

*Copy*

Vineland Ont., April 22, 1918.

Hon. J. A. Calder,  
Minister of Immigration  
and Colonization,  
House of Parliament,  
Ottawa.

Honourable Sir:-

Permit me to again address you with regard to the Petition of the Mennonites and Tunkers respecting their freedom from all Military Service, which question has again been brought before them by the recent Order in Council approved by Parliament.

If, among other conditions of exemption, conscientious reasons as provided for under clause 8 of the Exemptions are removed, what will be the standing of our young men who have had to apply for exemption and who did apply for exemption and were granted exemption only on those grounds.

What application will be made of the provisions for Mennonites as stated in the Man-Power Bill? Will it apply to all Mennonites as well as to those other established Churches, - Quakers and Tunkers, - whose faith was recognized and provided for by the laws of Canada?

Some of our members were exempted for other than conscientious reasons by the Local Tribunals although they applied for exemption as Mennonites and Tunkers. Under the New Man-Power Bill, will they become subject to call to active service?

Under the War-Times Elections Act, provisions were made that sons of such persons as were disenfranchised as Conscientious Objectors, who had not attained their majority, were not to be called into service. Will the present Man-Power Bill cancel the provisions of the War-Times Elections act and make the minor sons of our members, although they are adherents and not members of the Church?

We trust, Honourable Sir, that we do not seem hasty in seeking an interpretation of these new conditions. We do not desire to be rebellious against the laws of our land. We feel that provisions are made for those who are sincere in their religious views on the question of warfare, else no provisions would have been made for those specially mentioned in the recent Bill. We desire only to understand whether it apply to all who hold the same principles of faith as do the Mennonites concerned especially in the provisions of the Bill.

Whatever you may be able to do in behalf of those who are deeply concerned with these questions, will be accepted most gratefully. I am also writing to Mr. E.S.Scott, M.P. as many of his constituency are interested in this matter.

Most respectfully, Yours,

S. F. Coffman,  
Secretary, Com. of N-R.R.O.

Vinceland Ont., April 22, 1918.

Brethren:- Greeting.

It is with pleasure that we desire to inform you that since writing the enclosed letters information came indirectly that the President of the Privy Council, in a letter to one of our brethren, has stated emphatically that the Mennonites are free from any Military service under the New Regulations, and are excluded by the special provisions made in the Act regarding Mennonites. We hope that the same attitude will be taken by the Government regarding all the Non-resistant Churches and are awaiting official information on these points. Trusting in the goodness of God to us in these matters, I am,

Yours in faith,

S. F. Coffman

Vineland Ont., April 23rd. 1918.

John R. Ebersole,  
Milverton Ont.

Dear Brother:- Greeting.

Your letter received this afternoon. I wish that I had been in possession of it at the time that you phoned me. It would have been more satisfactory as there were some things that I did not understand distinctly enough over the phone. Was glad you called me up, as it afforded perhaps a little satisfaction to you as it did to me this forenoon to learn that the Government is considering us as belonging to the Mennonites who will have no duty to perform and are altogether excluded from the operation of the Military Service act and also from the New Man-Power Bill just passed.

I am enclosing herewith all of the correspondence that has been sent out in connection with the recent Act of the Government. We were greatly grieved that our boys would be called into service, and would have to pass through such ordeals as have come of the gang brethren on the other side of the line. But I believe that The Hon. Mr. Calder, who is a member of the Cabinet and is from Saskatchewan, understands the position that the Mennonites take and their faith, will do all in his power to have the same privileges extended to us, and give us the same recognition as that given to the Mennonites in the West. It is certain that many of the Government are not aware who the Mennonites are and what they stand for. We have heard very little of the Quakers during these exemption proceedings, and I have wondered whether or not they have given up their non-resistant faith in his Country. The Tunker brethren are very much concerned about their standing with the Government and we are working with them and for them in this matter, and hope to see them enjoy the privilege of freedom from military service.

These letters will give you an idea about where we would stand if the Government did not give us mere recognition. I am feeling now that all we are members and will be able to prove their membership will have no difficulty. But what of the boys who may not be members of the Church and who are not yet of age? This question has been presented to Mr. Calder, and we will await his answer. The letter was dated yesterday and we ought to have a reply by the 1st of the week. As soon as we receive word from Ottawa we will let all persons concerned know what has been decided.

Regarding the appeals to the Central Judge which you said had been sent in but have not had a reply, while the new Bill cancels all appeals, it makes provision for the Mennonites, and so the appeals will be answered by the New Bill. Our boys will not now be required to prosecute their appeals further. The answer is given in the new law, and they are counted as not to be called on for service of any kind. But they may be called on to find out why they have not registered, and I think it would be a good idea for each one to be supplied with a certificate of membership, so that they can at once show to any officer that they are not under the new law.

About the blank forms that were sent out, there may not now be a great hurry for them, since we were getting ready to present the case of our young men to the Government to show them what a variety of exemptions were

given by the different Tribunals and also to show that the exemptions that were granted were not at all in harmony with the principles of our faith. We wanted to show the Government the need of making some other provision for us, either by allowing us to be included as Mennonites under the Order in Council of August 13th 1873, or to make some other Order that would define us and the Tunkers as persons who could not be called on for any military service on account of our belief that all kinds of military service is against our faith. I think that I can state to you that, among all the names that I have at present, there are not twenty that have been exempted as Mennonites, and nearly all are exempted only from combatant service. This is certainly not in harmony with our principles and not giving religious liberty if the Government stands for that principle. It may be necessary, as you suggested some time ago, to have the Government pass some special law or Order that will stand for all time giving the non-resistant people the privilege of absolute exemption from military service, so that, as long as any hold to that principle they will be free from being molested in a time like this.

Since we have begun this matter with the Government I think, for myself, that we ought to give all of the information to them that we can and show how much it has effected our peace and confidence in the Government, and endeavor to get relief if possible. If your brethren think it advisable to take the council of the Church in this matter, it will be alright. Some of the forms have not yet been returned, and others may take some time yet, so you will not need to return yours until the brethren decide to have them filled out. You may be under the impression that the Government has ordered this list to be made out. This is not the case. Some of us who were on the Committee to Ottawa decided that it would be best to let the Government know just how our boys have been treated, and also show them how the exemptions that have been given were not according to our faith, as it still held our boys for non-combatant service in the army. The forms sent out, was the plan that we had made for getting the information that we needed in order to make our statements good before the Government.

Let us continue to fixr labor and pray that the work of the Lord may be done and His will be carried out in our lives. Perhaps we need some such chastening as we have been having to bring us nearer to him and to make our hearts and lives more pure and free from the things of the world and the flesh. And let us pray especially that, we may continue to give our testimony concerning the Gospel of peace and love as it is in Christ our Saviour

Will be glad for any further information and will be glad to be of any possible help in this work while we labor and pray for each other and the ~~world~~ folds that we endeavor to represent.

Yours in the Lord,

*J. F. Coffman*

Vineland Ont., April 23rd, 1918.

C. S. Zehr,  
Wellesley Ont.,

Dear Brother:- Greeting.

Your letter and the enclosed blank form received. Thank you for your help in the matter of getting our position as non-resistent people before our Government.

I think that our brethren did the best that they could under the very uncertain position in which we were placed under the Military Service Act. Those who received exemption from combatant service only were just the same as those who appealed in the majority of cases, for the Appeal Tribunals either disallowed the appeal or gave the same decision as the Local Tribunal. The Central Appeal Judge has reserved his opinion in nearly all of the cases. Some were decided as exempt as Mennonites by the Local and Appeal Courts. Now comes the New Act, and cancels the exemptions of all classes of Exemptions. But the Mennonites are told that they are not under this Act, and we are just now waiting to hear that none of our young men will be called on for any kind of service. But let us continue to pray that we may be able to continue our testimony of Christian love and peace among us.

Yours in faith,

*S. F. Coffman*

M.S.A.

Vineland Ont., April 23rd, 1918.

Osias Cressman,  
New Hamburg Ont.

Dear Brother Greeting.

Your letter and inquiry received today. I trust that you have received one of the letters which was sent to our ministers. Since then I have received word through some of the Markham Brethren who had some correspondence with Mr. N. W. Rowell at Ottawa, in which he stated that the Mennonites are excluded from the New Act, and hence from all military service, even under the former act. No classes that may be called now will effect our brethren. We are only waiting to have this news confirmed to us. We have sent several letters only this week and have had some correspondence with the Premier and with the Chief Justice which has not yet been answered, and as soon as we hear from those departments of the Government, as well as from two members of Parliament, we will have something authentic to report. We are hoping for the best, and ~~and~~ ~~that we may~~ praying that the mercies of the Lord may be extended to us in this matter. We certainly have much to be thankful for that we have thus far not been obliged to undergo any severe tests regarding our faith. We should thank the Lord for the great consideration which the Government has shown us in not calling any of our boys into ~~any~~ kind of service.

I do not blame the boys for feeling a little uneasy regarding the late Military Act. The way that matters were stated there was very uncertain, and since we were not included in the Mennonite class in the former Act, we were a little slow in believing that it meant us at this time. But, it seems that the Government has made the law as nearly like the other as possible in stating the "Exceptions" and there may be a purpose in it, on account of not drawing any criticisms, on their action in giving liberties to us while increasing the obligations of other classes. Oh, how thankful we should be for such favors, and what sacrifices we should be willing to make for those who are compelled to suffer the more! Let our boys be more earnest in their Christian lives and be more ready to sacrifice for the sake of the nobler cause which they now have the greater opportunity to serve.

I am enclosing a copy of the above letter which I had sent to some of the Brethren. As soon as we learn of anything definite we will send word to all.

This leaves us in usual health and trust the blessings of the Lord are giving you joy,  
Yours in Him,

*Osias Cressman*  
*The Brethren*

Record Copy

Fineland Ont., April 23, 1918.

Brethren:- Greeting.

It is with pleasure that we desire to inform you that since writing the enclosed letters, information comes indirectly that the President of the Privy Council, in a letter to one of our brethren, has stated ~~emphatically~~ that the Mennonites are free from any military service under the New Regulations, and are excluded by the special provisions made in the Act regarding Mennonites. We hope that the same attitude will be taken by the Government regarding all Non-resistant Churches and are awaiting official information on these points. Trusting in the goodness of God to us in these matters, I am,

Yours in faith

S. F. Coffma.

**J. R. EBERSOL**  
 MANUFACTURER OF  
**THE SPECIAL BAND CUTTER  
 AND SELF-FEEDER**

MILVERTON, ONT. *Apr 24* ..... 1918

*J. S. Hoffman,*

My Dear Friend:-

In further reference about these statement or records of appeals of our Brethren:-  
 Yesterday we heard that the whole Mennonite Matters shall be considered on 26th, so I went to several of our Ministers at once and we agreed to send you these papers at once, so if you needed them that you have them. I have filled them in as good as I know. And about this last name of whom I told you before. We did not know what is best, then we appealed for him with the others, then his appeal was to be heard at Kitchener, But when he received notice of appeal, his father and himself went to Linwood to their tribunal Mr Mcbachran about it. Mcbachran told them they should not have appealed further, that they have their exemption. Then they also told Mcbachran that they did not appeal (so they didn't) then Mcbachran advised them to pay no attention to the notice of appeal because they had not appealed, and because he has his exemption. Then they told me about it and they almost seemed offended that I appealed for him when he had his exemption. And I was then very sorry that I did appeal for him. And the next day his case was to be considered at Kitchener, So I sent telegram to ~~the~~ Appeal Tribunals at Kitchener, telling them that this man has his exemption, and that Appeal



(2)  
 was made for him by mistake, so then we were  
 afraid the Appeal Tribunal might cancel his  
 exemption, but then he heard no more of it  
 that I know of. ~~†~~ So we concluded he was  
 exempted according to the statement of McEachran,  
 the tribunal.

Well, May God Bless your and our  
 efforts to secure freedom for all our Brethren if it  
 is not against His Holy Will.

Remember us in ~~our~~ your earnest prayers as  
 I hope to do for all needfull.

Respectfully Yours,

J. R. Bersol.

P.S. I am now not sorry that I had appealed  
 for this last man, as it gave McEachran ~~†~~  
 a chance to confirm His exemption, What do you  
 think about this particular case?

Milverton Apr. 24, 1918

Bro. S. J. Coffman

Dear bro.

No doubt you are aware of the Order in Council passed in the House to call all men from 20 to 22 years and all exemptions canceled.

No doubt you have investigated the matter. will you please let me know how it will be with conscientious objectors

Thanking you in advance, and for all advice and instructions you gave us my the Good Lord help us in these trying times is my prayer

Remember us before the throne of grace

Yours in love  
Peter Boshart

P.S. Enclosed please envelope with stamp on

# M. C. Cressman

RETAIL DRY GOODS

BOOKS AND STATIONERY, CLOTHING, CARPETS, RUGS, LINOLEUMS, Etc.

AGENT FOR DR. PETER FAHRNEY'S ALPEN KRAUTER, VITALIZER,  
HEIL OEL, MAGEN STARKER, Etc.

*Kitchener*

*Berlin, Ont., Apr 24<sup>th</sup> 1918*

*S J Coffman*

*Vineland Ont*

*Dear Bro Cressman*

*We are feeling anxious & troubled in regard to the boys of military age since all exemptions are cancelled. I do not know of any <sup>of our boys</sup> who have been called out since the new m.s.d. is in force. but we do not know how soon the officers may come around, what is being done to help the boys? do we as mennonites come under the new ruling, or does the new act not apply to us. what should be the attitude of our boys if they are called. It seems to me the leaders in the church should do all in their power to bring our cause before the authorities, if they do not it may look as if we are indifferent in the matter, and make it so much harder for our boys. We are deeply grateful to you for the interest you have manifested in the boys so far. I know you are concerned, & I believe you will continue to do what you can. In the meantime let the church pray for peace*

*Yours sincerely  
M C Cressman*

# M. C. Cressman

RETAIL DRY GOODS

BOOKS AND STATIONERY, CLOTHING, CARPETS, RUGS, LINOLEUMS, Etc.

AGENT FOR DR. PETER FAHRNEY'S ALPEN KRAUTER, VITALIZER,  
HEIL OEL, MAGEN STARKER, Etc.

~~Kitchener~~  
~~Berlin~~, Ont., Apr 25<sup>th</sup> 1918

Dear Bro Coffman

Trinidad Ont

Greeting

Since writing you I got my letter from Bro Lapp in regard to the solicitation for Gushen College. No doubt you got your copy about the same time. What do you consider is best to do. It seems rather a hard proposition here in Canada. Still I think an effort should be made. It seems to me it would be better to make a general canvass at once in place of the two as proposed at our meeting of the Finance Committee - I mean for Canada, as we haven't very many really able people who can give substantiated amounts. I believe it would be well to have Bro Lapp come. He would certainly carry more weight than any home people we could ask. Will you let me hear your opinion in regard to this as soon as possible. I will leave it with you to write Bro L.

Yours sincerely  
M. Cressman

S. F. C. Gurnsey Sask 4 24. 18

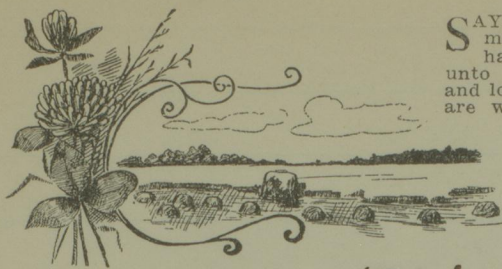
Dear Bes in the faith Greetings  
to you all.

This letter is rather delayed: owing to  
the difficulty in getting the signatures  
of the different boys and their exemptions  
cards. they are some what-scattered  
However I believe I have them all now  
a few of them are not satisfied with  
their exemptions. owing to be different  
to the rest: However nothing may be  
accomplished with same work.

We can only hope for the best: And pray  
that this great-war may come to an  
end. soon: We thank you very much for  
the effort you are making in behalf of the  
brethren.

The spring work is rather delayed owing to the  
frosts & a little snow the other day. Also some  
rain the other week. About  $\frac{1}{2}$  of the wheat-  
is sown.

P.S. Barbara Gorman beloved wife of  
George Nagus was buried yesterday  
at the Sharon burying ground  
funeral was largely attended  
died of convulsions she leaves behind  
her four little children two girls & two boys



SAY NOT ye, There are four months, and then cometh harvest? behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest. John 4: 35.

Ridgeway 4, 24, 18.

S. F. Loffman

Vineland My Bro Greeting  
your timely notice of the "manpower"  
act recently passed by our government just  
received, and with it your suggestions  
and instructions bearing on the same  
in regard to our members Exemption  
from military service.

We heartily endorse your proceedings  
and your zeal in the cause for right as  
we hold our faith and practice most  
sacred to the cause of Him who is our Head

With our consent, you have the  
endorsement of the sending notices to all  
whom this may apply by following  
harmony in advice we may work together  
and accomplish the end desired

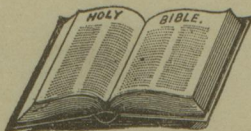
Thanking you for the part and  
soliciting your continuance

I remain as ever. A. Beach

Matt. 28. 19-20

Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and lo, I am with you always, *even* unto the end of the world.  
Amen.

Foreign Mission Board of The Brethren in Christ Church



Matt. 9. 37-38

Then saith he unto his disciples, The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few; Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest.

Gormley Apr, 24 th, 191 8

Eld S. F. Cauffman.

Vineland. Ont.

Beloved Brother.

I wish to express my, and our appreciation of the work you are doing for the guidance of our people in respect to the things which are taking place up at Ottawa, and the way in which our people are being affected thereby. Well we believe that God is still on his throne, and that He does still answer prayer.

Well I have made copies of your communications, and have forwarded them to all our Bishops, with the request that all the congregations be informed as to what is being done for our future liberties.

All this is making a heavy demand on my time just at this time when much is needed to be done both in the church and outside, but religious liberty stands first, and conscientious convictions must be maintained at the cost of even life itself.

Fraternally Yours.

*D. W. Heise*



W. M. M. M.  
S. F. Coffman

Baden Ont April 25<sup>th</sup>/18

Dear Bro:-- Greeting

I received your letter today. Was glad for it. I notice you wish to have the names of those who have applied for exemptions on form you mailed us last.

It is too bad to say it but I have lost that form some way as I cannot find it any more we have only a few young brethren here who have applied for exemption. One young Bro Luther Snyder is gone out west. Bro Isaac Snyder is at home he told me that he had applied for exemption as a farmer and also as mennonite. We have a few brethren that have not communed with

us for some reason or other.  
perhaps just careless or indifferent  
and not living up to their duty.  
Of this class we have Bro John  
Shantz who also is gone west.  
And our own son Byron Wismer  
Byron was examined last fall  
and placed in Class D 111 and  
has now been examined April  
24<sup>th</sup> and placed in class a. 2.  
and was told he would be called  
out at once. He is 23 years and  
9 months and if I understand  
right the exemptions of ages  
20. 21. and 22 have been cancelled  
But other drafties remain  
as before. Byron and Mama  
had claimed exemption as a  
farmer last fall when I  
was out west as I came  
home on November 28<sup>th</sup>

3

This <sup>is</sup> now a sad case for us as we thought we could not give him a letter in good standing and so applied at once for exemption as a farmer and I also wrote Justice Duff and told him we were Mennonites and were disfranchised last fall and did not vote and therefore appealed to him for my son. Our next boy is 19 since Oct 17 1817 and for this reason I was glad to have your letter.

Now about Byron I do not know what to do as it looks as if he would be called. He however feels as if he could do no combatant service I feel sorry for him. Would you please give me your advise as to what to do in his case

Byron was received into church fellowship some six or seven years ago. He has stayed away from communion for about four years. I well know that he has been going to places where he should not go. But as some one said this war is beginning to show some of us our place. I should have stated that I appealed to Justice Duff to have Byron <sup>servijel</sup> exempted from combatant. I do not know whether this was right as I said before I wish I could have your advice. I am looking for an answer at once and please also state what to do if he is called by the time you write.

Now we have a few more  
 young men Bro + Sister Eph Snyder  
 have two boys H Snyder aged 21  
 and E Snyder 23.

Herman Shantz's have one son  
 Russel Shantz <sup>19 years</sup> his mother is a  
 sister also Elmer Shantz <sup>19 years</sup> who is  
 gone west and our son  
 Milton Wismer 19 years

Now I would be glad for  
 advice about these boys  
 You know the most of these  
 boys thought that exemption  
 as a farmer was just as good  
 until lately. I meant to say  
 as Non-Combatant

Yours Truly

Oscar H Wismer

R.R. 2.

Bader  
 Ont

Breslau, Ont., April 25th, 1918.

S. F. Coffman,  
Vineland, -Ont.

Dear Brother:- Greeting.

Enclosed please find the report of the exemptions of the brethren of our congregation. We have only four, but we are just as much concerned about them as if there were four hundred. Especially since the order-in- council so recently passed seems to place these exemptions in the cipher list.

Received your circular letter, and thank you for the advice that it contains. I believe that we must do all that we can to influence the government in our favor, or in other words, to keep the promise made to our fore fathers, but I think the greatest need of our people at present is prayer. It strikes me that so many have been careless and indifferent, and that the sooner we wake up to the seriousness of the situation the sooner the blessings for which we are seeking will be granted to us.

Hoping and trusting that the information that you are gathering will be of benefit to our young brethren, and praying that our people will have confidence in the protection of God,

I am as always,

Your brother,

*Oscar Burkholder*

*M. Koppen*  
*John Bascho*  
*J.R. Glasole*  
*Peter Bredt*

Vineland Ont., April 26, 1918.

Dear Brother:- Greeting.

Your reports concerning the exemption claims are received and are satisfactory. As far as the new Law is concerned it is as definite as was the former law and we have the same right to claim exemption as formerly, by including ourselves under the Exceptions of the Act. Mennonites are not required to register. Some of the boys have received notices to report for service. We have wired the Hon. Mr. Calder at Ottawa to give us information and to look after the matters there. We will report as soon as we have word from him. Do nothing unless you receive notice to report, and then go to the Local or district Tribunal and present your church membership certificate and ask to have the call cancelled as Mennonites are excluded from the Act. We hope to have instruction very soon. Pray for the peace of the country and for our righteous testimony and for the glory of our Lord in it all.

Am in a hurry to make a trip to Toronto, over Sunday.

Pray for your servant,

In faith, Yours,



# House of Commons

OTTAWA

April 26th, 1918.

Rev. S. F. Coffman,  
Vineland, Ont.

Dear Mr. Coffman:

I have just received a ruling from the Central Appeal Judge, regarding appeals for exemptions from the Military Service of members of the Mennonite Church.

He states that members other than the Mennonites affected by the Order in Council who have claimed exemption from combatant service, where the membership is bonafide, have been granted exemption by the Central Appeal Judge, although the number of cases coming in before him has been quite small.

I see that this last Order in Council calling out all the young men from 19 to 23 has been interpreted as exempting Mennonites from combatant service only and that they are still liable for non-combatant service. It is unfortunate that in the Military Service Act you were not exempted in full the same as the Russian Mennonites. I am discussing this question at every opportunity with those in authority and will let you know of any change in the situation.

FSS/MHS.

Yours very sincerely,

*F. Scott.*



Vineland Ont., April 23, 1918.

Hon. J. A. Calder,  
Minister of Immigration and  
Colonization,  
House of Parliament,  
Ottawa.

Honourable Sir:-

Today I sent to you a Telegram as follows:-

"Some of our boys are receiving notices to report. Is this in keeping with instructions under the New Act? What advice for them?"

We were under the impression that our people are excepted from the Act, and that the Tribunals and Registrars would not call those who are Mennonite or Tunkers, whose Church Principles are known to be averse to all military service. Will instructions be sent from headquarters to such Tribunals and Registrars, not to call any of those who have registered as Mennonites or Tunkers, or will each one who is called be obliged to go to the place of enlistment and there under the ordeal of again proving his bonifide membership of a non-resistant Church. We supply to all of our boys certificates of Church membership which they presented when claiming exemption under the former Act. We are awaiting definite and favorable consideration of our appeals.

Yours truly,

Secretary of Committee.



P.

OFFICE OF  
THE MINISTER OF IMMIGRATION  
AND COLONIZATION

Ottawa,

27th April, 1918.

Dear Sir,-

I am in receipt of your telegram reading  
as follows:-

"Some of our boys receiving notices to  
"report. Is this in keeping with instruction  
"under new Act. Want advice for them."

I am taking the matter therein referred  
to up with the Minister of Militia and will ask  
him to deal with same.

Yours sincerely,

S. S. Coffman, Esq.,  
Vineland,  
Ontario.

Breslau April 29, 1918

Dear Brother

Enclosed find a notice of leave to appeal to the Central Appeal Judge. Would you please advise me how to proceed further with it whether you think it is of any use to add anything more to what we have written before.

A number of people have been telling me to appeal ~~as a~~ ~~for~~ on the two grounds as a conscientious Objector and farmer. I have rented the ~~farm~~ from father there would be no one here to do the work if they took me away. There might be a chance of getting on those grounds but it might not be any good for

my paper reads exempt from  
Combatant Service

any length of time

I am not in the class from 19 to 23  
so would hardly be called out  
right away. Bro Maurice Kinsie is  
in that class and had been exempted  
as a farmer. It looks as though  
he might have trouble now

My prayer to God is that he  
might direct us in all things. And  
if we will be tested and tried  
for our faith may he give us the  
needed grace to remain faithful.

Your brother in faith

Israhel Dettweiler

R R no 2 Breslau

The enclosed is for helping pay for  
your trouble and expense with this <sup>work</sup>

Lion Head

April 29/10

Dear Sir  
Mr Broadway filled  
out his Exemption paper  
Satisfactorily to himself

R. E. Herington  
Lion Head

0725



OFFICE OF  
THE MINISTER OF IMMIGRATION  
AND COLONIZATION

-E.C.

Ottawa, Ontario,  
29th April, 1918.

Dear Sir,-

I am in receipt of your letter of the 26th instant, and as you will observe from my letter to you of Saturday last, which has crossed yours, I have already taken the matter therein referred to up with the Minister of Militia, who will deal directly with same. You may expect to hear from the Militia authorities shortly in reply to the questions which you raise as to the exemption of your young men from military service.

Yours truly,

Minister of Immigration &  
Colonization.

S. F. Coffman, Esq.,  
Vineland,  
Ontario.

Baden April 29<sup>th</sup>/18

Dear Brother Greeting

Received your Letter from the 20<sup>inst</sup>  
and learned that not much have been done yet at the  
Government concerning our Boys but hope that God  
may soon through his grace and mercy provide  
ways that our Boys may be free from all military  
Services.

Further you will please find a postal note  
of Sixteen Dollars & Twenty Five cents \$16.<sup>25</sup>/<sub>100</sub> from some  
of our Boys to help to cover further your expenses  
in this time of Trials hope you will kindly  
except same with love to the congregation  
and use the same to the benefit of our Boys and  
the sake of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ who  
shed his Blood for us all.

This leaves us well hope will meet  
you the same.

From your Brother in Christ  
Chr Gasehd

Baden

S.A.

Vineland, Ont., April 30, 1918.

Christin Gascho,  
Baden Ont.,

Dear Brother:- Greeting.

Your letter received today, and also the Money Order for \$16.25, which represents the good will and love of the young brethren for what services we have endeavored in their behalf, in securing the privileges of freedom of worship and service to our God. I am only sorry that our efforts have, so far been producing so uncertain results. It is true that as yet none of our boys have been called upon to enter military service. We pray that the test may not need to come. May our hearts all be so true to our Master and lives so drawn to fellowship with Him that His love may protect us and His blessed, hand shelter us from the powers that might seek to molest or hurt us in any way. We know that His hands were pierced by His enemies and ours but, his hands are now able to save us because they are no longer nailed to a cross, They hold the Sceptre of the Kingdom of God in heaven. We pray for His mighty defense and deliverance.

We certainly feel grateful to our brethren for what they have done for us. Their help has come like God's ravens to Elijah, to bring us our daily bread and make it possible for us to go on in our work for the Master. And we pray that His blessing may return richly to all those interested in spiritual blessings that will enrich their lives and make them to enjoy the fullness of His love, May they all seek earnestly the Heavenly blessings of peace and love and purity.

I am enclosing again one correspondence that has come back from the Government. We have not yet received the notice that we have been expecting, but trust that we may soon hear favorably to the direct questions that we have sent to the Government. The military matters have been taken out of the hands of the Military Service Council, which is a branch of the civil Government and has been placed largely in the hands of the Militia department. This is the reason that the last letters which we have written to the member of Parliament has been referred to the Minister of Militia. With the Prime Minister to hear from regarding our Relief Organization and the Minister of Militia and the report of the Chief Justice Duff, we will likely have a decision regarding our position. I am sorry that we have no more definite information to hand at present. We are still hoping and praying, and may the Lord direct these matters for us as He has done in other things and at many other times.

Yours in faith,



M.S.A.

Vineland Ont., April 30, 1918.

Isiah Dettweiler,  
Breslau, Ont.,

Dear Brother:- Greeting.

Your letter with enclosures received. Thank you for your personal interest in our welfare, and may God reward you for what you thus minister to his servants.

Regarding the appeal to the Central Appeal Judge, I am glad that you have succeeded in getting your appeal through. Many of those who have applied have been refused the Appeal to the Central Judge, unless they appealed the second time for rehearing.

If you have followed the instructions on the yellow slip that accompanied your letter from the District Tribunal when you received notice that your request to appeal to the Central Judge was refused, you sent a duplicate of your reasons for appealing. If you did this you will not need to trouble yourself further as to stating your case before the Central Judge. If you did not send your reasons in duplicate to the District Registrar or Tribunal, then you should write out two letters exactly the same and address them to the Central Appeal Judge at Ottawa, as follows,

Date, -----

Central Appeal Judge  
Military Service Council,  
Ottawa,

Honorable Sir:-

I hereby appeal my claim for exemption from all military service, which claim was refused by the Appeal Tribunal at Kitchener Ont., basing my claim on the following grounds:-

1. The Mennonite Church, of which I'm a member, forbids its members engaging in combatant and non-combatant military service.
2. The Military Service Council has uniformly replied to all inquiries by members of our Churches that all Mennonites are excluded from the operation of the Military Service Act.

Serial Number, -----

Consecutive number, -----

Name, -----

Address, -----

May the Lord bless your efforts in making this appeal. Pray for his aid for all others in similar circumstances. Those whose exemptions for religious reasons have not been honored should appeal as members of the Mennonite Church. No Tribunal had a right to set aside the religious grounds and grant exemptions for other reasons.

Yours in faith,

S. J. Coffman

To the Brethren of the  
Exemption Committee to Ottawa,  
and N-R Relief Committee.

*Copy*

Vineland Ont., April 30, 1918.

Dear Brethren:- Greeting.

Another letter explaining what has been done regarding our Exemption claims. A notice came to me that a member of the Mennonite faith, -non-resistant-, at North Bay had received notice to report for service at the Exhibition grounds in May. Feeling that this was a step which showed possible conduct of officials, I at once wired to Hon. J.A. Calder, Ottawa, as follows:- "Some of our boys receiving notices to report. Is this in keeping with instructions under new Act? What advice for them?" The following is his reply by mail, - Ottawa, April 27, ----- # " I am taking the matter therein referred to up with the Minister of Militia and will ask him to deal with same."

Herewith I will give the chief points of the replies to the letters of April 28th, of which you have had a copies, to Mr. J. A. Calder and Mr. F.S. Scott.

" I have just received a ruling from the Central Appeal Judge, regarding appeals for exemption from military service of members of the Mennonite Church. He states that members other than the Mennonites effected by the Order in Council who have claimed exemption from combatant service, where the membership is bona fide, have been granted exemption by the Central Appeal Judge, although the number has been quite small. I see that his 1st Order in Council calling out all the young men from 18 to 23 has been interpreted as exempting Mennonites from combatant service only, and that they are still liable for non-combatant service. It is unfortunate that in the Military service Act you were not exempted in full the same as the Russian Mennonites. I am discussing this question at every opportunity with those in authority, and will let you know of any change in the situation."

Dated, Apr. 26. Yours very sincerely, Signed, F.S.Scott.

Ottawa, Apr. 29th-1918.

"I have already taken the matter referred to up with the Minister of Militia, who will deal directly with you same. You may expect to hear from the Militia authorities shortly in reply to the questions which you raise as to the exemptions of your young men from military service. - Yours truly, - Signed J.A.Calder.

We have now to hear from the Prime Minister as to the Relief Fund, and our exemptions in connection with it. We have to hear from the Chief Justice on some of the exemptions claims sent to him, and from the Minister of Militia regarding the new Act. We should understand that under the New Act, the Mennonites excepted are exactly the same as under the former Act. Mr Scott understands that our position is identical with that of the Russian Mennonites, and therefore we are entitled to the same exceptions and should have been allowed such exemption.

Your Secretary is now preparing a statement of the variety of exemptions received under the Tribunals and will place the statement before the members of the Government with whom we have corresponded asking them to secure some uniform action or decision which will cover all of them. Meanwhile let all encourage our brethren to continue their appeals. Yours in faith,

*S. F. Coffman*

M.S.A.

Exemption Committee to Ottawa,  
and N-R Relief Committee.

Vineland Ont., April 30, 1918.

Dear Brethren:- Greeting.

Another letter explaining what has been done regarding our Exemption Claims. A notice came to me that a member of the Mennonite faith, -non-resistant, - at North Bay had received notice to report for service at the Exhibition Grounds in May. Feeling that this was a step which showed possible conduct of officials, I at once wired to Hon. J.A. Calder, Ottawa, as follows:- "Some of our boys receiving notices to report Is this in keeping with instructions under the new Act? What advice for them?" Received the following reply by mail, "Ottawa, April 27,----- "I am taking the matter therein referred to up with the Minister of Militia and will ask him to deal with the same."

Herewith I will give the chief points of the replies to the letters of Apr. 22, to Mr. J.A. Calder and Mr. F.S. Scott, of which you have had copies:-

"Apr. 26.--I have just received a ruling from the Central Appeal Judge, regarding appeals for exemption from military service of the Mennonite Church. He says that members other than the Mennonites effected by the Order in Council who have claimed exemption from combatant service, where the membership is bonafide, have been granted exemption by the Central Appeal Judge, although the number has been quite small. I see that this last Order in Council calling out all the young men from 19-23 has been interpreted as exempting Mennonites from Combatant service only, and that they are still liable for non-combatant service. It is unfortunate that in the Military Service Act you were not exempted in full the same as the Russian Mennonites. I am discussing this question at every opportunity with those in authority, and will let you know of any changes in the situation." Yours very sincerely, - signed, F.S. Scott.

"Ottawa, Apr. 29th, 1918. ---- "I have already taken the matter up with the Minister of Militia, who will deal directly with same. You may expect to hear from the Militia Authorities shortly in reply to the questions which you raise as to the exemptions of your young men from military service  
Signed, -- J.A. Calder.

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Your Secretary is now preparing a statement of the variety of exemptions received under the Tribunals and will place the statement before the members of the Government with whom we have corresponded asking them to secure some uniform action or decision which will cover all of them. Meanwhile let all encourage our brethren to continue their appeals.

yours in faith,

S.F. Coffman.

To the Right Honorable Sir R.L. Borden K.C.M.G. Premier of the Dominion of  
Canada and the other Honorable Members of your Cabinet:-

We the undersigned petitioners agriculturists of the counties of Lincoln and Welland in the Province of Ontario, all loyal subjects of His Majesty King George the Fifth, all wishing to work for the National Interests, having been led to believe that food production is one of the essentials of the present world struggle and will be one of the means of obtaining a successful issue. Our wives and children have helped and are still prepared to make greater sacrifices in this line provided it is not made an impossibility for them to assist in maintaining production by loss of efficient help.

We would respectfully point to the loyalty and devotion shown in the past by the large percentage of volunteers that have proceeded from the Counties of Lincoln and Welland,

Having read with deep concern your recent order-in-Council calling all men in the midst of seeding operations between the ages of twenty and twenty two to the colors without any provisions for leave of absence we believe will hinder and discourage agriculturists in the following of their present occupation, and in many cases leave valuable farms entirely abandoned,

This section of Country being given to very intensive farming requires and MUST HAVE skilled labor which is only attained by careful training and close application and will be impossible to fill if the present skilled labor is taken off the farms.

Your petitioners humbly but firmly protest against the terms of the order in Council referred to; believing the Officer Commanding the district should have authority in proper cases to allow <sup>them</sup> temporary leave of absence, and would suggest some one be appointed who has the necessary qualification to represent the agricultural interest of the Counties of Lincoln and Welland for representation to the Officer Commanding Military District No. 2 for the purpose of obtaining leave of absence for proper cases of farmers and farm laborers who are bonafide engaged in the production of foodstuffs

And your petitioners will as in duty bound ever pray,

Jordan April 30<sup>th</sup> 1918

"Farmers' sons who are honestly engaged in the production of food will be exempt from military service, and if I continue to be Minister of Militia I will give you my word that if any farmers' sons ~~xxxx~~ who are honestly engaged in farm work and in the production of foodstuffs - if they are not exempted by the Tribunals and are called up for military service - I will have them honorably discharged from the Canadian Expeditionary Force, provided they go back to the farm, because it is very important that we should increase our production of foodstuffs."

Whereas the above pledge was made by the Minister of Militia in the presence of Premier Borden of Dundas, on November 24th last, and

Whereas it was prominently advertised throughout the Dominion as an essential plank in the platform of the Union Government, which was then seeking the suffrages of the electors, which suffrages it subsequently received and

Whereas the overseas demand for food has not since decreased, but has on the contrary become more emphatic and imperative than ever, and

Whereas the recent order in Council violates the pledge under which the farmers of this country, at much cost to themselves, were loyally responding to the call for increased production, and

Whereas the provisions of the said Order in Council, if applied to the farming community, will seriously and permanently cripple them in the work undertaken as well as positively imperil the cause of the allied nations: therefore resolved.

1- That it is the bounden duty of the Government to implement to the full its pledge to exempt all bona fide farmers engaged in the work of food production or honorably to discharge them from the Expeditionary Force, and to retain them upon the farm until their place can be adequately filled by experienced labor.

2- That in making this demand it is due to ourselves to say that we are not actuated by motives of self-interest. It would not be made if the necessary work could be done with lessened help or with the help of inexperienced men, nor are we asking for class legislation. Hard farm facts are in steady conflict with all academic theory. We aim to avert a wholesale tragedy.