

M.S.A.

Vineland Ont ., May 1, 1918.

John R. Ebersole,
Milverton Ont.

Dear Brother:- Greeting.

Your letter was in part answered in my last, which was written very hurriedly, just as I was ready to leave home for Toronto. I am enclosing a copy of a letter to some of the Brethren who were at Ottawa to see after these military matters, and believed that you would be interested to know what is going on. The situation is not yet clear. The Chief Justice, Mr. Duff, seems to have the opinion that our people are to be relieved only from combatant service, while the Russian brethren are exempted altogether from the power of the Act. This produces the situation that we have two classes of people in the land who are identical as to their faith but who are held under two different standards. We are continuing our efforts, trusting to the guidance of our Heavenly Father.

Regarding the brethren who have not appealed, I think that, if possible they should continue their appeals, if allowed to do so. The Chief Justice says that only a few cases have come before him, and this is undoubtedly the case since the Tribunal have been refusing to allow the appeals. Our claims are of a religious nature, and should be acknowledged. It is not a question as to whether the country can spare our labor or not, but one of whether the country will allow us to follow our sincere sense of duty to our God.

Yours in faith,

St. J. Coffman

Markham, May 1st. '18.

Dear Brother,

Last evening Bro. L.J B. called at our place and after reading some correspondence I have had with Ottawa re M.S.A. and the Mennonites, he asked me to write you giving a synopsis of the same. Might say that for three weeks I have been used up with "shingles" and at present I am only about 50% par -- that is all that prevents me from sending copies of letters received. As soon as I heard of the Order-in-Council cancelling all exemptions for certain ages, I at once wrote Hon. N.W. Rowell, Pres. of the Privy Council, asking him to tell me just where we stood. Years ago Rowell was at our home quite a few times during an election ~~xxxxxxx~~ campaign for as you know, father was quite an active worker in that line. Naturally, having an acquaintance with Rowell, I wrote to him in preference to others. I went into the matter from every angle, explaining that while the Minister of Justice had stated we were excepted from the Act, others, including Mr Justice Duff, Judge Winchester, and Registrar Osler had declared otherwise. I explained about the Russian Mennonite agreement, and finally asked him to let us know the truth no matter what it was, so that we would know just where we were at. I at ^{once} ~~once~~ received a personal letter from Rowell, and among other things, he stated that "we have been in touch with the Military Council" and they say". He goes on to say that "Mennonites undoubtedly come under the Act as exceptions to the same and that they have no duty whatever to perform under the same. I wrote back at once thanking him and asking him to see that this information be given at at once ~~Txxxxxxx~~

to Registrar Wilson so that he act accordingly and save a lot of needless

~~trouble~~ ^{trouble} and worry to all concerned. I never expected an answer to this

letter but on Monday of this week a bulky document came from Mr Rowell's private secretary. The envelope contained a letter from the secretary,

a copy of his letter to Col. Machin, Head of the Military Service Council and ^a reply from Machin. My letters had been forwarded to the Military

Service Council, and Machin writes to Rowell's Secretary very clearly on the matter at issue. He states that "Mennonites are undoubtedly excepted

from the Act and have no duty to perform in connection therewith."

"I take this to ~~mean~~ ^{mean} that that Mennonites, if arrested for non-compliance with the Act, would be immediately released by the Police Magistrate on proving to the Magistrate's satisfaction that he was, in fact, a Mennonite."

But the best part of the reply from Machin is the concluding sentence of his letter which reads as follows:- "As requested, I am sending a copy of

this letter to Mr. C. Leslie Wilson, the Ontario Registrar, for his information". I think that latter assurance will save a lot of

trouble and it is the one object I had in view in taking ~~up the matter~~ up the Matter with Hon Mr Rowell. ~~It will be~~ It will be very necessary

that any of the boys of the ages specified under the recent Order-in Council carry with them at all times, a certificate of membership as after a few

days, exemption certificates will be worthless. All faithfully well except myself and I might be worse.

With kindest regards and best wishes,

Fraternally Yours,

J. L. Byer

M. S. A.

Vineland Ont., May 1, 1918.

Oephan Wisne,
Baden Ont.

Dear Brother:- Greeting.

Your letter to hand. I am sorry that you did not have all of the particulars that we asked for. I am sending you a sheet with some of the names you suggested. I wish that you would fill it out for us. I would like the names of those who are members first. Then those who are members but who have not communed. Then those who are not members and who are sons of members. Please fill out what they have received from the Tribunals.

It is indeed a sad trial for you and your family. We hope that conditions will soon change so that we may have more hope for our boys. In connection with those brethren who have held back from the Communion. If they have been keeping up their Christian life and are willing to take up their fellowship with the Church for other than the reason that they would like to be exempt from military service, they should have the privilege of doing so. Nothing should keep them from confessing their sins and being at peace with God and having fellowship with the Church. Warn them to do the right thing and serve God. No one can keep them from uniting and continuing in the fellowship of the Church. When once they are in the Church where they feel they should be and, if they feel that it is wrong for them to enter the army or take any part of military service they have the same right that any other of our brethren have who would be called to serve. They would be in a position to refuse on account of their faith. These boys have been brought up as Mennonites and believe in its teachings, and none of them have enlisted of their own choice. But if they respond and enlist as soldiers of their own choice the Church cannot help them. We are expecting to stand by all of our brethren who stand by the principles of the Church.

We have no reply as yet to our letter asking about the boys who are not yet of age. We hope to hear very soon. This is a time when all of us should be engaged in prayer for the relief of our young people whose lives have been consecrated to God for love and peace. We should also pray for those who are obliged to enter the service of the army against their convictions. May the Lord hasten the day of peace and cause these terrible troubles to pass by.

We ought to encourage as many of our young people as possible to give their hearts to the Lord. We know that they will need His help now as much as at any time of their lives. Why should they not do their duty to their God? What should prevent them from uniting their lives with the people of God. We would not encourage any of them to do so on account of keeping out of the army. That is altogether a wrong motive. But, if their souls need to be saved how can they do their duty toward their souls, toward God and toward the world without their obedience to the word of God and in the Church? It is not the Church that they obey, but God. The Church does not have control over their souls, it is God. If they believe that God says it is wrong for them to engage in warfare with carnal weapons, and they have consecrated themselves to do the will of God, they consecrate themselves to God in a life of peace and good will to men, and are responsible to Him. Let us continue to love Him, obey Him, and teach His Word to men. Continue in prayer.

Hows in faith,

Markham, May 2nd. "18.

Dear Brother,

After sending you letter yesterday, Bro. Goudie of the M.B.C. Stouffville came down to my place to look over the correspondence referred too in my letter to you. He also showed me letter from you just received. It seems strange there is such a difference of opinion as is shown by letters to you from Calder and Scott, and one hardly knows what to think about it.

One thing sure, at the present time the Registrar, Mr. C. Lesslie Wilson of Toronto, is being guided by instructions from Col. Machin, Director of the Military Council as the following incident proves.

A son of Mr David Hoover of Gormley, and a member of the M.B.C., along with many others around her, recently received notice to report in a few days. he at once wrote back saying that he was a Mennonite, and a reply came from registrar Wilson by next mail, saying that it was a mistake that the notice was sent as he was a Mennonite and exempted under the Act. he was told to keep this letter as a valid excuse for not reporting, and that they would shortly send him an exemption certificate. My hopes and prayers are that this will be the procedure in all such cases,

Yours in a hurry,

J.L. Byer.

Markham, May 3rd. '18.

Dear Brother,

No doubt you will be surprised to be getting another letter from me so soon again, but a moments talk over the phone a few minutes ago prompts me to do so.

Last night Fletcher Gowdie, son of Elder S. Goudie of the M.B.C. and our school teacher Archie Stouffer of the same branch, received orders to report for service on the 15th of this month. Both went down to the ^{reg}register today, and they were both told they were outside of the Act.

The registrar has instructions from Machin of the Military Service Council and it is to be hoped that no one interferes to change the order of things as they are at present in so far as we are concerned.

It looks though ^{all} the boys will be called, and I have an idea that a registered letter sent to the Registrar with membership certificate would be just as good as a personal call on the Registrar. Will learn more as to what to expect when I get a chance to see Bro. Goudie as I did not care to say much over the phone.

best wishes,

With kindest regards and
Fraternally, J.L.B.

Waterloo. R. R. 2.

May. 3. 1918.

Dear Bro. Greeting

The new order in Council and military service act is drawing in its net the ~~com~~ exemptions are all canceled and are calling the Boys. where as you have been doing considerable work with regard to mennonites being free from military service have you got the confidence of the Government that we are and if so, what action do we have to take so as not to be cause an offence. as our son Floyd is called to report for service May. 5th at head quarters. London. he is not a member of the Church, he has not

(2)

made a religious desecision
 goes to our Church and
 Sunday school. Can we do
 any thing to avoid going
 or if he has to go and
 report can we draw some
 paper to present to the office
 and there by claim exemption.
 The notice as sent from
 headquarters has no provision
 for exemption unless he
 on being found medically
 unfit, he will be allowed
 to return home.

This leaves us well.

answer by return mail
 if possible.

Yours in his service
 Jesse Martin

Waterloo R.R. 2

Faristock May 5th 1918

Dear Brother S. F. Hoffman
Vinland Ont. - Greeting
We have reasons to praise the
Lord for his goodness - day by
day. Cause of writing is this
Two of our young brethren have
received notice to report for
duty on May 14th.

Received your telephone message
to John R. Ebersole Milverton last
night and were very glad for the
information.

Our young brethren were with
me this morning and we did
the best we knew to fulfil
the instructions given
and do now hope and pray
that we may receive grace
from those in authority

The young brethren were very
-down-hearted and we tried to
point them to look to the Lord Jesus
for their only help and to stand
for the name of the Lord without
wavering. let us continue in
prayer for the whole brotherhood

yours in faith

Jacob R Bender

Yavistock R R 1

we will let you know as
soon as we hear from London
again

Ridgeway 5, 3, 18

S. F. Coffman

Vineland

My Bro Greeting

yesterday I got notice that Bro Norman Winger of Bertie (reported in those blanks) to you, (Farmer) who received his Exemption papers at the local tribunal, Bridgeburg, has received word to appear in Toronto the first part of next week. He has been a member in good standing for over 6 years and applied for Exemp on those grounds, and got it without any questioning at all

What is the object of his being called to Toronto, He wants me to go along

What suggestions have you to give him and how to procede under the circumstances. He is the only son on the large farm with his father. An early reply is desired.

Thanking you for the past

I remain as ever Asa B. Barse

COPY.

Glynn Osler,
Ontario Registrar,

B-5.

Department of Justice,
Military service Branch.

Office of Ontario Registrar
Under Military Service Act.

Board of Trade Bldg.

Toronto, Ont.

May 3rd, 1918.

Name, Elmer Ross Lehman.
Address- 214 First Ave. E. North Bay.
Serial No. 803352
Local Ex. Tri- 204.
Consec. N - 234
Appal Tri-
Consec No.

Dear Sir-

Re your order to report for duty to
1st Battalion 1st C.O.R. at Toronto on May 13, 1918
on investigation it is found that you have been granted the fol-
lowing exemption,

-----Mennonite-----

and certificate to that effect will be mailed you in due course.

You may accept this letter as a cancellation of the
above Order to Report.

Yours truly,

Glynn Osler,

pc.

Assistant Registrar.

M.S.A.

Vineland Ont., May 4, 1918.

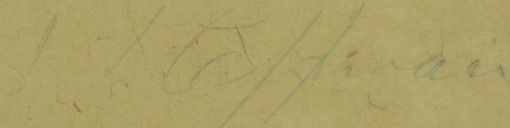
Asa Bearss,
Ridgeway Ont.

Dear Brother:- Greeting.

Your letter received and noted with interest, and sorrow. As yet we have had no authentic statement to our appeals to the Government. We have had a letter from Bobber J.L. Byer, stating that the Chairman of the Privy Council, the Hon. N. W. Rowell, has written him to the effect that Mennonites were excluded in the provisions of the new Act, and that notice had been sent to the Provincial Registrar at Toronto, Mr. Leslie Wilson, to the effect that the Mennonites should not be called into service. There has been one case, a son of Mr. David Hoover, of Gormley a member of the M.B.C. who was called. He wrote at once that he was a Mennonite and received notice that his call was a mistake, and that he would shortly be sent his exemption papers. I am not aware that all cases will be treated thus. I am not sure what will be the position of the Provincial Registrar regarding the Tunker Brethren. It seems to me that the best way would be to send notice at once to the Registrar, that his faith forbids his engaging in any form of military service, and that the Local Tribunal disregarded the fact, and that the matter of his total exemption was now in the hands of the Government along with the petition of the Mennonites. Ask an early reply. If it will be necessary for you to go to Toronto, you should present the correspondence which we have had with the Government and if possible get the matter postponed until the decision comes. In order to hasten matters I am sending now, a communication to the Prime Minister and to the Chairman of the Privy Council stating the present situation and the urgency of the matter and asking that the authorities be instructed as well as ourselves so that there will not need to be any embarrassment regarding our position and for our young men.

I am sorry that matters have moved so slowly. We have been making every possible claim that we could and have always included the Tunker and the Amish Brethren in our claims and may not yet have made it clear that the Tunker Brethren are in the same grave trouble that we experience. May the crisis soon be past and the grace of God appear to us in the glory and beauty of peace and holiness. Will mail you a copy of the communication as soon as possible. May God give you special grace and intervene for our brother.

Yours in faith,



Class First Petition signed by our Brethren.

Vineland Ont., May 4th, 1918.

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

Honourable Sir:-

In view of recent developments in connection with the Order in Council providing for recruits for military service, we are desirous to address you to receive information and assistance. We appreciate the privilege of having your services so willingly extended to us.

Members of our Churches,- Mennonite, Amish Mennonite and Tunker,- are being called to present themselves for military service. These young men are under the impression that their exemptions have all been cancelled and that the Government recognizes no claims of conscientious grounds, even when adherents of established churches whose faith forbids military service of every kind. Many of them, who receive no other instructions may be thus obliged to report and may be unwillingly forced into the ranks. We understand that orders have been sent to the Provincial Registrar that Mennonites are excluded by the Order in Council and are not obliged to report. In case there are those who are unwittingly and unwillingly joined to military units, will they be obliged to continue with such units or will they be relieved?

We are sending letters to the Prime Minister and to the Hon. the President of the Privy Council, Mr. N. W. Rowell, stating our position and asking their intervention. Our purpose is, to make clear our position and to prevent the unnecessary suffering which may be placed upon any of our young men. Mr. F. S. Scott, M.P., understands the position of our people in this section of the Country and is endeavoring to have our position and faith understood by the members of the Government.

Enclosed you will find a statement which has been compiled from some of the reports that have come to us from those who hold exemption papers which were granted to members of our churches who applied for exemption as Mennonites, Amish Mennonites and Tunkers. The report includes the disposition of the Appeals and shows the present standing of the applicants, who are still retained as eligible for military service, and who come under the class of those whose exemptions are cancelled by the recent Order in Council, unless they are recognized as of the Classes excepted from the Act and Order in Council.

Our purpose in Applying for total exemption from military service was not for the purpose of evading hardships; not to take advantage of the provisions made for farmers, and to remain at home, since most of our people are resident on farms. It was not for the purpose of taking advantage of improved financial privileges of the farming classes, coming from the war. Our people have never been overly mercenary; there is not a millionaire among them in the history of their more than a hundred years residence in Canada. Yet, the Tribunals that have answered our appeals have been inclined to interpret our appeals as based on desires to claim some material liberties or advantages.

The motive of our appeals for freedom from military servtce has been to be free to fulfill our obligations of loyalty to God, to His Word and to the teachings and example of Jesus Christ, our Saviour. We have pledged our lives to Him to serve Him in every command and in the pactice of peace and love to all men show forth his character and the bæssings of the Gospel of peace and good will to men. We desire to continue the testimony of those who have lived according to these pinciple and have kept these tenets of faith in the history of the Church for more than two caturies, which faith was permitted an existance in some countries and banished from others. We desire to practice these principles and teach them to our children as fundamental to the christian doctrine, character and life, and the very fundation of the happiness of men and the prosperity of nations.

We believe that our Government of Canada will, under evey act, continue to mæe provisions for complete religious liberty. The exercise of our faith is aheritage from the British crown. It was recognized in the old colonia government. It was recognized and especially mentioned for those cæsses who are now involved in this plea, by the Government of Caada over a hundred years ago, and was continued to them uninterruptedly from then until now, and is still recognized, but \according to certain interpetations/ to two spcial Churches, whose faith differéys in no sense regrding the articiel of warfare from those who are mentioned in the statues of Canada as having freedom from military service. There would thus be two laws for the same class of people, and the Statutes are set aside for citizens of long residence and recognized principles, in favor of Ordes in Council for the opossed citizens of other nations who reached out an improing hand for refuge and sftety.

We expect the Government to fully recognize all the non-resistant peple. May I call your attention to the fact tht the Tunker People who were and are represented with us in this plea, have not received the slightest recognition by the Tribunals. Their history is contemporary with that of the Mennonite, being an early branch from this society. Their principles of non-resistance precisely the same, and they hve always sought to carry out those principles and hve ever sought the avor of the Government in being permitted to enjoy the full exercise of their faith by being freed from the ~~required~~ duty of military service, and their recognition has been witnessed to by their names being found on the Statutes of Canada along with the names of the Quakers and Mennonites. It is a gre disappointment to the Tunker brethren tht their young men who subscribed to the clause granti exemption to conscientious objectors, were not granted the couttesy of recognition for religious principles but the majority of them were given exemption as farmers. We feel that the Government should know exactly what our faith is, and had they known, the difficulty that now exists would not likely have ocured. Some one described "conscientious objectors" as those whose tenets of faith firbid "combatant service." We know of no society which subscribes to such articles concerning military service, and the onsequence has been that there has been difficulty with every class of onscientious believer. Those whose Church had no objections to military service were not recognized, and those whose faith forbi d all kinds of military service had no choice but to accept the legl interpretation of the Act, which granted only exemption from military service. This seems to be a case where the Government has unintentionally invaded the precincts of the Church and has decided what its bdiel shall be. We hve handed to the

Government a statement of our faith, and it agrees with the faith and practice of the Church for the last centuries. The Mennonites and Tunkers and Quakers being a unit in matters of military service. May the Government be pleased to properly classify us according to our faith, and continue to us the agreements that have existed for more than a hundred years.

We were greatly disappointed in not being able to continue with our purpose of presenting the Government with a memorial of our gratitude for the past favors of religious liberty and freedom from military service. We felt that the "Exception" granted to Mennonites would be interpreted as applying to all Mennonites and to all the Churches whose faith was described by the Statutes upon which the Order in Council of August 13, 1873 was based. When we learned that its purpose was limited to our Russian Brethren we were disappointed in finding no place for ourselves under the provisions of the Act. Again we were obliged against our wills and convictions to subscribe our names and the Names of our Churches to statements that were not true concerning our faith and were obliged to abide by the legal interpretation of such statements. Again, when the Military service Council took up the matter of deciding upon our claims, and sent out information as under "Tribunal Circular Number 11," Tribunals and other officials seem to have chosen their own course and rendered decisions according to their personal opinions and passed judgment upon those over whom they had no jurisdiction according to the decision of the Military service Council which body represented the Government in safeguarding the rights of citizens under the Act. As a consequence of our members having had to report to the Tribunals, many of them were shamefully abused and needlessly exposed to the heartless badgering of some officials who did not know and could not appreciate the faith of our people. We have been placed in a position in which we have been almost made the subjects of religious persecution. We can scarcely expect to avoid all opposition and suspicion, and even persecution, but we feel that what might be avoided by such favors as our Government may be able to grant us, should be granted us. The statements concerning our exemptions would show that our claims and pleas have seemingly been avoided and all manner of opinions expressed concerning our standing. We do not ask the Government to state what our faith shall be, since that is not the business of any civil Government. We ask only that our faith as non-resistant people may so described and recognized by the Government that any regulations that may be made by the Government may at all times accord us the privilege of religious liberty.

We hope that the Government will recognize us as a law abiding people, and devoted subjects and loyal citizens of our country. We hope that the question of our religious rights may never be called into question in Canada, since her laws have always provided for people of every faith and people of every faith have been accorded the full privileges of citizenship. This is expressed in the words of Lord Bufferin to the Mennonites of Malitoba, - "there is no right or function which we exercise as free citizens in which we do not desire that you should participate, and with this civil liberty and freedom we equally and gladly offer absolute religious liberty." We hope that that our people and others of our faith may always have a place and a home under the British and Canadian ensigns.

It has been intimated to us that the recent Military Service Act and the more recent Order in Council have superceded the Statutes of Canada which provided freedom from Military Service to the Quakers, Tunkers and Mennonites. We hope that these measures, especially enacted for the relief of the aid Churches, in order that they would not be oppressed on account of their religious views, will not require to be re-enacted. But if such is the case, we trust that some measures may be taken by the Government that will restore and permanently safeguard lawful religious beliefs. The non-resistant faith has suffered in every country, even now, in the country to our South, our brethren are suffering virtual imprisonment on account of the position which they hold in regard to carnal warfare. Is there no place where a peace loving people and those who desire to observe the teachings of Christ as a most sacred and vital obligation, may find a home and a place to worship and serve their God and Saviour, save in Canada? We hope that there may be affixed to the one-hundred years record of liberty for the non-resistant faith the seal of the Government which will perpetuate such liberties forever. If it is lawful to believe the teachings and follow the example of Christ, we pray that it may be permitted us. In full accord with the liberality of the Government toward our people we hope that immediate steps may be taken to prevent any of our brethren from being molested or being embarrassed under present regulations, under which some of them may be obliged to refuse to enter military service on account of their faith.

We trust that the Government will give us opportunity to prove our loyalty in civil life and duty. We believe that our support in this respect will be most hearty and loyal. The support of a devoted, grateful and prayerful body of people as represented by our Churches, is pledged to our Government, to the full extent of our power. And we pray that God may long preserve the nation and bless the Government that permits the fullest degree of fellowship between Him and those who worship Him in Spirit and in truth.

We have learned that orders have been issued to the Provincial Registrar at Toronto to the effect that Mennonites are excluded from the Act and Order in Council, and that all Mennonites should be exempted. We trust that this privilege will also be accorded to the Tunker brethren. We trust that all departments that have to do with the issuing of the orders calling men into service will be instructed to refrain from calling members of our Churches. We love our Churches, we hold most sacred these principles, and we have pledged our lives to God to keep these teachings, who has kept us and has promised to keep us to the end if we abide faithful in His Word.

We appreciate the fact that the Government has appointed you, Honourable Mr. Calder, to meet us and deal with us in regard to the matters that have been brought before you. You understand our principles and know our people. We believe that the claims that we have made will not be considered out of order, and that your heartiest support may be given to our cause. We shall be most grateful for your assistance in our behalf.

Most sincerely, Yours,

The Mennonite and Amish Committee,
The Committee of the
Non-Resistant Relief
Organization.

S. F. Coffman
Secretary.

Markham, Ont. May 6th 1918

Dear brother S. F. Greetings - Have you more definite word from Ottawa? I believe bro. Byer has given you a synopsis of his letters from Ottawa. If Scott, Calder, Borden and Duff etc. will just sleep on now and let the instructions of Rowell and Col. Mackin (head of Military Service Council) stand I think our status on the exemption question will be clear. Evidently Mr. Wilson the Registrar in Toronto has been instructed because there were at least three M. B. C men, with church letters, before him last week and their claims were fully allowed. He also told bro. S. Gordie that the River Brethren or Trunkers have the same privileges. Now if you as secretary of committee, had obtained the same assurances from Ottawa I think we would be ready to push the relief work. With this assurance in hand do you think if one or two men would go to Ottawa the word of Rowell & Mackin would be confirmed and possibly the Govt. would be able to give some ~~instructions~~ suggestions for relief work? - Thus our people who are anxious to do something would have opportunity without much further delay.

Bro. Gordie suggested that the Ex. Com. of N. R. R. do meet and issue a circular letter etc and call for contributions. I felt that we should have something more definite

before taking that step.

I submit the following special topics to be considered during conference so far as time will permit. - As a member of the Executive Committee if you will approve the same the Secretary will include these when he issues the program -

1. How can we foster the prayer life in the congregation. - M. H. Shantz.
2. The benefits and dangers of higher education. - S. M. Kanagy.
3. The disentangled Mennonite Preacher - ^{27 Nov 21:4} J. K. Bixler.
4. The effect of the war upon our spirituality. - V. K. Weber.
5. Maintaining our ministerial supply - Jonas Snider.
6. A report of the work of the Non-Resistant Relief Organization, - S. F. Coffman.

Failing to hear anything to the contrary I shall consider that you accept the above named subjects.

Fraternally,

L. J. Burkholder

Vineland Ont., May 7, 1918.

L. J. Burkholder,
Markham, Ont.

Dear Brother:- Greeting.

With his mail I am sending you copies of letters to members of the Government which I am desirous shall have your approval before going out to them. The letter to the Hon. Mr Calder is a summary of all that we have already brought to the attention of the Government. I did not feel that we should have repeated so much or have made such an extensive statement, but the conditions were becoming so oppressively difficult that I thought the statements should be made as clearly and definitely as possible. Mr. Calder will understand all that we have said. The position of the Tunker brethren was not at all clear and they have had practically no recognition from the Government or from the officials that have had to do with their cases.

If you think that there should be a revision of the statements you are at liberty to make them and send the letters on. I am sending copies of these letters to other members of the Committees concerned and also sending letters to the ministers of our Churches, so that they will have instructions as to what to do in connection with those of the brethren who came in the classes called, whose exemptions have been cancelled.

Am very busy and have scarcely time to do this writing. A little spell of rain gives me a chance to do some of it.

Yours in faith,

S. J. Coffman

Calder's letter later.

Baden May 27/1914

S. J. Coffman

Greeting

I have now filled out your sheet as well as I could get information. The boys are being called out in our neighborhood but as yet I have not heard of any Mennonites. I all so notice that our 19 year old boys have to register before the first of June and then may expect to be called soon after. Now if you have any information to give us in regard this matter we would be glad to have it as it seems we have to act quickly.

I am sorry I had lost the other sheet as some of our boys are anxious that some ^{thing} is done to ~~some~~ them

This sure is a testing time and it is only through God and our Saviour that we can trust to accomplish anything. We are all praying for grace and Guidance of God in these hours of trial. Some of our members also think we ought to do more for the relief work and trust we will be lead by God spirit in this work. I might also state that Edgar Snider and Harley Snider are very much concerned as they might be called any day since they had only applied for exemption as farmers which has been canceled. Wishing you God's richest blessing.

Yours Truly

Baden R.R. 2 Osphen H. Wismer
Ont

Vineland Ont., May 7, 1918.

The Honourable Mr. N. W. Rowell,
President of the Privy Council,
House of Parliament,
Ottawa.

Honourable Sir:-

Permit me to address you concerning certain matters concerning which we have had recent dealings with the Government. As the representative of a Committee of the Amish and Mennonite Churches which interviewed the Government regarding the matter of our exemption under the Military Service Act, and representing a Committee of the Non-Resistant Relief Organization, which organization desired information concerning the raising of a memorial fund to be presented to the Government for charitable purposes in recognition of our religious liberty, I desire to acknowledge our gratitude for your interest in our cause as was manifested by your correspondence with one of our Brethren, Mr. J. L. Byer, of Markham, Ont.

We are grateful that the Government has taken steps to inform the Military authorities who are responsible for the calling of the classes into service that the Mennonite people are excluded from the Military Service Act and from the Order in Council calling for recruits for the army. We wish to thank the Government for this intervention and have addressed a letter to the Right Honourable Sir Robert Borden, Prime Minister expressing our gratitude for this and other past favors. We desire the consideration of the Government concerning our position and our faith at this most critical time in our experiences under the Government of Canada. The Honourable J. A. Calder was appointed as a representative of the Government to consider our interests, and we have addressed him more fully in regard to these matters.

The case of the Tinker Church for which we have appealed requires especial consideration, their faith regarding non-resistance being identical with ours, and their association with us in former appeals to the Government for religious liberty is attested to by the former statutes of Canada.

Whatever may be done in relieving us from such duties as are impossible for us to perform on account of our religious convictions will be most gratefully acknowledged with thanksgiving to God.

Humbly and sincerely, Yours,

The Mennonite and Amish Committee,

Secretary.

The Committee of the Non-Resistant
Relief Organization.

To The Right Honourable Sir Robert L. Borden,
Prime Minister of Canada,
House of Parliament,
Ottawa.

Vineland Ont., May 7th, 1918.

Honourable Sir:-

We, the undersigned Committees, desire to express the gratitude of the Churches which we represent for recent regulations which we understand have been made for the relief of those of our brethren who have been called for military service under the new Order in Council, which has cancelled previous exemptions granted them. Our brethren will present their claims as Mennonites and Tunkers, and trust to receive the proper exemptions.

We are again addressing the Government, through the Honourable Mr. Calder, Minister of Immigration and Colonization, who was appointed to meet our Committee concerning certain matters of a donation to the Government from our Churches. We have not been officially informed as to any steps having been taken by the Government concerning our exemptions. The Tunker Church has not been recognized under the Military Service Act, nor under the recent Order in Council. We trust that provisions may be made by the Government whereby religious liberty may be perpetuated and our people of non-resistant faith may always be permitted to enjoy their faith and the practice of the principles of non-resistance under the Government of Canada, for Canada is to them at the present time like an Oasis in a world desert. We cannot be too grateful to our Government for such privileges which we enjoy.

We have written the Hon. Mr. Calder more fully in regard to the matters which concern our relation with the Government on these questions.

Most gratefully and sincerely,

S. J. Coffman
Secretary, for the Committees.

Committee of Mennonite and Amish Churches,

Committee of the Non-Resistant
Relief Organization.

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

Vineland Ont., May 7, 1918.

Honourable Sir:-

In view of recent developments in connection with the Order in Council providing for recruits for military service, we are desirous to address you to receive information and assistance. We appreciate the privilege of having your services so willingly extended to us.

Members of our Churches,- Mennonite, Amish Mennonite and Tunker,- are being called to present themselves for military service. These young men are under the impression that their exemptions have all been cancelled and that the Government recognizes no claims on conscientious grounds, even when adherents of established Churches whose faith forbids military service of every kind. Many of them, who receive no other instructions may be thus obliged to report and may be unwillingly forced into the ranks. We understand that orders have been sent to the Provincial Registrar that Mennonites are excluded by the Order in Council and are not obliged to report. In case there are those who are unwittingly and unwillingly joined to military units, will they be obliged to continue with such units or will they be relieved?

We are sending letters to the Prime Minister and to the Hon. the President of the Privy Council, Mr. N. W. Rowell, stating our position and asking their intervention. Our purpose is, to make clear our position and to prevent the unnecessary suffering which may be placed upon any of our young men. Mr. F. S. Scott, M. P., understands the position of our people in this section of the Country and is endeavoring to have our position and faith understood by the members of the Government. Enclosed you will find a statement which has been compiled from some of the reports that have come to us from those who hold exemption papers which were granted to members of our Churches who applied for exemption as Mennonites, Amish Mennonites and Tunkers. The report includes the disposition of the Appeals and shows the present standing of the applicants, who are still retained as eligible for military service and who come under the class of those whose exemptions are cancelled by the recent Order in Council, unless they are recognized as of the Classes excepted from the Act and Order in Council.

Our purpose in applying for total exemption from military service was not for the purpose of evading hardships, not to take advantage of the provisions made for farmers remaining at home, since most of our people are resident on farms. It was not for the purpose of taking advantage of improved financial privileges of the farming classes, resulting from the war. Our people have never been overly mercenary; there is not a millionaire among them in the history of their more than a hundred years residence in Canada. Yet, the Tribunals that have answered our appeals have been inclined to interpret our appeals as based on desires to obtain some material liberties or advantages.

The motive of our appeals for freedom from military service has been to be free to fulfill our obligations of loyalty to God, to His Word and to the teachings and example to Jesus Christ, our Saviour. We have pledged our lives to Him to serve Him in every Command and in the practise of peace and love to all men, to show forth His character and the blessings

of the Gospel of peace and good will to men. We desire to continue the testimony of those who have lived according to these principles and have kept these tenets of faith in the history of the Church for more than two centuries, which faith was permitted an existence in some Countries and banished from others. We desire to practice these principles and teach them to our children as fundamental to the Christian doctrine, character and life, and the very foundation of happiness of men and the prosperity of nations.

We believe that our Government of Canada will, under every Act, continue to make provisions for complete religious liberty. The exercise of our faith is a heritage from the British Crown. It was recognized in the old Colonial Government. It was recognized and especially mentioned for the classes who are now involved in this plea, by the Government of Canada over a hundred years ago, and was continued to them uninterruptedly from then until now, and is still recognized, but according to certain interpretations/ to only two special Churches, whose faith differs in no sense regarding the article of war-fare, from those who are mentioned in the Statutes of Canada, as having freedom from military service. There would thus be two laws for the same class of people, and the Statutes for citizens of long residence and recognized principles would be set aside in favor of Orders in Council for the oppressed citizens of other nations who reached out an imploring hand for refuge and safety.

We expect the Government to fully recognize all the non-resistant people. May I call your attention to the fact that the Tunker people who were and are represented with us in his plea, have not received the slightest recognition by the Tribunals. Their history is contemporary with that of the Mennonites, being an early branch from the Mennonite society. Their principles of no-resistance are precisely the same, and they have always sought to carry out the principles and have ever sought the favor of the Government in being permitted to enjoy the full exercise of their faith by being freed from the duty of military service, and their recognition has been witnessed to by their name being found on the Statutes of Canada along with the names of the Quakers and Mennonites. It is a source of disappointment to the Tunker brethren that their young men who subscribed to the clause granting exemption to conscientious objectors, were not granted the courtesy of recognition for religious principles, but the majority of them were given exemption as farmers. We feel that the Government should know exactly what our faith is, and had they known, the difficulty that now exists would not likely have occurred. Some one described conscientious objectors as those whose tenets of faith forbid "Combatant service." We know of no society which subscribes to such articles concerning military service, and the consequence has been that there has been difficulty with every class of conscientious believer. Those whose Church had no objections to military service were not recognized, and those whose faith forbid all kinds of military service had no choice but to accept the legal interpretation to the Act, which granted only exemption from "Combatant service" This seems to be a case where the Government has unintentionally invaded the precincts of the Church and has decided what its belief shall be. We have handed to the Government a statement of our faith, and it agrees with the faith and practice of the Church for the last centuries. The Mennonites and Tunkers and Quakers being a unit in matters of military service. May the Government be pleased to properly classify us according to our faith, and continue to us the agreements that have existed for more than a hundred years.

We were greatly disappointed in not being able to continue with our purpose of presenting the Government with a memorial of our gratitude for the past favors of religious liberty and freedom from military service. We felt that the "exception" granted to Mennonites would be interpreted as applying to all Mennonites and to all the Churches whose faith was described by the Statutes upon which the Order in Council of August 13th, 1873, was based. When we learned that its purpose was limited to our Russian Brethren we were disappointed in finding no place for ourselves under the provisions of the Act. Again, we were obliged, against our wills and convictions, to subscribe our names and the names of our Churches to statements that were not true concerning our faith, and we were obliged to abide by the legal interpretation of such statements. Again, when the Military Service Council took up the matter of deciding upon our claims and sent out information, as under "Tribunal Circular, Number 11," Tribunals and other officials seem to have chosen their own course and rendered decisions according to their personal opinions, and passed judgement upon those over whom they had no jurisdiction according to the decision of the Military Service Council which body represented the Government in safeguarding the rights of citizens under the Act. As a consequence of our members having had to report to the Tribunals, many of them were shamefully abused and needlessly exposed to the heartless badgering of some officials who did not know and could not appreciate the faith of our people. We have been placed in a position in which we have been almost made the subjects of religious persecution. We can scarcely expect to avoid all opposition and suspicion, and even persecution, but we feel that anything that the Government could do to avoid such conditions should be graciously granted us. The statement concerning the character of our exemption shows that our religious pleas have seemingly been avoided, since many opinions have there in been expressed. We do not ask the Government to state what our faith shall be, since it is not in the province of civil government to decide religious questions. We only ask that our faith as non-resistant people may be so described and recognized that any regulations that may be made by the Government may at all times accord us the privilege of religious liberty.

We hope that the Government will recognize us as a law abiding people, devoted subjects and loyal citizens of our Country. We hope that the question of our religious rights may never be called into question in Canada, since her laws have always provided for people of every faith who have been accorded the full privileges of citizenship. Lord Dufferin said to the Mennonites of Manitoba, "There is no right or function which we exercise as free citizens in which we do not desire that you should participate, and with this civil freedom we equally and gladly offer absolute religious liberty." We hope that our people and others of our faith may always have a place and a home under the British and Canadian ensigns.

We have written the Prime Minister and the Chairman of the Privy Council, expressing our thanks for what has been done for us and have referred them to you for further information in regard to these matters. Believing that our plea will receive a sympathetic interest and be given earnest consideration, We are,

Committee of Mennonite and Amish.
Non-Resistant Relief
Organization.

Most gratefully, Yours,
The Committees.

Hon. F.S. Scott, M.P.
House of Parliament,
Ottawa.

Vineland Ont., May 7, 1918.

Sir:-

We desire to express to you our pleasure in the matter of the provisions that have recently been made for our people. We have learned that the Provincial Registrar at Toronto has been instructed that the Mennonites are excluded from the Military Service Act, and also under the new Order in Council, and that such as are called now shall be given their exemptions. While this has not come to us from any direct official source, we have learned that such orders are in force and some of our members have been granted exemption under those provisions only recently.

We have directed letters to the Prime Minister and also to the President of the Privy Council thanking the Government for what has been done for our relief. We have also directed another letter to Hon. J. A. Calder, Minister of Immigration and Colonization, summing up our petitions and the reasons for them and asking for continued recognition and provisions for the enjoyment of our religious liberty in the years to come. We also called attention to the fact that the Tunker brethren have not been recognized at all in these provisions for Mennonites. They differ from us in regard to their faith only in name. They are and have been for many years a strictly non-resistant people, and provisions were made for them under the Statutes of Canada.

I am enclosing a copy of a statement of the Character of exemptions granted the Mennonites, Amish and Tunkers and from that you will be able to judge what the Tribunals did with our pleas for exemption on religious grounds, and how our faith was misquoted and disregarded.

We very much appreciate your efforts on our behalf and trust that we may have the assurance from the Government that our interests as far as religious liberty is concerned will always be safeguarded. Our gratitude for such liberties can only be manifested in a greater degree of respect and loyalty toward our Government and a greater zeal to support our country in every possible way to the full extent of our powers.

Yours faithfully and gratefully,

Secretary.

For the Committees.

Mennonite and Amish Committee.

Committee of the Non-Resistant
Relief Organization.

Copy Military Service Act, and Order in Council, 1917, 1918.

Vineland Ont. May 8, 1918

Brethren:- Greeting.

We have reasons to thank God for new mercies. The Ontario Registrar at Toronto, Mr. Lesslie Wilson, has received instructions from the Military Service Council that Mennonites are outside of the Act, and are exempt. Some have already reported that they are Mennonites and have received exemption. In case any of our members are called to report, they should send a registered letter to the Department or Officer from whom the call has come, stating that they are Mennonites, referring to the Serial and Consecutive numbers, which will give the Department access to the Tribunal Records where the evidence of membership may be found, - the Church Certificate having been sent to the Tribunal. In case you have not given your Church Certificate to the Tribunal you should send one with your letter. Do not make use of the money or ticket sent with the order to report for service, under any circumstances. In case you report in person, pay your own fare and return the money or ticket. Those of our members who have not registered or have not been called in any of the previous classes need not register. We have not received official notice of these steps on the part of the Authorities, but have received the information through reliable sources and ~~know that the Government is preparing for the~~ blessings as we may need them. Reports from the Government will be sent out as soon as received. We are awaiting such reports. Yours in faith

S. F. Coffman, For the Committee.

Vineland Ont., May 9, 1918.

Asa Bearss,
Ridgeway Ont.,

Dear Brother:- Greeting.

Just a line this morning. Bro. Isaac Swalm of near Collingwood was here to see me yesterday. His son was called upon to report to Hamilton and was assigned to service there. They had been before the Registrar in Toronto and he told them he must report to Hamilton and arrange there regarding his exemption. The Registrar, in Toronto, has said that the Tinker brethren have the same claim for exemption that the Mennonites have, but he would not allow Bro. Swalm's son the exemption. Bro. Swalm has returned to Toronto and will meet Bro. Heise there and will call upon the Registrar again and bring before him the fact that he has told others that the Tinkers are exempt. We do not know how this case is coming out. If the Registrar gives no satisfaction the case will be brought before the Government at Ottawa at once. It is too bad that these conditions should exist, and the Government have so many opinions about religious liberty.

Bro. Swalm informed me that some of your brethren from Beattie are also called and were obliged to report in Hamilton. I hope that they have not met the same treatment that was accorded Bro. Swalm and his son.

You will find enclosed a copy of a letter to Hon. J.A. Calder. We have endeavored to sum up all the facts concerning our claims. And have especially set forth the claims of the Tinker Brethren. We would have some kind of a reply soon. It has been over a week since we wired Ottawa about our boys being called and have no reply as yet. We must keep up our courage, hope and abide in the faith. The Lord will not forget the prayers of His people.

Yours in Hln,

St. J. Hoff

Elmira, Ont., May 8th, 1918.

Rev. S. F. Coffman,

Vineland, Ont.

Dear Friend:

Greetings.

As I have not received an answer to my wire on Saturday I take it for granted that you had no definite information from Ottawa to act upon.

In our district there are several young men ^{called up.} to report for service. While these men are not enrolled as members of our church they hold certificates as adherents which certificates were treated in different manners by the local tribunals recently in session. Some of the tribunals gave the bearers of these certificates the same privileges as the enrolled members enjoyed while one tribunal absolutely refused to recognize them; and as a result many who had these certificates and were called before this tribunal did not show them and were exempted as farmers only. Some of these men are now called up for service.

In view of this fact, and, as the time for action is limited, I took the liberty to write to the Deputy Registrar at London and also to the Central Appeal Judge at Ottawa, explaining the situation and inquiring as to whether the bearer of such a certificate would, upon presentation to the authorities at London, receive the same consideration as that which will be accorded to enrolled members of the church, whatever the nature of such consideration may be. Mention of the fact was made that we do not uphold child baptism and that these boys were brought ^{up} and educated in the principles of the Mennonite Church by Mennonite parents. I also referred to the fact that such cases were recognized in the M.S.A. of former governments. (1810---50, Geo. III, Chap. 11.)

A reply from London has already been received. They could not give me any definite information but referred me to the G.O.C.M.D. #1, but I fear that I cannot get a reply in time to act upon it although it might be worth the effort. The letter reminded me of the fact that conscientious objectors were exempt from combatant service only and that they were liable to serve behind the lines in Forestry and Construction Battalions.

The question arising to-day is as to what limit the Mennonite may go before he transgresses upon the non-resistant faith of his fore-fathers. I believe it would be well for us to have a definite understanding concerning this point so that the foundation of our faith in this respect may be represented to the authorities in a manner that will be recognized and will bear out the principles of our non-resistant faith. Your advice on this matter will be greatly appreciated.

Thanking you sincerely for the way in which you are keeping me informed and may the Lord bless your efforts, I am,

Yours very truly,

A. M. Bearinger

Vineland Ont., Ma 9, 1918.

L. J. Burkholder,
Markham, Ont.
Dear Brother:- Greeting.

Your letter received and noted. As yet there has been no reply to our petitions to the Government. I do not know why there should be such a constant delay in these matters. We have done all that we could and have kept these matters constantly before the attention of the Government. Yet, I am hopeful for the outcome, since the whole question rests upon the basis of religious liberty. There is not another Society that would brook the interference of the Government in matters of their faith. Nor is it the policy of the Government to interfere with such matters. If our Russian Brethren have been promised an inviolate freedom on account of religious scruples, we have the same privilege. If we have no just claim for our request neither have they. If the Tunkers have no right to ask for religious freedom, neither have we or the Russian brethren. So we feel justified in our position and continue to look to the Lord for a just decision from the Government.

Brother Isaac Swalm of the Tunker Brethren, near Collingwood, was here to see me last evening. His son was called, and they went to Toronto, and interviewed the Registrar, who told them that they were obliged to report at Hamilton and that the officers there would inform them as to the course they should take to secure exemption. The boy was examined and they were told that they would not need to put on the uniform against his will. The following day the boy was detained and ordered to put on the uniform, being told that he would have to drill while they were trying to get his exemption. His father was ordered to leave while the officers were removing his coat and cap and putting on the uniform. Bro. Swalm left last evening for Toronto to meet Bro. D.W. Heise and Bro. S. Goudie, who would meet the Registrar with him and place these matters before him. I showed him your letter in which you reported Bro. Goudie's statement regarding the Tunker brethren. This will likely be a test case, and other Tunker boys were obliged to report yesterday. You had better call up Bro Heise and find out about his case. We hope to hear soon from Ottawa regarding the matter of which we inquired.

Yours in faith,

S. F. Coffman

Military Service Act, and Order in Council. 1917, 1918.

COPY.

TELEGRAM, Vineland Ont., May 9, 1918.

Hon. J. A. Calder,
House of Parliament, Ottawa.

Ernest J. Swalm, member of Tunker Church,
forsibly retained when reporting at Scott Street
Barracks, Hamilton. Is in Co. D, Second Depot
Battalion. Training under protest. Please have
immediate action taken to retain him in Hamilton
until case of Tunker Church is decided. Full
information on the way.

D.W. Halse,

Secretary, Non-Resistant
Relief Organization,

Gormley, Ont.



Ottawa, Ont., 10th May 1918.

Dear Sir,-

By direction of the Prime Minister, I have the honor to acknowledge receipt of your letter of May 7th with reference to the questions raised by the Non-Resistant Relief Organization. These matters are having the careful attention of the Honourable Mr. Calder at the present time and I have no doubt they will be disposed of very shortly.

Very truly yours,

G. W. G. G. G.
Prime Minister's Secretary.

S.F. Coffman, Esq.
Secretary of the Committee,
Non-Resistant Relief Organization.
V I N E L A N D. Ont.,

Original Copy

Vineland Ont., May 10, 1918.

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

Honourable Sir:-

In regard to the telegram, of this date, sent you and which should have read as follows, - "Ernest J. Swain, member of Tunker Church, forcibly retained when reporting at Scott Street Barracks, Hamilton. Is in Company D, 2nd Depot Battalion. Is training under protest. Please have immediate action taken to retain him in Hamilton until case of Tunker Church is decided. Full information on the way."

Signed, D. W. Heise,
Secretary, Non-resistant Relief
Organization.

The young man in question is registered in the Exemption class as Serial number, 825888, at Collingwood. He applied for exemption as a farmer and as a member of the religious sect known as Tunkers, of which society he has been a member for over eight years. After receiving his notice to report, he at once notified the Ontario registrar that he is a member of the Tunker Church whose faith forbids all military service, and that he therefore declined to report. The reply from the Registrar was in par as follows, - "I find that Tunkers are not excepted under the Act, and you are therefore to report for duty as directed and inform the Officer Commanding that you are a Tunker, and he will take the necessary action.

"I beg to point out, for your information, that if this order is not complied with, you will become a deserter from the C. E. F. and will be dealt with as usual. "

Signed, G. Leslie Wilson. Ontario Registrar.

Mr. Swain in company with his father reported to Hamilton on May 7th, and reported to the Military Officer that he was present but that he could not report for duty because he is a member of the Tunker Church. His claims were utterly ignored and he was told by the Commanding Officer that he should go into training and that his exemption as a Tunker should be made to Head Quarters and would, no doubt, be honored. He was retained for examination while his father sought further information regarding his exemption. Before leaving, the father asked whether, after examination, the uniform would be forced upon the son. He was told that the uniform was not forced upon any against their will. Upon his return, the following day, the young man was found in the Quarter Master's department with officers who were using all means, even intimidation, to persuade the young man to put on the uniform. He was taken to the office of the Colonel, but the father was not permitted to present himself or his claims for exemption. The son was told that if he refused to put on the uniform he would be sent over seas at once. In the presence of the father the authorities endeavored to take off the civilian clothing of the young man and the father was ordered away, and next saw his son, coming from the department having on the military coat and cap.

Such is the manner of treatment accorded one who cannot accept military service because he is religiously opposed to war or the rendering of any

assistance or encouragement thereto by personal support, and whose Church has for centuries taught and practiced the non-resistant Doctrines of the New Testament, and has held these doctrines as vital to the Christian life and to salvation, and whose members have ever voluntarily accepted or engaged in any form of military service or connected themselves with any military work.

The father of this young man is Isaac Swalm, a minister of the Tunker Church in the Nottawa district near Collingwood. He is a farmer, having 107 acres of land, mostly under cultivation. The young man is a only son. The father, about nineteen years ago, had the misfortune to loose his right arm, and is dependent upon the service of his son for assistance in the duties of the farm and home; but his greatest concern is that his son is placed in a position in which his faith is compromised and his religious principles are counted for naught, even trampled underfoot, and his religious liberties are denied him. These facts were all ignored by the authorities at Hamilton and Toronto. They seem to be powerless as long as they are not informed or directed by the Government at Ottawa.

May we state to you again that the Tunker brethren are on an equal basis with the Mennonites in so far as their principles of faith are concerned. If the Mennonites have claims that they are worth of recognition, so have the Tunker brethren. Under the Military Service Act, 7-8 George V., Chapter 19 the Preamble states, "All male inhabitants of Canada, of the age of eighteen years and upwards, and under sixty, not exempt or disqualified by law, and being British subjects, shall be liable to serve in the Militia." The above refers to the power granted under the Statutes of 1906. Our people, with the Tunkers and Quakers, were exempt at that time by law. Under the "General Provision," section 13 of the Act, it is stated, "The Militia Act, the Army Act, and the King's Regulations and Orders for the Army, shall so far as not inconsistent therewith, apply to and form a part of this Act." May I ask, was it the intention of the Government to put away the religious liberty and the exemptions that were granted to the Quaker, Mennonites and Tunkers? Is there anything in the Act that would be in contravention of former provisions for our peculiar religious tenets and our former privileges? In a former letter we pointed out that the provisions of the Government for conscientious objectors failed to cover our position.

The Order in Council of Aug. 13th, 1873 made provisions for the Russian people coming to Canada to enjoy the liberties that other religious bodies among which the Mennonites were included, were at that time enjoying. The recommendations of The Honourable The Privy Council, sanctioned by His Excellency The Governor General on the 5th of September, 1872, states particularly, for the confirmation of the faith of the Russian brethren, in the permanency of the provisions of religious liberty as provided by the Statutes of Canada, - "That the Constitution does not confer upon the Governor General in Council any power to over-ride or set aside, under any circumstance, the plain meaning of Statute law, and he recommends that this information be conveyed to the Mennonites in Russia." According to this interpretation, the Order in Council did not exclude the other branches of the Non-resistant Churches. If they are excluded it has been by the recent Act, and former privileges were thus cancelled and religious liberty swept away. There may have been a misinterpretation of the Act and a misunderstanding of its provisions for all non-resistant people, which latter condition we prefer to believe is true.

Honourable Sir, we have been in great distress concerning these matters. Many young men who are called, and who are members and have been members of our Societies for years, are uncertain as to what attitude they shall take. They will not feebly resist the authorities. They cannot comply with what is required of them by the military authorities, and by military requirements. To be identified in any way with the use of arms or in support of the military establishment or service is to them a violation of the pledge of their lives to God. It is this for which we plead. It is for this purpose that we inquire into the provisions of the Statutes of our Country, and petition you as representatives of a free people. We plead that we may be allowed to serve our God, which is our highest obligation. We will gratefully render to our Government our service in civil life and in our spiritual obligations in their behalf.

We trust, that the case of the Tunker brethren as well as that of the Mennonites will be favorably considered and such orders issued as will relieve any from further reporting for military service.

Most gratefully,

Yours truly,

D. W. Heise,
Secretary, Non-Resistant Relief
Organization,
Gormley, Ont.
Per.

Please send copy of reply also to S. F. Coffman,
Sec. Mennonite and Amish Com.
Vineland Ont.