

Copied June 11th from London Free Press

Mennonites warned.

Alleged to be Advising Young Men not to Register.

"It has been reported to the Deputy Registrars office that certain persons of the Mennonite faith in this district are advising their young men of 19 and 2 years of age not to register," said Capt. Hindson chief local representative to a Free Press reporter yesterday.

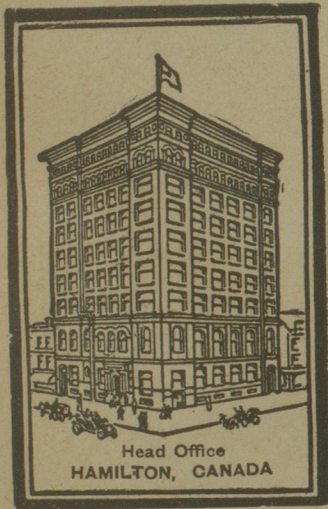
It would perhaps be as well to point out to these people that such advice makes the young man failing to register liable as defaulter, and the persons advising them to such a course make themselves liable to a fine, or imprisonment or both. Capt. Hindson also pointed out that the Mennonites do not according to the decision of the Central Appeal Judge, come within the schedule of men exempted from service.

Every man who is not included in the classes named in the Schedule attached to the Military Service Act of 1917 must register concluded the officer.

Copied By J. R. Eversol.

FRIDAY

7



JUNE

-

1918

There is No Time Like the Present for Starting to Save

R.R. #2 Pickering June 11/18

L. S. Coffman
Windsor

Dear Brother

Greeting

I was at Waterloo over
Sunday, saw Mr Weichel
he was wrong regarding the certificates,
he sent them to Ottawa they were
sent back to be sent to officers
commanding district -
for Toronto district it is

Col Bickford
College St

O. C. 1st Depot Battalion

the certificates of Toronto district
should be sent to him instead
of Mr Weichel to save time
May the Lord guide and lead us
in our difficult duties

yours truly

Thomas Reesor

Vineland Ont., June 12, 1918.

John R. Ebersole,
Milveton, Ont.

Dear Brother:- Greeting.

After you had phoned me I had intended writing at once but so many other demands were made on my time with visits and calls concerning the exemption question that it was not possible to get at it. I am taking this first opportunity to tell you that there has been no other arrangement concerning the registering of the boys of nineteen. I had told Mr. Scott through whom we have made arrangements with the Government that our boys would not register, but would keep their church certificates in case they were approached for not registering and that the certificate would be given as evidence that they were to be exempt from military service. There has been no further instructions from Ottawa regarding this question.

I am glad to learn that the boys have been released from the camp at London. May God be praised for the relief that He has given us in this time of trial.

In case any of the others are called to appear or report to the the district headquarters, let them present their certificate of membership or adherence, signed by the minister and bishop of the congregation, to the District Commanding officer and they will receive liberty at once. This is the instruction from Mr. Weichel. The Officer at London is Col. John Youngs, O. C. 1st Depot Battalion, London, Ont.

Regarding the registering of the nineteen year old boys, I called up Mr. Scott, M.P. at Galt this evening. He is not certain as to our position in his matter, and will take it up at once and report to me tomorrow forenoon. I will advise all as soon as I learn definitely about it. For the man-power bill all will have to register on the 22nd of June. Some have felt that we ought not to register for this as it is supposed to be an aid to the military service, but, the primary purpose is to increase the production of the Country, and none are obliged to do any work that is not agreeable to their faith.

J.R.E.- June 12.-2.

Regarding the report of the Central appeal Judge, I would think that his decision was given before the arrangement was effected with us as it is now. I would not pay much attention to these decisions at the present time. We are under special arrangements with the Government now and not under the jurisdiction of the Central Judge as to our exemptions. As long as the Government will acknowledge our certificates, and grant release from military service we will be free from all military service. As soon as any of the certificates are not honored and our boys are held for non-combatant service we will be obliged to conclude that our exemptions were for combatant service only and our work will require to be carried on further.

It is my private opinion, that, as soon as Parliament meets again we will be obliged to have a special understanding regarding our standing and relation with the Government regarding military service. I fear that conditions are not as satisfactory as they might be. I have not yet seen any of the papers that are held by the brethren who are released from the camps.

If there is any need to ask for the exemption of any members, send the certificates to the Officer Commanding, and not to Mr. Welchel. You may refer the case to Mr. Welchel, but need not send a certificate.

I am not sure how far our exemptions are granted in the report to Mr. Welchel. It is a matter which I have not been able to learn fully, but will expect to hear from it more fully. At present we are not required to do any military service and that is the principle thing with which we are concerned.

Trusting that we may prevail in prayer for those who are in trials and for the suffering of the world, and praying that our lives may grow more submissive to the will of God and our faith may prove steadfast, I am,

Yours in faith,

Elmira, Ont., June 12th, 1918.

Rev. S. F. Coffman,

Vineland, Ont.

Dear Friend:

Greetings.

You have reason to believe that because you do not receive prompt answers to your correspondence that your young friend has dropped out of the propaganda altogether but the fact is that I am so busy with it that I have neglected to make an occasional report of my doings to our secretary.

However, Brother Reesor informs me that he reports regularly to you and as we are working together it would be unnecessary for me to report. I was pleased to note that you have turned the adherent question over to us as you seem to have your hands full with affairs that may concern you more directly than the adherents of our branch of the Church. I am still more pleased and thankful that I am able to inform you that the humble efforts those who have worked in behalf of these adherents have not remained unrewarded. I received a report last night that our boys have returned from London. We ask the brethren to give all honor and thanks to God for His blessings and try to lead a life that will make us to some extent worthy of them.

Brother Reesor paid us a short visit on Sunday and will likely report all that is occurring from time to time. I am always pleased to hear from you and wish to extend my sincere thanks for the way in which you are keeping us posted. May God's blessings reward your efforts in behalf of our boys.

Yours very truly,

N. M. Bearinger

P.S. — Please let me know in what light you regard the registering of members of the church on June 22nd. as there are several opinions existing concerning the matter.

Nanticoke R.R. 1. June 12th 1918

Dear Friend

As we would like a bit of an advice about certain things I have a boy 19 years old and as you know we are all concerned about our children now he was not intending to Register but was advised by some of our Brethren he had better so he went and wrote a letter and told them that he could do nothing to help the war along on any way and told them he has been a member of the Tunkers Church for 3 years and he sent it in the same as if he Registered now what we would like to know is are the Tunkers getting exemption and if they are will he be able to get the exemption papers before the first of July so if he gets called out he will have it to show of course he may not get called out we hope not and do you think we as a church had better Register the 22 day of June and if we do had our boy 19 years old better Register please answer this letter as soon as possible. From Mrs Hiram G Weaver
Nanticoke R.R. 1
Ont

Please find \$1 to pay your
expenses and for your
trouble you have went to the
bother of the Boys and
receiveth Thanks

70

Vineland Ont., June 12, 1918.

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

Dear Sir:

Relative to our conversation by phone this evening, the matter which concerns us is the registration of our young men of nineteen and twenty years for military service as under recent Order in Council. This was the subject of our correspondence on the 20th Ult, and your reply of the 20th, stating that the instruction given to our young men would cover the situation. The reason that we claimed the privilege of not registering was that such registration was equal to a voluntary enlistment, and all who register are deemed soldiers and from that date are deemed on leave of absence without pay. This would be a situation contrary to the principles of our faith. None of our members are expected to become associated with the army in any manner whatsoever. To require them to register as soldiers is requiring them to compromise their faith. We know that this registration would be only a formality for us and the effect ~~is not~~ what of a sentimental one, but, none of us like to be called what we are not, even if immediately exonerated.

The registration brings about another complication. We are not yet aware as the nature of the exemption to be granted to our young men. It has been intimated that they will be given leave of absence, and it is not stated whether the leave of absence is to be limited or unlimited. Under the provisions of exemptions granted under the M. S. A. 1917, we could secure nothing but exemption from combatant service. If the "leave of absence" is to take the place of the former class of exemption granted us, we acknowledge that it is far more satisfactory, but under the "leave of absence", we are yet classified as part of the C. E. F., and you will recognize that this condition is not recognizing the principles of our religious belief. There may have been some guarantee that these members of our Church will not be called upon at any time to do any military service, but it would be a matter of interest to us to know whether this condition is to continue during the duration of the war or only until the Military Service Act ceases to be in force.

The statement regarding the registering of the Mennonites was found in the London Free Press, of June 11th, and was made by Capt. Windson, Chief Local Representative. We have been careful to follow only the instructions received from Ottawa, and have been having trouble by some of our people getting advice from Local representatives in London and Toronto. We have been careful not to antagonize the Government. What advice has been given has always complied with instructions confirmed by those with whom we have had official correspondence in these matters. It is to be regretted that our position was not understood at the first and our people classed with those who were excluded from the operation of the Act. Nothing has been gained by the efforts of the military department to enforce the Act upon our people, since we cannot be expected to change our faith; and there has been constant difficulty in dealing with the situation, both on our part and on that of the Government, in adjusting our case with the provisions of the Act.

We wish to state our appreciation of the efforts that were made in securing our present relief from service. The provisions have brought relief for those who were in the camps, and we trust that the boys who are at present under sentence, by Court Martial, will also be released. Ernest J. Swalm, and Charles Wright, both at Niagara Camp, have had their trials, and Mr. Swalm has been sentenced and Mr. Wright was awaiting his sentence. Elvin A. Winger, 2nd Batt., B Co., is also at Niagara and is still detained and in uniform, although he has been released from the confinement inflicted for refusing to do military duty. It is claimed that he voluntarily assumed military duty, by signing papers. The situation is, that he signed papers under a false impression. The uniform was forced upon him, and he was told that he must sign a paper that he had received the uniform so that the soldier who had been ordered to put the uniform on him would be able to show that he had done his duty. We have placed this case in the hands of Mr. Weichel, who, we understand, is to look after the exemptions for us. We trust that these cases will also be settled.

We have no fear that the present operations will not give us relief. The position, as we have herein set it forth, is one which we see from our view point as it affects our religious standing. It may be impossible to alter the situation. If our boys are obliged to register and then report for exemption, or leave of absence, they will at all times be expected to refuse service, and be more or less exposed to the abusive treatment of some unsympathetic officials as has been their experience in the past.

Our ministers in the different congregations are ready to supply the names of those who are now included in the call, - of the ages from 18-23, - and could forward the same to the District Registrars or to the Officer Commanding. In this way the Department would have a record of the men and, in case any were called or approached for not having registered, their certificates could be forwarded as evidence for not complying with the Act. Since only the boys of nineteen and twenty are involved in the present registration it seems that this matter may be simplified and misunderstanding and confusion avoided.

Some time ago we asked what is the status of boys who are under twenty-one years of age who are sons of fathers who are disenfranchised under the Elections Act. Has the exemption of disenfranchised persons who are between the ages of twenty-one and twenty-three, and that of the sons of minor age been cancelled? or has the Elections Act been repealed? or are persons who have no voice in the Government expected to bear arms under present regulations? These were among the questions asked in a letter to Mr. Calder and no opinion was expressed regarding them. We will be glad for information.

Again, thanking you, Mr. Scott, for your successful efforts in our behalf, and also for the favors requested herewith, I am,

Yours truly,

S.F.C.,
for Committee.

June 13th 1918

Milverton

R.R. 1,

Ont.

Dear Brother in Christ
greeting in his worthy name
So let you know that the
Mennonite cong sends eight
dollars and ninety cts for to
help cover expenses you are
having in this present crisis.
hoping it will reach you,
thanking you for favors
you have done to us. I
remain.

Yours truly
Daniel Gehr

COPY.

Military Service Act, 1917.

803350

179/236.

Ser. No.

June 13/18.

Con. No.

This case has been appealed by the Pub. Representative
ize.

Any letter or statement that you may desire to lay before the Central Appeal Judge in reference to the hearing before him of an appeal by you or on your behalf by the Public Representative concerning your claim for exemption must be attached securely to this sheet and sent to the Ontario Registrar, Toronto, forthwith, by return mail.

Name,----- Jacob Darby Watson,

Street and Number, R.R. #1 - -

City or Town ----- Vineland Ont.

notice

Do not fail to attach the above to any letter you may wish to send in support of your Central Appeal. and address your envelope to

CENTRAL APPEAL DEPARTMENT,
Ontario Registrar Under Military Service Act,
TORONTO.

Baden June 13th 1918

Dear Brother greeting.

We are well Hoping you are same
 Further would like to ask you Regarding
 Registering on the 22 inst. as I am asked
 over & over about it. and I was told that
 the Reeve of Ellis Township is urging his
 people in his Township not to Register he
 is going to find out more about it what it
 Really means he says he thinks it is the
 greatest Conscription ever has been and
 people hardly know what to do so I thought
 I would write and kindly ask your opinion
 about it. So kindly let me know by Return
 mail. The Snyder Boys went to London again
 yesterday and had to stay there. Don't know how
 Long Brother Mannasak Halman was with them
 to London on Monday he stopt at my place on their
 way home in the evening and he told me that Wismer
 Or his Clerk told him the Boys 19 years of age must
 Register and present their Member Certificate and their
 age & their Occupation & adress with it and then they
 would get a Receipt Back and any time some military
 Authority would approach and ask them to come along
 with them. to Show their Receipt and that would clear them
 but - it may be feared so they did not Register so far till
 we have a Reply from you from our Telephone to you. Yours in Faith
 Chr Gaseho

Vineland Ont., June 13, 1918.

Jacob R. Bender,
Tavistock Ont.

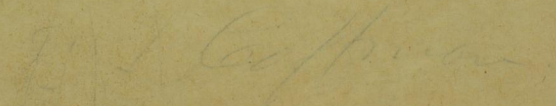
Dear Brothe:- Greeting.

An enclosing another circula~~r~~ letter which you will note refers to the registering of the boys of 19 and 20. It seems that there will be some trouble if they do not register, and so I called up Mr Scott and had a talk with him regarding the situation. He then took up the question with the authorities with the advise as enclosed. We do not like the idea of registering as soldiers, but in this case it is only taking a method of getting relief from the military service. As soon as any are called they need only present their certificates of membership and the release will be given. It may be a long time before any of them are called. Your will see that the boys send in the information that they are members of the Mennonite Church; this may save them from being called, but has not been suggested in the advice, from Mr. Scott. It will be worth trying and is not against the regulations.

As to registering under the man-power bill, it will be perfectly in order for all to register. There will be no compulsory service, and it might be well for those who can, to offer to do farm work in one other locality if it is found necessary. We do not want to be selfish, if there are those who need help and we are in a position to give them help since our boys are not compelled to leave home and the country as soldiers.

I hope this will be satisfactory.

Yours in Him,



Vineland Ont. June 13, 1918.

N. E. Roth,
Tofield Alberta.

Dear Brother:- Greeting.

Your letter received and noted. In reply I would say that, if the privilege of not registering was granted to our brethren in the West under the former call for service, the same privilege will likely be granted under the present call. It might be well for you to see some of the officials, or have brother Stauffer look into the matter for you. Our brethren in the West are included in the provisions for the Russians and have not been molested. If this condition still prevails there will be no trouble. We are having all of the difficulty in the Province of Ontario, but feel glad that there is some relief. For the man-power registration I think that all should register who are British subjects. If you are all American subjects, you are also free from the operation of the Army service and need not register.

I hope this will clear up the situation to some extent. May God bless you in your labors for Him.

Yours in faith,

Vineland Ont., June 13, 1918.

A. T. Gooding,
Stayner Ont.

Dear Brother:-

Your letter with reference to the membership of Howard Hunsberger was received and noted.

It will not be necessary for you to make out a certificate otherwise than according to the form for adherents as was outlined in the previous letter. The time limit for adherents joining the Church is not indicated. They will be at liberty to join at any time. The only limit asked for by the Government is that they have been regular attendants of the Church prior to July 6th 1917, when the Military Service Act was passed. The object in making this time limit is on account of preventing persons who had not previously been associated with the Mennonite Church from making the Church an escape from military service. All of our adherents who had been associated with the Church will be acknowledged as at liberty to give expression to their faith by actually joining the Church and taking the obligation of maintaining the non-resistant doctrines of the Church. I am enclosing another circular letter which speaks for itself. We are sorry that there is yet some indefiniteness about our relation with the Government, but it appears that the Government is making an honest effort to give us relief and for this we should be thankful to our God and Saviour

Yours truly,

Original Copy

Vineland Ont. June 13, 1918.

Colonel John Youngs,
O.C. 1st Depot Battalion,
London Ont.

Sir:

Regarding a reported interview with Captain Hindson, District Representative, which appeared in the London Free Press, Jun 11th, concerning certain Mennonites advising their young men not to register, permit me to give an explanation.

A Committee of the said Church has been in touch with the Government, seeking relief from the operation of the M.S.A., 1917, and the recent Order in Council, with the resulting arrangement of which you have information.

In a letter to the Hon. F. S. Scott, M.P., who was the representative of the said Committee, the following statement was made by the Committee, "We have also instructed the young men, who are members, 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, they should present their Membership Certificates as evidence that they have a right to claim exemption from service. ----- If this is not in accord with your arrangements, please let me know, so that we may be able to comply with the same.--"

In his reply the following was said:- "I believe that the instructions you have given to your young men will cover the situation. If anything different develops, kindly let me know."

This will account for the advice given by Mennonites to their sons. It is not their purpose to antagonize the Government. Any difficulties which arise will be considered by the Hon. Mr. Scott, and Mr. W. G. Weichel of Waterloo, who also represents the Non-resistant people in these matters.

A recent interview with Mr. Scott brings the advice that young men of nineteen and twenty should register, and no further trouble, we trust, will be found regarding this matter among our people.

Yours Respectfully,

For the Committee.

Vineland Ont., June 13, 1918.

L. J. Burkholder,
Markham Ont.,

Dear Brother:- Greeting.

Your letter of the 7th Inst. received and noted. I am glad to learn of the improved condition of Brother Hoover, and trust that ere this he will be able to be around again. All are as well as usual here. This afternoon I expect to leave for Stevensville and Sherkston. We expect, the Lord willing to hold a few meetings previous to our Communion services at Sherkston. We want to learn what the prospects will be to do some work at Stevensville. Remember us in prayer.

You will find enclosed herewith a circular letter regarding the question of registration. We were trying to ward off this matter, but it seems that the question was raised at London and I asked Mr. Scott to make inquiries and report to me. He called up this morning and the result is on the letter and has been mailed to about all of the Ministers and Bishops of our non-resistant churches. We will be obliged to take the best view possible of the matter and make use of the registration as a means of avoiding military service while others use the same method to engage therein. The Government is bound by its regulations and cannot make other provision without an act of Parliament, since there is a definite division among them as to the meaning and application of the Orders in Council 1873.

Perhaps this sheet looks as though my type-writer has improved somewhat and I am sure that I will try and get along with it as long as possible. But I am sure that you would be perfectly welcome to it if I would be in a position to dispense with it. It has no market value, since it is badly used up and some parts broken. I have been making a few repairs but cannot make a new machine of it. But old and worn out things last longer than new ones these days.

There has been no reply from the Government or any of the members concerning the Relief Organization. If the Government proves its good faith by operation our exemption claims as they have promised, it will be right for us to go ahead with the collection of the funds and then approach the Government regarding the acceptance of it. By that time those who are away on their vacations will have returned and will be ready to consider our propositions. The Prime Minister, President of the Council, Sec. of Interior and Minister of Immigration and Colonization are all absent and were on the Committee to consider our donation.

Word came to me that the Hutterite Brethren have asked for Exemption as a colony if they come to Canada, and have been granted that privilege and have bot land in Alberta. I have directed a letter making inquiry thru what sources they have received exemption.

If the markham boys are not yet released, - the Heise boys, - follow the directions here given. Bro E.W. Heise will, no doubt, look into the question and secure their release.

Yours in faith,

S. F. Coffman

Vineland Ont., June 13, 1918.

L. J. Burkholder,
Markham Ont.,

Dear Brother:- Greeting.

Your letter of the 7th Inst. received and noted. I am glad to learn of the improved condition of Brother Hoover, and trust that ere this he will be able to be around again. All are as well as usual here. This afternoon I expect to leave for Stevensville and Sherkston. We expect, the Lord willing to hold a few meetings previous to our Communion services at Sherkston. We want to learn what the prospects will be to do some work at Stevensville. Remember us in prayer.

You will find enclosed herewith a circular letter regarding the question of registration. We were trying to ward off this matter, but it seems that the question was raised at London and I asked Mr. Scott to make inquiries and report to me. He called up this morning and the result is on the letter and has been mailed to about all of the Ministers and Bishops of our non-resistant churches. We will be obliged to take the best view possible of the matter and make use of the registration as a means of avoiding military service while others use the same method to engage therein. The Government is bound by its regulations and cannot make other provision without an act of Parliament, since there is a definite division among them as to the meaning and application of the Orders in Council 1873.

Perhaps this sheet looks as though my type-writer has improved somewhat and I am sure that I will try and get along with it as long as possible. But I am sure that you would be perfectly welcome to it if I could be in a position to dispense with it. It has no market value, since it is badly used up and some parts broken. I have been making a few repairs but cannot make a new machine of it. But old and worn out things last longer than new ones these days.

There has been no reply from the Government or any of the members concerning the Relief Organization. If the Government proves its good faith by operation our exemption claims as they have promised, it will be right for us to go ahead with the collection of the funds and then approach the Government regarding the acceptance of it. By that time those who are away on their vacations will have returned and will be ready to consider our propositions. The Prime Minister, President of the Council, Sec. of Interior and Minister of Immigration and Colonization are all absent and were on the Committee to consider our donation.

Word came to me that the Hutterite Brethren have asked for Exemption as a colony if they come to Canada, and have been granted that privilege and have bot land in Alberta. I have directed a letter making inquiry thru what sources they have received exemption.

If the markham boys are not yet released, - the Heise boys, - follow the directions here given. Bro E.W. Heise will, no doubt, look into the question and secure their release.

Yours in faith,

Vineland Ont., June 13, 1918.

D. W. Heise, Sec.
Gormley Ont.

Dear Brother:- Greeting.

Find enclosed a circular letter which has been sent to all of the Bishops and ministers of our Churches. I have mailed copies to all of the Bishops in your Church. Am sorry to learn that not all of your boys are yet released. I think that our boys are all released now. Those in the London camp were allowed to return home last Saturday. The brethren Sider have been here several times and were with us this week regarding the situation with Bro Alvin Winger. I wrote Mr. Weichel to take the matter up with the authorities. Since he signed for some matter, they have assumed that he voluntarily accepted service. This is a case of imposition on the part of the authorities and will require a separate consideration, but should have the same consideration as if he had signed no papers. He is in camp and in uniform under protest. You have likely done all that could be done. If Col. Bickford has seen the certificate of Brother Winger, signed by your Bishops, he should take action at once to relieve the brother from service.

Mr. Weichel has had papers sent to him from the department, showing that official notice has been sent to the Officers Commanding in the Districts #1 and #2, asking them to acknowledge the certificates signed by authorized ministers and Bishops of the Mennonite Anish and Tunker Churches and to grant leave to those who present such certificates. This information was of a private nature, and therefore not sent out.

Regarding the registering of the 19 and 20 year old brethren, this came about through some agitation at London. I called up Mr Scott, and he took up the matter with the Department with the results as noted. I am sorry that we have to take these steps, but it is a way of escape for us, and about the only way that the Government can arrange until there is a meeting of the Parliament or Cabinet. We have not a full recognition of our faith, but we have a freedom from service for which we should thank God. There is no news for the Relief Organization. If we see the good faith of the Government in freeing all of our members, we will be in a position to call for donations and then meet the Government as to the disposal of the funds on hand. If nothing can be done through those channels the money can be devoted to other causes which will have the same results. for the cause of Christ and suffering humanity.

Yours in faith,

J. L. Coffman

Vineland Ont. Jun 13, 1918.

Mr. W. G. Welchel,
Waterloo Ont.

Dear Sir:

Your letter of the 10th Instant received and noted. We are glad to report that, up to the present time things have been working satisfactorily, except the cases of the Tinker brethren at Niagara. The two who were courtmartialled and the one concerning whose case I wrote you yesterday. We are hoping that these will also be released. I do not know whether the applications in the regular way will avail for them. The officers have been appealed to and the certificates have been given for them. We are awaiting results.

Enclosed you will find a copy of a letter to Mr. Scott. I thought you might be interested, as you have been active in securing the favors which we enjoy. It seems that the Headquarters in London are getting disturbed over reports that are getting circulated. We have previously advised our brethren not to register, but this advice was in accord with instructions given us through our correspondence, having such advice confirmed by those who represented us in the Government council. Mr. Scott is taking the matter up with the Government at present, and will inform us as to our position. The letter will explain our attitude on the question.

Thank you for your advice regarding our procedure in claiming exemption. This advice will be given to the parties concerned.

Thanking you for your interest and help in our efforts to secure our religious privileges, I am,

Yours truly,

G. F. Coffman
For the Committee.

Copy

Vineland Ont. June 13, 1918.

Colonel John Youngs,
O.C. 1st Depot Battalion,
London Ont.

Sir:

Regarding a reported interview with Captain Hindson, District Representative, which appeared in the London Free Press, Jun 11th, concerning certain Mennonites advising their young men not to register, permit me to give an explanation.

A Committee of the said Church has been in touch with the Government, seeking relief from the operation of the M.S.A., 1917, and the recent Order in Council, with the resulting arrangement of which you have information.

In a letter to the Hon. F. S. Scott, M.P., who was the representative of the said Committee, the following statement was made by the Committee, "We have also instructed the young men, who are members, 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, they should present their Membership Certificates as evidence that they have a right to claim exemption from service. ----- If this is not in accord with your arrangements, please let me know, so that we may be able to comply with the same.--"

In his reply the following was said:- "I believe that the instructions you have given to your young men will cover the situation. If anything different develops, kindly let me know."

This will account for the advice given by Mennonites to their sons. It is not their purpose to antagonize the Government. Any difficulties which arise will be considered by the Hon. Mr. Scott, and Mr. W. G. Weichel of Waterloo, who also represents the Non-resistant people in these matters.

A recent interview with Mr. Scott brings the advice that young men of nineteen and twenty should register, and no further trouble, we trust, will be found regarding this matter among our people.

Yours Respectfully,

For the Committee.

Elmira, Ont., June 13th, 1918.

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

Dear Friend:

Greetings.

Since our people have found out that we have been so favoured by the authorities there are many inquiries concerning the progress of our donation scheme. Would you kindly advise me as to what extent it has been proceeded with as I beleive that it would be possible to get a lot of our people interested now that recent happenings have made such a favourable impression upon them.

An early reply would be very much appreciated.

Yours very truly,

N. M. Bearinger.

RR#2 Pickering June 14 18

Rev S S Coffman
Wineland

Dear Brother
Greetings

I have just received a letter from Mr & M Bearinger urging me to go on with donation collection, to my mind the time is now ripe as our exemption is assured I think we should go on for the sake of public opinion which may react against us. As for the purpose of donation that could be worked out later, those who do not wish to give under present conditions could pay later on when the movement is under way satisfactory to hesitating ones, as it no doubt will take some time to be appreciated by all. This is my personal view intended for your consideration
May God be praised for abundant mercies.
Yours truly
Geo Peeson

Wineland Ont., June 14, 1918.

To the Bishops and Ministers of the
Mennonite and Tunker Churches.

Dear Brethren:- Greeting in the name of Jesus.

While we are enjoying the privilege of freedom from military service which the Government has granted to us and which has been arranged for through the officers of the Military Districts, it has been found, that, in order to complete the workings of these arrangements that it will be necessary for our young brethren to send in their names and date of birth to the District Registrar in whose district they reside. This information can be secured from your Post Office.

All of the young brethren who have reached the ages of nineteen and twenty and all of those who reach the age of nineteen hereafter will be obliged to register. May we add that it would not be out of place for them to indicate in their letters that they are members of the Mennonite, Anish Mennonite or Tunker Church. ~~Do not send your certificate with the letter.~~
Instruction. - Get your instructions from the Post Master. Register the letter. Do not send Church Certificate. Keep your Church Certificate with you, as evidence that you have a right to claim exemption from military service.

The young men who register now may not be called upon for service, but if any are called, they shall present their Church Certificates to the Officer Commanding in the Military District, and exemption or leave of absence will be given at once. None of our members will be required to do any military service. If a leave of absence is given, it will be for an indefinite period.

While these arrangements are not a complete recognition of the faith which we profess, and while registering implies an application for service and a leave of absence is a soldier's permit to be absent, the arrangement is the best that the Government is able to make for us under the present military law. It is a method which the Government has devised for our relief, and let us accept it in the spirit in which it is granted. Let us be thankful to God and grateful to the Powers that rule over us. We trust that when the Government again assembles that a better understanding will be reached regarding our faith and our privileges. Let us pray for the guidance of these affairs by the hand of Him who rules over all.

In case any of our brethren are called in the London District, send the Church Certificate to Colonel John Youngs, O.C. 1st. Depot Battalion, London Ont., and apply for exemption. Those living in the Toronto District should apply to Colonel H.C. Bickford, 149 College St. Toronto Ont. The certificates need not be sent to Mr. Weichel, Waterloo, Ont. Send only the name of the person desiring exemption to Mr. Weichel.

There is yet no report concerning the Fund for the Government.

Yours in faith and service,

S. F. Coffman,
For the Committee.

Vineland Ont., June 14, 1918.

To the Bishops and Ministers of the
Mennonite and Tunker Churches.

Dear Brethren:- Greeting in the name of Jesus.

While we are enjoying the privilege of freedom from military service which the Government has granted to us and which has been arranged for through the officers of the Military Districts, it has been found, that, in order to complete the workings of these arrangements that it will be necessary for our young brethren to send in their names and date of birth to the District Registrar in whose district they reside. This information can be secured from your Post Office.

All of the young brethren who have reached the ages of nineteen and twenty and all of those who reach the age of nineteen hereafter will be obliged to register. May we add that it would not be out of place for them to indicate in their letters that they are members of the Mennonite, Anish Mennonite or Tunker Church. Do not send your certificate with the letter. Instruction.- Get your instructions from the Post Master. Register the letter. Do not send Church Certificate. Keep your Church Certificate with you, as evidence that you have a right to claim exemption from military service.

The young men who register now may not be called upon for service, but if any are called, they shall present their Church Certificates to the Officer Commanding in the Military District, and exemption or leave of absence will be given at once. None of our members will be required to do any military service. If a leave of absence is given, it will be for an indefinite period.

While these arrangements are not a complete recognition of the faith which we profess, and while registering implies an application for service and a leave of absence is a soldier's permit to be absent, the arrangement is the best that the Government is able to make for us under the present military law. It is a method which the Government has devised for our relief, and let us accept it in the spirit in which it is granted. Let us be thankful to God and grateful to the Powers that rule over us. We trust that when the Government again assembles that a better understanding will be reached regarding our faith and our privileges. Let us pray for the guidance of these affairs by the hand of Him who rules over all.

In case any of our brethren are called in the London District, send the Church Certificate to Colonel John Youngs, C.C. 1st. Depot Battalion, London Ont., and apply for exemption. Those living in the Toronto District should apply to Colonel H.C. Bickford, 149 College St. Toronto Ont. The certificates need not be sent to Mr. Weichel, Waterloo, Ont. Send only the name of the person desiring exemption to Mr. Weichel.

There is yet no report concerning the Fund for the Government.

Yours in faith and service,

S. F. Coffman,
For the Committee.

Arglmes West
June 14/18.

Eld S. J. Coffman
Vinceland

Dear Bro:

Re Registration

Are Mennonites excepted from this proclamation, or are we supposed to register as others? Personally I see nothing to except us and see no harm in registering although it belongs to the war machine and is closely connected with the Conscription act.

One of our brethren who has recently returned from Africa is very anxious to know if we as ministers must register and wanted me to find out and I thought you would know about as much about it as anyone.

We are very grateful for past information. Reply by return if possible.
E. Moyer.

1918th
14
Dunroon June

S. F. Goffman.

Dunroon, Ont

Dear bro in Christ: Greeting

Your letter of 13th received to-day was glad to hear from you again. I also received a letter from D. W. Heise in which he said Ernest was under the "civil" authorities. I did not understand it that way. Did you? Did you write to M^r. Bush (fairly) and ask him to use his influence in securing Ernest release. I forgot to find

out Ernest's address. We addressed it to St Batherines in care of M^r. Bush Jailor. I forgot Mr Bush's Christian name. The letter you sent me to-day does not concern Ernest, does it?

We have written several letters but do not know if he received them or not. Would letters sent to him, there, be censored. We have heard nothing of him since I was there a week ago to-day. A week from to-morrow is our Lovefeast. We expect to have some meeting during next week and

perhaps the week after as we are having a Minister from Ohio. Bro B. H. Hoover. Let us pray that some soul may get Salvation. We had a letter from one of your sisters in the Church to-day telling us that 110 souls are to be baptized up at Waterloo some place in the near future. Praise the Lord that some are yet seeking the Lord in these days of Military oppression and Apostasy. It seems the Authorities at Toronto are very slow

J. L. Lamm
 I will advise it in the
 will copy that letter off and
 bitter against no. I don't
 as others will not put in
 letting our young
 Brethren go off. I was
 at a barn raising last
 Monday and a man came to
 me and using an oath said
 the Government did the meanest
 thing they could do by taking
 my only son from me and the
 condition I am in.
 Others think Ernest has
 as good a right to go, as
 others sons. I believe a
 leave of absence will be better
 for us than a bright exemption

Brunner June 17th 1915

S. F. Coffman

Dear Brother

Greeting in Jesus name,
May grace and peace be multiplied
unto you. Since having met at
East Zorra meeting house you
will know who I am.

I suppose you are a busy man
these days. But would like some
advice. We had a young brother
aged 19 enlisted ~~and~~ voluntarily
his father (a widower) would like
to have him back home again.

Am also told he would like to come
home. Do you think there would
be any chance of getting him free
again? What steps would have to be
taken? Kindly answer by return mail
and oblige

Would have like to have written
you some time but thought you
would be too busy for much letter
reading, As I live close to Bus Ebersol
he has done all the writing and
of course I read the letters so
have the same benefit as if I wrote
myself, as I have a flock and
also a farm to look after. I am
kept quite busy. My prayer is that
God may bless you in your arduous
work and give you grace and
strength and also wisdom from
above to continue in the same.
Will close by asking to be remem-
bered at the throne of grace,
and also sending our love and
best wishes to you and family

Fraternally Yours
Nicholas Haffziger
Bruner, P. Q
Ont

S. F. B.

Guernsey June 15 / 18

Dear Bro. in the faith. Greetings to you and yours. Also all interested in the West. Your last letter, re the adherent- and ^{other} questions noticed. were glad to hear that same was decided in favor of such.

We have only a few such cases at present. But have a few that were once members, (in the military age) that we have not commended for some time, but were not expelled. we tried to straighten up. they don't seem to see their standing. P.S. The registrar offered his signature on certificates.

We are arranging a membership certificate by the approval of our Provincial Registrar. Regina. a delegation of four members met with the registrar two week ago. and he received us very kindly. We were questioned very closely, when we were through. he claimed we gave him more. about our people and working than he ever got before. This has also put the Russian brethren in close quarters. We expect to meet with the Russian brethren on Monday next to discuss matters.

S. F. B.

Guernsey June 15 / 18

Dear Bro. in the faith. Greetings to you and yours. Also all interested in the West - your last letter, re the adherent - and ^{other} questions noticed. were glad to hear that same was decided in favor of such.

We have only a few such cases at present. But have a few that were once members, (in the military age) that we have not commended for some time, but were not expelled. we tried to straighten up. they don't seem to see their standing. P.S. The registrar offered his signature on certificates.

We are arranging a membership certificate by the approval of our Provincial Registrar. Regina. a delegation of four members met with the registrar two week ago. and he received us very kindly. We were questioned very closely when we were through. he claimed we gave him more. about our people and working than he ever got before. This has also put the Russian brethren in close quarters. We expect to meet with the Russian brethren on Monday next to discuss matters.

27

The principal question is, who is rightly termed a Mennonite, or who is a Mennonite.

The Russian brethren claim, that all children born of Mennonite parentage, have a right to claiming the name Menn.

We have taken this stand, that after one comes under the conditions of ^{the} word (of God) and is baptised and received into ^{the} church.

The stand that we took in the presence of the officers has since drawn into the camps a few of their people, adherents, but not actual members. Now we would be pleased to have your views on this question, as we wish to be one with our Conf. in the east.

are we under the status of the year, or date 1812 or the new as the Russians, ^{claim in} 1843 the first was changed, or destroyed.

The weather is fairly warm, with high winds as the rule the crops look good, except the high sandy sections we are as well as usual, except Adam's. Myer's little boy is 15 months old, was very sick of Pneumonia, but slightly better. We have reason to thank God for His rich blessings bestowed, and promise yours in love.

Box 18 Sun

J. S. Rosenberger



House of Commons

~~OTTAWA~~ Galt, June 15th, 1918.

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

Dear Mr. Coffman:-

I am in receipt of your letters of the 12th and 13th instant and note contents. The instructions which you have sent out to your people will cover the situation I believe, and I do not think that there should be any further difficulty.

Regarding the general question which you bring up of the position of the Mennonite people I do not think that this is the proper time to press these matters. The public mind is so aroused that I do not believe that you would get the consideration to which you are entitled. As a matter of fact you are getting a great deal more than the regulations passed by the Government, if literally interpreted, would give you. You will remember that I told you that on the question of adherents that it did not appear likely that they would be exempted. Mr. Meighen informed me that it would open up a question that would cause no end of embarrassment. We were able to accomplish ~~but~~ the object which we had in view by getting the military authorities to take the view that these men would be of little use to them under any circumstances holding the belief which they did and that it was better to leave them at their present occupations. If anyone contested the point I am doubtful, under the regulations, if it could be done. It is however bringing about the object which you desire and my own judgment ~~is~~ that the less said about it the better. It is very easy for us to look back now and see that these matters should have been taken care of before the war. There can be no doubt that was the proper time to do it and have the standing of your people in these matters recognized but the difficulty is that it was not done and my own opinion is that the best that you can do under the circumstances is to accept the conditions which your friends have been able to work out for you and leave all other matters stand until after the conclusion of the war.

I am,

Yours sincerely,

F. Scott

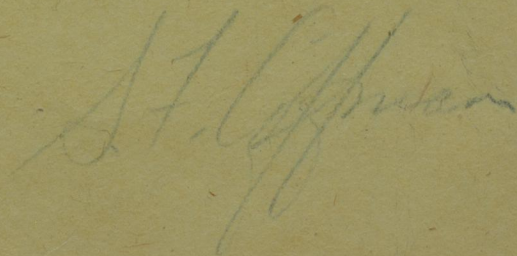
Vineland Ont., June 17, 1918.

Daniel Zehr,
Milverton Ont.
R. R. # 1.

Dear Brother:- Greeting in the name of the Lord.

Your letter enclosing the amount of \$8.90 as a contribution from the Church at that place has been received, and we desire to express our thanks for this appreciation of what we have endeavored to do for the cause of the Church in securing release from service as soldiers. We thank God for what he has done in our behalf. We thank Him for enabling us to be of some assistance in this work and feel that we are well repaid by the joy that has come to our lives on account of the privileges which we now have from the Government, and pray that He may continue these blessings to the Church. The Lord will reward you for the way in which you have remembered one of His children, and the money will be used in His service, by His grace. Many are inquiring whether or not all of our people shall register on the 22nd of this month. Since this registration is only for ~~the~~ a record of what people are doing in regular occupations, it will not be out of place for our people to register. They will not be required to do any military service. The Government requires that every one must register.

Yours in christian faith and love,



Vineland Ont., June 17, 1918.

Central Appeal Department,
Ontario Registrar, Under Military
Service Act,
Toronto Ont.

Sir:

My claim for total Exemption from Military Service is based upon the fact that I am a member of the Mennonite Church whose tenets of faith forbid its members engaging in any military service whatsoever. My Certificate of membership is on file with my application for exemption.

The faith of the Mennonite Church has remained unchanged as regards Military Service, for over two-hundred years, and its members can not constantly change their faith.

The faith of the Mennonite Church regarding military Service is recognized under the Exceptions to the Act.

My second reason for claiming exemption is on account of the need of caring for the farm, My father is an invalid and unable to do any farm work.

Respectfully,

Serial Number 803350.
Con. No. 179/236.

Vineland Ont.
R.R.# 1.