



THE LORD is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness: but is long-suffering to usward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. 2 Pet. 3: 9.

Ridgeway Oct-4. 17
S. J. Coffman — Greeting

Dear Bro — Girvin handed me your letter last-night-asking what steps we have taken in regard to Conscription act-towards our people — We have printed forms for our members to present to the Exemption board as a certificate of membership of our church signed by the Bishop of each district ^{where they live} if any of our Single or widowers without children should be called upon for military service.

And connected with the same we have a petition from the Dunker Church to the Exemption board, setting forth our reasons for Exemption, with scripture quotations and scripture references as bearing upon the principals of and grounds of our nonresistant doctrine.

If you in the future get an appointment from the officials of the government — to meet your delegation on this question, please let me hear from you as to the nature of the arrangement &c

yours truly Asa Beare

Vineland Ont., Oct. 5, 1917.

Asa Bearss,
Ridgeway, Ont.
R. R. 1.

Dear Brother:- Greeting.

Your letter of the 4th Inst to hand, and glad for your reply to the letter which I had written Girvin.

A meeting with the Premier of Canada, Sir Robert Borden, has been arranged for Tuesday, Oct. 9, in Ottawa at 10 A.M. Mr. Weichel, M.P. of North Waterloo, will accompany our deputation. I expect to leave Vineland on Monday, 1.28 P.M., leaving Hamilton at 2.50 and arrive in Toronto at 3.58. The delegation from Waterloo will arrive at Toronto at 8.20 PM. We will expect to leave Toronto Monday evening at 11 P.M. for Ottawa, via G.T.R. Any of your Brethren who would desire to accompany us will be heartily welcomed to do so. I think that Brother Elliot intimated to Brother Burkholder that some of your brethren would likely accompany us at that time.

It is important that we should be together for some time previous to the meeting with the Premier so that we would have an understanding as to our position and the aims of our petitions.

I am sure that the assistance which we could mutually give each other will be a great help in our cause. May God direct us in wisdom and aptience to do all to His glory and the welfare of the souls of men.

Yours in His service,

S. J. Coffman

New Dundee Oct. 6. 1917

S. F. Goffman

Dear Bro. Greeting

The scene

is changed again. I had a talk with Mr. Weichel, by phone, to-day. He says it will not suit on Tuesday. Instead we will meet with the Prime Minister on Thursday (Oct. 11) at 10 a.m. Will leave Toronto at 5.40 P.m. by C. P. R. + stop at Locust Hill, as we had at first planned. I called up Lewis by Phone this evening + told him. I expect some one or more of the Amish Brethren will go too. Hope this will be final.

Yours in faith,
D. Dergay

P.S. Mr. Weichel will meet us at the Windsor Hotel Ottawa

1st copy prepared
MILITARY SERVICE

APPEAL TO THE CANADIAN GOVERNMENT, IN COUNCIL.

We, the Mennonites of the Ontario Conference, representing also congregations of like faith in the Alberta-Saskatchewan Conference, and having official representation in the Mennonite General Conference, recently assembled at the Yellow Creek Church, near Goshen Indiana, do hereby humbly petition your Government in respect to the faith which we hold dear.

We give due recognition to the grave problems which confront the nation in the present world conflict and realize that as a result complicated and trying situations have been brought about which we can not fully comprehend. We, as a people, seek to adjust ourselves to the new state of affairs, willingly submitting to the wishes of the Government in as far as we can do so without violating a law or principle of Christ Whom we recognize as Lord of lords and King of kings, and Whose law we consider the supreme guide of our lives.

As a people we stand united in expressing our gratitude to our Government and to all those who are in authority for the recognition that has been given those of our faith in the matter of conscription for military service, and further submit this petition that full recognition be given to our position in the doctrine of nonresistance which has been one of the fundamental tenets of our faith and one ~~which~~ for which our fore-fathers suffered exile and death in the old world, This same principle has been cherished and kept alive in the bosom of those of them who made the land of our present abode their home under the protection of a government which permitted them to enjoy liberty of conscience and the free exercise of their faith in full confidence that those who were in authority would verify every pledge and promise given them when they settled here.

Our people retain a deep sense of appreciation for the generous spirit of the British government in granting William Penn and the members of his colony, among whom were many of our fore-fathers, the privilege of liberty of conscience in religion and especially immunity from military service. These privileges were not ~~revoked~~ ^{revoked} by the government that followed later, and was not revoked by the Government of Canada when, out of respect for the British Crown, many of our people left the United States and made their home here. We deeply appreciate the fact that no military service of any kind was required of our people at any time during the more than one hundred years of their residence under the Canadian government, and recall with gratitude the number of instances when this government renewed its pledges of religious liberty to others of non-resistant faith who sought the hospitality of this land. Younger generations of our people have from time to time inquired of the government whether these liberties are still in force and have been informed at all times that those who have conscientious objections to engaging in military service have exemption from such service guaranteed to them by the British Government.

In times of peace we were thankful for the assurances of religious liberty and the contemplation of undisturbed privileges in following the example and teachings of the Prince of Peace. Under the stress of the hour we seek through this petition to define our position with regard to military service. We recognize the same principle which the government

1st Copy prepared

recognizes in the justice of law that he who aids and abets another in way wrong doing is also a transgressor. With this principle in mind we have always maintained that any form of military service is opposed to the practice of the doctrine of peace and good will to man, and hence our desire to follow only such activities and pursuits in civil life as are in keeping with the laws of God and Christ.

We also recognize the good will of the Government in inserting in the Military Service Act a clause granting exemption from combatant service to all adherents of religious denominations whose articles of faith forbid combatant service, and we hereby humbly petition that the exemption clause cited may be so construed as to meet the requirements of the faith and practice of those whom the Government has graciously favored in continuing to them those principles of liberty which have been the occasions of many thanksgivings to God and the constant joy of many humble citizens.

With a deep sense of humility before God and prayer that the authorities before whom this may come may be guided in their decisions and their arduous duties by the Divine will, and that we may continue to dwell in gladness and follow the pursuits of peace, we respectfully submit this petition and shall humbly pray.

As a people we recognize the supremacy of the Kingdom of Jesus Christ, whose "kingdom is not of this world." For this reason many of our ^{in all countries} people, especially the leaders of congregations, have refrained from the use of their ~~franchise~~ ^{privileges} of franchise while ~~in~~ ^{as citizens of Canada,} ~~have been prohibited its use,~~ for the sake of peace and harmony in the congregation, while none have and a more complete separation from the entangling affairs of the world, none of the which ~~none~~ are prohibited the use of their ~~franchise~~ ^{privileges}. Since the passing of the "War-Time Elections Act, we humbly seek to know ^{the} our position of the Government regarding all of our members relative to this act, whether all who have desiring ~~hitherto~~ to the fullest extent of ~~our~~ power, to comply with every regulation of the Government, recognizing that ~~desiring to~~ so that we may conduct ourselves accordingly, realizing that in matters of war we cannot consistently give our voice and in respect to Government we are to be submissive to its laws, excepting only the higher laws of the Gospel in all rightness.

In connection with the sentiments expressed in the accompanying Petition of the Mennonites of the Ontario and Alberta-Saskatchewan Conferences, We, the representatives of the Anish Mennonite Congregations of Waterloo, Oxford and Perth Counties desire to express ourselves in perfect accord and hereby join in the petition for a continuance of the recognition of our faith by the present Government.

MILITARY SERVICE ACT.

AN APPEAL TO THE GOVERNMENT OF CANADA IN COUNCIL.

We, the Mennonites of the Ontario Conference, representing also congregations of like faith in the Alberta-Saskatchewan Conference, and having official representation in the Mennonite General Conference recently assembled at ^{the} West Yellow Creek Church, near Goshen Indiana, do hereby humbly petition your Government in respect to the faith which we hold dear.

We give due recognition to the grave problems which confront the nations in the present world conflict and realize that as a result complicated and trying situations have been brought about which we can not fully comprehend. We, as a people, seek to adjust ourselves to the new state of affairs, willingly submitting to the wishes of the Government in as far as we can do so without violating a law or principle of Christ. Whom we recognize as Lord of lords and King of kings, and Whose law we consider the supreme guide of our lives.

As a people we stand united in expressing our gratitude to the Government and to all those who are in authority for the recognition that has been given to those of our faith in the matter of conscription for military service, and further submit this petition that full recognition be given at all times to our position on the doctrine of nonresistance which has been one of the fundamental tenets of our faith and one for which our fore-fathers suffered exile and death in the old world. This same principle has been cherished and kept alive in the bosom of those of them who made the land of our present abode their home, under the protection of a government which permitted them to enjoy liberty of conscience and the free exercise of their faith in full assurance that those who were in authority would verify every pledge and promise given to them when they settled here.

Our people retain a deep sense of appreciation for the generous spirit of the British Government in granting to William Penn and the members of his colony, among whom were many of our fore-fathers, the privilege of liberty of conscience in religion and especially immunity from military service. These privileges were not annulled by the government that followed later, and were not revoked by the Government of Canada when, out of respect for the British Crown, many of our people left the United States and made their home here. We deeply appreciate the fact that, with the exception of a few isolated cases of impressed service during the war of 1812, no military service of any kind has been required of our people at any time during the more than one hundred years of their residence under the Canadian Government, and recall with gratitude the number of instances when this Government renewed its pledges of religious liberty to others of nonresistant faith who sought the hospitality of this land. Younger generations of our people have from time to time inquired of the Government whether these liberties are still in force and have been informed at all times that those who have conscientious objections to engaging in military service have exemption from such service guaranteed to them by the British Government.

In times of peace we were thankful for the assurance of religious liberty and the contemplation of undisturbed privileges in following the example and teaching of the Prince of Peace. Under the stress of the hour we seek to through this petition to define our position with regard to

military service. We recognize the same principle which the Government recognizes in the justice of law, that he who aids or abets another in wrong doing is also a transgressor. With this same principle in mind we have always maintained that any form of military service is opposed to the spirit and practice of peace and good will to men, and hence our desire to follow only such activities and pursuits in civil life as are in keeping with the doctrine which we believe to be the laws of God and of Christ.

We recognize the good will of the Government in inserting in the Military Service Act a clause granting exemption to all adherents of religious denominations whose articles of faith forbid combatant service, and hereby express our thanks for this gracious consideration while we also humbly petition that the exemption clause cited may be always so construed as to meet with the requirements of the faith and practice of those whom the Government has thus graciously favored in continuing to them those principles of liberty which have been the occasion of many thanksgiving to God and the constant joy of many humble citizens.

As a people we recognize the supremacy of the "Kingdom of Jesus Christ" which "is not of this world." For this reason many of our people in all countries, especially the leaders of congregations have refrained from the use of their suffrage franchise, both for the sake of peace and harmony in the congregation and for the sake of a more complete separation from the entangling affairs of the world, although none are prohibited the exercise of these privileges. Since the passing of the "War-time Elections Act," we humbly seek to know the position of the Government regarding all our members relative to this act, so that we may conduct ourselves accordingly realizing that in matters of war we can not conscientiously give our voice, and in respect to government we are to be submissive to its laws, excepting only the higher laws of the Gospel in all righteousness.

With a deep sense of humility before God and prayer that the authorities before whom this may come may be guided in their decisions and their arduous duties by the Divine will, and that we may continue to dwell in godliness and follow the pursuits of peace, we respectfully submit this petition and shall humbly pray.

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Recommendations from the Prime Minister and Secretary of State,
Ottawa, October 11, 1917.

1. All of our members who are in the age limit liable for military service, when called, must apply for exemption according to Government regulations.
2. Physical examination before a medical Board is not required of those who apply for exemption for conscientious reasons.
3. None of our members are expected to vote under the present Elections Act. Those who do so forfeit their right of exemption.
4. The question of noncombatant will be dealt with later if circumstances should require it.

The above recommendation are made from notes of the conversation with the Government and have not been approved by the Government.

Deputation:-

L. J. Burkholder, Moderator of Conference
David Bergy, Secretary of Conference.
S. F. Coffman,
Anson Groh.

Amish Deputation,
Christian Gascho,
Jacob R. Bender,
Jacob S. Bender,
Samuel Bender.

Copy.

MILITARY SERVICE ACT.

AN APPEAL TO THE GOVERNMENT OF CANADA IN COUNCIL.

*These copies of correspondence
sent to both, Hon. Chas. Doherty
Minister of Justice
and His Hon. Chief Justice
of the Supreme Court*

We, the Mennonites of the Ontario Conference, representing also congregations of like faith in the Alberta-Saskatchewan Conference, and having official representation in the Mennonite General Conference recently assembled at the Yellow Creek Church near Goshen, Indiana, do hereby humbly petition your Government in respect to the faith which we hold dear.

We give due recognition to the grave problems which confront the nations in the present world conflict and realize that as a result complicated and trying situations have been brought about which we cannot fully comprehend. We, as a people, seek to adjust ourselves to the new state of affairs, willingly submitting to the wishes of the Government in as far as we can do so without violating a law or principle of Christ, Whom we recognize as Lord of lords and King of kings, and Whose law we consider the supreme guide of our lives.

As a people we stand united in expressing our gratitude to the Government and to all those who are in authority for the recognition that has been given to those of our faith in the matter of conscription for military service, and further submit this petition that full recognition be given at all times to our position on the Doctrine of non-resistance which has been one of the fundamental tenets of our faith and one for which our forefathers suffered exile and death in the Old World. This same principle has been cherished and kept alive in the bosom of those of them who made the land of our present abode their home, under the protection of a Government which permitted them to enjoy liberty of conscience and the free exercise of their faith in full assurance that those who were in authority would verify every pledge and promise made and pledged given to them when they settled here.

Our people retain a deep sense of appreciation for the generous spirit of the British Government in granting to William Penn and the members of his colony, among whom were many of our forefathers, the privilege of liberty of conscience in religion and especially immunity from military service. These privileges were not annulled by the Government that followed later, and were not revoked by the Government of Canada when out of respect for the British crown, many of our people left the United States and made their home here. We deeply appreciate the fact that, with the exception of a few isolated cases of impressed service during the war of 1812 no military service of any kind has been required of our people at any time during the more than one hundred years of their residence under the Canadian Government, and recall with gratitude the number of instances when this Government renewed its pledges of religious liberty to others of non-resistant faith who sought the hospitality of this land. Younger generations of our people have from time to time inquired of the Government whether these liberties are still in force and have been informed at all times that those who have conscientious objections to engaging in military service have exemption from such service guaranteed to them by the British Government.

In times of peace we were thankful for the assurance of religious liberty and the contemplation of undisturbed privileges in following the example and teaching of the Prince of Peace. Under the stress of the hour we seek through this petition to define our position with regard to

Military Service. We recognize the same principle which the Government recognized in the justice of law, that he who aids or abets another in wrong doing is also a transgressor. With this same principle in mind we have always maintained that any form of military service is opposed to the spirit and practice of peace and good will to man, and hence our desire to follow only such activities and pursuits in civil life as are in keeping with the doctrine which we believe to be the laws of God and of Christ.

We recognize the good will of the Government in inserting in the Military Service Act a clause granting exemption to all adherents of religious denominations whose articles of faith forbid combatant service, and hereby express our thanks for this gracious consideration while we also humbly petition that the exemption clause cited may be always so construed as to meet with the requirements of the faith and practice of those whom the Government has thus graciously favored in continuing to them those principles of liberty which have been the occasion of many thanksgivings to God and the constant joy of many humble citizens.

As a people we recognize the supremacy of the Kingdom of Jesus Christ which "is not of this world." For this reason many of our people in all countries, especially the leaders of congregations have refrained from the use of their suffrage franchise, both for the sake of peace and harmony in the congregation and for the sake of a more complete separation from the entangling affairs of the world, although none are prohibited the exercise of these privileges. Since the passing of the "War-time Elections Act" we humbly seek to know the position of the Government regarding all of our members relative to this Act, so that we may conduct ourselves accordingly, realizing that in matters of war we cannot conscientiously give our voice and in respect to Government we are to be submissive to its laws, excepting only the higher laws of the Gospel in all righteousness.

With a deep sense of humility before God, and prayer that the authorities before whom this may come may be guided in their decisions and their arduous duties by the Divine will, and that we may continue to dwell in godliness and follow the pursuits of peace, we respectfully submit this petition and shall humbly pray.

Signed by the deputation of the Mennonite Church,

L.J. Butkholder, Markham Ont. Moderator
David Bergy, New Dundee Ont. Secretary.
S.E. Coffman, Vineland Ont.
Anson Groh, Petrolia, Ont.

In connection with the sentiments expressed in the accompanying petition of the Mennonites of the Ontario and Alberta-Saskatchewan Conference we, the representatives of the Amish Mennonite congregations of Waterloo, Oxford and Perth Counties, desire to express ourselves in perfect accord and hereby join in the petition for a continuance of the recognition of our faith by the present Government.

Signed by the deputation of the Amish Mennonite Church,

Christian Gascho, Baden Ont.
Jacob R. Bender, Tavistock Ont.
Jacob S. Bender, Tavistock Ont.
Samuel Bender, New Hamburg Ont.

MILITARY SERVICE.APPEAL TO CIVIL AUTHORITIES.

We, the Mennonites of the United States and Canada, in General Conference assembled at the Yellow Creek Church near Goshen, Indiana, August 29, 1917, giving due recognition to the weighty problems that are confronting the nations in the present world conflict realize that this condition has brought abea with it complicated and trying problems which we can little comprehend or appreciate. We as a people seek to adjust ourselves to the new state of affairs in willing submission in so far as we can do so without violating a law or principle of Christ whom we recognize as Lord of lords and King of kings, and whose law we consider as the supreme guide of our lives.

As a people we stand united in expressing our gratitude to our \President/ and those who are in authority for the recognition that has been given those of our faith in the matter of army conscription and further submit this humble petition that full recognition be given to our position on the great question of Nonresistance which has been one of the fundamental tenets of our faith and for which our fore-fathers suffered exile and death in the old world, and which principle has been cherished and kept alive in the bosoms of those who carried their faith with them to the land of our present abode under the protection of whose government in times past they have enjoyed liberty of conscience and the free exercise of their faith in the full confidence that those who are in authority would verify every pledge and promise given them when they settled here.

Under the stress of the hour we humbly present this petition in which we seek to define clearly our position with regard to military service. As a people we recognize the same principles to which our government has justly given recognition in its construction and interpretation of law; that he who knowingly and willingly and with intent to give aid; aids shelters or otherwise lends to the comfort or efficiency of any one in the violation of the laws of the land he becomes a transgressor and is subject to punishment. With this same principle in mind we must assume the painful duty to decline military service in any form whether combatant or noncombatant, by which we become a part of the military organization which is devised for the prosecution of war and the destruction of lives and property and limit our activities to such pursuits of civil life as are in keeping with the laws of God.

With a deep sense of humility before God and prayer that the authorities before whom this may come may be guided in their decisions by Divine will that we may continue to dwell in godliness and follow the pursuits of peace, we respectfully submit this petition.

This should be worded to meet conditions in Canada.

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*Should be moved for presentation to Premier of Canada.
This goes into hands of Ex. Com of Conf and "Peace and Arbitration Committee"*

MILITARY SERVICE

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Copy.

Ottawa, Oct. 11, 1917.

The Honorable Arthur Meighen,
Secretary of State,

Honorable Sir:-

Allow me to again express our appreciation for the courtesy extended to our delegation today by yourself and the Honorable Sir Robert Borden, and for the favorable consideration of our position regarding participation in war in any form. We have the confidence that our interests are well guarded and trust that we may always prove ourselves worthy citizens in our humble capacity.

The following advice is being given to our ministers regarding the questions considered in our conference today:-

1. All of our members who are in the age limit liable for military service, when called must apply for exemption according to Government regulations.
2. Physical examination before the Medical Board is not required for those who apply for exemption for conscientious reasons.
3. None of our members are expected to vote under the present Elections Act. Those who do so forfeit their rights of exemption.
4. Non-combatant service will be dealt with later should circumstances require it.

We trust these statements are a correct expression of the opinions rendered in our conference,

List of addresses for literature,- Military Act and Elections Act.

Again thanking you for your favors extended, and praying that the guiding hand of God may be with you in your arduous duties, I am,

Yours in humble service,

S.F.C.

6. Recommendations from The Prime
Minister and Secretary of State, Ottawa
October 11, 1917

1. All of our members who are in the age class liable for military service, - 20 - 34, must apply for Exemption according to the Government regulations. - Secure Certificate of membership.
2. Physical examination before the Medical Boards is not necessary for those who apply for exemption for conscientious reasons.
3. None of our members are expected to vote. Any who do so ^{under} at the present elections, act with forfeit their rights of exemption.
4. Non-combatant service will be dealt with later if circumstances should require it.

COPY.

Ottawa, Oct. 11, 1917.

The Honourable Arthur Meighen,
Secretary of State,
Ottawa.

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List of addresses for literature.

Again thanking you for favors extended, and praying that the guiding hand of God may be with you in your arduous duties, I am,

Yours in humble service,
Signed, S.F.Coffman.

for the Committee.

Ottawa - Oct 11, 1917.

The Honorable Member
Secretary of State.

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COPY

MILITARY SERVICE ACT.

October 11, 1917

AN APPEAL TO THE GOVERNMENT OF CANADA IN COUNCIL.

We, the Mennonites of the Ontario Conference, representing also congregations of like faith in the Alberta-Saskatchewan Conference and having official representation in the Mennonite General Conference recently assembled at the Yellow Creek Church near Coshen Indiana, do hereby humbly petition your Government in respect to the faith which we hold dear.

We give due recognition to the grave problems which confront the complications in the present world conflict and realize that as a result the complicated and trying situations have been brought about which we cannot fully comprehend. We, as a people, seek to adjust ourselves to the new state of affairs, willingly submitting to the wishes of the Government in as far as we can do so without violating a law or principle of Christ, Whom we recognize as Lord of lords and King of kings, and Whose law we consider the supreme guide of our lives.

As a people we stand united in expressing our gratitude to the Government and to all those who are in authority for the recognition that has been given to those of our faith in the matter of conscription for military service, and further submit this petition that such recognition be given at all times to our position on the doctrine of nonresistance which has been one of the fundamental tenets of our faith and one for which our fore-fathers suffered exile and death in the Old World. This same principle has been cherished and kept alive in the bosom of those of them who made the land of our present abode their home, under the protection of a government which permitted them to enjoy liberty of conscience and the free exercise of their faith in full assurance that those who were in authority would verify every pledge and promise given to them when they settled here.

Our people retain a deep sense of appreciation for the generous spirit of the British Government in granting to William Penn and the members of his colony, among whom were many of our fore-fathers, the privilege of liberty of conscience in religion and especially immunity from military service. These privileges were ^{not} annulled by the Government that followed later, and were not revoked by the Government of Canada, when, out of respect for the British Crown, many of our people left the United States and made their home here. We deeply appreciate the fact that, with the exception of a few isolated cases of impressed service during the war of 1812, no military service of any kind has been required from our people at any time during the more than one hundred years of their residence under the Canadian Government, and recall with gratitude the number of instances when this Government renewed its pledges of religious liberty to others of nonresistant faith who sought the hospitality of this land. Younger generation of our people have from time to time inquired of the Government whether these liberties are still in force and have been informed at all times that those who have conscientious objections to engaging in military service have exemption from such service guaranteed to them by the British Government.

In times of peace we were thankful for the assurance of religious liberty and the contemplation of undisturbed privileges in following the example and teaching of the Prince of Peace. Under the stress of the hour we seek through this petition to define our position with regard to

military service. We recognize the same principle which the Government recognizes in the justice of law, that he who aids or abets another in wrongdoing is also a transgressor. With this same principle in mind we have always maintained that any form of military service is opposed to the spirit and practice of peace and good will to man, and hence our desire to follow only such activities and pursuits in civil life as are in keeping with the doctrine which we believe to be the laws of God and of Christ.

We recognize the good will of the Government in inserting in the Military Service Act a clause granting exemption to all adherents of religious denominations whose articles of faith forbid combatant service, and hereby express our thanks for this gracious consideration while we also humbly petition that the exemption clause cited may be always so construed as to meet the requirement of the faith and practice of those whom the Government has thus graciously favored in continuing to them those principles of liberty which have been the occasion of many thanksgivings to God and the constant joy of many humble citizens.

As a people we recognize the supremacy of Jesus Christ, the kingdom of which "Is not of this world." For this reason many of our people in all countries, especially the leaders of congregations, have refrained from the use of their suffrage franchise, both for the sake of peace and harmony in the congregation and for the sake of a more complete separation from the entangling affairs of the world, although none are prohibited the exercise of these privileges. Since the passing of the "War-time Elections Act," we humbly seek to know the position of the Government all of our members relative to this Act, so that we may conduct ourselves accordingly, realizing that in matters of war we can not conscientiously give our voice, and in respect to government we are to be submissive to its laws, excepting only the higher laws of the Gospel in all righteousness.

With a deep sense of humility before God and prayer that the authorities before whom this may come may be guided in their decisions and their arduous duties by the Divine will, and that we may continue to dwell in godliness and follow the pursuits of peace, we respectfully submit this petition and shall humbly pray.

Signed by the deputation of the Mennonite Church,
L.J. Burkholder, Moderator, Markham Ont.
David Bergy, Secretary, New Dundee Ont.
S.F. Coffman, Vineland Ont.
Anson Groh, Petrolia, Ont.

In connection with the sentiments expressed in the accompanying petition of the Mennonites of the Ontario and Alberta-Saskatchewan Conference We, the representatives of the Amish Mennonite congregations of Waterloo, Oxford and Perth Counties, desire to express ourselves in perfect accord and hereby join in the petition for a continuance of the recognition of our faith by the present Government.

Signed by the deputation of the Amish Mennonite Church,
Christian Gascho, Baden Ont.
Jacob R. Bender, Tavistock Ont.
Jacob S. Bender, Tavistock Ont.
Samuel Bender, New Hamburg Ont.

*This petition was handed to the Prime Minister Sir Robert Borden
& his Secretary of State, Arthur Meighen at Ottawa
Oct. 11, 1917.*

EXEMPTION FROM MILITARY SERVICE.

1. No Medical Examination need before applying for exemption.
2. More than one claim made be made on same exemption form. If claims are just mark them on application form. Insert name of your church.
3. Fathers who cannot vote in this election may claim exemption for son who is under 21, at election time, if son is not member of church.
4. Parents may make claim for exemption of any son needed at home.
5. Make claim for exemption at post office, on blank form provided by Post Master, before November 8, or soon as possible.
6. Certificate of Church membership is not needed in making application for exemption; be provided with certificate when called before Exemption Tribunal on or after November 8.
7. Remember that our Church forbids its members engaging in any form of service under the military arm of the Government, and do not sign papers requiring such service before knowing what the decision of the Government is concerning the standing of the Church on this point. Before giving any consent for non-combatant service you may appeal to a higher tribunal.
8. In case your claim for exemption is disallowed you have a higher Tribunal to which you may appeal.
9. Do not promise orally or in any other way to consider hospital transport or other service in the army. Our Church is unitedly opposed to all service in the army.
10. Take with you before the Exemption Tribunal evidence in support of all your claims for exemption.

Some matters are yet before the Government for decision. Pray for the cause that is dear to our hearts and spiritual welfare.

Sent one copy to each
Congregation in Canada
Am waiting to hear from
from you.

EXEMPTION ON MILITARY SERVICE
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Just mark them on application for exemption
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service under the military arm of the Government, and do not allow persons
receiving such service before knowing what the decision of the Government
is concerning the standing of the Church on this point. Before giving any
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8. In case your claim for exemption is disallowed you have a higher tribunal
to which you may appeal.
9. Do not promise service in any other way to consider hospital transport
or other service in the army. Our Church is unconditionally opposed to all service
in the army.
10. Take with you before the Exemption Tribunal evidence in support of all
your claims for exemption.
Some matters are yet before the Government for decision. Pray for the
cause that is dear to our hearts and spiritual welfare.

COPY OF REPLY FROM SECRETARY OF STATE OF CANADA.

SEAL

BA.

Ottawa, October 12th, 1917.

Dear Sir:-

I appreciate very much your letter of the 11th October. The Prime Minister and myself, representing the Government, were very glad indeed to meet you and your friends and confer with you on the important subject brought before us.

Your understanding of our position is set out in your letter and is fairly correctly stated and expressed.

Answering your application for copies of the various statutes to be sent to your people, I have pleasure in giving instructions, today, to my Secretary that these be sent as asked for.

Yours very truly,

Signed, Arthur Meighen.

S. F. Coffman, Esq.
Vineland,
Ont.

Vineland Ont. Oct. 12, 1917.

The Members of the War Resolutions Committee
of General Conference.

Dear Brethren:- Greeting.

The petition to the Premier of Canada was drawn up and a copy sent to Brothr Daniel Kauffman, and approved. Since that time the Elections Act was passed by the Government and the time for the calling of the first class of army recruits was so near at hand that our Brethren here completed and presented the Appeal to the Government of Canada in Council as herein enclosed, on Oct. 11.

Our conditions here being somewhat peculiar we followed the general plan of the appeal to the President of the United States and included items or changed phrases so as to meet the conditions here. We trust that our action may meet with your approval. We did not purposely ignore the General Conference Committee. In seeming to do so we beg your forbearance, as lack of time precluded getting the approval of all.

Our position here is practically the same as those of our Brethren in the United States as to the obligation of noncombatant service. The Russian Mennonites and Doukobors are entirely exempt from military service in any form and are not at all affected by the present act. Owing to the fact that the quota of men required by the Government at the present time will be filled by the first call of the Government, including only the first class, - unmarried men, and widowers without children, between the ages of 20 and 34, allowing for all possible exemptions, and allowing for the filling of all ranks that might be classed as noncombatant by those who are not conscientious objectors, none of our brethren are likely to be held or called for any form of service. This is the opinion expressed by the Government when we met with them. In case any of our young men would be liable to be called for such service the Government has kindly expressed willingness to consider the matter with us again.

Our deputation was kindly received and given a considerate hearing and an assurance that all that was possible would be done for our people under our peculiar circumstances. While we feel that the Government will give us practical exemption we feel that our people should be placed in the class of those who, for conscientious reasons, object to all forms of and any connection with war of any kind or any connection with any kind of military organization, and be granted complete exemption from all military service whatsoever. While we have clearly stated our position and called the attention of the Government to these facts we do not expect that our desires can be immediately conceded on account of present conditions, but hope that our plea may ~~xxx~~ be considered at a later and we hope early time.

Kindly look over the petition and suggest your improvements so that if we should again be required to meet with the powers that be we may have your assistance at hand.

Pray for us as we do for you in these trying times.

Deputation,

Yours in faith, for the Committee,

L.J. Burkholder. Mod. Conf.

Amish Deputation S. F. Coffman.

D. Bergs Sec. "

Christian Gascho

Daniel S. Bender

S. F. Coffman.
Anson Groh.

Daniel R Bender

Samuel Bender.

Vineland Ont., Oct. 13, 1917.

Aaron Loucks,
Scottsdale Penna,

Dear Brother:- Greeting.

In reply to your inquiry regarding the Workmen's compensation Act, in force in Canada, it seems that I have only learned of the Act for Ontario. I do not know whether or not such acts have been passed in the other Provinces. In looking over the regulations of the act it seems that there is no evasion of it by any one. All are expected to make use of it and subject to a penalty besides liable to action by the Compensation Board to assign such damages or liability as they may deem just. It is compulsory as an act of the Government.

It also is intended to prevent legal action for damages which were so frequent and often unjust in their decisions. Since the act is in force there are very few suits for damages or injuries in the courts. Our own brethren who have come under the rulings of the act have found it a great help to them.

You will notice that no kind of agreement between the employer and the workmen is legal, it must meet with the approval of the Board and in case of accidents the enforcement of the agreement is under the regulation of the Board. It virtually places all relations of the employer and the workmen under the supervision of the Board and there is no possible exception.

I think that it would be well for your committee to issue some kind of a statement concerning your findings and with advice to our brethren regarding their relations with these Acts of the Government. The General Conference turned you down rather flatly, but without understanding the question as to its benevolent purposes and desire to save litigation.

Yours in faith,

Please inform this the facts which you need. I made an error in
name, attached to the Danish delegation in Bro K's letter. The Daniels should
have been Jacobs. This list of names is correct.
omit my name (S.H.) and make it "Committee"

Vineland Ont., Oct. 13, 1917.

Editor Gospel Herald,
Scottsdale Pa.,

In a letter to Bottr D. Kauffman, which may have been forwarded to
him at some other point I gave a report of our visit to the Governmtn at Ota
Ottawa. I enclosed a copy of the petition with the findings or decision of
the Government regarding our people liable to service. This may not have
come into your hands. Several Brethren from the A.M. congregations accompani
ed us and supported our petition. The Committe were as follows:-

- L. J. Burkholder, Mod. of Conference, David Bergy, Sec. of Conf.
- S. F. Coffman, Anson Groh, Christian Gascho, Jacob R. Bender, Jacob S.
Bender, and Samuel Bender.

While the conditions of the military service act are such that it does
not recognize our having complete exemption, holding us subject to non-
combatant service, in the working out of the act we feel that our position
will be respected. Our brethren will be subject to all of the regulation
of the act in so far as their response to the call of the Governmet for
recruits is concerned:- That is they must respond and secure their exemption
papers and sign them at the places designated. in the clause for exemption
for consciencious reason the name of the denomination must also be filled
in. Any other lawful reason for exemption may also be filled in. On account
of the exemption claim being filed there need be no physical examination.
Such will not be required until the exemption is disallowed.

Those of surxnnonresistant faith are not ~~respxez~~ allowed to vote at the
coming election since the issues before the Government are expected to
be very largely in support of the war and the army. Any one of nonresistant
faith who exercises his suffrage franchise at this time will make himself
liable also for military service.

The carrying out of these provisions of the military service act are
is under the control of the civil government. No one is a soldier until
he is actually called to the colors after he is found fit and ^{examined for} all exemptions
have been disallowed, and the Government calls upon ^{him} to enter the service.
The question of non combatant service is one which the Government
has under consideration, and in case such services were required of those
whose faith forbids combatant service the interest and faith of such will
be considered.

We feel grateful to the Government for what they have done for us so
far, and while obediently complying with the laws which have been made we
pray that God may guide them in all their further deliberations so that they
may be able to grant to all earnest and sincere followers of the Prince of
Peace the full exercise of their convictions and peace loving life, pray-
ing also for the cessation of war and the coming of the Kingdom of everlast-
ing peace.

The deduction which we have made from the conversation with the
government have not been approved by him and are not authoratative. It is
only our sense of what was said, and we are responsible only to this ex-
tent. While the Act is law, no part of it has yet been enforced by

Proclamation, but will likely be applied to a very small extent.

Windsor, Ont., Oct. 13, 1917.

Editor Gospel Herald,
Scottsdale Pa.,

In a letter to Bobb D. Kauffman, which may have been forwarded to him at some other point I gave a report of our visit to the Government at Ottawa. I enclosed a copy of the petition with the findings or decision of

the Government regarding our petition. This may not have come into your hands. Several brethren from the A.M. congregation accompanied

us and suggested our petition. The Committee were as follows:-

- L. J. Bartsch, Mod. of Conference, David Berg, Sec. of Conf.
- S. F. Collins, Anson Groh, Christian Gasscho, Jacob R. Bender, Jacob S. Bender, and Samuel Bender.

While the conditions of the military service act are such that it does

not recognize our having complete exemption, holding us subject to non-combatant service, in the working out of the act we feel that our position will be respected. Our brethren will be subject to all of the regulation of the act in so far as their response to the call of the Government for recruits is concerned. That is they must respond and secure their exemption papers and sign them at the places designated. In the absence for exemption for conscientious reason the name of the exemption must also be filled in. Any other lawful reason for exemption may also be filled in. On account of the exemption claim being filled there need be no physical examination. Such will not be required until the exemption is disallowed.

Those of non-resistance faith are not exempt allowed to vote at the coming election since the issues before the Government are expected to be very largely in support of the war and the army. Any one of non-resistance faith who exercises his suffrage franchise at this time will make himself liable also for military service.

The carrying out of these provisions of the military service act are under the control of the civil government. No one is a soldier until he is actually called to the colors after he is found fit and all exemptions have been disallowed, and the Government calls upon him to enter the service. The question of non-combatant service is one which the Government has under consideration, and in case such services were required of those whose faith forbids combatant service the interest and faith of such will be considered.

We feel grateful to the Government for what they have done for us so far, and while obediently complying with the laws which have been made we pray that God may guide them in all their further deliberations so that they may be able to grant to all earnest and sincere followers of the Prince of Peace the full exercise of their convictions and peace loving life, praying also for the cessation of war and the coming of the Kingdom of everlasting peace.

The deduction which we have made from the conversation with the Government have not been approved by him and are not authoritative. It is only our sense of what was said, and we are responsible only for this extent. While the Act is law, no part of it has yet been enforced by

Vineland Ont., Oct. 15, 1917.

Aaron Loucks,
Scottsdale Pa.,

Dear Brother:- Greeting.

In my letter of the 13th Inst. and in the communication to the ~~the Gospel Herald~~ ^{which have been inserted in the same}, I made the statement that "no one is a soldier until he is actually called to the colors." This is incorrect. In a copy of

the Proclamation issued on the 13th the Statute says, "That all men within the class so called shall, from the date of such proclamation, be deemed soldiers enlisted in the military service of Canada and subject to military law, save as the ~~Act~~ said Act otherwise provided; and that the men so called out shall report and shall be placed in active service in the Canadian Expeditionary Force as may be set out in such proclamation or regulations; but that they shall, until so placed on active service, be deemed to be on leave of absence without pay." Then follows the clause providing for exemption. In the case of our people the certificate of exemption is from "Combatant" service only" which fact still holds our brethren

for non-combatant service as a part of the military force of Canada, and subject to military and on leave of absence without pay.

While it is probable that no such service may be called for before the terms of this military act are fulfilled, it is, nevertheless, not consistent with the principles of our faith to be considered a part of an army that is at present engaged in actual conflict and subject to its regulations and only on leave of absence without pay.

We cannot change the statutes, nor can the Government at the present time, since it is an act of parliament. But we pray that while we are called soldiers and amenable as such we may still retain the principles and practices of peace, praying that we may still gain the favor of the Government with a full recognition of our faith.

A letter from the office of the Secretary of State, dated Oct. 12th in reference to our rendering of the opinion expressed by the Government respecting our position and duty says, "Your understanding of our position is set out in your letter and is fairly correctly expressed."

I will mail you copies of both the Military and Elections Acts as soon as copies reach me.

Yours in faith,



HO, EVERY one that
thirsteth, come ye to
the waters, and he
that hath no money: come
ye, buy, and eat; yea, come,
buy wine and milk without
money and without price.
Isa. 55:1

Ridgeway Oct 16 1917

Bros C. F. Coffman

Vineland — Greeting in Jesus name

Thank you for the copy of petition
sent me and the temporary out come of
the visit to Ottawa by your delegation.

We can always helpe eachother along
Especially in a good cause and will not
loose our reward for so doing.

I appreciate very much your kindness and
helpe for the good of the church in behalf
of our young to whom we must look to for
our future hope and prosperity of the church

The petition referd to is well gotten up
and composed, I have one from our U. S.
Brethren for the same purpos or to present
to the Exemption board, it is very concise
whereas yours enters more extencively into
the past privilages we have enjoyed,
We had to change ours in the wording as
it was pure American. I am glad you
take an interest in ours as well as your own people

I trust we may in the future continue to assist each other in these perilous times when many people are loosing their heads. Let us pray much so the salt may not loose its saviour and God will help his own to be steadfast in the faith. For He is still on His throne and beholds every thing done by his saints for the kingdom of Peace, and will rule every thing towards the steadfastness of his people in these trying times." for as thy days thy strength shall be." although some may have to suffer persecution for His sake as they did in the infancy of the church and the nonresistant doctrine the Master taught.

Let us in the future stand by each other and let each other know if anything changes for the better or for the worse. So we may know how to move for the good of humanity

I am sincere your obedient
servant-

Asa Bearss