

Vineland Ont., May, 17, 1918.

Thomas Reesor,
Pickering Ont.,

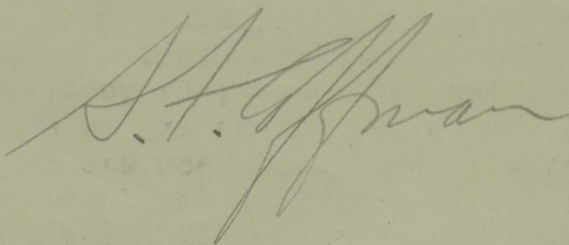
Dear Brother:- Greeting.

Your letter received. I was with the Amish Brethren at Tavistock on Wednesday evening. They wanted some explanations about the position in which we are now, since our appeals to the Government seem to have been acknowledged as far as the members of the Mennonite Church are concerned. A couple of their brethren had been called and did not know what to do. We told them that they should send notice to London that they are Mennonites or Amish Mennonites and that they would then be exempted. This seems to be the order for London as well as Toronto. I received notice that at least one Mennonite Brother had been accorded exemption by the Registrar at London.

I was glad to learn that you received some encouragement concerning the adherent of the Mennonite Church while you were at Kitchener and Waterloo. It is too bad that these young men who have been brought up to believe thus are obliged to deny their faith and principles by force. I hope that some arrangement may be made for them so that they will be allowed their liberty. It may bring many of them to think more seriously of what is their duty to God, and they should be encouraged to thus confess their faith in him and stand for the principles that are planted in their hearts from childhood. Anything that I may do to help in this cause will be cheerfully given. Our Conference is at hand week after next. If it will be necessary to go to Ottawa at any time I will try and comply with the necessity. Let us continue to pray for the peace of the land and of the world.

The case of the Tunker Brethren is receiving the attention of the Government at present. A letter from Hon. Mr. Salder says that the matters have been referred to Hon. N.W. Rowell, who will place them before the Council.

Yours in faith,



C. LESSLIE WILSON
ONTARIO REGISTRAR

DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE
MILITARY SERVICE BRANCH

W. R. SMYTH,
PUBLIC REPRESENTATIVE
A. F. BARR,
H. E. MACHELL,
ASSISTANT REGISTRARS

OFFICE OF ONTARIO REGISTRAR

UNDER MILITARY SERVICE ACT

BOARD OF TRADE BUILDING

TORONTO, May 29., 1918.
ONTARIO

Thomas Reesor, Esq.,
R. R. #2, Pickering, Ont.

Dear Sir:

Attached hereto please find memorandum which you lent me the other day and I beg to thank you for the loan of same.

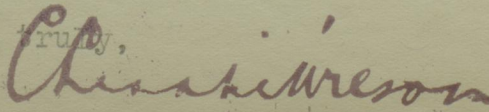
I have received the list from you of the men of your denomination liable for Military Service which is as follows;

York County

Allan Wideman,	Stouffville	Simeon Reesor	Markham
Carl Reesor	Markham	Levi Drudge	"
Joseph Smith	Unionville	Joseph Diller	"
Allan Reesor	Locust Hill	Abraham Reesor	"
Joseph Reesor	Markham		

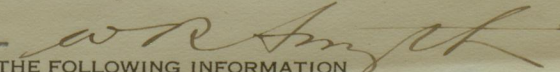
Would you let me have their ages in each case and also let me know if Drudge and Wideman have actually reported for service. I have some recollection that this was done, but have nothing on my memorandum and my recollection is not sufficiently clear. Let me hear as to this at once in case they have reported.

Yours truly,



Ontario Registrar.

Per-



IF YOU HAVE OCCASION TO REPLY PLEASE QUOTE THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION
WRS-S.

Chief Public Representative.

NAME

SERIAL No.

LOCAL TRIB.

APPEAL TRIB.

CATEGORY

DECISION

" 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 of July, 1917.

It has accordingly been decided that leave may be granted, as stated in the letter of the 22nd, on a 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.

C. LESSLIE WILSON
ONTARIO REGISTRAR

DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE
MILITARY SERVICE BRANCH

W. R. SMYTH,
PUBLIC REPRESENTATIVE
A. F. BARR,
H. E. MACHELL,
ASSISTANT REGISTRARS

OFFICE OF ONTARIO REGISTRAR

UNDER MILITARY SERVICE ACT

BOARD OF TRADE BUILDING

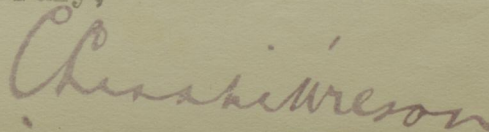
TORONTO, May 31., 1918.
ONTARIO

D. W. Heise, Esq.,
Gormley, Ont.

Dear Sir:

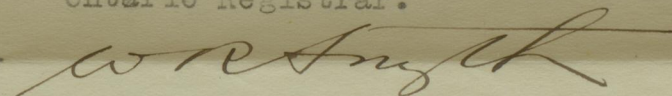
Attached hereto please find memorandum which
you lent me the other day, for which please accept my
thanks ~~for loan of same.~~

Yours truly,



Ontario Registrar.

Per-



Chief Public Representative.

WRS-MS.

IF YOU HAVE OCCASION TO REPLY PLEASE QUOTE THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION

NAME

SERIAL No.

DECISION

LOCAL TRIB.

APPEAL TRIB.

CATEGORY

D W Heise

MEMORANDUM OF LAWS AFFECTING THE MEMBERS OF THE MENNONITE
RELIGIOUS SOCIETY AND MILITARY SERVICE IN CANADA.

As requested, a search has been made of the various Statutes formerly in force in Canada and in Upper Canada prior to Confederation (1867), which affect or refer to that body and military service and obligations.

Apparently there is no Statute of the Imperial (British) Parliament in connection with such matters, so far as the books at the Osgoode Hall and Legislative Libraries at Toronto show. In one volume, which was published by the Government at the time, and which purports to contain all statutes and laws of the British Parliament, of Quebec and the subsequent Province of Upper Canada (and including all Ordinances having the force of law), from 1776 to 1820, appears the first Statute in which mention is made of the Menonists and Tunkers, such Statute being one of George III, passed in 1808.

The following extracts from the various Acts from time to time in force will show the history of such legislation and the existing law now in effect.

1808 - 48 Geo. III, Chapter 1, being "An Act to explain, amend and reduce to one act the several laws now in being for the raising and training the Militia of this Province."

Section 11 - That every male inhabitant from sixteen years of age to sixty shall be deemed capable of bearing arms, and shall enroll his name as a militia man on the first day of training, etc."

Section 27 - Be it further enacted by the authority aforesaid that the persons called Quakers, Menonists and Tunkers, who from certain scruples of conscience, decline bearing arms, shall not be compelled to serve in the said Militia, but every person professing that he is one of the people called Quakers, Menonists or Tunkers, and producing a certificate of his being a Quaker, Menonist or Tunker, signed by the Clerk of the Meeting of such Society or by any three or more of the people called Quakers, Menonists or Tunkers, shall be excused and exempted from serving in the said Militia; Provided nevertheless that every such person or persons that shall or may be of the people called Quakers, Menonists or Tunkers, from the age of sixteen to sixty, shall, on or before the first day of December in each and every year, give in

his name and place of residence to the Treasurer of the District, where he or they shall reside, and pay to such Treasurer, to and for the public uses of such district, in time of peace, the sum of twenty shillings, and in time of actual invasion or insurrection, or when any part of the Militia of that District shall be called out on actual service, the sum of five pounds, and in default of such payment, it shall and may be lawful, on information or complaint on oath made by the said Treasurer, before any Justice of the Peace of such District, for the said Justice to issue his warrant, under his hand and seal, to levy the same by distress and sale of the offender's goods and chattels, returning so much of the said distress as shall exceed the sum of twenty shillings per annum in time of peace, and five pounds per annum in time of actual invasion or insurrection, or when any part of the Militia of that District shall be called out on actual service, deducting therefrom the charges and all other incidental expenses of such distress and sale, as well as the expenses of summoning such offender before such Justice to answer the said information and complaint, and the said sums so levied by the said Justice as aforesaid, shall be by him, within the space of two calendar months, paid into the hands of the Colonel, or, in his absence, the next Senior Officer of the Regiment, Battalion or Independent Company of the Division where the offence has been committed, to be applied for the like purposes as the fines, forfeitures and penalties imposed by this Act, and for want of such distress, the Justice before whom such person shall have been convicted shall commit him to the common goal of the District until he shall pay and satisfy such sum, together with the reasonable charges incident to such conviction; Provided nevertheless that no person or persons so convicted, shall in any case be detained in custody longer than the space of one calendar month; Provided also and it is hereby further enacted that each and every of the persons usually called Quakers, Mennonists and Tunkers, that have attained the age of fifty years, shall not be liable to the payment of such sum of twenty shillings for being exempted from serving in said Militia in time of peace, but that in time of war or other emergency, they shall be liable to serve, or to the payment of five pounds for being exempted for every year, until they shall have attained the age of sixty years.

1809 - 49 Geo. III, Chapter 6, being "An Act for the Relief of Menonists and Tunkers in certain cases."

Whereas the Religious Societies of the Menonists and Tunkers from certain scruples of conscience against taking an oath, are subject to many inconveniences to themselves and families, as well as to others who may require their evidence; for remedy whereof, be it therefore enacted etc. That from the passing of this Act, any Menonist or Tunker in any case in which an oath is required by Law or upon any lawful occasion, wherein the affirmation or declaration of a Quaker will by law be admitted, shall be, and is hereby permitted to make his or her affirmation or declaration in the same manner and form as a Quaker may be by the Laws now in force required to do.

Section 3 - And be it further enacted by the authority aforesaid that no Menonist or Tunker shall by virtue of this Act be qualified or permitted to give evidence in any criminal cases, or to serve on Juries in criminal cases, or to hold or enjoy any office or place in the Government of this Province, anything herein contained to the contrary notwithstanding.

1810 - 50 Geo. III, Chapter 11. - Whereas the sons of Menonists and Tunkers who are Minors cannot avail themselves of the indulgence intended to be granted by the 27th clause (of 48 Geo. III, Chap. 1,) by reason of not being able to obtain the certificate required by the above mentioned Act, until they shall have attained the age of twenty-one years, according to the rules and regulations of the said Societies, for further remedy whereof; be it enacted (etc.) That the sons of Menonists and Tunkers liable to serve in the Militia, under the age of twenty-one years, shall instead of the certificate required by the above mentioned Act, produce a certificate, stating his name, that his father is a Menonist or Tunker (as the case may be) and that such minor is brought up and educated in the principles of Menonists or Tunkers (as the case may be), which certificate shall be signed by the Clerk of the Meeting of such Society, or by any three or more of the people called Menonists or Tunkers, such minor shall then be entitled to the benefits and indulgences in said clause mentioned, subject nevertheless to all other restrictions and provisions of the said clause.

1837 - 1 Vic., Chap. 8, Sec. 50, being "An Act to amend and reduce into one Act the Militia Laws of this Province (virtually the same as the following):

1839 - 2 Vic., Chap. 9, Sec. 52, And be it further enacted that the persons called Quakers, Mennonists and Tunkers, who from certain scruples of conscience decline bearing arms, shall not be compelled to serve in the said Militia, but every person professing that he is one of the people called Quakers, Menonists or Tunkers and producing a certificate of his being a Quaker, Menonist or Tunker, or being the son of a Quaker, Menonist or Tunker, brought up and educated in the principles of the Quakers, Menonists or Tunkers, and under the age of twenty-one years, signed by the Clerk of the Meeting of such Society or by three or more of the people called Quakers, Menonists or Tunkers shall be excused and exempted from serving in the Militia; Provided nevertheless, that every person who may be so excused as aforesaid shall on or before the first day of June in every year give in his name and place of residence to the Colonel or Officer commanding the Regiment within the limits of which he may reside, and pay at the same time to the said Colonel or Officer commanding the sum of twenty shillings currency, and in time of actual invasion, insurrection or rebellion, when any portion of the Militia are called upon for actual service, the sum of ten pounds, and in default of such return and payment as aforesaid such Colonel or Officer commanding shall be required to complain of such neglect or refusal and to summon and try the party so offending and to decide and determine upon every such case by a Regimental Court in the same manner and form as ^{is} provided for the trial of other offenders against this Act.

1841 - 4-5 Vic., Chap. 2. That the persons called Quakers, Menonists or Tunkers shall not be compelled to serve in the Militia within that portion of this Province which formerly constituted the Province of Upper Canada but every person who shall profess to be one of the people called Quakers, Menonists or Tunkers and shall, if required, produce a certificate thereof signed by the Clerk, Pastor, Minister or Leader of the Meeting or Society to which he shall belong, shall be excused and exempted from serving in said Militia. (Here follows provision for giving names, etc. to assessor and for the payment of ten shillings in times of peace and five pounds in times of invasion, etc. and providing

for assessment as Quakers, Menonists or Tunkers. The money was apparently to be spent on roads.)

1846 - 9 Vic., Chap. 28, Sec. 31. (This Sec. was repealed by the following Act):

1849 - 12 Vic., Chap. 88. Whereas it is expedient to repeal so much of the Act regulating the Militia of this Province as obliges Quakers, Menonists or Tunkers to enroll themselves in any Company Division in Upper Canada and to revive the Act herein mentioned relating to the payment to be made by such persons in lieu of serving in the Militia; Be it therefore enacted that the 31st Section of 9 Victoria, Chapter 28, and so much of the said Act as repeals the Act of 4 and 5 Victoria, Chapter 2, and so much of the said first mentioned Act as may be inconsistent with or repugnant to this Act or to the Act secondly mentioned, shall be and are hereby repealed in so far as regards that portion of this Province ^{which} formerly constituted the Province of Upper Canada, and that the Act secondly mentioned shall be and is hereby revived and shall be reckoned in force and shall apply to the Militia Law now in force and to the militia thereby organized and the things to be done under the same as fully and effectually as if the provisions thereof were herein repeated and re-enacted.

1855 - 18 Vic., Chap. 77, Sec. 7. All persons bearing certificates from the Society of Quakers, Menonists and Tunkers, or any inhabitant of this Province, of any religious denomination, otherwise subject to military duty in time of peace but who from the doctrines of his religion shall be adverse to bearing arms, and shall refuse personal military service, shall be exempted therefrom. (Here follows a provision requiring an affidavit to be filed a month before exemption claimed.)

1859 - Being the Consolidated Statutes of Upper Canada, Chapter 35, Section 73, repeats the law of 1855.

The Confederation of the Dominion of Canada having been formed in 1867 the Militia Act was revised as follows:

1868 - 31 Vic., Chap. 40, Sec. 17. Any person bearing a certificate from the Society of Quakers, Menonists or Tunkers or any inhabitant of Canada of any religious denomination, otherwise subject to military duty, but who, from the doctrines of his religion, is adverse to bearing arms and refuses personal military service, shall be exempt from such service when balloted in times of peace, or war, upon such conditions and under

such regulations as the Governor-in-Council may from time to time prescribe. (Exemption to be claimed with affidavit as prescribed in the Act.) This clause was repeated practically verbatim in 46 Victoria and also continued in the Revised Statutes of Canada 1886, Cap. 1, Sec. 21.

Statutes now in force.

"The Militia Act", Revised Statutes of Canada 1906, Cap. 41.

Sec. 10. All the male inhabitants of Canada, of the age of eighteen and upwards and under sixty, not exempt or disqualified by law, and being British Subjects, shall be liable to service in the Militia: Provided that the Governor-General may require all the male inhabitants of Canada, capable of bearing arms, to serve in the case of a levée en masse.

Sec. 11. The following persons only shall be exempt from liability to service in the Militia:- (Amongst others)

Persons who, from the doctrines of their religion, are averse to bearing arms or rendering personal military service, under such conditions as are prescribed.

Sec. 12, ss. 2. No person shall be entitled to exemption unless he has, at least one month before he claims such exemption, filed with the commanding officer within the limits whereof he resides, his affidavit, made before some justice of the peace, of the facts on which he rests his claim.

Sec. 69. The Governor in Council may place the Militia, or any part thereof, on active service anywhere in Canada, and also beyond Canada, for the defence thereof, at any time when it appears advisable so to do by reason of emergency.

The Military Service Act 1917.

Among the grounds of exemption allowed is

Sec. 11, ss. (f) That he conscientiously objects to the undertaking

of combatant service and is prohibited from so doing by the tenets and articles of faith, in effect on the sixth day of July, 1917, of any organized religious denomination existing and well organized in Canada at such date, and to which he in good faith belongs; and if any of the grounds of such application be established, a certificate of exemption shall be granted to such man.

(2) (a) A certificate may be conditional as to time or otherwise, and, if granted solely on conscientious grounds, shall state that such exemption is from combatant service only.

To this Military Service Act 1917 a schedule of exceptions is attached, among which is: 7. Those persons exempted from Military Service by Order in Council of August 13th, 1873, and by Order in Council of December 6th, 1898. Mennonites might possibly come under exception 7 but I could not find any copy of these Orders in Council or any reference to them except in this Act in the Library at Osgoode Hall, not being published in the Canada Gazette around the dates mentioned.

Memorandum of Extracts from Dominion Government Records
 which appear to relate to Section 7 of the Military Service Act '17.

---0---0---0---0---0---0---

"1868

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 Ceanada 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 ballotted in time of peace, or war, upon such conditions and under such regulations as the Governor 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 of making conditions and regulations was upon the Governor General in Council the Power 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 Kimberly.

(Signed) John J. McGee,

Clerk, Privy Council.

To the Honorable

The Minister of the Interior.

Department of Agriculture,
 Imigration Branch,
 Ottawa, July 23, 1873.

Gentlemen:

I have the honour under the instruction of the

Hon. the 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 orders of His Excellency the Governor General in Council, for the information of German Mennonites having intention to emigrate to Canada via Hamburg.

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

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.O. 1st. Depot Battalion, London Ont., and apply for exemption. Those living in the Toronto District should apply to Colonel H.C. Eickford, 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.

COPY

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 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 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,

(Signed,) E. S. Scott.

C. Lesslie Wilson
Ontario Registrar.

A. F. Barr
H. E. Machell
Assistant Registrars

DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE
MILITARY SERVICE BRANCH

OFFICE OF ONTARIO REGISTRAR
Under Military Service Act.

Toronto
Ontario,

June 27th, 1918.

Board of Trade Building.

Thos
A. G. Reesor, Esq.,
Pickering, Ont.

Dear Sir:-

The Central Appeal Judge has now ruled that Tunkers and Ontario Mennonites are not excepted from the Military Service Act. Therefore, all members and adherents of the Church born since 1882 and now 19 years of age and in the future as they become 19 years of age, must register under the Act. When their cases come to be dealt with, they may raise whatever claims for exemption either from full service or combatant service as they may be advised.

You had better see that all the persons in your congregation coming within the above description register at once if they have not already done so.

In view of what has passed between us, I venture to again call your attention to the advisability of the members of your community holding a conference with a view to seeing whether you cannot see your way to make a compromise on the subject of non-combatant service with Hospital Corps or other non-combatant units. With the example of your brethern during the Napoleonic wars and during the American Civil War, it seems to me that you should find some better use for your young men than having them sent to prison.

Yours truly,

C. Lesslie Wilson,
ONTARIO REGISTRAR

Per W. R. Smyth,
CHIEF PUBLIC REPRESENTATIVE

WRS-P.

Re. Military Service Act.

Vineland Ont., July 3rd, 1918.

Brethren:- Greeting.

This letter is being sent to all those whose names have been authorized by the Government to be signed to Certificates. It seems that such have received communications from the Registrar's Office, Toronto, bearing the following information and suggestions, or similar matter:-

"The Central Appaal Judge has now ruled that Tunkers and Ontario Mennonittes are not exempted from the Military Service Act."- -

"In view of what has passed between us, I venture to again call your attention to the advisability of the members of your community holding a conference with a view to seeing whether you cannot see your way to make a compromise on the subject of non-combatant service with the Hospital Corpse or other non-combatant units. ----."

A reply was sent in the name of the Committee, in which the following statements were made bearing on the questions mentioned.

"Permit me to say that our standing on the article of war, and our attitude toward all military service, as expressed in the resolutions of the General Conference of the Mennonite Church, in 1917, and the Conference of the Tunker Church, has been handed to the Government at Ottawa. The arrangements which have been made with the Government and the Department concerned, regarding our brethren who may be called for service, are being complied with, and thus far have proven satisfactory.

"The Hon. F. S. Scott, of Galt Ont., has kindly consented to represent our interests with the Government, and Mr. W. G. Weichel has been active in rendering assistance, since his residence in Waterloo Ont. has constantly brought him in touch with our people. Our Committee has much appreciated their services, and, for the sake of avoiding complications and misunderstandings which naturally result from general correspondence, we prefer that all matters effecting the Government be referred to the above mentioned Gentlemen. - - - ."

From the above, it will be noted that we consider it inadvisable to reopen the questions which have already been taken into consideration with the Government at Ottawa. To do so now, would be to invite complications with our friends, Mr. Scott and Mr. Weichel, have been able to adjust and avoid. Since we have dealt with the Officials at headquarters, it would not be wise to make the questions a local affair.

We have offered to give any information that might be needed so far as local matters are concerned.

The decision of the Chief Justice does not effect our present arrangement with the Government concerning the release of our brethren from service. The present arrangement was made on account of the opinion being given that our brethren were not excepted and not exempt. They are obliged to register and are then given their leave of absence.

Let us watch and pray that the Lord may deliver us from the trials and temptations that surround us on every hand, let us keep humble before Him and faithful toward Him, interceding in behalf of the conditions that have brought about the sorrows of the world, that we may assist in bringing about the restoration of peace and good will among men. May His will be done in all things.

Yours in faith and service,

S. F. Coffman,

For the Committee.

Beamsville July 8/19
Mr Thomas Reeser
Pickering
Dear Bro,

Please find enclosed
P. O. Order for \$150.⁰⁰
from Mennonite Congregation
at Vineland
for Relief Fund

Resp. Yours

Wm Am Hunsbeger
Beamsville
Ont

Vineland Ont., July 19th 1918.

Thomas Reesor,
Pickering Ont.

Dear Brother- Greeting in the name of the Lord.

Your letter of the 18th Inst. received and noted. I am enclosing several copies of the Statement of our position on the question of military service, and trust that you may be able to make use of them.

I am in favor of having the report of the Statutes regarding the mennonites and military service printed, and made use of in a judicious manner by our Non-resistant Organization, and I believe that it will be a good thing to place it in the hands of some of the members of Parliament. I had a letter from Brother Heise yesterday and he thinks that we should be on our guard, and watch the developments, since it is evident that Parliament will meet in extra-ordinary session in the near future and we will then be in a position to have our interests looked after if we see the members in time and have them take an interest in our case. We should not think of asking them to bring any new legislation before Parliament now, since there is an ~~exten~~ amount of prejudice against us. We will be satisfied with what we have under present conditions, provided the Government again renews its pledge of total exemption when the conditions are more favorable to us, or rather, we will be satisfied if the Government allows us to understand that our privileges are not now taken away from us.

I am giving you a statement herewith regarding the expenses which have accrued on account of correspondence for the Committees and for the N-R.R.O. Since last November I have used a thousand printed envelopes, and making a rough estimate of a thousand sheets of letter paper. I am putting in a bill for postage to cover what has been used since the last allowance was made for the same, or at least the most of what was used.

1000 Printed envelopes,	\$2.25
1000 Letter paper	1.50
Postage	10.00
	<u>\$13.75</u>

The enclosed bill, receipted, will answer for the settlement of this account, and please enter an item on your books for the same amount from Vineland, without stating the name. This will balance your books and show an item of expense from the fund. The reason that I am doing this is on account of the fact that there has been funds sent to us for our personal use in the work and we have felt that the actual outlay should go into your fund, even though we feel that we do not want to make the draft on your funds for the amount.

Some contributions came to us, from some of the Amish congregations, which were sent in appreciation of what was done and to help bear the expenses and time spent. Time, of course has been the largest item with me, but it is rather a difficult item to estimate and to value. If any of these contributions were intended for the general fund they should be placed there and reported. There may have been some misunderstanding in some of these items, and I will be glad to have them cleared up.

How did Brother Hoover get along with his appeal case? Hope all is well with them. My wife is better again, but not strong yet.

Yours in faith,

S. F. Coffman

Memorandum of Extracts from Dominion Government Records
 which appear to relate to Section 7 of the Military Service Act '17.

---0---0---0---0---0---0---

"1868

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 ballotted in time of peace, or war, upon such conditions and under such regulations as the Governor 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 of making conditions and regulations was upon the Governor General in Council the Power, 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 denomination 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 Kimberly.

(Signed) John J. McGee,

Clerk, Privy Council.

To the Honorable

The Minister of the Interior.

Department of Agriculture,
 Immigration Branch,
 Ottawa, July 23, 1873.

Gentlemen:

I have the honour under the instruction of the

Hon. the 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 orders of His Excellency the Governor General in Council, for the information of German Mennonites having intention to emigrate to Canada via Hamburg.

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

Vineland Ont., August 19th 1918.

Thomas Ressor, Tres.
Pickering Ont.

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

Your letter of the 15th instant received. I had copies of the lists of names of the Ministers and bishops of the several Churches represented in our Organization as well as the revisions of those lists. I made out complete lists as revised and have sent them on to Mr. Scott.

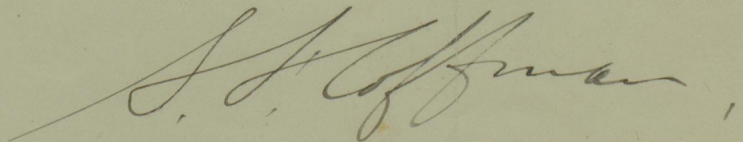
All of the ministers and Bishops of your branch were included in the list. This was according to your former arrangement. Only the Bishops of our Church, and those acting in that capacity in districts where we have no Bishop, were included in our list. The Tunker Brethren have sent only the names of their Bishops, including one in the North West. The Amish Branches have their Bishops names only. The M. B. C. Church have sent the names of their two presiding Elders and all of the ministers in the congregations of the Ontario Conference.

There should not have been the misunderstanding about these lists that there seems to have been. Perhaps it was due to the sending of the lists from the Departments in Ottawa. There may have been some misunderstanding also in the way that the matter was presented to the Department. Some seems to have had the Idea that only the Bishops were to have the authority to sign the Certificates and since not all the Churches were represented by Bishops they were perhaps cut off of the list. I have made it clear on the lists that all of those whose names appear on the list under the heading of the Church name are authorized to sign certificates.

I am glad that you took this matter up with Mr. Scott. He seems willing to do all that he can to help our cause, since he more fully understands the position that we take. Mr. Weichel is also a faithful helper and we should be especially grateful for the way in which he has voluntarily given us aid. Things seem to be settled down to a state of quietness at present, but we may expect some change about the first of October, or soon after the Fall seeding and harvest are past. We need to continue our prayers to the Lord for His help.

Wife has been quite sick with her old Gall Stone trouble. By the mercies of the Lord she is again improving. Pray for us .

Yours in faith and service,



To:-

Capt. Tyndale,

Ottawa, Sept. 4th, 1918.

Secy. Military Sub-Committee.

Herewith copy of correspondence which Mr. Weichäl left in my office. The last folio is a list of Bishops and Ministers in two Branches of the Mennonite Church who are authorized to sign Membership Certificates.

The A.A.G. M.D. 2, will not accept a Certificate which is worded "to the best of my knowledge and belief". As I come from that part of the country, I know these boys very well and I am quite sure that the Mennonite Church does not keep any official record of the members of their church, and unless the Minister or Bishop who was present at the time these boys joined the church would swear to it, I am afraid that it would be impossible to get a Certificate stating that they knew absolutely that they are members of the Mennonite Church, and I am of the opinion that these Certificates should be accepted.

Major D.A.A.G (3)

Vineland Ont., Sept. 5th, 1918.

Thomas Reesor:-
Pickering Ont.

Dear Brother:- Greeting.

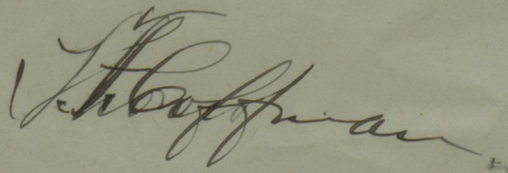
Please find enclosed a Post Office Order for the amount of Thirt-two Dollard and thirty-six cents, (\$32.36) which was sent to me from the Poole congregation, Amish, for the war-sufferers relief fund. It was sent by Daniel Zehr, Milverton Ont., R.R.#1. and might be acknowledged to him.

I was in Wareiloo County the first of this week and met Brother L. J. Burkholder there. As I had some business in Kitchener, I went to see Mr. Euler, to find out what methods he had been using in securing the release of several young brethren from service. His methods were practically the same as those used by others, requiring the membership certificate and securing the indefinite Leave of Absence from the Command-in Officer. I had not time to go up to Waterloo to see Mr. Weichel, as I would like to have done in order to find out what was being done concerning the special donation to the Government. I learned through Mr. Euler that Mr. Calder has returned, and since he is the one who was appointed by the Government to look after that matter for us. I thought iy would be in order to write him again and call attention to the matter and say that we are waiting to learn what suggestions the Government has for us.

Owing to the shortness of the time that I had at my disposal I was unable to call upon Mr. Scott. I have learned that the limitations placed on the date of members being received into the Church will not effect any of our boys who have been brought up in the Church. The Government is only making provisions that will effect any one who has come into the Church solely for the purpose of escaping from Military Service. There are no such cases among us that I am aware of, and it is very probable that Our brethren will not be required to do any Military Service of any kind.

May we hope that we will be spared any further complications with the Government respecting our position and attitude toward the Government. We have endeavored to act under the instructions of the Government at all times and desire to do our duties as citizens and subjects. I hope that there will be a hearty respose to the appeal for the memorial for the Government.

Yours in faith,



Vineland Ont. Sept. 19th 1918.

Thomas Reesor:-
Pickering Ont. R.R.#2.

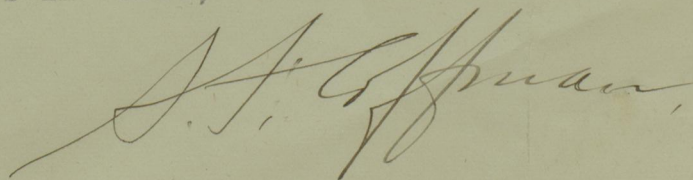
Dear Brother:- Greeting in the Master's name.

Your letter of the 16th instant to hand. I was pleased to learn of the steps that are being taken by the brethren in North Waterloo. I trust that their efforts will result in doing a practical work for the sufferers who are neglected so much in the general provisions made for relief. The funds that are being collected for the relief of the merchant marine branch of the Government's work are no doubt accumulating, but the soldier sailors or naval branch seems to be receiving the greater attention of the public. I think that a fund collected solely for the relief of the widows and orphans of the citizen sailors will be appreciated and will be rightly appropriated. There is no doubt but that the same fund would appeal to many other people if it were brought to their attention. Under the conditions that were suggested by Mr. Calder, it might be well for the Committee to get together and work out the problem of what causes might be supported by our non-resistance bodies and send out a list of such causes and allow the people to donate to any or all as they choose to do.

I have learned through a letter received from Brother Heise that their brethren are expecting to get to work at once in the collection of the funds and desire to have it well under way before the next war loan is inaugurated. Our congregations are now planning their collections and we are planning for large contributions. It is only right that we should take a large interest in the relief work. Our people have not been overburdened with these causes in every district. Quite a number have given to the patriotic and other funds, but it has not been the case generally. Others have given individually to the war relief work. This is a special opportunity to help in a large effort, and show appreciation also for what the Government has done for us.

It may be that the Amish brethren have not yet taken up an organized canvas of their congregations. Have you received any information from brother Gascho regarding this matter. He might give some information and also give some advice as to how the work might be done among the Amish Congregations. I hope that we may be able to work together in one spirit in this matter, while the methods and the causes may be quite varied. You and the rest of the Committee in that section might be able to get together and make some plans for further work. Will be glad to hear further regarding the plans and prospects.

Yours in faith,



To:-

Ottawa, Nov. 5th, 1918.

Capt. Tyndale,
Sec. Military Service Sub-Committee.

I wish to call your attention to the fact that there are numerous complaints regarding the administration of the M.S.A. in Military Districts Nos. 1 and 2, in so far as it affects Mennonites and Tunkers, etc.

The rules of the Mennonite Church are such that a male cannot become a member of the church until he is approximately 21 years of age, as their belief is that until a person has attained that age they do not quite understand what they are doing and, therefore, they are not allowed to become members of the church in full standing until they reach that age, as until they are 21 they are known as adherents and it is suggested that a strong letter be forwarded to the General Officers Commanding, and inform them that they must accept a Certificate from the Bishop of the Mennonite Church which states that the man concerned was an adherent of a bonafide member of the Mennonite Church.

This may look like as if giving a broad opening, but from my personal knowledge, as I have lived in Western Ontario among these people, I feel quite sure that a Bishop of the Mennonite Church would not give a Certificate to a man who was not an adherent or a bonafide member of the Church.

Major D.A.A.G (S)
for A/Adjutant-General,

Fitchener Ont. Jan 29, 1919.

L. J. Burkholder Chairman
Markham Ont.

Dear Brother, - Owing to absence from home, and lack of opportunity to see either Mr. Scott, M.P. or Mr. G. W. Weichel, I could not reply to request to get information concerning the presentation to the Government of the Memorial Relief Fund.

Last evening I saw Mr. Weichel. He suggests that it would be most appropriate to hand the amount to Mr. Borden personally. But Mr. Borden will not be at home until some time in February or March, at least some time during the coming session of Legislature. Mr. White, - Minister of Finance, thinks that if the fund is not handed to Mr. Borden, nothing would be gained by presenting it to any other member of the Government and the fund would then best be given to the various organizations to be aided by it, and given by our own organization.

Another matter needs attention. Legislature is in prospect to make a uniform Military service law, abrogating all exemption privileges. Mr. Weichel thinks we should take steps to place our cause in the hands of representatives of the Government to protect our privileges. He suggests Mr. Scott and himself. I will also talk over the matter with Mr. Eiler and report to you.

Yours,

J. A. Coffman

Experience during the war No 1

At the time of the passage of the Military Service act dated 1917¹⁷: all the male inhabitants of Canada of the age of 18 and under 60, not exempt or disqualified by law shall be required to serve in the Militia.

The former act exempting Mennonites which was drawn up many years ago appeared to be disputed by the authority in power, as it was subject to being discontinued by order in council. with the result that there were quite a few of different groups were drafted for service

As there was no organization among any of the Mennonite and tunker groups each group were put on their own resources. I had been ordained Minister in our group in 1916 had no particular qualifications to act except the drafted boys personally asking me to do what I could in their behalf.

at this time myself and Wm Weichel then member of Parliament got busy with the Military department at Ottawa (Mr Weichel representing North Waterloo)

At this period an order was passed exempting boys of military age who were baptised and members in good standing in their various groups, unfortunately there was no provision for those that were not baptised members, of which our group had several, who were drafted. Finally Mr Bearinger, an able and influential young man from Elmira Ont had an appointment with F.S. Scott M.P. for south Waterloo, together with myself pleaded for our boys, stating that as they had never adhered to any other group, they should be classed as members, all other denominations especially those who baptise children were classed as members. Mr Weichel who had been defeated as M.P. in North Waterloo, still had had much influence in Ottawa.

They spent considerable time at Ottawa, finally they got an order passed granting a leave of absence for the boys in question, which a few of the commanding officers were very prone to recognize this order.

One of our boys through the influence of his mother failed to report when called and was taken to the camp at Niagara on the Lake and detained there, I went over on his behalf as the boy was being questioned I thought he was rather vague in his answers and tried to help him out, but was respectfully asked to sit down, after all was finished on the officers desk, he turned respectful to me and said, "You are being protected by the best Government in the world and are not giving one ~~cent~~ cent to show your appreciation" Later I mentioned this fact to Rev L.J. Burkholder, Later to S.F. Goudie of the M.B.C. group, later an organization was created which was duly named, Nonresistant relief organization, for the purpose of helping those suffering through ravages and destruction of the war.

I might say this fund has increased into several millions of dollars and has been expanded over the best part of the civilized world.

With the energetic co-operation of the various groups the organization included almost all the groups in Ontario and also the majority of the Mennonites of the western provinces.

Another version of the Military Service act not published might be interesting. the county of Waterloo and district came under the Military district of London Ont,

apparently there were some unfounded rumors reached headquarters that the boys of the Waterloo district would defend themselves in a body On a certain Sunday a Sergeant was sent from London to investigate at the Elmira at the regular service in the forenoon.

I was called to be present with Bro N.M. Bearinger taking the principle part in the proceedings .I happened to be with the officer, who was visibly moved by the surroundings in general as many of the congregation had gathered to witness the proceedings . the sergeant told me :-if everyone was like this there would be no war.

We retired into Mr Weichel's residence where the military official drafted his report which stated ; they are the most earnest confidential people I ever saw, my advice to you is to leave them alone; from that time there was little trouble if they adhered to the regulations as to qualifications .But certain drawbacks were encountered .Certain of the older generation took the stand that all mennonites were unconditionally exempt from military service and one Bishop at least refused to take part in the necessary proceedings ,until he was finally convinced that it was absolutely necessary. some of the boys which had been under draft were roughly handled when they refused to don military uniform ,as were a few of the others in the Toronto district ,who were confined to prison,
