also, I am told, some who were released for a period of time and given jobs and who were taken back to these internment camps when the specified period of employment stopped. I have been told by people who have been in close touch with this question that a number of these people are being kept in these internment camps for the simple reason that the camp must be kept in operation. You cannot have a camp in operation and officers employed unless you have internees there. I have heard that from public-spirited citizens who have made a close study of the refugee problem. I think the minister might check that.

Then, concerning the conscientious objectors, I have had considerable correspondence with the Department of Labour, but very little satisfaction. I know personally two young men taken from Toronto university on the ground that they were conscientious objectors who would not go into the killing branch of the army, though they are quite willing to serve in any other capacity. One of these was a second year medical student and the other a third year medical student. They have asked to be permitted to do work in hospitals, orderly work or something of that kind, where their services can be used. I have correspondence from another, a graduate scientist, who is anxious to give his services in research work or in any other way in which he can be used, except to do actual fighting in the army.

There is another class, a religious group, who not only refuse active service but refuse alternate service, and they are sent to gaol. I have met a number of them, both before they were sentenced and afterwards. My story from their relatives is that they are put in solitary confinement for a given period, then brought out and asked if they are willing to join the army, and if they are not willing they are put back in solitary confinement. Some of them would be willing to serve in

essential industry or on farms if the government saw fit to release them for that purpose. The one freedom they want is to be permitted to preach the religion of their choice as they see it and believe it. Those I have known personally are harmless. One of them, for instance, was a railroad mechanic doing an excellent job on the railway. We take him and put him in solitary confinement, because, by reason of his religious scruples, he will not go into the army or into one of the alternate services. It seems to me that by using some intelligence we could utilize this man-power to better advantage without affecting the war effort in any way. There are these three classes, the class of refugee internees and the conscientious objectors. I am collecting more information on these three types of individuals. I am confident that these boys should be given service of some kind instead of cleaning up brush in an alternate service camp as at the present time. There are the conscientious objectors who have been sent to gaol. I wonder whether something can be done in this regard.

Mr. MacINNIS: I support the hon. member for Calgary West (Mr. Edwards) and the hon. member for York South (Mr. Noseworthy) in what has been said about conscientious objectors. I think the attitude that is adopted toward these conscientious objectors is not a correct one. We first made provision for conscientious objectors, and then we treat them as if they had violated the law. We treat them in some respects as criminals. Most conscientious objectors I have known are a very high type of citizen. We may not agree with their point of view or the attitude they take in the national emergency; nevertheless they are men of the highest character. I was impressed with this fact a few days ago when I got a letter from a conscientious objector who worked in a forestry camp in British Columbia. He told me that the treatment he received in the camp was everything that could be desired, that neither he nor any of the others had objections or could find fault with it. But this is what he said: "We feel that at this time when man-power is so badly needed we are really not doing very useful work here. Taking a long point of view, this forestry work may be very desirable, but it is not work that should be done now when there is essential work that we should be doing, which the country needs far more than this." He suggested that they should be transferred to agricultural work. In my opinion, the hon. member for Calgary West put the case