

Petersburg Nov. 26. 1917

S. F. Coffman

Vineland

Dear Bro. Greeting:

In reply to your letter I may state that I took the letter you sent me from the Minister of Justice to the tribunals in New Hamburg and insisted for our rights as Mennonites but they simply disregarded it and said they would deal according to the instructions they have from the government but they said we should appeal and the higher tribunals would likely exclude the Mennonites entirely. Our Brethren have the same trouble in Waterloo and Trumbo.

It seems these local tribunals want to show their authority and at the same time I think they know better.

Yours in Love

Manasseh Hallman

P.S. They claim that the higher judge has to decide who the Mennonites are that are excluded from the act which your letter from the Minister of Justice has reference to

Box 505 New Hamburg
Nov 27/14 Ont.S. J. Coffman
Wineland Ont.

Dear Bro Greeting
 in the worthy name of Jesus
 your letter to the Prime Minister
 recd in due time, you have
 expressed our thoughts better
 than we would have been
 able, we appreciate your
 service very much and
 are willing to aid you
 financially for your service
 Just send us your account
 and we will permit amount
 we are encouraged to make
^{more} sacrifice to the Lord by the
 reports from our young
 Brethren in camp in the
 united States, had the opportunity
 to meet a young Bro who
 is on his last leave before
 going to camp he is here

visiting his relatives; Praise God
for the courage he is showing
he has submitted himself to
God, asking his young Brethren
to Pray for him that he might
be Faithful in all his trials
that may come before him
and seems to be cheerfull
Health is fair but the Grim
reaper Death is in our midst
a Funeral almost Every day
in the community we again
invite you to Pay us a visit
when convenient to you

Your Humble Bro
Samuel Bender
Pray for us

P. S.

don't forget to send account
S. B.

excuse Language

New Hamburg Nov 28, 1914

Bro Coffman

Again Greeting in Jesus Name.
 In reply to your letter stating
 that Bro Hallman should have
 made his letter clear to these Officers
 this was all done but that all the
 good it did, we are not greatly alarmed
 because we hear something which we
 hope is true, at present they want class
 A. and the non-combatants fall in
 class E. but even then we would like
 to know were our boys are at if possible
 so we know just how to direct them
 that ~~they~~ might not be stubborn before the
 time. At Drumbo and Preston our
 boys received full exemption without
 any trouble but this is only what I
 hear. These ^{Our} Officers ^{here} say this letter we
 hold must have been in Counsel and
 not brought before the (Judge who)
 has to say what is really law or not
 or passed in an irregular session

would it harm or to much
trouble if you would write
to headgaters and ask where
the trouble is, In the meantime
we will wait at the Thrown
May we so continue in His Service
Our Bible Conference at Baden
was thus far attended with interest
and full house.

Your unworthy
Servant
Isias Cressman

sorry the programme
was not send
foregoing mail
Pardon

(4) Military Service Act.

(Copy)

Vineland Ont., Nov 29, 1917.

Bishops and Brethren:- Greeting.

Owing to the fact that a number of the Exemption Tribunals have not been giving recognition to the claims of our brethren for exemption on the grounds that they are excluded from the operation of the Military Service Act, and since their rulings have not been uniform it is advisable that every claim that has not been honored with entire exemption should be at once appealed to a higher tribunal. Where exemption has been granted conditionally for other than conscientious reasons the claim should also be appealed to accord with the regulations that Mennonites are excluded from the Act, and hence not subject to the conditions prescribed by the Local Tribunals.

The Military Service Council at Ottawa has specially considered the position of the Mennonites in Ontario and therefore we have a right to claim our privileges of entire freedom from the Military Service Act under the ruling which they have given. Their decision was made upon the appeals of Mennonites in Ontario, and our claims may be made accordingly.,

Each Bishop and each minister who has charge of a congregation in which there are brethren who have claimed exemption should see that these claims are made for all who are effected by decisions of the Local Tribunals.

Praying for our young brethren and for our authorities that we may have our peace and righteousness secured to us, I am,

Yours in behalf of the Committee,

S.F.Coffman.

M.S.A.

Vineland Ont., Nov. 29, 1917.

Oslas Cressman,
New Hamburg Ont.,
Dear Brother:- Greeting.

Your letter recieved and noted. Thank you for the programme of the Baden Bible Conference. Would have been glad to be present and to have enjoyed the good things with you. May God bless the seed tht has been sown.

With regard to the matter of the exemption of our young brethren, it seems that there are differences in the manner of dealing with our brethren. We have no specific cases to use in order to refer the matter to the Military Service Council at Ottawa. If any of our young brethren are not entirely exempted on account of their belonging to the Mennonite Church they should appeal at once to the next higher Tribunal. In case that Tribunal refuses to dismiss them from service there is another Tribunal to which they may appeal. I do n^ot think that it would be wise at present to trouble the Department of Justice at Ottawa with this matter until we have had all the cases appealed to the higher Tribunals. In case they do not allow any of these applications to Mennonites then it will be time to take the matter up wity^h Ottawa. See that any cases you have in gur congregation that are not entirely free are at once appealed to the next higher Tribunal, and I think you will get them clear. Yours in faith

S. J. Coffman

Vineland Ont. Nov. 30, 1917.

Samuel Bender, Esq.
 Box 508
 New Hamburg Ont.

Dear Brother Bender:- Greeting in the name of Jesus.

Your letter of the

27th received and noted. I was glad to get a letter from you and to learn that you are well and enjoying the blessings of the Lord and loving His peace and righteousness. This is after all the greatest enjoyment that life can bring to us. The Lord has done so much for us and our little service in this world should be filled with His love and peace. The terrible war is still going on and it seems that it is getting worse and worse. When will the end of it come and what will be the condition of things if it keeps on as it has?. May the Lord soon bring it to an end. We can still look to Him and pray for peace and good-will to man, for we believe that this is what He would desire for the world.

By reports there was a good Conference at the Baden church I would have been glad to be present and also enjoyed the meetings. There will certainly be some good results from such meetings where the Word of God is taught and souls are inquiring of Him His will and desiring to follow His way. These are the things which men should seek after. May it not be that the next generations of our young people will see more clearly what their duties are and be more ready to live that life of devotion and separation than those of today? We pray that these meetings and Bible studies will bear fruit for the Lord in consecrated lives and souls saved from sin and the world.

It has been a pleasure to me to be engaged in the work of our Master. My time and all that we have belongs to Him. You have asked for my account of expenses in connection with the work done in this Committee regarding exemption. I have none to give. Some time ago I sent to our treasure an account for postage amounting to three dollars, and that is all that I feel I should ask for. The rest of my time is like that of our other ministers and what I may need for our living will come from the Lord, and from such sources as we have at our command. Thus far we have always had enough and to spare, we have been living in the hope of our Heavenly Father, who, like the Prodigal's father, "has enough and to spare." But we trust that we may never leave Him and get into the far country where we must perish with hunger. This is of course spiritual and yet we feel that it is also true of natural things. May we ever be true to Him. Thanking you for your interests in us and praying for God's blessing upon you and yours, I am

Yours in faith and love,

W. F. C. ...

New Dundee Dec. 1, 1917

S. F. Coffman

Dear Bro. Greeting

I received your letter, re appeals from tribunals, I believe the congregation at Kitchener advised their young men not to appeal, but in the other districts, I think, most of them have sent in their appeals,

Perhaps Bro. Lewis has told you that had a meeting of part of the Ex. Com. at Baden on the 29th, We have passed a resolution asking yourself & Bro. L. J. to meet with committees of the new Mennonites, the Risse people & the Drukkard people to consider the question of raising some money to aid suffering people in different

parts of the world or for
other purposes arising from
the great conflict now raging.

We also decided to ask
the different congregations of
the Ontario Conference to
observe the 19th day of December
as a day of fasting and prayer,
acting in conjunction with
the announcement of the Ex.
Com. of the Ind.-Mich. Conference,
asking each congregation to
decide upon their manner
of service on that day.

Yours Sincerely
David Bergey

The Lambton County Co-Operative Association

Anson Grah, Mgr., Petrolia,

Petrolia Dec 1st 1917

S. F. Coffman
Box 174

Wineland Ont-

Dear Bro Fred

I have yours of Nov 29th enclosing copy of instructions for those Brethern who unfortunately fall under, instructions given structured Tribunals. I have been receiving similar of your work in behalf of the Committee and have always expected to thank you for your consideration in sending these to me. But loose courage, pardon me for this neglect. I have no criticisms to offer, I have nothing to object to in your work, And I would consider myself out of place even to comment on the work, which at times has moved me almost to distraction. I only wish to thank you, and assure you my silence, is not of lack of interest or ill will. Work on, God Bless you

Fraternely
Anson Grah



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.

Bridgeway 12. 3, 1917

S. F. Soffman My Dear Greeting

Yours of Nov 29 to hand for our instruction — Thank you again for the instructions you give from time to time

Our Boys here in our congregation have got along fine with their appeals to the Exemption board, ours at Bridgeburg were composed of honorable men that know the law and their business, Mr J. B. James the head one knows our people right well and does the fare thing towards our faith and practice

I hear from some tribunals that they have done crooked work, owing to their ignorance of the law and instructions coupled with meanness and selfwilled supremacy to have no one Exempted on conscientious grounds, because they know nothing about our creed and doctrine, much less the law regarding the same

As Ever A. Bearss

Tavistock Ont. R. R. No 1

Dec 3rd 1917

Dear Brother and fellow-worker in the vineyard of the Lord S. F. Hoffman
Holland Ont. A Hearty Greeting
in the Saviors worthy name.

Dear Brother I feel grateful toward you for your kindness and what you have done for us. I have received your letters you have sent us and was glad for the information you gave us. In your last letter you wrote about appealing to the higher tribunals. I also had noticed that these tribunals did not give the boys the same exemptions I noticed one tribunal's reply was that exemption be allowed from combatant service on account of his religious belief.

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my opinion of this was that these young brethren that got this reply should appeal but other brethren said that was all the authority the tribunals had to give so the ~~thing~~ ^{penalty} was simply just let go and on the forms that they got it was stated that after three days no appeal would be heard. another tribunal gave it this way that exemption be allowed as a member of the Amish Church (which shows their ignorance of our church) and some others got (exemption allowed until he ceases to farm) here they made not mention of ground No 1 namely conscientious reasons. This last one especially I thought should have appealed

111

I have often thought it would have been best if all our young brethren would only have claimed exemption for conscientious reasons and none other (after we have made mistakes we are always ready to see them)

They were told they would get another paper in a couple of weeks. Would then be the time to appeal when they get the other paper. Or should they have done right away when they got their reply from the Tribunal. Or can they appeal any time at present. Hoping to hear from you again soon I will try to come to a close for this time, wishing you Gods richest blessings in abundance your brother in Christ
Jacob R Bender.

IV

P. S. a few more words
We feel very much indebted to you
for what you have done for us
We feel that we cannot repay
you for it May God bless you for
it. We cannot express our thanks
as we feel as we should. Dear
Brother we heartily invite you to
come and visit us. although we
are German we had brethren here
before who spoke to us in English
so let not that keep you from coming
Whenever you can come just let
me know and we ^{will} try to do our
best - as we can. We are always
glad when ministering brethren come
to visit us to tell us of the glad
tidings brought to us from Heaven

over

Dear brother and colabourer in
God's Vineyard let us ~~for~~ earnestly
pray for each other and for
our government that God may so
direct and guide them in their
way according to His Divine Will
that we live a quiet and peaceable
life to the Honor and Glory of God
and for the cause of His Kingdom
a hearty greeting to the
Brotherhood

Jacob R Bender

Hope to hear from you again

Vineland Ont., December 7, 1917.

To His Honour Chief Justice Duff,
Central Appeal Judge,
Department of Justice,
Military Service Branch,
Ottawa.

Sir,

Exemption

With reference to the action of the Local Tribunals who have had to deal with the exemptions claims made by young men who are members of the Mennonite Church and of other Churches of kindred faith, permit me to state that there has not been a uniform consideration of the said claims for total exemption from all military service, which privilege they have had just reason to claim as a result of the appeal made by a Committee of our Church to the Government and the decision rendered thereupon by the Military Service Council, a copy of the correspondence being herewith enclosed.

In some instances these said young men were told that they needed not to have applied for exemption, they being excluded from the operation of the Military Service Act. In other cases their claims were marked "Allowed." Some ^{claims} were allowed for other than conscientious reasons; others were ^{granted} allowed so long as they remained on farms, and still others were exempted from combatant service only.

We have taken the liberty of advising ^{our members} all such young men, not totally exempted or who are exempted for other than religious claims, to appeal from the decisions of the Local Tribunals, this advice being based on the above mentioned decisions of the Military Service Council.

^{These appeals may be granted}
^{may be given} We trust that there may be the same favorable and uniform consideration of these appeals by all Appeal Tribunals as has been granted us by the Military Service Council ~~and~~ for which our people have been sincerely grateful. We trust also that any member of our Church who has not understood and has not availed himself of the privilege of appeal will receive equal consideration with those who have appealed for recognition of their faith which prohibits their engaging in any form of military service.

Trusting that Your Honour will give this matter your most gracious consideration, I am

Respectfully and humbly,

Your servant who doth petition,

On behalf of the Mennonite and Amish Mennonite Committee.

1. To ~~His Honourable~~ ^{The Honourable} Chas. J. Doherty,
Minister of Justice,
House of Parliament,
Ottawa.

Vineland Ont., December, 7, 1917.

2. To His Honour Chief Justice Duff,
Central Appeal Judge,
Department of Justice,
Military Service Branch,
Ottawa.

Sir,

With referende to the action of the Local Exemption Tribunals who have had to deal with the exemptions claims made by young men who are members of the Mennonite Church and other Churches of kindred faith, permit me to state that there has not been a uniform consideration of the said claims for total exemption from all military service, which privilege they have had just reason to claim as a result of the appeal made by a Committee of our Church to the Government and the decision rendered thereupon by the Military Service Council, a copy of the correspondence being herewith enclosed.

In some instances these said young men were told that they had ^{needed not to have} ~~no need of~~ applying for exemption since they were excluded from the operation of the Military Service Act. In other cases their claims were marked "Allowed." ^{Some were} ~~Some were~~ ^{claims} ~~allowed~~ ^{granted} so long as they remained on farms, and still others were exempted from ~~combatant~~ ^{combatant} Service only.

We have taken the liberty of advising ^{our members} ~~all of~~ such young men, not totally exempted or who were exempted ~~from~~ other than religious claims, to appeal from the decisions of the Local Tribunals, this advice being based on the above mentioned decisions of the Military Service Council.

We trust that ^{for all appeal tribunals the same} ~~there~~ ^{considered} ~~may be~~ ^{decided to} a favorable and uniform consideration of these appeals in accordance with the decisions already given to us by the Military Service Council, for which our people have been sincerely grateful, and we trust also that ~~ix~~ ~~any~~ ~~xxx~~ member of our Church who has not understood or has not yet availed himself of the privilege of appeal will also receive equal consideration with those who have appealed for the recognition of their faith which prohibits them from engaging in any form of military service.

Trusting that ^{at} Your Honour will give this matter your most gracious consideration, I am,

Humbly and faithfully,

Your servant who doth ~~petition~~ ^{petition},

On behalf of the Mennonite and Amish Mennonite Committee.

Vineland Ont., December 7, 1917.

To the Honourable Charles J Doherty,
Minister of Justice,
House of Parliament,
Ottawa.

Sir,

With reference to the action of the Local Exemption Tribunals who have had to deal with the exemption claims made by young men who are members of the Mennonite Church and of other Churches of kindred faith, permit me to state to yourself and to the Government that there has not been a uniform consideration of the said claims for total exemption from all military service, which privilege they have had just reason to claim as a result of the appeal made by a Committee of our Church to the Government and the decision rendered thereupon by the Military Service Council, which Council we have addressed concerning this matter, enclosing copies of our former correspondence with the Government.

In some instances these young men were told that they needed not to have applied for exemption, they being excluded from the operation of the Military service Act. In other cases their claims were marked "Allowed." Some claims were allowed for other than conscientious reasons. Others were exempted so long as they remain on farms, and still others were exempted from combatant service only.

We have taken the liberty of advising our members not totally exempted or who are exempted for other than religious claims, to appeal from the decisions of the Local Tribunals, this advice being based on the above mentioned decisions of the Military Service Council.

We trust that these appeals may be granted the same favorable and uniform considerations as have been granted us by the Military Service Council for which our people have been sincerely grateful, and we trust also that any member of our Church who has not understood and has not availed himself of the privilege of appeal will receive equal consideration with those who have appealed for recognition of their faith which prohibits their engaging in any form of military service.

Trusting that this matter may receive your most earnest consideration and that of the Departments concerned, I am, Sir,

Most respectfully,

On behalf of the Committee of the Mennonite and Amish Mennonite Churches.

Vineland Ont., December 7, 1917.

To the Honourable Charles J. Doherty,
Minister of Justice,
House of Parliament,
Ottawa.

Sir:-

With reference to the action of the Local Exemption Tribunals who have had to deal with the exemption claims made by young men who are members of the Mennonite Church and of other Churches of kindred faith, permit me to state to yourself and to the Government that there has not been a uniform consideration of the said claims for total exemption from all military service, which privilege they have had just reasons to claim as a result of the appeal made by a Committee of our Church to the Government and the decision rendered thereupon by the Military Service Council, which Council we have addressed concerning this matter, enclosing copies of our former correspondence with the Government.

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We have taken the liberty of advising our members not totally exempted or who have been exempted for other than religious claims, to appeal from the decisions of the Local Tribunals, this advice being based on the above mentioned decisions of the Military Service Council.

We trust that these appeals may be granted the same favorable and uniform consideration as has been granted us by the Military Service Council, for which our people have been sincerely grateful, and we trust also that any member of our Church who has not understood and has not availed himself of the privilege of appeal will receive equal consideration with those who have appealed for recognition of their faith which prohibits their engagement in any form of military service.

Trusting that this matter may receive your most earnest consideration and that of the Departments concerned, I am, Sir,

On behalf of the Mennonite and Amish Mennonite Committee,
Most respectfully,

Signed, S.F.Coffman.

Brethren:- Greeting. This note is appended to save space and labor. Our letter of thanks to the Prime Minister was withheld until this matter of the appeal of the cases of some of our brethren has been settled. We are still grateful to the Government and feel that there will be no difficulty on account of the appeal cases since the Department of Justice has acted on the standing of the Mennonites in Ontario and said that they and all other non-resistant bodies are not under the Military Service Act, and has been thus interpreting the law to all who have applied for such information.

Let us thank God and hold our confidence and steadfastness of faith,

Humbly Yours in faith,

S.F.C.

COPY.

Vineland Ont., December, 7, 1917.

To His Honour Chief Justice Duff,
 Central Appeal Judge,
 Department of Justice,
 Military Service Branch.
 Ottawa.

Sir:- With reference to the action of the Local Exemption Tribunals who have had to deal with the Exemption Claims of the young men who are members of the Mennonite Church and of other Churches of kindred faith, permit me to state that there has not been a uniform consideration of the said Claims for total exemption from all military service, which privilege they have had just reason to claim as a result of the appeal made by a Committee of our Church to the Government and the decision rendered thereupon by the Military Service Council, a copy of the correspondence being herewith enclosed.

said

In some instances these young men were told that they needed not to have applied for exemption they being excluded from the operation of the Military Service Act. In other cases their claims were marked "Allowed." Some claims were allowed for other than conscientious reasons; others were exempted so long as they remained on farms, and still others were exempted from combatant service only.

We have taken the liberty of advising our members, not totally exempted or who were exempted for other than religious claims, to appeal from the decisions of the Local Tribunals, this advice being based on the above mentioned decisions of the Military Service Council.

We trust that these appeals may be granted the same favorable consideration as has been granted up by the Military Service Council for which our people have been sincerely grateful. We trust that any member of our Church who has not understood and has not availed himself of the privilege of appeal will receive equal consideration with those who have appealed for recognition of their faith which prohibits their engaging in any form of military service.

Trusting that Your Honour will give this matter your most gracious consideration, I am,

Respectfully and humbly,
 Your Servant who doth petition,

Signed, S.F.Coffman,

On behalf of the Mennonite and Amish Mennonite Committee.