

# The Views

—OF—

## SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTISTS

RELATIVE TO

BEARING ARMS,

AS BROUGHT BEFORE

THE GOVERNORS OF SEVERAL STATES,

AND THE

PROVOST MARSHAL GENERAL,

WITH A PORTION OF

The Enrollment Law.

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STEAM PRESS

OF THE SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST PUBLISHING ASSOCIATION.  
BATTLE CREEK, MICH.:

1865.

## The Exemption Clause.

SECTION OF THE ENROLLMENT LAW OF 1863,  
RELATIVE TO THOSE CONSCIENTIOUSLY  
OPPOSED TO BEARING ARMS.

AN ACT to amend an Act, entitled, "An act for the enrolling and calling out the National Forces, and for other purposes," approved March 3, 1863:

Section 17. *And be it further enacted,* That members of religious denominations, who shall by oath or affirmation declare that they are conscientiously opposed to the bearing of arms, and who are prohibited from doing so by the rules and articles of faith and practice of such religious denomination, shall, when drafted into the military service, be considered non-combatants, and shall be assigned by the Secretary of War to duty in the hospitals, or to the care of freedmen, or shall pay the sum of three hundred dollars, to such person as the Secretary of War shall designate to receive it, to be applied to the benefit of the sick and wounded soldiers: *Provided,* That no person shall be entitled to the benefit of the provisions of this section, unless his declaration of conscientious scruples against

bearing arms shall be supported by satisfactory evidence that his department has been uniformly consistent with such declaration.

**Enrollment Law of July, 1864.**

Sections 10 and 11 of Amended Enrollment Act, passed July 4, 1864, which provides for the present call, but revokes the clause commonly known as the \$300 exemption clause, contain the following relative to the law given above concerning those conscientiously opposed to bearing arms:

“Nothing contained in this Act is to be construed to alter, or in any way affect the Law relative to those conscientiously opposed to bearing arms.”

**Letter of Introduction.**

The following is a letter from Hon. W. W. Woolnough, given to the General Conference Committee to introduce them to his Excellency, the Governor of Michigan:

TO HIS EXCELLENCY,  
GOVERNOR BLAIR,  
JACKSON, MICHIGAN:

SIR—Permit me to introduce to you Elders Byington and Loughborough, and Geo. W. Amadon. They visit your Excellency as representatives of a religious organization in our city, respectable as to numbers, and of Christian consistency, and daily walk and conversation worthy of emulation; and are

**Statement of Principles  
OF SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTISTS.**

The following is the statement laid by the General Conference Committee before the Governor, Aug. 3, 1864:

TO HIS EXCELLENCY,  
AUSTIN BLAIR,  
GOVERNOR OF MICHIGAN:

We, the undersigned, Executive Committee of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, respectfully beg leave to present for your consideration the following statements:

The denomination of Christians calling themselves Seventh-day Adventists, taking the Bible as their rule of faith and practice, are unanimous in their views that its teachings are contrary to the spirit and practice of war; hence they have ever been conscientiously opposed to bearing arms. If there is any portion of the Bible which we, as a people, can point to more than another as our creed, it is the law of Ten Commandments, which we regard as the supreme law, and each precept of which we take in its most obvious and literal import. The fourth of these commandments requires cessation from labor on the seventh day of the week, the sixth prohibits the taking of life, neither of which, in our view, could be observed while doing military duty. Our practice has uniformly been consistent with these principles. Hence, our

themselves gentlemen of unquestioned integrity.

Should you be able to aid them in what they conceive an effort to maintain their consistency, you will confer a favor on many friends here, and also upon the applicants, who are, with the people they represent, thoroughly loyal.

Very respectfully,  
Your obedient servant,  
W. W. WOOLNOUGH.

*Battle Creek, Mich., Aug. 2, 1864.*

The following endorsement of the foregoing letter was made by Hon. T. W. Hall, and E. W. Pendill, mayor of the city of Battle Creek:

We have read the above statement of Mr. Woolnough's, and can say that it is correct.

T. W. HALL,  
E. W. PENDILL.

people have not felt free to enlist into the service. In none of our denominational publications have we advocated or encouraged the practice of bearing arms; and when drafted, rather than violate our principles, we have been content to pay, and assist each other in paying, the \$300, commutation money. And while that provision remained of universal application, we did not deem any public expression of our sentiments on this question called for.

We would further represent that Seventh-day Adventists are rigidly anti-slavery, loyal to the government, and in sympathy with it against the rebellion.

But not having had a long existence as a distinct people, and our organization having but recently been perfected, our sentiments are not yet extensively known. The change in the law renders it necessary that we take a more public stand in the matter. For this reason we now lay before your Excellency the sentiments of Seventh-day Adventists, as a body, relative to bearing arms, trusting that you will feel no hesitation in indorsing our claim that, as a people, we come under the intent of the late action of Congress concerning those who are conscientiously opposed to bearing arms, and are entitled to the benefits of said laws.

JOHN BYINGTON, } Gen.  
J. N. LOUGHBOROUGH, } Conf.  
GEO. W. AMADON, } Com.

*Battle Creek, Mich., Aug. 2, 1864.*

**The Governor's Reply.**

I am satisfied that the foregoing statement of principles and practices of Seventh-day Adventists is correct, and that they are entitled to all the immunities secured by law to those who are conscientiously opposed to bearing arms, or engaging in war.

AUSTIN BLAIR,  
*Governor of Michigan.*

*Dated, Aug. 3, 1864.*

**To the Governor of Wisconsin.**

To HIS EXCELLENCY,  
JAMES T. LEWIS,  
GOVERNOR OF WISCONSIN:

We, the undersigned, Executive Committee of the Illinois and Wisconsin State Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, subject to the direction of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists of Battle Creek, Michigan, beg leave to present the following for your consideration:

I. That there is under your jurisdiction a religious denomination known as Seventh-day Adventists, and legally organized for the worship of Almighty God, taking the Bible as the rule of their faith and practice; and are unanimous in their views that its teachings are contrary to the spirit and practice of war, hence they have ever been conscientiously opposed to bearing arms.

**The Governor's Response.**

EXECUTIVE OFFICE,  
MADISON, Aug. 29th, 1864.

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN: I am satisfied that the foregoing statement of the principles of the Seventh-day Adventists is correct, and that they are entitled to all the immunities secured by law to those who are conscientiously opposed to bearing arms or engaging in war.

JAMES T. LEWIS,  
*Governor of Wis.*

**To the Governor of Illinois.**

FREESPORT, ILL., Aug. 20, 1864.

HIS EXCELLENCY,  
RICHARD YATES,  
GOVERNOR OF ILLINOIS:

Permit me to introduce to you Messrs. Joseph G. Wood and H. W. Decker, who will fully explain to you the object of their mission.

There is in this part of our State a number of church organizations of the Seventh-day Adventists, who are as truly non-combatants as the Society of Friends, and who are conscientiously opposed to bearing arms. Now what these gentlemen desire, is to secure for the members of that Society in Illinois, the immunities provided for such persons under the conscription laws. As a class the members of this Society are thoroughly loyal, and

II. Our practice has uniformly been consistent with these principles. Hence our people have not felt free to enlist into the service. In none of our denominational publications have we advocated or encouraged the practice of bearing arms. And when drafted, rather than violate our principles, we have been content to pay, and assist each other in paying the \$300 commutation money. And while that provision remained of universal application, we did not consider a public expression of our sentiments necessary.

III. We would further add that all Seventh-day Adventists are perfectly loyal and in sympathy with the Government in putting down this wicked rebellion:

IV. But not having existed long as a distinct people and our organization having but recently been perfected, our sentiments are not extensively known. The change in the law renders it necessary that we take a more public stand in this matter. For this reason we now lay before your Excellency the sentiments of Seventh-day Adventists as a body, relative to bearing arms, trusting you will feel no hesitation in indorsing our claim, that as a people we come under the intent of the late Act of Congress concerning those conscientiously opposed to bearing arms, and are entitled to the benefits of said laws.

Your obedient servants,

ISAAC SANBORN, }  
JOSEPH G. WOOD, } *Executive*  
H. W. DECKER, } *Committee.*

are willing to bear their share of the burdens of the Government in putting down the rebellion, but they cannot conscientiously take up arms. I commend them to your most favorable consideration.

Sincerely Yours,  
THOS. J. TURNER.

I cordially endorse what Col. Turner has said in the within, and commend his views.

C. K. JUDSON, P. M.  
JOHN H. ADDAMS.

**Referred to the Secretary of War.**

EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT,  
Springfield, Ill., Sept. 19, 1864.

Respectfully referred to Hon. E. W. Stanton, Sec. of War, Washington, D. C., whose attention is requested to within statements. At direction of His Excellency, Gov. Yates.

JOHN M. SNYDER,  
*Col. and A. D. C.*

**Response of the Pro. Mar. General.**

WAR DEPARTMENT,  
Provost Marshal General's Office,  
WASHINGTON, D. C., Sept. 26, 1864.

HIS EXCELLENCY,  
RICHARD YATES,  
GOVERNOR OF ILLINOIS,  
SPRINGFIELD, ILLS.:

SIR,—I have the honor to return herewith papers in the case of certain applicants for benefit of provisions of Sec. 17, Act Feb. 24, 1864, referred by you to the Honorable Secretary of War, and by him referred to this Office;—and in reply would state that the Section and Act referred to, provide fully for such cases. It is as follows:

“*And be it further enacted*, That members of religious denominations, who shall by oath or affirmation declare that they are conscientiously opposed to the bearing of arms, and who are prohibited from doing so by the rules and articles of faith and practice of said religious denomination, shall, when drafted into the Military service, be considered non-combatants, and shall be assigned by the Secretary of War to duty in the hospital, or to the care of freedmen, or shall pay the sum of Three Hundred Dollars to such person as the Secretary of War shall designate to receive it, to be applied to the benefit of the sick and wounded soldiers: *Provided*, That no person shall be entitled to the benefit of the provisions of

**The Governor's Response.**

PENNSYLVANIA, EXECUTIVE CHAMBER,  
Harrisburg, Aug. 24, 1864.

I AM satisfied from an examination of the principles, and practices, of the Seventh-day Adventists, that they are entitled to all the immunities secured by law to those who are conscientiously opposed to bearing arms, or engaging in war.

A. G. CURTIN,  
*Governor of Pennsylvania.*

**Mission of Eld. J. N. Andrews  
to Washington, D. C.**

Papers presented to Brigadier General James B. Fry, Provost Marshal General, by Elder J. N. Andrews.

[A]

MICHIGAN MILITARY AGENCY,  
[On E, near 7th Street North,]  
WASHINGTON, D. C., Aug. 31st, 1864.

BRIGADIER GENERAL JAS. B. FRY,  
PROVOST MARSHAL GENERAL:

Sir,—Permit me to ask your special attention to the bearer, Rev. J. N. Andrews a minister of the Religious Organization known and recognized as the “*Seventh-day Adventists*,” a body of Christians, residing in small numbers in each, or nearly all, of the Free States, who “are conscientiously opposed to the bearing of

“this Section, unless his declaration of conscientious scruples against bearing arms shall be supported by satisfactory evidence that his department has been uniformly consistent with such declaration.”

Such persons must present their claims to the Board of Enrollment of the District in which they reside, who will hear the evidence required by provisions of said Section and Act.

I have the honor to be, Sir,

Very respectfully

Your Obedient Servant,

JAMES B. FRY.

*Provost Marshal General.*

**To the Governor of Pennsylvania.**

CONDERSPORT, AUG. 23, 1864.

TO HIS EXCELLENCY,  
Gov. A. G. CURTIN,  
HARRISBURG, PENN.:

SIR,—Permit me to introduce to you Eld. N. Fuller, who has been a resident of this county for many years. I know him to be of good Christian character, of good respectability and fidelity. He is an earnest advocate of the principles he comes to you to represent.

He visits your Excellency to ask you to give your opinion that Seventh-day Adventists are entitled to the benefit of the Act providing for those who are conscientiously opposed to bearing arms.

Your obedient servant,

ISAAC BENSON.

arms, and who are prohibited from doing so, by the rules and articles of faith and practice of such religious denomination.”

Rev. J. N. Andrews comes duly accredited as the agent of that organization to ask of you, that the relief contemplated in section (17) of the Enrollment Act, approved March 3d, 1863, may be extended to each, and every, member of their organization, provided they shall on oath, or affirmation, declare that “they are conscientiously opposed to the bearing of arms, and are prohibited from doing so by the rules and articles of faith, and practice, of their church, and furnish satisfactory evidence that their department has been uniformly consistent with such declaration.”

Permit me to ask your attention to the endorsement of Austin Blair, Governor of Michigan, on page 9 of the accompanying pamphlet named “*The Draft*,” also to express to you my full confidence in the loyalty and patriotism of the petitioners.

Your obedient servant,

J. TUNNICLIFF, JR.,

*Mich. Military Agent.*

[B]

WASHINGTON, D. C., Aug. 30th, 1864.

SIR:

I have the honor to present the accompanying Documents, showing that I am the duly accredited representative to the Provost

Marshal General, of the religious denomination styled Seventh-day Adventists, a people unanimously loyal and anti-slavery, who because of their views of the ten commandments and of the teaching of the New Testament cannot engage in bloodshed, and who therefore ask that the provisions of the enrollment act of March 3, 1863, and July 4, 1864, designed to meet such cases, may be applied to themselves.

Respectfully yours,

JOHN N. ANDREWS,  
Minister of the Gospel.

To Brigadier General James B. Fry, Provost Marshal General.

(C)

SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST PUBLISHING HOUSE,  
Battle Creek, Mich., Aug. 22, 1864.

WE the undersigned, General Conference Executive Committee of the denomination of Christians calling themselves Seventh-day Adventists, hereby empower Eld. John N. Andrews, an accredited minister of our denomination, to act in our behalf in laying before the Provost Marshal General, the sentiments of Seventh-day Adventists in relation to bearing arms and engaging in war.

JOHN N. LOUGHBOROUGH, } Executive  
JOHN BYINGTON, } Conference  
GEORGE W. AMADON, } Committee.

(E)

State of New York, 28th District,  
Office of the Provost Marshal,  
ROCHESTER, Aug. 24, 1864.

BRIG. GEN. JAMES B. FRY,  
PROVOST MARSHAL GENERAL:

Sir,—I have the honor to introduce Rev. J. N. Andrews of this city, who visits Washington upon business connected with his society. He is known to me as a gentleman of integrity, and any statement he may make can be relied upon.

Very Respectfully,

Your Obt. Servant,

ROSWELL HART,

Captain & Provost Marshal, 28th District,  
N. Y.

To these the following response was received from the Provost Marshal General:

PRO. MAR. GENL'S OFFICE,  
September 1st, 1864.

RESPECTFULLY RETURNED TO REV. J. N. ANDREWS: Members of religious denominations, who have been drawn in the draft, and who establish the fact before the Board of Enrollment that they are conscientiously opposed to the bearing of arms, and are prohibited from so doing by their rules and articles of faith, and that their deportment has been uniformly consistent with their professions,

(D)

NEWFANE, Nig. Co., N. Y., Aug. 15, 1864.

TO PROVOST MARSHAL,  
GENERAL FRY:

Dear Sir,—I learn that there is an effort being made by the denomination of Christians calling themselves Seventh-day Adventists to avail themselves of the exemption clause in the enrollment law, which applies to those who are opposed to war from religious and conscientious convictions.

My knowledge of them has been quite limited, but so far as I have known them, I have known them to be thoroughly loyal and upright. I have understood them to be, from conscientious convictions founded upon the ten commandments, opposed to engaging in war, and have also understood that their course has, as far as possible, been in accordance with such convictions. How far the clause in the law referred to, will be construed to go by the department I am not aware, but I am in favor of giving them a fair and impartial hearing, and all their rights under such law being granted to them.

If entitled to such exemption they will be able to show their claims to it. I believe them to be a very conscientious, upright and consistent people, and that their principles and practices have been uniformly in harmony. Respectfully,

BURT VAN HONE,  
Late M. C. 31st, District, N. Y.

will be assigned to duty in hospitals, or to the care of freedmen, or shall be exempt on payment of \$300, to such persons as the Secretary of War may designate.

By command of the Provost Marshal General.

THEO. McMURTRIE,  
Capt. & A. A. G.

With thanks to Echoes from the Past, www.vbates.com, for the photo reproduction of the 1865 booklet.