

WESTERN
UNION

WESTERN
UNION

WESTERN
UNION

S. 4037

REC'D SEP 5 1950

1950 SEP 5 AM 4 16



LDD003 NL

WASHINGTON DC 4

SENATOR LESTER C HUNT 73

SENATE OFFICE BLDG WASHDC

SECTION 30 OF S. 4037, MCCARRAN'S INTERNAL SECURITY BILL,
WOULD PREVENT SINCERE MENNONITES, BRETHREN, QUAKERS, MANY OTHERS
(EVEN A CANADIAN MENNONITE GIRL MARRYING U.S. MENNONITE) FROM
BECOMING NATURALIZED CITIZENS. THIS VIOLATES PRINCIPLE RELIGIOUS
FREEDOM. PLEASE VOTE KEEP NATURALIZATION OATH AS IS

A STAUFFER CURRY EXECUTIVE SECRETARY NATIONAL SERVICE BOARD FOR
RELIGIOUS OBJECTORS (1000 11 ST NW).

SEN. L. C. HUNT
ACC. NO. 270

S 4037

COPY

~~Romney, R.~~
Sherk, J. Harold

September 2, 1950

Gentlemen:

Acknowledgment is made of your communication of August 31, with respect to Senate file 4037, to protect the internal security of the United States.

This measure has been declared to be the next order of unfinished business in the Senate, beginning Tuesday, September 5.

I am pleased to have the comments of the representatives of the Friends Committee on National Legislation, the Brethren Service Commission and the Mennonite Central Committee, and will give the statements careful consideration.

Sincerely yours,

LESTER C. HUNT
United States Senator

Mr. J. Harold Sherk
Mr. C. Lloyd Bailey
Mr. W. Harold Row
1000 - 11th Street, N. W.
Washington 1, D. C.

SEN. L. C. HUNT
CC. NO. 270

1000 11th Street, N. W.
Washington 1, D. C.

August 31, 1950

REC'D SEP 2 1950

Honorable Lester C. Hunt
Senate Office Building
Washington 25, D. C.

Dear Senator Hunt:

We the representatives of the Friends Committee on National Legislation, the Brethren Service Commission, and the Mennonite Central Committee wish to call your attention to a change in the naturalization oath provided for in the McCarran Bill, S.4037. It is our belief that the present oath is adequate and should remain unchanged.

We refer to section 30 which would amend the Nationality Act of 1940, as amended, requiring one taking an oath either to "agree to bear arms if required by law" or to "perform non-combatant service in the armed forces of the United States when required by law."

Adoption of this change in the naturalization oath would mean that any person who because of religious training and belief feels he cannot conscientiously participate in military service would be excluded from the possibility of naturalization as an American citizen.

The three faiths of which the signers of this letter are a part have encouraged their members to be careful and productive citizens of this country and we believe that a contribution has been made to the good of our country even though many members have not been able to bear arms in its behalf. It is our feeling therefore, that the willingness to bear arms should not be the sole criterion on which naturalization should be based.

The oath as it now stands says, "to support and defend the Constitution and the laws of the United States against all enemies foreign and domestic." This provision is adequate to protect the United States against subversive elements which might apply for citizenship if adequate investigation is made.

The requirement to agree to bear arms or to do non-combatant service seems irrelevant for every citizen is required to obey the law or accept the consequences. In a recent opinion of the United States Supreme Court, February 20, 1950, the Court said that the right of United States citizenship should not be destroyed solely on the ground that a person, because of religious conviction and belief,

SEN. L. C. HUNT
ACC. NO. 270

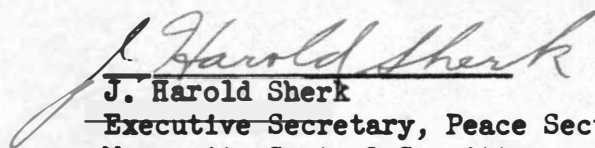
could not shoulder a gun in time of war when there is sufficient evidence that such a person is willing to aid his country in other ways in an emergency.


We realize that S. 4037 is basically an internal security bill and is aimed at subversive elements in our country. It is hard to believe that such a change in the naturalization oath could have any effect upon this problem for those who would conspire against our country would not hesitate to take this revised oath. It is only those who are motivated on a high moral plane who would, because of moral and religious principles, refuse to take such an oath. Is it the desire of Congress to prevent people of high moral and religious principles from coming to our country?

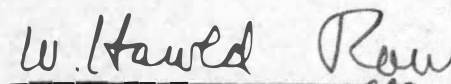
By adopting this provision it seems to us that the United States would be reversing its time honored position of recognizing the right of freedom of religious belief. We hope that you, as a member of the Senate, will assist in the elimination of this provision, allowing the naturalization oath to stand as it is.

Attached to this letter are excerpts from a statement previously prepared by the Mennonite Central Committee on this subject which we believe would give you further information on this matter.

Sincerely,


J. Harold Sherk
Executive Secretary, Peace Section
Mennonite Central Committee


C. Lloyd Bailey
Associate Secretary, Friends Committee
on National Legislation


W. Harold Row
Executive Secretary,
Brethren Service Commission

SEN. L. C. HUNT
ACC. NO. 270

EXCERPTS FROM A STATEMENT BY THE MENNONITE CENTRAL COMMITTEE
SUBMITTED TO THE IMMIGRATION AND NATURALIZATION SERVICE,
CONCERNING PROPOSED CHANGES IN THE NATURALIZATION OATH.

"This delegation, representing the larger constituent bodies of the Mennonite Central Committee, comes to you with a deep concern...

"The Mennonite people of the United States have deeply appreciated the provision which has been made by our Government for the recognition of those who, because of religious training and belief, cannot conscientiously serve as members of the armed forces. This conviction concerning military service, founded on the teaching and example of Christ, has been held by Mennonites throughout their history. The recognition of this conviction, as held by our people and many others, was well expressed by the Selective Service Act of 1948, Deferment and Exemptions, Section 6(j):

"Nothing contained in this title shall be construed to require any person to be subject to combatant training and service in the armed forces of the United States who, by reason of religious training and belief, is conscientiously opposed to participation in war in any form. Religious training and belief in this connection means an individual's belief in a relation to a Supreme Being involving duties superior to those arising from any human relation...."

"We teach loyalty to our country and obedience to duly constituted authority, but with the conviction that 'we ought to obey God rather than men' in any matter where the law of the state is in conflict with our understanding of the divine law. We are ready to give our country and humanity at large any sacrificial service that is consistent with our religious principles. This was demonstrated during World War II by 4,665 of our young men who served the country in work of national importance through Civilian Public Service in forestry, agriculture, mental hospitals, and as 'guinea pigs' in medical research. Since the end of the war and continuing currently the Mennonite Church has been conducting a program for the relief of human need around the world.

"During the 400 years of our history, Mennonites at times found themselves in difficulty with various governments because of our convictions on military service, and have repeatedly been subjected to persecution, even to death. Through the invitation of William Penn, founder of the state of Pennsylvania, the first Mennonite settlers came to this country in 1683, finding here the religious liberty which had been denied them in their native lands. In the more than 250 years since, thousands of others have found haven here, and we believe have proved their worth as citizens.

"Legislation recently introduced in the Senate has caused us deep concern because of its possible effect on the eligibility for naturalization of persons of our faith who may desire to become United States citizens. We refer particularly to S. 3455, Section 336... This measure as we understand it, would require military service, either combatant or noncombatant, of any applicant for citizenship and would disqualify members of the Mennonite church from receiving citizenship.

SEN. L. C. HUNT
ACC. NO. 270

"...We are persuaded that our position is not incompatible with the highest requirements that our government should expect from those who petition for citizenship.

"We earnestly request, therefore,...to retain in the naturalization laws and regulations provision whereby persons who cannot serve in the military establishment either as combatants or non-combatants because of religious training and belief, may nevertheless, if otherwise qualified, be granted citizenship."

Respectfully submitted,

John L. Stauffer, Bishop
Virginia Mennonite Conference

Wilmer S. Shelly, President
Eastern District Conference of the
General Conference of Mennonites of
North America

Noah G. Good, Secretary
Lancaster Mennonite Conference
Peace Problems Committee

J. Harold Sherk, Executive Secretary
Peace Section, Mennonite Central
Committee

William T. Snyder, Director
Mennonite Aid Section of
Mennonite Central Committee

SEN. L. C. HUNT
ACC. NO. 270