

exemption from military service in the American Civil War of 1860-4, and also in the present war by the British Government.

VI. That your petitioners humbly beseech your Honorable House to grant their prayer, that they may live quiet and peaceable lives in obedience to God, to whom they will pray for the guidance of your Honorable House in the conduct of public affairs.

To this were attested the signatures of the Christadelphians of Canada, members of the several recognized Ecclesias heretofore referred to.

At Midsummer, 1917, Canada had on the statutes a fullfledged Conscription Act, known as

THE MILITARY SERVICE ACT, 1917,

the same to come into force at any time or occasion by proclamation to be made at the discretion of the Governor-General of Canada.

The Duke of Devonshire, the Governor-General, did on the 12th of October, 1917, issue a proclamation under the Military Service Act, 1917, calling up men for immediate military service, stipulated as Class 1, between the ages of 20 and 45, unless married or a widower having a child dependent upon him, and who could not prosecute a claim for exemption provided in the Act.

By the good offices of a certain Brother who had secured from Ottawa a number of copies of the Military Service Act, we were able to study critically what provision the Act contained for those to be exempted from military service, whose religious belief forbid them entering into the service of the Army and Navy.

The grounds of exemption provided in the Military Service Act, 1917, were as follows: (Section II.)

- "No. 1 (a) That it is expedient in the **national interest** that the man should, instead of being employed in military service, be engaged in other work in which he is habitually engaged;
- (b) That it is expedient in the **national interest** that the man should, instead of being employed in military service, be engaged in other work in which he wishes to be engaged, and for which he has special qualifications;
- (c) That it is expedient in the **national interest** that the man should, instead of being employed in military service, continue to be educated or trained for any work, for which he is then being educated or trained;
- (d) That serious hardships would ensue if the man were placed on active service, owing to his exceptional financial or business obligations or domestic position;
- (e) Ill health or infirmity;
- (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 6th day of July, 1917, of any organized religious denomination existing and well recognized in Canada at such date, and to which he in good faith belongs;"

"And if any of the grounds of such applicant be established, a certificate of exemption shall be granted to such man."

- "No. 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."

Your Committee was greatly perturbed at the knowledge the above supplied. It was seen at once the Act fell away behind the English Army Act No. 2, whereas we had felt assured Canada would not enact provisions inferior to those of the Mother Country. The Canadian Act, as it stood, provided the granting of absolute exemption from all military service for all and every consideration but religious, conscientious objection; which, from a Christadelphian standpoint, means there was to be no exemption