

into service men from 19 to 22. On a separate sheet I am complying with your request for the names of Bishops and Ministers who will be responsible to sign certificates of membership for any of our young men.

Since the recent advice to the District Registrars that Mennonites are considered as excepted from the M.S.A. we have instructed our young men who were previously called and whose claims had been canceled by the Order in Council, that they should present their Church certificates when called and secure their exemptions. We are pleased to state that their claims have thus far been honored. We have also instructed the young men, who are members, ~~of~~ that under the Exceptions accorded us, they need not register under the Order in Council. But, in case they are approached as defaulters under the Act, that they should present their Membership Certificates as evidence that they have the right to claim exemption from service. We have been careful to grant certificates only to those who are actual members in good standing. We have instructed them to keep their Church Certificates constantly in their possession as evidence to any who might approach them for reasons for not being in service. If this is not in accord with your arrangements, please let me know, so that we will be able to comply with the same. We had hoped that full recognition would be accorded as under the Exceptions for Mennonites.

As to the question of adherents, we desire that all that can possibly be done to grant relief would be in order, since our young people are strongly persuaded concerning the principles of our faith although not members of the Church. Could they not be assigned for non-combatant service in Canada, if not exempted.

Has anything been done for the relief of our Tanker brethren? Some of them are already imprisoned for refusing to accept military service.

Thanking you for past favors, I am,

Most gratefully,"

Signed, S.F. Coffman,

For the Committee.

The following list of names was sent, of persons who would sign certificates of Membership.

Mennonites, - Bishops, Jonas Eider, Abram Gingerich, Manasseh Haliman, S.F. Coffman; Acting Bishop, L.J. Burkholder; Appointed by Committee, John Gascho, Zurich.

Bishops, Freeman Rittenhouse, Ezra L. Martin, and Minister, Thos. Reesor  
Amish Mennonite, Bishops, Daniel H. Steinsman, Christian Eehr, Daniel S. Jutsel, Nicholas Wafziger, John J. Kuepfer, Joseph W. Kuepfer, Jacob Lichty.

Mennonite Brethren in Christ, - Elders Samuel Goudle, C.N. Good. Ministers appointed by Conference to sign certificates, - M. Bricker, J. Bolwell, W. Brown, I. Brubacher, P. Cober, S. Cressman, R. Etherington, H.R. Frey, A.J. Gooding, J.W. Kitching. E. Mer Moyer, E.H. Schwalm, E. Seivenpiper, C.I. Sinden, D.J. Storms, A.S. Warder, W. Yates, F.J. Lehman.

I ~~also~~ also appended the names of the "Tanker Brethren, so that they might be known, in case the Government grants the hoped for exemption, - Elders, Asa Beares, John Eider, D.W. Heise; Ministers, Fred Elliott, John A. High, Simon Cober.

The addresses were given also, and the suggestion that the list might be changed or added to as occasion might require, and suggesting that authentic lists from Conference reports might be filed with the Government for reference. I have sent the list of our conference and would suggest the other Conference do so as far as possible.

Trusting that these steps will meet your approval and that this report will be used and not publicly advertised, I am,

Markham, Ont. May 2<sup>nd</sup> 1918

S. F. Coffman  
Vineland, Ont.

Dear brother - Greeting. - I have before me a letter from Mr. C. Leslie Wilson, Ontario Registrar in which he asks that membership certificates issued to our young men who seek exemption, show how long they have been members in the church. He also asks that I give this instruction to the officials of the church. You will therefore kindly see that certificates issued in the future, in your bishop district bear this data.

We had a pleasant communion service at the Wideman Church yesterday. Bro. Freeman Pittenbure baptised five young men at the same place in the afternoon. Two had been in uniform but permission was obtained to have them baptised in their civilian clothes. The other three have orders to report this week. The two were on two weeks leave of absence. There is some hope that the leave may be extended.

Bro. Edwin Byer is the only one who has a reply from the Ont. Registrar. The boys reported by registered letter with membership certificates enclosed. His order to report was cancelled.

The others are anxious since they are ordered to report tomorrow. I think they need have no concern. Those who appeared in person obtained a refusal. Two M. B. C. men are to appear before Judge Winchester to prove their membership

Bro. Sam. Wideman insisted upon appearing with one of his sons - Ray and they had no certificate and they also obtained a refusal. Later a certificate of membership was sent to the Registrar. We hope for a favorable decision.

Bro. Theo. Rueser has word from Mr. Weichel that he is doing what he can for adherents. We are to place <sup>Wed. of this week</sup> in his hands the names of all adherents and he will endeavor to secure relief for them.

As ever  
L. J. Burkholder

Vineland Ont., May 20, 1918.

Hon. F. S. Scott, M.P.  
House of Commons,  
Ottawa, Ont.

Dear Sir:-

Your favor of the 11th May, received and noted with pleasure.

We wish to thank you for the interest you have taken on behalf of our people and for the successful arrangement with the Government regarding the exemption of members of our Churches from the recent Order in Council calling into service men from 19 to 23. On a separate sheet I am complying with your request for the names of Bishops or ministers who will be responsible to sign certificates of membership for any of our young men.

Since the recent advice to the District Registrars that the Mennonites are considered as excepted from the M.S.A. we have instructed our young men who were previously called and whose claims were cancelled by the Order

in Council, that they should present their Church Certificates when called and secure their Exemptions. We are pleased to state that their claims have thus far been honored. We have also instructed the young men, who are members, that under the Exceptions accorded us, that they need not register under the Order in Council. But, in case they are approached as defaulters under the Act, that they should present their Membership Certificates as evidence that they have the right to claim exemption from service. We have been careful to grant certificates only to those who are actual members in good standing. We have instructed them to keep their Church Certificates constantly in their possession as evidence to any who might approach them for reasons for not being in service. If this is not in accord with your arrangements, please let me know, so that we will be able to comply with the same. We had hoped that full recognition would be accorded as as under the Exceptions for Mennonites.

As to the question of adherents, we desire that all that can possibly be done to grant relief would be in order, since our young people are strongly persuaded concerning the principles of our faith, although not members of the Church. Could they not be assigned for non-combatant service in Canada, if not exempted?

Has anything been done for the relief of our Tunker brethren? Some are already imprisoned for refusing to accept military service.

Thanking you for past favors, I am,

Most gratefully,  
For the Committee.

Names of Bishops and Ministers of the Mennonite and Amish  
Mennonite Churches, Authorized to Sign Certificates  
of Membership, for Exemption Claims.

--- 00 ---

Mennonite.

*H. H. Scott*

*May 20 - 1918*

Bishop Jonas Shyder, Waterloo Ont.  
Bishop Abram Gingrich Elmira Ont.  
Bishop Manasseh Hallman, Petersburg, Ont.  
Acting Bishop, L. J. Burkholder, Markham Ont.  
S. F. Coffman, Vineland Ont, Bishop.  
John Gascho, Zurich Ont. Minister, appointed by Committee.

Freeman Rittenhouse, Minister, Dunville Ont., Bishop.  
Thomas Reesor, Pickering Ont. Minister,  
Ezra L. Martin, St. Jacobs, Ont. Bishop.

Amish Mennonite.

Bishop Daniel Steinman, Baden Ont.  
Bishop Christain Zehr, Wellesley, Ont.  
Bishop Daniel S. Jutsi, Tavistock Ont.  
Bishop Nicholas Hafziger, Brunner Ont.  
Bishop John J. Kuepfer, Brunner Ont.  
Bishop Joseph W. Kuepfer, Milverton Ont.

Bishop Jacob Lichty, Wellesley Ont.

Mennonite Brethren in Christ.

Elder Samuel Goudie, Stouffville Ont.  
Elder C. N. Good, Kitchener Ont.

Ministers authorized by Conference,

M. Bricker, Markham, Ont.  
J. Bolwell, Edgely Ont.  
W. Brown, Kitchener, Ont.  
I Brubacher, Elmwood.  
P. Cober, Maryboro Ont.  
S. Cressman, Breslau Ont.  
R. Eltherington, Lion's Head Ont.  
H.R. Frey, Sunnidale Ont.  
A.T. Gooding, Stayner Ont.  
J.N. Kitching,

181 Brunswick Ave., Toronto.

Elmer Moyer, Aylmer West, Ont.  
N.H. Schwalm, New Dundee Ont.  
E. Sievenpiper, Stouffville Ont.  
C.I. Sinder, Dundalk Ont.  
D.J. Storms, Hespeler Ont.  
A.G. Warder, Collingwood Ont.  
W. Yates, Long Bay Ont.  
F.J. Lehman, Vineland Ont.

Elders and Ministers of the  
"Tunker" Church.

Elder Asa Bearss, Ridgeway, Ont.  
Elder John Sider, Marshville, Ont.  
Elder D. W. Heise, Gormley Ont.  
Fred Elliott, Minister, Richmond Hill Ont.  
John A. Nigh, Minister, Hagersville Ont.  
Simon Cober, Kitchener, Ont.

This list of names of the Different Churches may be supplemented if necessary, and approved lists of Conference records will be mailed for reference by the Government.

Vineland Ont., May 21, 1918

John R. Ebersole,  
Milverton, Ont.

Dear Brother:- Greeting.

Your letter received yesterday evening. And you have likely received the report of the decision of the Militia Council at Ottawa which was mailed you. This information may help as regards the questions asked concerning our exemption and our need of registering. It may be that the Government will require our brethren who are nineteen to register, but will grant them exemption on account of their being members of the Mennonite Church. Their Church certificates should be sent with their names when the report to the Registrars, if they are required to register. I will likely receive word from Ottawa in a day or two in reply to my question about registering, and will send word at once.

In looking over the form of the affidavit which you sent I find that the conditions are better than some forms that I have seen. You are not required to promise to defend the person of the King. The oath form should be entirely stricken out. That is the phrase, "Swear by Almighty God," should be entirely stricken out and in place the words, "affirm." The last phrase, "So help me God," is not out of order. In the form which you sent you are to be faithful and bear true allegiance to the King. This is what we do in any country. When you have become a citizen you will be allowed the privileges of citizenship and one of the conditions is that you will be allowed to have religious freedom. The Government is granting us that now and we believe that we shall always have that privilege in Canada.

But we need to continue in prayer that the Lord may give us mercy under all conditions. We need to prove faithful to God and to each other to the best of our powers. We are glad for the privilege of helping each other, and what I have been able to do to help you and the brethren there has been gladly and freely done. Under the blessing of the Lord it is all provided for and I do not ask any further remuneration. Please accept it as from the Lord and in His name.

We feel thankful for your prayers and encouragement in the work, May he ever bless you and the brotherhood there.

Yours in Him,



# House of Commons

OTTAWA

May 21st, 1918.

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

Dear Mr. Coffman:

I am in receipt of your letter of the 20th instant with list enclosed which I have handed to the proper authorities.

I would be obliged if you would secure for me a similar list of the Tunkers and I will endeavour to have thier members included with the others.

I believe that the instructions which you have given to your young men will cover the situation. If anything different develops, kindly let me know. I would also be obliged if you would give me a list of specific cases where Tunkers have been imprisoned or where they have been forced into Military Service and I will have the question looked into.

Yours very truly,

FSS/MHS.

*F. A. Scott*

*Two Anish Members under arrest  
at London. Had Scotch Certificates.*

*S. F. Coffman*



Vineland Ont., May 22<sup>nd</sup> 1918.

Jacob R. Bender,  
Tavistock Ont.

Dear Brother:- Greeting.

Your telegram received today, asking me to come to London and stating when. I replied, after thinking over matters and after reading a letter from Hon. F. S. Scott, who has been taking charge of the Exemption matters for us at Ottawa. In my wire to you I said. "Have wired Ottawa. Could do nothing by coming. Hopeful. Writing." I had sent a wire to Ottawa as follows. "Two Amish members imprisoned at London. Had sent certificates."

Mr Scott wrote me on the 20th, the letter received today, stating that the instructions which I had given about sending certificates and not reporting and not registering was alright and according to the plan which they had made for the exemption of our brethren. You have the instructions which were mailed recently. I would have been glad to come to London and to have given any help that could have been given, but, since I am not a military officer above the Commanding Officer there, it would have been useless for me to try to persuade them as has been proven so often. They will not listen to arguments after they have men under arrest. It requires orders from higher officers, and hence I at once wired Ottawa and the matter will be placed in the hands of the Military Authorities at Ottawa and they will send instructions at once. I hope that before this reaches you the brethren will have been released and on their way home rejoicing in their deliverance. I fear that others will have to pass through the experience of being subjected to arrest. These are trying times. We must make up our minds to bear some of the afflictions that come to all men, in these days. I know that it is a hard thing to be looked upon as a prisoner, but there is no disgrace in "suffering wrongfully."

Tell the brethren that all who are of military age should have their Church Certificates with them, all of the time. Perhaps you have instructions to send a list of all of your members who are aged 18 to 34 years to the Ontario Registrar at Toronto. Brother L. J. Burkholder has sent the instructions to at least some of the Ministers. The Ontario Officers would like to have such names sent by the ministers of the various congregations so that they would know who are our members and could grant exemption to them and detect any false representations of those who would try to get exemption by fraud.

I trust that there will be no ill feeling on account of my not coming to meet you at London. I thought this to be the wisest course to pursue. In case I should be needed, I will be glad to come.

All well and busy,

Yours in faith,

Vineland Ont., May 22, 1918.

Mr. C. Lesslie Wilson,  
Ontario Registrar, M.S.A.  
Toronto, Ont.

Dear Sir:

Replying to your request for the names of members of our  
Mennonite Congregation who are aged 18 to 34, I report the following:-

Jacob Darby Watson, age 25, Vineland Ont. R.R. 1. Farmer.

Stephen G. H. Thwaites, age 23, Jordan Ont. Blacksmith. Married.

The first named has already applied for complete exemption to the  
District Registrar at Toronto.

Yours truly,

Pastor of Mennonite Church  
Vineland Ont.

RR#1  
Waterloo Ont. May 22/18.  
Mr S. F. Coffman,  
Vineland, Ont.

Dear friend: -

We got a copy from  
Jonas which you sent him  
regarding the exemption of Men-  
nonites, in which it reads  
that those that didn't  
register need not, but also  
notice in the paper that all  
must register & does not state  
anything about Mennonites

I was 20 yrs old on the  
4th of Feb. & come in the  
draft. What should I do,  
register or not?

I am enclosing a stamped  
envelope and am awaiting  
an early reply.

I remain,

Yours sincerely  
Fred M Snyder.

RR #1

Markham Ont May 22<sup>nd</sup> 1918.S J Coffman  
Vineland Ont

Dear Bro:- Greetings. I had written Bro. Sam Brownsberger who is at Moosehill Ont teaching school instructing him not to register on June 1<sup>st</sup>. He writes me asking if his church certificate will be sufficient to satisfy any officer he might chance to meet. I have replied stating that I thought it should and that I was not aware of any other provision having been made by the Govt. If I have informed him wrongly I wish you would advise me.

We are all well at present. Wishing Gods' blessing on you and yours

Sincerely

Leonard W Hoover

Tarasloch,

May 22 1891

2 boys under arrest  
at London can you come  
to " address when

J. R Bender  
Twitick

Have wired Ottawa. Could  
do nothing by coming.

Hopeful, - Writing.

S.F.C.

Markham, May 22nd. '18.

Dear Brother,

Just a few lines in a hurry, to give you a few things of recent occurrence re the M.S.A. as affecting us. Two weeks ago Edwin got his call and I at once wrote the Registrar, and a reply came back almost immediately saying that call was cancelled. This order was followed till late last week two members of the M.B.C. called at registrars and were treated with sarcastic remarks and ordered to appear before Judge Winchester on Monday A.M. Had some business in city and I managed to get up to Hall and hear proceedings. Smythe, the military representative was almost brutal in his manners towards the young men, and argued that Mennonites of Ont. did not come under the Exceptions at all. Winchester was very friendly and differed with Smythe decidedly and said many complimentary things about our people. As Smythe was leaving the room he said in an undertone "I'll land the whole d--- bunch yet"--- this was said to another lawyer. Yesterday some of the boys got word from the Registrar saying that call was cancelled for present and cases were being taken before Judge Duff at Ottawa. You see what they are trying to do and I thought best to let you know what we have to expect. It would be well if in some way, the authorities that are favorable to us might be made aware of the pressure being brought to bear in some quarters as intimated by Smythe's remark. You can use your own discretion as to what best to do if you think it wise to do anything. All fairly well but personally I am not yet over effect of late attack of "shingles".

Kindest regards to you and  
yours,  
Fraternally, J.L.B.

Vineland Ont., May 22, 1918.

Mr. W. G. Weichle.  
Waterloo, Ont.,

Dear Sir:-

Through our Rev. Thomas Reesor, and Rev. L. J. Barkholder and also through the Hon. F. S. Scott, we have learned of the effort made through you to gain recognition for the adherents of the Mennonite Church. We most heartily appreciate the services which you have rendered us in the past and again on this behalf.

You desire the names of all adherents and the following is the list of those who belong to our families in this vicinity, who are members of my congregation. The Mennonite Brethren in Christ have a congregation here and their pastor will send the list of adherents of that congregation.

Harry Elmore Boose, age 28, Camden Ont. This young man was drafted, but met with an accident which has disabled him for service.  
Emery Earl Boose, age 18. Camden Ont.

Benjamin Ezra Watson, age 18. Vineland Ont., R.R.1.

William T. Fretz, Age 24, Jordan Harbour, Ont.

Trusting that your efforts will be rewarded and that there may be granted the religious liberty for which we have long prayed, and assuring you of the gratitude of our people, I am,

Yours truly,



Vineland Ont., May 22, 1918.

Hon. F. S. Scott, M. P.  
House of Commons  
Ottawa Ont.

Dear Sir:-

Your letter of the 20th Inst. received. Am glad to learn of the hopeful out-look for our people and for the Tunkers brethren especially.

I wired you to-day, " Two Amish members under arrest at London. Had sent certificates." It seems that the London Tribunal had granted exemption to Mennonite brethren who had applied for exemption upon being called. These two brethren had sent in their certificates when called but did not respond in person. Some time ago, a member of the Amish church had been arrested and taken to London and was detained in prison there for three weeks, and then released without any certificate or other documentary evidence of his release. There seems to be some irregularity about procedures there. I can assure you that any of the cases there who apply under the signatures of the Bishops or ministers are worthy of recognition.

The ministers of the young men in question asked me to meet them in London. I replied that I could do nothing by coming, since I have no authority from the Government, and have no evidence save the correspondence with members of the Government on the question. The authorities at these places have notice of procedure from the Head-quarters at Ottawa, and should know what course to pursue in any case. There has been no cases of my being refused at Toronto, when the proper course was taken to claim exemption. A few cases applied for exemption in person, and not with certificates, and were refused. Those who applied with certificates have so far been honored. I trust that the cases at London have been favorably ordered.

There is only one case of a member of the Tunker Church that I am aware of at present that is under arrest. That is the case concerning which I wired and later wrote to Hon J. A. Calder, -the case of Ernest Swalm, at Hamilton, Scott St. Barracks. If I am not mistaken he is still detained there. Several other cases of the Tunkers were ordered to report there and were given two weeks leave of absence. Their time is about expired and they will then be obliged to report and, unless some steps are taken to prevent it they will also be subjected to the same treatment accorded Mr. Swalm. The boys will be obliged to refuse to put on the uniform and to do any military service. It grieves us that we have come in conflict with our Government in these matters. But we cannot be untrue to the profession of our faith before our God.

Thanking you again for your council and your much appreciated instructions and assistance in these time of stress. I am,  
Most respectfully, Yours,

11

W. S. A. and Order in Council, 1917. 1918.

Vineland Ont., May 23, 1918.

Dear Brethren:- Greeting.

May God be realized for daily mercies, and may we prove worthy.

A letter from Ho. F. S. Scott, of the 17th Inst, states in part, "Mr. Weichel and myself have endeavored yesterday and today to have matters arranged so that your people will be exempted from the operations of the Orders in Council recently passed, calling to the Colors the young men from 19 to 23. We had an interview yesterday with the Militia Council. The Minister of Militia was present and after discussing the whole situation thoroughly, it was arranged that we should secure the names of Bishops or someone in authority who could issue certificates of membership in your Church. The Officer Commanding the Military District will be authorized to accept these certificates and allow the men off on leave."

"Kindly forward to me as quickly as possible the names of those to whom the Government could refer."

Concerning the exemption of adherents, he does not think it possible at the present time, but would keep us informed if any further changes in the situation. Mr. Weichel would get in touch with our people in his district.

In reply to this letter, I sent the names of Bishops and Ministers of the Mennonite, Anish and M.B.C. and Tunker Churches who would sign Certificates. Also, I stated the following, - "We have instructed our young men who were previously called and whose claims were cancelled by the Order in Council that they should present their Church Certificates when called, and secure their exemption. We have also instructed our youngmen who are members that under the Exceptions accorded us, they need not register under the Order in Council. In case they are approached as defaulters under the Act, they should present their certificates as evidence that they have a right to claim exemption from service, ----- and to keep their Church certificates constantly in their possession as evidence to any who might approach them for reasons for not being in service. If this is not in accordance with your arrangements please let me know."

In reply to my letter I have one from Mr. Scott as follows:- "I believe that the instructions which you have given to our young men will cover the situation. If anything different develops, kindly let me know."

Mr. Scott acknowledged the receipt of the list of Ministers, and also asked for a list of the "Tunker" ministers, but these had been sent him. He asked for specific cases where the "Tunker" brethren were imprisoned or forced into Military service, and he would look into the question.

We have notified him of the two cases of imprisonment of our brethren in London, and of the case of the Tunker brother in Hamilton. We will be glad to report any other cases to the Authorities in Ottawa.

There will be opposition to these privileges accorded us, but let us be patient and look to the Lord for His help. The Government will stand by us in these times of trial.

The question of adherents has not yet been decided. The question of minor sons has not been considered as yet. We have much to be thankful for but also much to pray for, At the request of those who have assisted us, please keep these matters as quiet as possible. It is desirable thus.

May 23, --2.

A letter from a brother in Markham, states that some of the brethren there had received word from the Ontario registrar that all was cancelled for the present and the cases were being taken before Judge Duff at Ottawa. It is evident that there is pressure being brought to bear against the granting of exemptions to the non-resistant people. This information is being sent to Mr. Scott at Ottawa and he is being urged to get in touch with others with whom we have had correspondence and see that the cases are looked after if brought before the Chief Justice.

We have sent as much correspondence on the question of our claims as will be necessary to inform the Government where we stand and why we believe as we do regarding Military service.

The names of those who were suggested as having authority to sign certificates are as follows.

Mennonites:-- Bishops Jonas Snyder, Abram Gingrich, Wannasch Hallman, S. F. Coffman, Acting Bishop L. H. Burkholder, and John Gascho, appointed.

Bishops Frederick Bittenhouse, Ezra L. Martin, and Minister Thomas Reiser.

Amish Mennonite--Bishops Daniel H. Steinman, Christian B. Zehr, Daniel S. Jutsi, Nicholas Hufziger, John J. Kuepfer, Joseph W. Kuepfer, Jacob Lichty.

Restored Brethren in Christ:-- Elders, Samuel Goudie and C. F. Good.

Ministers-- M. Bricker, J. Bolwell, W. Brown, I. Brubacher, P. Coker, S. Crossman, R. Eltharington, H. R. Frey, A. T. Gooding, J. K. Kitching, F. J. Lehman, Elmer Moyer, F. H. Schwalb, E. Stevenhagen, C. I. Sinden, D. J. Storms, A. G. Warder, W. Yates,

Turkey Church:Asa Beauss, John Sider, D. W. Haise, Fred Elliott, Simon Coker, John A. Figh.

It was suggested to Mr. Scott that these lists could be supplemented if necessary and approved lists of Conference records could be sent from such congregations or organizations that had them.

A letter from Bro. L. J. Burkholder says, that the Ontario Registrar asks that all certificates given to our young men who seek exemption should show how long they have been members of the Church.

A letter from the District Registrar to myself as the pastor of the Mennonite Church at Vineland asked for the names of all members, brethren, who are between the ages of 18 to 34 inclusive. These were forwarded.

Please give attention to any instructions from the Government. We still claim ourselves to be Excluded from the Act and Order in Council that is the instructions which was given us from Ottawa. Opinions of men differ, as may be observed by reports. We cannot follow all of these opinions. As soon as we learn of any further changes we will notify the members of the Committee dealing with these subjects, and, if necessary, all of our ministers.

Looking to the Lord for guidance and for deliverance from our troubles, and asking all to join in earnest prayer for those who are in trouble at the present time on account of loyalty to our faith in Christ, I am,

Yours in Him,

S. F. Coffman, Sec.

For the Committee.

C. LESSLIE WILSON,  
ONTARIO REGISTRAR

A. F. BARR,  
H. E. MACHELL,  
ASSISTANT REGISTRARS

DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE  
MILITARY SERVICE BRANCH

OFFICE OF ONTARIO REGISTRAR

UNDER MILITARY SERVICE ACT

BOARD OF TRADE BUILDING

TORONTO,  
ONTARIO

May 23rd, 1918

S. F. Coffman, Esq.,  
Pastor of Mennonite Church,  
VINELAND, Ontario.

Dear Sir;

I beg to acknowledge receipt of your letter of the 22nd, inst, furnishing me with names of the male Members of your Congregation between the ages of 18 and 34 inclusive, for which I thank you.

Yours truly,

*C. Leslie Wilson*

ONTARIO REGISTRAR.

Per. *A. F. Barr*

Assistant Registrar.

GAE-M.



# House of Commons

OTTAWA

May 23rd, 1918.

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

Dear Mr. Coffman:

I have your telegram of the 22nd instant, advising me that two Amish members are under arrest in London. I am sure that the arrangements which I made with the Department have not yet been put into operation, in fact, it was only yesterday that the department received the list which you sent me.

I have today taken up with the Department the case of the arrest of these two young men and they have promised to arrange for their release and no doubt it will go into effect in a day or two. Just as soon as arrangements have been completed with the District Commanding Officers, I do not anticipate that they will have any further trouble in this regard.

I expect to leave for home on Friday and if there is anything further that presents itself after this week, if you will address me at Galt, Ont. I will see that it is attended to.

I am,

Yours very truly,

FSS/MHS.

*F. S. Scott.*

Mr. C. Leslie Wilson.  
 Registrar under Military Service Act.  
 Toronto.

Sir. -  
 Order to report for duty - at the Exhibition Camp  
 on May 24, 1918 has been received by me.  
 I am a member of the Tinker Church, as  
 intimated to by my released Church Certificate,  
 whose tenets of faith forbids its members  
 engaging in any military service whatsoever.  
 As such I cannot report for military duty,  
 and pray that I may be granted complete  
 exemption on account of my religious belief, for  
 which exemption my church has applied for  
 to the Government at Ottawa.

Yr. truly answer.

Respectfully,

Serial number — name.

Consecutive number — address —

Vineland Ont., May 24, 1918.

Hon. F. S. Scott, M. P.  
House of Commons,  
Ottawa, Ont.

Dear Sir:

After writing you on the 22nd, more information came to hand. As an evidence that some instructions are being followed by the authorities at least in Toronto, I received a letter from the Registrar that he desired the names of male members of our congregations from the ages of 18 to 34 inclusive. Instructions were also sent out that the Church membership certificates should show how long they were members.

On the other hand, I received a letter from a party in Markham who is a personal friend of the Hon. N. W. Rowell, and who has had some correspondence with him regarding exemption, that the Toronto Tribunal has stated that all exemptions are again cancelled and that the cases are being brought before Chief Justice Duff for decision. I was under the impression that these matters have been settled a number of times, yet, if the Government chooses to rehear our pleas and reverse their decisions it is their privilege to do so. At the present time there are a number of different decisions regarding our people. Some are exempted and hold their exemption certificates. Some are awaiting decisions and certificates of exemption. Others have been refused exemptions and some are in the guard house in barracks with military units. It is evident that there has been no uniform treatment of our claims now, -much the same condition that existed under the system of exemptions under the M.S.A. We are still anxiously awaiting the permanent decision of the Government regarding the non-resistant Churches. The memorial contemplated by the Non-Resistant Relief Organization in recognition of religious liberty in Canada, is now at a stand-still. Our people are anxious to do something through the agency of the Government to aid in relief work, but can hardly be expected to memorialize what they do not enjoy.

The names of the Tunker ministers were forwarded with the list of the Mennonite Ministers. A Conference list will be mailed you shortly. There are three Tunker boys in the Exhibition camp at Toronto, two are in the guard house or detained as prisoners owing to refusal to serve in the army. Charles Wright, Welland port Ont., Elmer L. Steckley, Gormley Ont., and John H. Heise, Richmond Hill Ont. Two more are expecting to report at Toronto today, and they will likely be accorded the same consideration, Elmer W. Sider, Percy Station Ont., and William Charlton, Percy Station Ont., both being members for some time.

The Chief Justice has all of the Correspondence with the Government up to the time of our delegation meeting you in Ottawa. Since then we have had communication with the Prime Minister, the Hon. N. W. Rowell, the Hon. Mr. Calder and yourself. Any further evidence that we may furnish to give assistance in deciding the status of our people will be gladly given. We are almost in the same position today as were our Russian Brethren when they were asked for and received religious liberty in Canada, and we feel that Canada will continue to allow us to worship our God and follow the Teachings of our Saviour in peace.

Most respectfully,

For the Committee.

Milverton May. 24, 1918

Bro. S. F. Coffman

Dear bro.

Greeting in the name of the Lord  
Having read your letter to J. R. Ebersole  
and am scertainly glad and thank to God  
for the privilage the Government grants us  
I was <sup>looking</sup> for a similar letter but not received  
any yet.

In the copy of the letter you have send to  
the government I did not see my name in  
the list of ministers that are giving member-  
ship certificates, and as I am giving the certificates  
of our congregation, will that cause any trouble  
that the officers wont except certificates that I  
am giving?

Your humble bro.

Peter Boshart  
Acting Bishop.



Vineland Ont., May 24, 1918.

Jacob R. Bender,  
Tavistock Ont.

Dear Brother:- Greeting.

Today I sent you a circular letter which was also sent to all of our members and to ministers of the Tunker and M.B. C Church. I also received a letter from Mr. Scott, saying that he had received my telegram regarding the boys in the custody of Officers in London. He says that they will undoubtedly be released in the course of a few days, since the arrangements which they had decided on were not yet complete as far as notifying the Officers was concerned. This will take a few days time, and then we will get results from the decisions of the Militia Council. The whole arrangement takes considerable time.

I mailed a letter to Mr. Scott, who is returning to Galt today. He will get the letter tomorrow and will attend to the case of the our boys at once. We need to be patient although it is hard for the boys and for their parents to think of being separated and confined in jail for trying to serve their God with a good conscience. A number of the Tunker brethren are at Toronto and in the same condition with not so much prospect of getting release. We are working for them and the Government will undoubtedly take up the matter very soon if not already and decide on the question of all non-resistant churches.

I understood that you will not expect to be at our Conference. I had hoped that you could come, and trust that you may yet be able to be with us.

I was sorry that I could not give you more satisfaction over the phone, but glad to report now since receiving the letter from Ottawa, that the outlook is better than at any time yet.

May God give us grace to be very faithful to Him in all things. We are paying for cabotage and let us also live for the good of all we can.

Regards to the family, the three little brothers and their bay sister.

Yours in faith,

Vineland Ont., May 24, 1918.

Hon. F. S. Scott, M. P.  
Galt Ont.

Dear Sir:

After mailing you a letter, on this date, to Ottawa I received yours of the 22nd Inst. stating that the situation concerning the exemption of our people would prove satisfactory, since the Commanding Offices had not yet received their instructions. We are indeed grateful to you for your intervention on our behalf.

A message received today from the Tavistock district says that there are now four of the Anish brethren in detention at London, having had the uniforms forced upon them. The names are, Daniel Brenneman, William Brenneman, Henry Roth, and Simon Roth.

Simon Roth is a citizen of Ontario, was working in Michigan and was obliged to register there. He later returned home and was registered here claiming his exemption as a member of the Anish Church. He lately received notice to report for service in Michigan and proceeded there with his evidences of Canadian citizenship to get release from service there. He was stopped at the time and taken immediately to London and forced into uniform, although he has refused to take any part in drill.

We are glad for the favorable outlook and believe that everything that can be done will be done for our release. It means more than we can tell to feel that we are free to worship as we feel that we should in keeping the commandments of our Lord.

Find enclosed a copy of circular letter sent to our ministers. Again thanking you for your many favors, I am,

Yours truly,

For the Committee.

1 Tavistock May 25<sup>th</sup>  
1918

S F Coffman Vineland Ont

Dear Brother and fellow-labourer

Greeting in Jesus name.

Are all well thanks to God.

Will let you know that we have  
been to London twice now

May 23 and 24. found our boys in  
uniform and feeling very bad about  
it that those clothes were put on  
them. still we found them in good  
spirits and trusting firmly in the  
Lord that He will deliver <sup>them</sup> and asking  
for Grace and Strength from God  
our Father. May we pray earnestly  
to God then in their faith without  
wavering. These are truly trying  
times. Our brethren truly have  
the opportunity to bless them that  
curse you as they had to hear so  
much of that

2

It made my heart sad for their souls - of these men how they take the name of God in vain to blaspheme and mock such the like as I never had heard before so that I felt we do not earnestly enough proclaim and bring the Saviour to the dying world, to bring the Gospel of Peace and Good Will to all men.

The boys were very thankful when we told them what was being done for them, and were hoping and praying for deliverance if it is God will. May God so direct the officers that they may not go beyond their power.

-The parents were very much hurt, but as Paul says, We are troubled on every side yet not distressed, We are perplexed

3

to do good to them that despitefully  
use you and pray for them that  
persecute you may God grant them  
grace and wisdom from on high  
as he has promised in his word.

The brethren have been sorely  
tried in so many ways but they  
be to God who so graciously has  
kept them and strengthened. They  
have been sent to Jail for refusing  
not to drill (the two Roth boys)  
the other two (Brenneman boys)  
had not been asked for it yesterday  
but expected to be tried for it  
today. They had sent to Jail for  
over night or a couple of hours  
and then taken before the Colonel  
who tried to persuade them to  
obey orders to drill, and to be  
cursed and swore at.

4

yet not in despair. May God  
comfort them and keep them to  
do his will and to rejoice in  
that that they be counted worthy  
to suffer wrong for the name of  
Jesus Christ. Trusting that the  
Lord will so direct us and guide  
us all to do His will and let us  
continue to pray that we all can  
stand united in Christian love  
striving together under the banner  
of our Heavenly King Emmanuel  
to fight the good fight of faith  
your brother in Christian love  
Jacob R Bender  
Yaristock R. K. I

Vineland Ont. May 25, 1918.

I. S. Rosberger,  
Guernsey, Sask.

Dear Brother:- Greeting.

Your letter to hand and noted.

There has been no decided change in the military condition up to the present time. I sent you a circular letter this week. The situation is explained there. It seems that in the West the Tribunals are governed by what is done with the Russian brethren, and by the present decisions of the Government we are largely held under the same conditions but a little more is required of us to get our exemption. Give all of the brethren Church Certificates, but be careful to put down the date of their being received as members. Those from the East may apply to the Church to which they belong for their certificates. They need not register at all if they are members and hold certificates. There has been no decision regarding minor sons, and nothing definite for those who are members of Mennonite families and not members of the Church. The Government is considering the question at present. So, those who are not members must all register, and if anything is decided in their favor they will be exempted.

Regarding the registering for labor, we will be obliged to register then same as the other citizens. This will not obligate us for military service.

Our Conference has taken no action toward recognizing the Government for our exemptions. This was taken up by the non-resistant Churches here through a Committee. The various branches of the Mennonite Church are in this Committee and also the Tunker Church. Nothing has been done as yet since we have been waiting on the Government's decision regarding our exemption. As soon as this is decided we will be ready to take up contributions and it is very probable that the Churches in the West will have an opportunity of contributing also.

Our Conference meets this coming week and some of these matters will be considered there. Would be glad to have one of you with us. Pray for us during these Conference Sessions.

Regards to the family.

Yours in faith,

Vineland Ont., May 25, 1918.

Asa Bearss,  
Ridgeway Ont.

Dear Brother:- Greeting.

Your letter received in due time. I have since sent you a circular letter with instructions and information concerning the situation. I have since received a letter from Mr. Scott, M.P. stating that the instructions have been forwarded to all of the Officers Commanding the Military Districts and that they will grant exception to those who hold certificates from the Mennonite Church. He said recently that he was taking up the claims of the Tunker Church and thought that their claims would be honored or should be honored the same as the Mennonites. He has been very attentive to these matters. I have sent to him a list of the names of all of the boys from the Tunker Church who are now in camp and have had the uniform forced upon them or who are in detention. He will take up these matters at once with the authorities.

I think that your boys should reply to the Officers who have sent them their call, by letter first, and then by personal response in case they are not exempted before. Some one should go with them and see that they receive fair treatment. All of these cases should be reported to Mr. Scott so that he will have evidence as to what is going on.

Brother John Sider, Bishop, of Marshville and his son, with Brother Earl Sider, who is one of your brethren who was called to report, were down to see me this week. They told me of some of the cases in Hamilton and Toronto, and I sent on the information to Mr. Scott. It is too sad to think of any one having to suffer religious persecution here in this free land. But these are the grievous times. We need to be doubly watchful and prayerful.

We hope for better things to come and may the Lord give us grace to be faithful until He comes.

Yours in faith,



# CANADA POST CARD

THE ADDRESS TO BE WRITTEN ON THIS SIDE



## JUBILEE OF CONFEDERATION C A N A D A

	1867	1917
Provinces	4	9
Area (Sq. M.)	540,000	3,729,665
Population	3,600,000	7,600,000
Railways (Miles)	2,250	35,500
Grains (Bu.)	65,000,000	1,000,000,000
Postage Stamps Issued	\$669,000	\$23,000,000
Forestry	34,000,000	175,000,000
Mines	8,000,000	137,000,000
Fisheries	6,000,000	31,000,000
Manufactures	50,000,000	1,300,000,000
Foreign Trade	114,000,000	1,996,000,000

Since 1901 the total value of field crops has risen from \$195,000,000. to \$841,000,000.

The total value of live stock, in same period, from \$268,000,000. to over \$800,000,000.

Exportable surplus of agricultural products:—

1868-70— \$13,000,000.

1916-17— \$480,000,000.

*Eld L. J. Coffman*

*Vineland*

*Ont*

Gormley May 25<sup>th</sup> 1918

Dear Coffman,

Am in receipt of your  
communications, and have acted in  
accordance with instructions, will write  
you more fully after Monday next,  
We are looking up, to "Him"

yours

D. W. B.

Vineland Ont., May 25, 1918.

Moses Hoover, Selkirk, Ont.

Dear Brother:- Greeting.

Your letter came to hand in due time. I was very anxious to know the particulars concerning the two young men who made application to unite with the Church. It would all depend on their motives in coming into the Church at the present time as to whether we would be justified, under our present arrangements with the Government, in accepting them as members. We know that the Government will recognize all members in good standing and will honor their claims for exemption from military service. But if any should come into the Church now, and if they had not previously been associated with the Church either as sons of Mennonite parents or as regular attendants, it would do them no good to join the Church as far as claiming exemption is concerned, for the Officers would not respect their claims. We could honor their sincere convictions and ask for their exemption if they are truly converted and prove that they are sincere in their faith, but the Government would insist in their proving a longer membership and would question their coming to us for membership after they had been called to the colors.

I am sorry that these conditions exist. I believe that their mother was once a member of our Church. I do not know that she has considered herself a member at the present time. These things would be against the boys.

In case the boys are in earnest in their desire to be baptised and received into the Church you had better attend to it for them. It would be their privilege to stand true to the faith as far as they can. We do not wish to deny any the privilege of christian fellowship. They could then report and take their stand and the consequences and would have to abide by the decisions of the Government. All certificates that are signed for our members now will have to bear the date of their baptism.

I will give you the privilege of receiving these boys in case you can arrange matters satisfactorily as to their faith and their desires in view of the existing conditions. Thomas Reesor in Markham baptised several of the sons of their people in Markham. Two of them had already put on the military uniform and received permission to be baptised in civilian clothes. Others were obliged to report after they were baptised. - None of the boys could be refused baptism if they are sincere, just because they are called to go to war. They need salvation then more than ever, and the help of God above everything else. It will then rest with them as to how they will expect to carry out their convictions, and the Church will bear with them under the severe trial which they will have to meet.

I am sorry that I could not talk with you. Our Communion service comes on Sunday, with meeting in the morning and afternoon. I tried four times to get you by phone since Thursday evening. I hope you will see the boys and arrange with them. The Lord bless you all.

Yours in faith,

Vineland Ont., May 25th, 1918.

The Clerk of the Privy Council,  
House of Parliament,  
Ottawa Ont.

Sir:

Please send to me, if they can at all be procured, a copy each of the "Order in Council of August 13th, 1873," and the "Order in Council of December 6th, 1898," both of which are referred to in the Military Service Act, 1917.

Also please send cost of same, and oblige,

Yours truly,

THE MENTIONED RELATIVE YEAR OF 1873  
DECEMBER 6th 1898. BOTH OF WHICH REFER TO CERTAIN STATUTES ENACTED UNDER  
DECEMBER  
THE "ORDER IN COUNCIL OF AUGUST 13th 1873" AND THE "ORDER IN COUNCIL OF

PLEASE SEND TO ME IF THEY CAN BE AT ALL BE PROCURED, A COPY EACH OF

Sir:

OTTAWA ONT.  
HOUSE OF PARLIAMENT  
THE CLERK OF THE PRIVY COUNCIL

VINELAND ONT. MAY 25th 1918

Vineland Ont., May 25th, 1918.

The Clerk of the Privy Council,  
House of Parliament,  
Ottawa Ont.

Sir:

Please send to me, if they can at all be procured, a copy each of the "Order in Council of August 13th, 1873," and the "Order in Council of December 6th, 1898." both of which refer to certain classes excepted under the Military Service Act of 1917.

Yours truly,

Wm. H. ...

...

...

...

...

Sir:

...

...

...

...

1918  
Wuntruon May 25<sup>th</sup>S. G. Coffman  
Vineband, Ont.

My dear bro. in the Lord:  
Greeting in the precious  
name of Jesus:

We received your letter  
late last night with  
the money in it. I felt  
sorry when I saw the  
money returned. When  
I think of all the trouble  
I put you to, and the kind-  
ness shown towards us, I  
just feel I never can  
repay you for the debt  
of love I owe you.

There seems to me only one way open now for me to do it, and that is; that I can pray our Father in Heaven; whose eyes never lose sight of those kind acts bestowed upon, even an unworthy child like me, to abundantly bless you & yours in all Spiritual and temporal blessings. I had a letter from Ernest yesterday. He seems cheerful and is still looking to God for deliverance. He expects that they will be moved to Niagara-on-the-lake. <sup>about the last of May</sup> He was called up to give

evidence for his trial. <sup>last week</sup> He did expect <sup>his court martial</sup> it would be <sup>trial</sup> this week. He seems to get more liberty than the other Con. Objectors. The other day he was sent to hunt up a young man and he was all over the grounds without a guard. He said he would not betray that confidence for the whole World. He says there are many that would give all their possessions to be out of the army. The other day he was fainting with a man, <sup>who</sup> ~~and said by~~ seemed stupid and two days after, he (Ernest) saw 4 men carry him to the Hospital

Things develop. I saw in the  
 light the other day Mennonite &  
 Mennonite are not to the east  
 at present and I hope also not in the  
 future. Thinking you are sending out to  
 information & hope you may send me  
 one information on how to  
 seed in Germanic soil, as  
 I would like for you to give  
 according as I understand things.  
 should give the certificates  
 Canada, and the ones that  
 20 min later he was dead. He  
 drank Shellac to get the alcohol  
 He was so sick of army life. Well!  
 I will give you the names of the  
 Bishops and their addresses in  
 the Lunker Church in Canada.

Bish Chas. Baker, Batteaux Ont.  
 " John Reichard, Fordwich "  
 " John Sider, Marshville "  
 " Jonas Winger, Stevensville "  
 " Bert Sherk " "  
 " Peter Steckley Stouffville "  
 " Fred Hahn Kindersly Bask

These are all the Bishops in



Vineland Ont., May 25, 1918.

Fred M. Snyder,  
Waterloo Ont.  
R.R. #1.

Dear Brother Fred:- Greeting in the name of our Master.

Your letter received and note. The instructions which were sent to our ministers were for Mennonites. Those that you read in the papers were for those who are called to be soldiers. We have considered ourselves as exceptions to the Act and Orders in Council and the Government has now considered us to be such. On account of that, we are asking our boys not to register, since those who are not under the law are not bound by it.

You may be approached by officers and asked why you are not in service. At such a time you should have with you your church membership certificate as evidence that you are not required to do military service. The Offices Commanding in all of the Military Districts will have instructions to exempt all members of the Mennonite Church. In case you are arrested for not registering, your proof that you are a member of the church will relieve you. If you register you will have the same thing to perform, and will likely be arrested then for reporting and not doing military service. It is as broad as long, and we prefer not to report for military service since that act is not compatible with our faith.

We will be required to register for the enrollment of labor. This does not ~~involve~~ involve us in military service.

Hope all are well. Regards to the family.

Yours in faith,