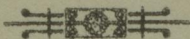


# Official Documents

## From the Canadian Government

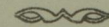


Regarding Exemption of Mennonites  
From Military Service in Canada.



Reprinted 1918.  
B. Ewert's Printery.  
Gretna, Manitoba.

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**From the Canadian Government**



**Regarding Exemption of Mennonites**  
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**Certified Copy of a Report of a Committee  
of the Honourable the Privy Council,  
Approved by His Excellency the  
Governor General-in-Council  
25th Sept. 1872.**

The Committee of Council has under consideration a despatch from the Right Honourable the Secretary of State for the Colonies, dated August 23. ultimo, covering a letter from Mr. Zahrabs, Her Majesty's Consul at Berdiansk, dated July 26th. last, and a letter from Mr. Cornelius Jansen of Berdiansk, dated June last, addressed to Your Excellency.

The Honourable the Minister of Agriculture, to whom the above despatch and enclosures were referred, reports that it is expedient to give the German Mennonites in Russia the fullest assurances of absolute immunity from military service if they settle in Canada.

That a sub-section of Section 17, of the Act 31 Victoria, chapter 40, is as follows:

"Any person bearing a certificate from the Society of Quakers, Mennonites or Tunkers, or any inhabitants of Canada of any religious denomination, otherwise subject to military duty, but who, from the doctrines of his religion, is averse to bearing arms and refuses personal military service, shall be exempt from such service when balloted in time of peace or war, upon such conditions and under such regulations as the Government in Council may from time to time prescribe."

That under this section all the persons above mentioned, and the Mennonites are expressly included, are absolutely free and exempted by the

law of Canada, from military duty or service, either in time of peace or war.

That the intention of the Act in conferring upon the Governor General in Council the power of making conditions and regulations was to enable the Government to provide, if necessary, for the registration of the exempted persons in such a manner as to prevent persons belonging to any other denominations than those specified in the section of the Act above quoted from avoiding military duty under false pretences.

That the constitution does not confer upon the Governor General in Council any power to over-ride or set aside, under any circumstances, the plain meaning of statute law, and he recommends that this explanation be conveyed to the Mennonites in Russia.

The Committee concur in the foregoing report, and advise that a copy of this Minute be transmitted by Your Excellency to the Earl of Kimberely.

(Signed) John J. McGee,  
Clerk, Privy Council.

To the Honourable  
The Minister of the Interior.

**Department of Agriculture.**

**Immigration Branch.**

Ottawa, July 23. 1873.

Gentlemen.

I have the honour under the instruction of the Honourable Minister of Agriculture, to state to you in reply to your letter of this day's date the following facts relating to advantages offered to settlers, and to the immunities afforded to Mennonites, which are established by the Statute Law of Canada and by order of His Excellency the Governor General in

Council, for the information of German Mennonites having intention to emigrate to Canada via Hamburg.

1. An entire exemption from military service is by law and Order in Council granted to the denomination of Christians called Mennonites.

2. An Order in Council was passed on the 3rd of March last to reserve eight townships in the province of Manitoba for free grants on the condition of settlement, as provided in the Dominion Land Act, that is to say: "Any Person who is the head of a family, or has attained the age of 21 years, shall be entitled to be entered for one quarter section or a less quantity of unappropriated Dominion Lands, for the purpose of securing a homestead in respect thereof."

3. The said reserve of eight townships is for the exclusive use of the Mennonites, and the said free grants of one quarter section to consist of 160 acres each, as defined by the Act.

4. Should the Mennonite settlement extend beyond the eight townships set aside by the Order in Council of March 3rd last, other townships will in the same way be reserved to meet the full requirements of Mennonite immigration.

5. If next spring the Mennonite settlers on viewing the eight townships set aside for their use, should prefer to exchange them for any other eight unoccupied townships, such exchange will be allowed.

6. In addition to the free grant of one fourth section or 160 acres to every person over 21 years of age on the condition of settlement, the right to purchase the remaining three fourths of the section at one Dollar per acre is granted by law so as to complete the whole section of 640 acres, which is the largest quantity of land the government will grant a Patent for to one person.

7. The settler will receive a Patent for a Free Grant after three years residence, in accordance with the terms of the Dominion Lands Act.

8. In event of the death of the settler the lawfull heirs can claim the Patent for the Free Grant upon proof that settlement duties for three years have been performed.

9. From the moment of occupation, the settler acquires a "homestead right" on the land.

10. The fullest privilege of exercising their religious principles is by law afforded to the Mennonites without any kind of molestation or restriction whatever; and the same privilege extends to the education of their children in schools,

11. The privilege of affirming instead of making affidavits is afforded by law.

12. The Government of Canada will undertake to furnish passenger warrants from Hamburg to Fort Garry for Mennonite families of good character, for the sum of thirty Dollars per adult person over the age of 8 years; for persons under eight years, half price, or \$15.00, and for infants under one year \$3.00.

13. The Minister specially authorizes me to state that this arrangement as to price shall not be changed for the season 1874, 1875, 1876.

14. I am further to state that if it is changed thereafter, the price shall not, up to the year 1882 exceed \$40.00 for an adult and children in proportion, subject to the approval of parliament.

15. The immigrants shall be provided with provisions on the portion of the journey between Liverpool and Collingwood; but during other portions of the journey they are to find their own provisions.

I have the honour to be,  
Gentlemen,  
Your obedient servant,  
(Signed) John Lowe,  
Secretary of Department of Agriculture.  
Messrs. David Klassen,  
Jacob Peters,  
Heinrich Wiebe,  
Cornelius Toews,  
Mennonite Delegates from Russia.

**Written Reply from the Government at Ottawa  
Re- Interview of the Mennonite Delegation  
in regard to Military Service.**

Ottawa, 8th. January, 1917.

Dear Sirs;

Referring to your interview this morning with the Honourable Robert Rogers and Colonel Clark, Under Secretary of State for Internal Affairs, representing the Federal Government, and myself, I now have to confirm in writing the statements that were then verbally made to you.

1. The terms of the Order-in-Council under which the Mennonites settled in Canada, guarantee their freedom from Military Service. Canada will respect to the utmost its obligations under that Order-in-Council.

2. Members of the Mennonite communion are requested to fill in correctly and return promptly National Service Cards, and it is suggested that they should write across the face of each card the word "Mennonite" as indicating their religious faith. It is unnecessary to explain in detail why these cards should be returned. In general it is sufficient to observe that it is important that the State should have the fullest possible infor-

mation as to the number of men between the ages of 16 and 65, who, by reason of their obligations, are available only for agricultural work.

3. Every member of the Mennonite communion is expected, in fact it is his duty, to devote his energies to the utmost of his ability in increasing the production of agricultural products in Western Canada during the present year. In that way he can render National Service, which while not essential to the success of our cause, is as important as military service, for the reason that armies cannot exist without food.

4. In event of any member of the Mennonite communion having joined an overseas battalion under misapprehension or otherwise, and desiring to be released, if he will make an application to the colonel of his battalion, stating that he is a Mennonite, and desires to be discharged, immediate action will be taken to that end. The application must be made in writing and signed by the applicant himself. Application on his behalf by another person will not be sufficient. While Mennonites are free from Military Service, there is, of course, nothing to prevent any member of the communion from becoming a volunteer, if he so desires.

I think I have covered the questions submitted.

Yours faithfully,

(Signed) R. B. Bennet.

Director General of National Service,

Rev. Abraham Doerksen,

Rev. Heinrich Doerksen,

Rev. David Toews,

Rev. Klaas Peters,

Rev. Benjamin Ewert.

Representatives of Mennonite Settlers, Western Canada.

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