

(In Duplicate)
Mr W. E. Wismer
District Registrar
Military Service Council 1917
London

Sir I herewith give notice that I desire to further appeal to the Central appeal Judge, that my claim for appeal as well as my claim for Exemption from all Military Service may be allowed, basing my claims on the following grounds-

1) The Mennonite Church of which I am a member forbids its members to engage in combatant and noncombatant Military Service.

2) The Military Service Council has uniformly replied to all inquiries by members of our Churches that all Mennonites are excluded from the operation of the Military Service Act

Serial No
Consecutive No

Vineland Ont., November 20, 1917.

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

Honourable Sir:-

In reply to our letter of the 22nd of October, We, the Mennonites of the Ontario and Alberta-Saskatchewan Conferences, and other Congregations of like faith with us, desire to thankfully acknowledge the letter of the 3rd Inst., from the Military Service Branch of the Department of Justice, in which it is stated that "Under paragraph 7 of the Military service Act, Mennonites are excluded from the operation of the Act and have no duty to perform thereunder."

We cannot adequately express to yourself and to the Government what this interpretation of the regulations of the said Act means to us, nor can we tell of the joy that it gave to our people, nor of the thanksgivings to God which ascended from hearts and homes and assemblies of those who have loved and sought after peace and good will to all men in the Spirit of Jesus Christ, and who in sincerity have sought to obey His will and Word in all things.

We desire to express our sympathy with the Government during these days of stress and trial and assure you that our prayers are made to God in behalf of our Rulers and our King that judgment and discretion may be at all times given them to decide each weighty problem and that wisdom may be granted in every decision that the interests of the kingdom and country may be conserved and the cause of Christ advanced through those gracious provisions of our land which permit the followers of Christ to lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty.

We realize also that the Government has not assigned us any duty in lieu of military service, and therefore we are not made to share any special part of the burden which our nation is bearing. We recognize this fact, and while we are sharing in the national burden of trials and fears and labors, it is our purpose, by the grace of God, to voluntarily undertake some share in the sacrifice of our fellow-citizens, and by some means, \ the plans of which are now under consideration, / express in a more substantial manner our gratitude to the Government for the Christian privileges which we enjoy under the laws of Canada, our allegiance and loyalty to our King and Country, our Christian sympathy toward our fellow-citizens and toward humanity and our common interests in the world in which we live while maintaining our allegiance toward the Kingdom of Heaven and to Jesus Christ our Saviour.

We are,
Most thankfully and humbly,

Sir,

Your servants who do humbly pray,

The Committee.

per. S.F.Coffman.

D.J.Burkholder, Mod. Markham.
David Bergy, Sec. New Dundee.
Anson Groh, Petrolia.
S.F.Coffman, Vineland.

Christian Gascho, Baden.
Jacob R.Bender, Tavistock.
Jacob S.Bender, Tavistock.
Samuel Bender, Esq., New Hamburg.

Statement of Claim for
Appeal and Exemption
In Duplicate

Feb 21/1918

Sir I herewith give notice that I desire to further appeal to the Central appeal Judge, that my claim for appeal as well as my claim for Exemption from all Military Service may be allowed, basing my claims on the following grounds -

1) The Mennonite Church of which I am a member forbids its members to engage in combatant and noncombatant Service Military Service

2) The Military Service Council has uniformly replied to all inquiries by members of our Churches that all Mennonites are excluded from the operation of the Military Service Act

Serial No

Consecutive

and both together
London

To the Registrar of the ^{military,} Service Act at London Ont.

W. E. Wismer

Dear Sir

Appeal of Claim for Exemption
Serial No. --- Act, Schedule No. 1

As the Local Tribunal Board at New Hamburg has granted me Exemption from Combatant Service Only, and Judge Reed of Kitchener Appeal Tribunal has Dismissed my Case, and according to a Letter from E. L. Newcombe Deputy Minister of Justice Received By L. J. Coffman of Vineland Dated Nov 3rd 1917 at Ottawa, that all mennonites are Excluded from the Operation of Said Act and no Duty to perform there under, and therefore I as a Member of Said Denomination do hereby Appeal to Chief Justice Duff at Ottawa and kindly Ask for Complete or Total Exemption from Military Service in any Shape or form

Jan 21st 1918

Mr Chief Justice Duff

Central Appeal Judge

Department of Justice

~~I~~

Ottawa

I Appeal to you for Complete Exemption
from all Military Service, as a member of
the Mennonite body which forbids its members
to engage in any form of Military Service.
My appeal to District appeal court at London
was dismissed.

My Serial No
Consecutive No

Name

Address

Kitchener ont., Jan. 24, 1918.

To the Committee to Interview Government.

Brethren:- Greeting.

In accordance with the purpose of the committee and the advice of the meeting of the Relief Organization at its first meeting in Kitchener, Elder Goudie and the Secretary of your Committee met with Mr. W. G. Weichle, M.P., of Waterloo at his home, January, 22nd, to discuss the advisability of interviewing the Government relative to the objects of this Organization.

We have the following to report:-

The Government will be inclined to look with favor upon the engaging in relief work by the Non-resistant Bodies.

The Government would be in a position to use funds and disburse them according to the direction and wishes of these bodies, excepting, however, the use of funds in such districts with which our Country is now at war, - such as Armenia, and parts of Poland and Palestine.

It is advisable to send a small delegation to Ottawa to interview the Government as to what special lines of relief are most needy, and to inform the Government as to which objects of relief and charity are most in harmony with the sympathies and faith of our people and would receive the most hearty support. The relief of widows and orphans would prove very acceptable to the Government.

With reference to the exemptions, Mr. Weichle recommends that all of our young men who have not received complete exemption should appeal their cases to higher tribunals as soon as possible.

It is the purpose of your Committee officers to send to the Prime Minister of Canada a report of this Organization, with a letter recognizing our gratitude for the privileges of freedom from military service, and stating our objects, also asking advice concerning an interview with regard to these objects.

Please express your opinion regarding the advice to send a limited number of this Committee to interview the Government at Ottawa. It will be the duty of the Executive Committee to take action in changing the Committee if advisable.

Yours truly,

S.F. Coffman, Secretary.

Address your reply to L. J. Burkholder, Markham, Chairman of the Committee.

Vineland Ont., Jan 24, 1918.

Dear Brother;- Greeting.

Having seen some of the exemption papers of some of our young brethren and having found thereon nothing which free them from more than combatant service; and having also seen some of the notices from the District Appeal Tribunals returned to our brethren who have held papers allowing only exemption from combatant service and who had appealed for a complete exemption, and since the said appeals were disallowed or dismissed and stated that these persons would be subject to a call to service and would with the call be assigned to certain battalions for service, I have taken the liberty of again calling attention to the need of having every brother appeal his claim for exemption to the higher tribunals until the claim is granted fully, if not already granted.

If any of their papers are marked as follows they should be appealed for complete exemption as Mennonites.

"Exemption from combatant service." "Exemption for religious reasons according to clause 8." "Exemption until class or category is called." "Exemption as a farmer or other laborer." When the appeal was made on the grounds of religion according to clause 8 and the certificate is marked "Allowed" or "Granted" and is not otherwise qualified. Any exemption granted on clause 8 relieves from combatant service only and is granted to all religious objectors. Our faith calls for total exemption.

In making your appeals the claim should be made as a member of the Mennonite Church whose creed forbids military service of any kind. It must be borne in mind that any brother who has not secured total exemption is a soldier under the military arm of the Government, as above noted, and is considered on leave of absence without pay until he is called upon to do active service. They are listed with others who are exempted only from combatant service and are eligible for non-combatant service, and belong to that branch of the Canadian Expeditionary Force which is now in active service. They are not yet called and may not be called for active service, but the fact that they are a part of such military force is contrary to the principles of our faith and we should not be satisfied that they are so situated.

The Government has made provisions for the relief through the Appeal Tribunals and it is our privilege to make use of them, and secure the exemption which the Military Service Council has already acknowledged is our right. The machinery is in operation, and the first step is to appeal to the District Appeal Tribunals. If the claim is not allowed there the appeal should be made to the Central Appeal Judge, Military Service Council, Department of Justice, Ottawa. Directions for appeal will be found on the back of each exemption certificate from the Local or Appeal courts. Follow the instructions given there. The fact that the time limit for making the appeal as stated on the papers has expired will not interfere with the appeal.

Trusting that you will give the necessary aid to those interested in your congregation, and praying that through God and our Saviour we may receive the favor desired from our Government, I am,

Yours in faith,

S. F. Coffman,

For the Committee.

Abstract from Letters Sent
to the Different Churches

Baden, Ont. Jan. 4. /18

Dear Bro:

Greetings in Jesus' name.

The Committee sat today, and after several discussions we decided to make an appeal to you, to ask you to announce in your Church to your young Brethren to subscribe towards the donation to Mr. S. F. Goffman, who has done so much for our young Brethren.

Whatever is donated, please sent to my Address,

Yours truly,

Chr Gascho
Secretary
of Committee

Baden no 15/17

To the Registrar under
Military Service Act 1917
London Ont.

Sir

Appeal of Claim for
Exemption of (name)

Serial no. as
Consecutive no. on Schedule

Claim no. 1 needed for Carrying
On Farming operation

Claim no. 8 Conscientious
Reasons according to Letter Received
and Signed by E. L. Newcombe
Deputy Minister of Justice dated
Nov 3rd 1917 At Ottawa, all
Mennonites are Excluded from
the Operation of Said Act and
therefore I as a member of Said
Denomination Claim Complete
Exemption

Exemption is Claimed for the Reason
Marked with a cross X

- 1st Importance of Continuing Employment in
Habitual Occupation X
- 2nd Importance of Employment for which
he has Special Qualification.
- 3^d Importance of Continuing Education or
Training.
- 4th Serious hardship Owing to Exceptional
financial Obligations
- 5th Serious hardship Owing to Exceptional
Business Obligations
- 6th Serious hardship Owing to Exceptional
Domestic position
- 7th Ill Health or infirmity
- 8th Adherence to Religious Denomination known
as Amish Mennonite of which the Articles
of Faith forbid their Combatant Service

Department
of
Justice

Military Service Branch
130 Sparks Street

Ottawa 3rd November 1917

L. J. Coffman Esq
Vineland Ont

Sir

Military Service Act, 1917

With Further Reference to your Letter of the 22nd instant addressed to the Right Honourable the Prime Minister of Canada. I have to inform you that under paragraph 7 of the Schedule of Exemptions to the above act, Mennonites are Excluded from the Operation of the act and have no Duty to perform thereunder.

In a former Letter to an adherent of your Sect I suggested that any Mennonite might claim Exemption on the ground of his being Excluded by paragraph 7, with a view to relieving him of any annoyance which might be caused by prosecution after the 10th instant for non-compliance with the act, the production of the counterfoil being sufficient answer to an enquiry, since expressing that Opinion the matter has been thoroughly discussed by the Military Service Council and the Opinion now is that if Mennonites should be prosecuted for non-compliance with the act the answer to the prosecution would be that they are Mennonites and ^{on} proof of the fact undoubtedly the prosecution would be dismissed. I think this fully covers the contents of your Letter and your mind may now be at rest on the whole Subject.

I have the Honour to be Sir your Obedient Servant
Signed E. L. Newcombe
Deputy Minister of Justice

Recommendations from the Prime Minister
and Secretary of State, Ottawa, Oct 11, 1917

- 1st all of our members who are in the age limit 20-34 liable for military service must apply for Exemption according to the Government Regulations. Secure Certificate of Membership.
- 2nd physical Examinations before the medical Boards are not Required for those who apply for Conscientious Reasons.
- 3rd None of our members are expected to vote under the present Elections act. Those who do so forfeit their Rights of Exemption.
- 4th None Combatant Service will be dealt Later with if circumstances should require it

Vineland Ont., March 2. 1918.

Christian Gascho,
Baden Ont.

Dear Brother:- Greeting in the name of Jesus, who has loved us and washed us from our sins in his own blood and has made us the Children of God, by adopting us into His family through the love and mercy of His own Beloved Son.

After being absent from home for a week, attending a business meeting at Goshen Indiana, I returned home on Friday afternoon. Your letter came to hand and was glad to hear from you, and to learn that you are now settled in your new home. I trust and pray that you may be spared many years to enjoy your home and the blessings that it brings, and trust that you may be enabled to enjoy the benefit of more opportunity to engage in the work of the Master since you have more liberty and are less free from the cares and labors of life. After all, it is the time that we are enabled to spend in behalf of the work of the Lord that gives us the most enjoyment and the greatest amount of blessing. We are thus enabled to share with others the spiritual blessings that the Lord has granted us and are able to lay up treasures in Heaven which will return unto us after the treasures of earth are gone or are left behind us as we take our flight to the realms of glory.

I want to acknowledge with sincere thanks and gratitude the receipt of the Money Order for the amount of Forty-one Dollars and seventy-five cents \$41.75/ which represents the gratitude of many of the dear young brethren who have been helped to some extent by the labors which have been devoted to the interests of the Lord's people during these times of trial. What has been done has been willingly done and in trust that the Lord would bless it to accomplish the purpose which He has designed and which He alone could carry out by His power. We know that we are helpless as far as our relations with the powers of this world are concerned. We have no power of defense and we have no influence in the affairs of the nation to make or carry out its laws. But, if we have any favors with the Rulers that are over us it is because it has been the power of the Lord operating in them to permit us the enjoyment of the peace and privilege of worship which is granted to us. We feel that we have had more than is due us for the work that has been accomplished. We know that what is given is a token of the love of the brethren, and we accept it only as an offering to the Lord from them and a gift of the Lord to us. May another great blessing come to them from the Lord so that each may have his due portion and may the portion which comes to these dear young souls who so much desire to serve the Lord in the Spirit and in love and good will to men, be the largest and best portion of all, even the answer to the prayers that have been ascending to God for our complete liberty to worship our God and to live a life that is free from the necessity of doing military service, and then may there be another blessing return to the Government which gives us this liberty, - the blessing of national peace and prosperity.

The letter to the Prime Minister concerning the work of the Non-Resistant Relief Organization was received while Sir Robert Borden was away to the United States. He will reply when he returns to Ottawa. With love and best wishes, and with thanks for the kindness of all concerned, I am

Yours in faith,

S. F. Coffman

COPY

Ottawa, May 31st, 1918.

To -

The General Officer Commanding,
Military District No. 1 & 2,
London & Toronto.

Status under the M.S.A., 1917, of -
Mennonites, Tunkers, and Amish.

Pursuant to Headquarter's letter of the 22nd and 29th instant on the marginally noted subject, it has been brought to the attention of the department that a large number of bona fide adherents of these sects were not actually members of the Church on the 6th July, 1917.

It has accordingly been decided that leave may be granted, as stated in the letter of the 22nd, on certificate of one of the Bishops whose names have been submitted, to the effect that the man concerned was prior to July 6th, 1917, a regular attendant at the Church, and a bona fide adherent, and has since actually joined the Church.

Captain D.A.A.G.
for a/Adjutant-General.

COPY

Ottawa, Ont., May 31, 1918.

Sir:

Referring to your recent interview, I beg to state that your request has been favorably considered by the Military Service Sub-Committee and I enclose herewith, a letter sent to the General Officers Commanding, Military Districts Nos. 1 and 2, (London and Toronto) on the subject.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your obedient servant,

(Signed) T. Y. Tyndale,
Captain, D.A.A.G.
Secretary,
Military Service Sub-Committee

W. G. Weichel, Esq.
Waterloo, Ont.

The Fund or Donation of this
Organization is not to be used
for Returned Soldiers or any
Other purpose but for the
(Innocent) Sufferers of this
Gr^eat World's War.

mel Goudie,
W. Heize,
as. Reesor,
c. Gascho.

Vineland Ont., Mar. 22, 1918.

Members of Committee to Interview Government,
Non-Resistant Relief Organization.

Members:-

A letter addressed to the Premier was acknowledged as follows;
Your letter of the 20th Inst. /February/ advising that the Non-Resistant
Relief Organization proposes to raise a charitable fund
to be donated to the Government as a memorial in appreciation of the re-
ligious liberty enjoyed by non-combatant organizations, is to hand in the
presence of the Prime Minister on important public business. Your suggestion
that a Committee appointed for that purpose should interview the Govern-
ment with regard to the work of the Organization will have consideration
in due course.

Dated Ottawa, Feb. 28th.

Yours very truly,

Signed, Geo. W. Yates,
Prime Minister's Secretary.

S.F. Coffman, Esq.
Vineland Ont.

A second letter was received yesterday as follows.

Ottawa, March 19, 1918.

Dear Sir,-

In further reference to your letter of the 20th of February,
addressed to the Prime Minister, and referred to the Hon. Mr. Rowell,
Mr. Rowell asks me to advise you that a Committee of the Cabinet will meet
you on Tuesday, the 26th of March, at eleven-thirty a.m., Room 28, East
Block, Ottawa. Will you kindly confirm this appointment.

Yours very truly,

Signed, J.B. Allen,
Assistant Secretary.

Later in the day a telegram came stating that the appointment had
been changed to the 27th of March.

After consulting with Bro. L.J. Burkholder over the phone, I replied
as follows:-

To the Honourable Mr. N.W. Rowell.

Honourable Sir,-

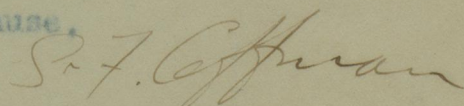
A letter from Mr. J.B. Allen, Assistant Secretary, of March
18th, stating that an appointment had been made for the Committee of the
Non-Resistant Relief Organization on the 26th of March, was duly received.
Also a telegram stating that the appointment was changed to March 27th.
Our Committee will esteem it an honor to meet with the Committee of the
Cabinet, at the time specified, March 27th at eleven-thirty a.m.

Most respectfully, Yours,

Signed, S.F. Coffman, Sec. Etc.

The matter of arranging for the Committee's meeting was left in the
hands of the President of the Committee and Organization, Bro. Burkholder.
You have undoubtedly had notice from him.

Yours for the cause,



Secretary of the Committee.

Com. to Gov't.
L.J. Burkholder,
S. Gудie,
Thos. Reesor,
C. Gascho,
D.W. Heise,

Vineland Ont., Apr. 3, 1918.

Brethren:-

Please note, herewith, the report of the Committee which waited on the Government on the 27th of March.

Our Committee, Thos. Reesor, David W. Heise and S.F. Coffman, met with F.S. Scott, M.P. for South Waterloo, and arranged for a meeting of the Cabinet Committee at the temporary House of Parliament, at 11.30 a.m. But the appointment was later changed to 2.45 p.m. The Committee of the Cabinet was to have included the Hon. J.A. Caulder, M.P., Saskatchewan, Minister of Immigration and Colonization; Hon. Arthur Meighan, M.P., Manitoba, Secretary of the Interior; Col. Mewburn, Minister of Militia, and Hon. N.W. Rowell, President of the Council. This being the last day of the session of Parliament previous to the Easter holiday, the members were exceptionally busy and we met with Hon. J.A. Caulder and the Hon. S.F. Scott only.

The members of the Government gave your Committee a very attentive hearing and are very much interested in the purpose of our Organization. We presented our petition, a copy of which is inclosed, requesting them to advise a method of procedure and a proper application of the funds to be donated, and we also stated the conditions which at present seem to interfere with the carrying out of our purposes. We presented to the Government a statement, as per the second inclosed copy, showing how there appear to be conflicting issues between our non-resistant faith and the provisions of the Military Service Act, we requesting that we desire some statement or action on the part of the Government which may clear up our standing with the Government regarding the Military Service Act.

The members of the Government whom we met have promised to take up these matters with their fellow-members and with the proper officials at the earliest possible moment after the Easter Recess and forward to your Committee a report thereupon. They were glad for our explanation of our situation and felt to give us the fullest assurance that our interests would not be disregarded and our complete exemption from military service would be allowed.

Asking that you may continue to pray for your Committee and their work, and for the Government and their efforts to deal righteously with all of its citizens, we are

Yours in the service of the Master,

S. F. Coffman, Sec.
for the Committee.

A REQUEST OF A COMMITTEE OF THE NON-RESISTANT RELIEF ORGANIZATION
to
A COMMITTEE OF THE CABINET

Regarding a Donation from Non-Resistant Churches to be made to
the Government for Charitable Purposes.

Honourable Sirs:-

As representatives of the Non-Resistant religious bodies known as Mennonites and Tunkers, whose principles of faith regarding total abstinence from war in any form has been recognized and provided for by our Government in times past by Legislation and Orders in Council, which freed them from all obligations to military service, and for which recognition and provisions our people have felt to express their gratitude by giving to the Government a sum of money in the nature of a Memorial which shall be used for charitable purposes during these times of need occasioned by the exceptional hardships brought about by the present war, we are pleased to meet you at your bidding and to confer as to the proper channels through which to donate this fund and as to its proper use to accord with the faith of our people, giving them the opportunity of heartily expressing their esteem of their Government.

Permit us to state that our people have been sharing in the works of charity and relief of suffering by giving generously of their labors and means as far as consistent with their peace-loving principles. This movement on their part, - "the Non-Resistant Relief Movement", - is a special effort to do more work along the same lines and to share more fully in the privations of their fellow citizens and in the support of the charitable work of the Government. Your assistance in devising some means by which this donation may be made to the Government is earnestly solicited. We also desire that our people may have the assurance that this fund can be used for the relief of those who are worthy poor and who are in actual need of relief, either at home or abroad, preferably the relief of widows and orphans, who have no support as war dependants, or who may not be included in the classes pledged the support of the Government.

It would give us great pleasure to have confirmed to our people the assurance that the total exemption of those of our faith from all military service is still the purpose of our Government. While such pledges have been given to us from some of the departments of the Government, others have not seen fit to so interpret the provisions of the Military Service Act, and many of our young men who registered under the said Act and claimed exemptions on religious grounds have not had uniform decisions of their claims and many are still held for non-combatant classes. Our Relief Organization had been formed with all confidence of the Government's purpose to carry out its policy of religious liberty and its pledges to our people. We regret that since our organization we have not met with the same encouragement. What the Government may do in making clear to the minds of our members that our privileges are continued and guarded will meet with grateful and hearty response and, we trust, the devout thanks to God for the beneficence of the Government, and ardent prayers for His sustaining power during these times of trouble. Your petitioners who shall ever pray,

THE CONFLICTING POINTS BETWEEN THE FAITH OF THE NON-RESISTANT
CHURCHES AND THE MILITARY SERVICE ACT.

1. If any service whatsoever is required of Non-Resistant believers, who are members of such organized Churches, it nullifies the pledges of religious liberty on the first actual occasion that privileges of exemption could have been effective.
2. In following the advice of the Government in response to the first call, under the Military Service Act our young men were obliged to register under Clause 8 of the Exemptions, inserting the name of the "Tunker," or "Mennonite", or "Amish Mennonite" Church, thus describing the "tenets of faith" as opposed to "combatant" service. This incorrectly expresses our faith; but no provisions were made under the Exemptions Regulations for correctly stating our faith and the grounds of our claims as opposed to all forms of Military Service, whether "combatant" or non-combatant." Hence the Local and District Tribunals could not do otherwise than follow the directions of the Act and exempt from combatant service only, and our brethren not totally exempted are subject to Military Service.
3. Our Brethren have not been uniformly dealt with by the various Exemption Tribunals. Some have been exempted as farmers, some as necessary at home, others until certain classes or categories are called and others exempted from combatant service. Some few in the East and a number in the West are Exempted as Mennonites. The Military Service Council and other heads of Government Departments have almost uniformly declared that the Mennonites and Tunkers are excepted from Military Service Act and "have no duty to perform the rounder." Our appeals to the various Tribunals, using the decision of the Military Service Council, have not met with any success in securing the release from Military Service of any of our young men, and they are still held, contrary to their faith, as soldiers on leave of absence without pay, and are under the Military Authority of the Country.
4. Our people have esteemed the interpretation of the "Exceptions to the Act", that those coming under the Order in Council of Aug. 13th, 1873, included all Quakers, Tunkers and Mennonites whose liberties under the statutes of Canada had been continued to them for many years, and whose liberties were cited to the Mennonites who proposed immigrating to Canada in order to confirm their confidence in the continuance of their faith in this land. We could not believe that the Canadian Government had annulled in any degree those religious liberties and immunities which our fore-fathers enjoyed.

The Committee.

Vineland Ont., April 6th, 1918.

Mr Justice Duff,
Central Appeal Judge,
Department of Justice,
Ottawa.

our Honour:-

Respecting the appeal of Joseph Grossman, New Hamburg Ont., Serial number 726680 AC, Consecutive Number 690A, which is an appeal from the decision of the Appeal Tribunal at Kitchener, Ont., and to presented to the Central Court April 13th, permit a few facts.

Since addressing Your Honour on December 7th, 1917, and forwarding correspondence which was filed for reference in case of appeals of Mennonites coming before your court, this is the first case that has been brought to our attention as having been allowed the privilege of appeal to the Central Tribunal. We are grateful for this consideration.

Our position as Mennonites, Amish Mennonites and Tunkers respecting our Tenets of Faith and attitude toward military service has not been described by the Exemption Clause of the Military Service Act under which our members were obliged to claim exemption, since we hold and have held for centuries that all forms of military service are inconsistent with our Christian profession.

We have been informed by Local and Appeal Tribunals that the Exceptions to the Act referred to those Russian Brethren who were granted exemption by Order in Council August 13th 1878. We were pleased that the military Service Council expressed the opinion that Mennonites are excluded from the operation of the Act and have no duty to perform thereunder. The Tenets of Faith of the Russian Mennonites and their reasons for asking exemption from military service is the only adequate description of our faith and grounds for our claims, since we hold the same principles and the Mennonites the same articles of faith, and it appears to us to be the only proper classification for us under the Military Service Act.

We believe that it was not the purpose of the Government in framing the Military Service Act to prescribe what should be the articles of faith of any Church, and not their purpose to limit in any sense the privileges of well established and recognized religious bodies we dutifully accept any limitations which may not interfere with our sense of duty to our Saviour, but pray that these most sacred principles of peace and good will, as exemplified by Christ, may be recognized as lawful and permitted us by the clemency of our Government.

WE are, most humbly and faithfully,
Your servants who pray,

The Committee.
Signed, S.F. Coffman,
Secretary.

Vineland Ont., April 9, 1918.

Brethren:- Greeting.

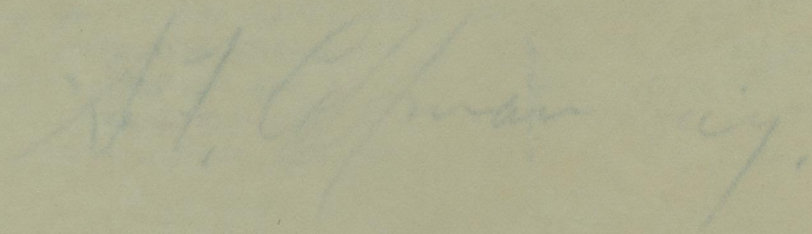
You will please find enclosed a copy of a letter to the Chief Justice, Duff, regarding the exemption claims that are being allowed to some of our brethren. This is the first case that has come to my attention and we should feel anew our interests in our young brethren and pray that they may find grace in the sight of those who are in a position to judge the righteousness of our cause and the legality of the religion which we profess to follow.

We trust to hear the results of the decision of this case in the course of a few days. Other measures are pending in regard to the Military service act and we should pray that in the future we will be freed from some of the trials that have come to us in this first call to furnish recruits for the army of the country.

In connection with the work of the Committee that had to do with the Non-Resistant Relief Organization, we have to report that some members of the Government have taken the case in hand and will do what they can to have our position made clear before the Government. We are glad for this interest and will endeavor to render them all the assistance possible in understanding our faith and principles and in securing such information concerning our boys as will enable them to present our case intelligently before the Government. Copies of this letter to Chief Justice Duff will be forwarded to them. We have also sent out blank forms to be filled in concerning the decisions of the Tribunals that have acted on the applications of our boys for exemption. This report will help them to see that we have not been allowed any concessions concerning our faith. All exemptions were allowed as were those of any conscientious objector and some are not given that much recognition. These reports will be compiled and forwarded as soon as the returns are in. If you have any influence in getting these reports returned promptly, please do so. Continue to pray for the cause.

XZURZIXXX

Yours in faith,



Vineland Ont., April 10th, 1918.

Dear Brethren:- Greeting.

Please find enclosed a copy of a letter to the Chief Justice regarding the exemption of one of our boys. This letter is self explanatory. I have also sent copies of it to the Committee that made the appeal to the Government in the Fall of last year. A copy of this same letter is being sent to The Hon. J. A. Caulder and to Mr. F. S. Scott, who met with us in Ottawa.

This is the first opportunity that any of our boys have had to have their appeal case before the Central Tribunal and we pray to God that we may have favor at this time.

The blank forms with request for the records of those who are applying for exemption are beginning to come in and it seems that in the majority of cases the exemptions have been for other than the reasons for which they appealed for exemption. The question of religious belief has not been taken into consideration by the Local and District Tribunals generally. We should make an effort to bring this matter to the attention of the Government.

As soon as the report comes from Ottawa regarding this Appeal we will forward a report to you, and may also hear from one of the Government Committee in the mean time.

Yours in faith,

Vineland⁹ Ont., April 30, 1918.

Christin Gascho,
Baden Ont.,

Dear Brother:- Greeting.

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

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

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

Yours in faith,

S. F. Coffman.

M. E. A. and Order in Council, 1917, 1918.
To Committee of Mennonite and Anish- and
Committee of M-E. A. Organization.

Vineland Ont., May 20, 1918.

Brethren:- Greeting.

Please note the following copy of a letter received from the Hon. F. S. Scott, M.P. This was written after Mr. Weichel and Mr. Scott had been interviewed regarding the securing of exemptions for adherents of our Churches. Mr. Weichel agreed to accompany Mr. Scott to Ottawa for the purpose of interviewing the Government concerning these questions.

Ottawa, May 17th 1918,

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

Dear Mr. Coffman:

Mr Weichel and myself have been endeavoring yesterday and today to have matters arranged so that your people will be exempted from the operations of the Order in Council recently passed, calling to the colors the young men from 18-28. In this, we think, we have been successful. We had an interview yesterday with the Militaria 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 then be authorized to accept these certificates and allow the men off on leave.

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

It does not appear desirable, at the present time, to have this information made public. We do not want it to get into the papers. We endeavored further to have this apply to the adherents of the members of your Church, but up to the present time we have not been able to arrange this, and I must confess that it seems doubtful at the present moment that we will be able to do so. If the Government were to do this, it would be extending privileges beyond that contained in the original Military Service Act, as the Military Service Act granted exemption only to those who were members, in good standing of your Church."

"We have pointed out that the young men of your faith do not enter the Church at an early age, as a rule not until they have married. The answer is that to open the question of adherents at all, would lay the door open to fraud."

"We will keep you informed if there is any further change in the situation. Mr. Weichel returns home tonight and will immediately get in touch with your people in his own district."

Yours very sincerely,

Signed, F. S. Scott.

FSS/WHS.

The following is my reply to the letter of Mr. Scott.

Vineland Ont. May 20th 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 18 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 W.S.A. we have instructed our young men who were previously called and whose claims had been cancelled by the Order in Council, that they should present their Church certificates when called and secure their exceptions. We are pleased to state that their claims have thus far been honored. We have also instructed the young men, who are members, of-ee 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 Tunker 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 Snider, Abram Gingerich, Manasseh Hallman, S.F.Coffman; Acting Bishop, L.J.Burkholder; Appointed by Committee, John Gascho, Zurich.

Bishops, Freeman Rittenhouse, Ezra L. Martin, and Minister, Thos. Reesor
English Mennonite, Bishops, Daniel H. Steinman, Christian Zehr, Daniel S. Jutsi, Nicholas Nafziger, John J. Kuepfer, Joseph W. Kuepfer, Jacob Lichty.

Mennonite Brethren in Christ, - Elders Samuel Gaudle, C.N. Good. Ministers appointed by Conference to sign certificates, - M. Belcker, J. Bolwell, W. Brown, I. Brubacher, P. Cober, S. Cressman, R. Eltherington, H.R. Frey, A.T. Gooding, J.W. Kitching. Elder Moyer, W.H. Schwalm, E. Seivenpiper, C.I. Sinden, D.J. Storms, A.G. Warder, W. Yates, F.J. Lehar.

I ~~also~~ also appended the names of the "Tunker Brethren, so that they might be known, in case the Government grants the hoped for exemption, - Elders, Asa Beards, John Sider, D.W. Neise; 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 that 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,

S.F. Coffman