

To the N-R.R.O. and
Committee to Ottawa.

Vineland Ont., July 31st, 1918.

Brethren/-greeting in the name of Him in Whom we trust.

Your attention may have recently been called to the report of the decision of the Military Service Council, Department of Justice Branch, Ottawa, as it appeared in the Toronto Globe, Mail and Empire and other papers. Several Communications have come in regarding these reports. Your Secretary, had, previously to receiving these communications, seen the report and at once took up the matter with Hon. Mr. Scott, Galt. He referred to a letter from the Military Service Committee which has in charge the Granting of the Leave of Absence which we are now enjoying, and which says that this department has no jurisdiction over the Department of Justice and its branches. It also says that the ruling of the Chief Justice against the excepting of Mennonites and Tunkers from the Act does not debar them from claiming exemption from service on religious grounds. It also states that instructions have been sent out to commanding Officers at Toronto and London, to release from military service bona fide Mennonites and Tunkers. We are aware of these decisions and arrangements. We have no other instructions to follow than those which have been given us by those who have been in touch with the Departments in our behalf. It will behoove us to continue in good faith in the way that has been pointed out to us and which has up to the present time proven satisfactory, in securing the release of all of our brethren from the camps.

There are some questions which will arise in our minds as to the status of those brethren who have united with the Church since the 13th of October, last, and which the Department of Justice has decided are not entitled to the privilege of exemption on religious grounds. This question has already been presented to the members of the Government with whom we are dealing and will, no doubt, be taken into consideration. Until we are further advised it will be well to ~~maintain information~~ continue as we have, and all of those who are called should present their membership certificates to the commanding officers of the camps and receive the Leave of Absence granted by such officers.

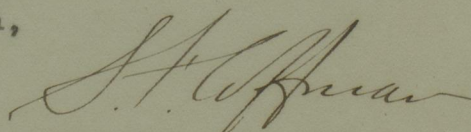
There have been some differences in the Leave of Absence granted at different camps and to different individuals. There is no uniformity in these papers because there may be no uniform instructions concerning the character of the Leave to be given. Let each brother comply with the conditions of the papers which he has received from his Officer, reporting at the time specified and appealing again for further leave.

The Question as to the decision concerning a bona fide member, or member ~~if~~ in good faith is also one to be considered. It may be a question with some whether the Government shall decide this or whether it will be left to the Bishops and Ministers of the Churches. This question has also been brought to the attention of those who represent us in the Government. We feel that these are weighty questions and it is not without a sense of their importance that we present them and not without a prayer to God to assist in the solution of them for the sake of His people that we should consider them.

Let us continue in patience and prayer and thanksgiving to God for mercies we need and for those we are receiving daily.

Notify all possible to continue as we have in our work, for we have no other instructions from the Government.

Yours in faith,



For the committees.