



# "Boy Scouts, You've Made the Team."



BY THEODORE ROOSEVELT

*Report of an address by Col. Theodore Roosevelt to the Encampment of Boy Scouts at Mineola, L. I., under the auspices of the Nassau County Council, of which Col. Roosevelt is Honorary Scout Commissioner, Sunday afternoon, September 2nd, 1917. It was Mr. Roosevelt's expressed intention that in speaking to this audience he should be understood as addressing all Boy Scouts throughout the United States, and all the friends of the organization. Every Scout will be thrilled by these ringing words from the most virile American alive.*

**F**ELLOW BOY SCOUTS: (Very hearty applause.) Of course, I have a right to say "Fellow Boy Scouts," for I see here as one of your Scout Masters the Dominie under whom I sit every Sunday. I am not only proud of Nassau County for what you boys have done in organizing this body here in this country as you have, but I congratulate with all my heart the American people on the Boy Scout movement; and I want you boys to feel this. Boys of your age ordinarily cannot feel as yet that they have done much for the country as citizens, but you boys—the Boy Scouts—are different. Because of the leadership given by your organization you are already doing your part. You are on the team now—Uncle Sam's Team. You are doing your bit. (Loud applause.) And I tell you, it is worth while. I do not know a man or a boy worth his salt who has not got the desire to be a part of the team that counts, and to do his share in making it count. That is what every red-blooded American has got to feel, or he isn't worth being called an American. It is what you boys are doing.

We have got 258,000 Boy Scouts, and about 75,000 people like Scoutmaster Talmadge, President Earle and myself (Scout Commissioner) who are in the movement as leaders, and I won't be content until instead of 258,000 we have 2,580,000. (Great applause.)

And now, boys, nothing could have pleased me more than what President Earle said in introducing me, when he spoke of a sentence I had used, and said it ought to be the motto on which the Boy Scouts act. It ought to be the motto on which all of us here act, and also on which every grown-up American acts: "NEVER BE NEUTRAL BETWEEN RIGHT AND WRONG." One of the lessons that it is most important to teach the average American—the men you boys are to be—is to teach him that when he is neutral between right and wrong, he is helping the wrong. If when you are grown up you see cruelty, iniquity and evil triumph over decency and justice, and you go by on the other side, like the Levite, you will earn just the cordial memory the Levite earned for himself under those circumstances. If you are not with the right, then you are



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against the right. And you boys have got to cultivate not only the habit of being decent yourselves, but of helping to make other people decent. Therefore, you have got to be good, decent and efficient. I have got mighty little use for the type of good man or good boy of whom all you can say is that he is harmless. (Laughter and applause.)

Boy Scouts, I want you to count in the game of life. I want you to count now when you are boys, and I want you to count when you have grown up and become men. I have just come over from the troops, the Sixty-ninth Regiment. They are going abroad to do their duty. You are being trained in this organization so that if you are ever needed in the future you can do your duty, and now you can do your duty in civic life rather than in war.

I believe in this movement with all my heart, and also in that constantly-growing belief in this country that all of our young men between the ages of 18 and 22 shall have to have obligatory universal military training to supplement what you boys are doing now.

The democracy of our Government must be based fundamentally on the kind of spirit you show—the service you give. No man is entitled to a privilege if he does not perform a duty. You can't, any of you, enjoy the privileges of a Boy Scout if you stay out and don't do any of the work.

Sooner or later I hope to see in this country manhood suffrage and womanhood suffrage based on manhood and womanhood service. (Applause.) No one who does not give service is entitled to suffrage. Any one who does not give service in times of peace does not stand ready to give it in war. I would not interfere with those who are too conscientious to go to war,

but when I hear a man say he is too conscientious to fight for his country, I would like to have him take his conscience out and examine it and see if it is healthy. If he is too conscientious to fight, then I am too conscientious to let him vote and help to rule a country for which I have to fight.

There were some elderly sissies of both sexes who objected to the Boy Scout movement when the organization was being started, for fear it would make us too military. These same types of people are now opposing universal military training for fear it will make us into a nation of militarists. It is no more true of one than of the other. Military training will tend to produce a better type of men in civic life, just as it will fit men to fight for their country. Your organization though not military has already borne fruit in this respect. The percentage of Scout officials and graduate Scouts who have already gone into the army is markedly above the general percentage, and for this we are debtors to this organization.

I want to make this appeal, and I want to make it as strongly as I can. Every man of fighting age who is fit to go and allowed to go ought to go to war. Every man of fighting age who is all right ought to go to the front, and it will be a mighty sight pleasanter to explain to his children later on why he went than why he did not. There are men who can't go and who ought not to go. Their duty will be to take the places of the men who do go. Now, any man who is too old, or for any other good reason cannot go to the front, can do his part by volunteering to serve as a Scoutmaster and take the place of some man who has got to go. (Great applause.) On the whole, the Scoutmasters and similar officers represent a very high type—an unusually high type—of lead-

ership in the community. We have a right to expect the very best men in the community to come forward to do that work, and I wish to emphasize with all my power that it is an unpatriotic thing to let the Boy Scout movement be hampered in any way by the fact that the Scoutmasters and leaders of the boys have shown their patriotism by going into the army, and I urge you who stay at home, show that you know what patriotism is by coming in and taking their places.

If a man says that he regrets he cannot go to war, but that he would like to serve his country, ask him what he is doing otherwise. You can serve your country in some way at home. You can be a Scoutmaster, thereby taking the place of someone else who goes to war. (Applause.)

Nobody is doing what he ought to do in this country now unless he is helping in some way to win this war: By fighting, by supporting those who have gone to fight, by taking their places, by doing the

work they have left behind to do. Sometimes it is one member of a firm who does the whole work of the firm because his partners have gone to war. Sometimes it is the older man, or the infirm, who does the work of the strong man who has gone to the front; or he is doing his work in other lines.

And now I appeal to all good Americans who wish to help the America of the future to help it in some tangible way by taking the places of the Scoutmasters or other officials of the Boy Scouts of America who have gone to the front, and who have made all of us their debtors by going to fight the battle for American manhood and civilization.

Many of the Scoutmasters and leaders of this organization have shown their patriotism by going to war, and now let every good American show his patriotism by encouraging and supporting the Boy Scouts of America in every way within his power.

"Good luck to you."