

Chichester Observer 5th July 1916 page 5

CONSCIENTIOUS.

An East Dean hurdle maker appealed for exemption on the grounds of national interest and conscientious objection.

Being a Christian, that was, by faith redeemed through the blood of Jesus Christ, he held it was contrary to His teaching for him to fight and kill his fellow men. It was not the will of Christ that he should take part in the world struggle, or do violence to any man. In the Gospel of St. Matthew, Christ reproved one of His followers for using the sword with the words, "All they who take the sword shall perish by the sword." Again, when He was brought before Pilate, Christ said, "My kingdom is not of this world, else would My servants fight."

Proceeding, applicant stated he objected to non-combatant service because he could not see the difference between it and combatant service. He would not resort to the use of arms in any dispute. Asked if he would be willing to take part in the saving of life, he said he could not take part in any military service as it was all working for the same purpose—the prosecution of war. He had held conscientious objections since he first knew Christ as his Saviour—in August, 1907. He was a member of no religious body, or sect, but belonged to Christ.

Asked if he could state any sacrifice he had made in consequence of his convictions he stated he had foregone pleasures contrary to the Lord's will. Assuming his conscientious objection was established he would be willing to undertake other work, but he knew no other except his own trade.

The Tribunal allowed the appeal on the "national interest" ground, and gave six months' exemption.

Chichester Observer 8th March 1916 page 3 column c

A Conscientious Objector.

The next applicant was Nelson Sargent, of Walberton, aged 28, who was described as a foreman builder, having sole charge of the books of account, and said he prepared plans and estimates in the building and decorating trade, and did undertaking and repairs. He also collected rents, and was Secretary to the Walberton Working Men's Benefit Club. He claimed exemption on the ground of serious hardship, and also that he had a conscientious objection. Three men had left, two to go in the Army and one on Government work. He had one person partially dependent upon him. He had a conscientious objection to combatant service because it would be repulsive to his nature.

Mr. Harris: He objects to killing them, but he doesn't object to burying them. (Laughter).

In reply to questions, the applicant said there were four men working now, but sometimes they had had as many as a dozen. His father (the owner of the business) could not do his work, because he already worked himself. He admitted there was not much doing in the building repairs now. The Benefit Club—a slate club—had forty-three members, who paid fortnightly.

The Chairman: It would be quite possible for someone not of military age to collect these subscriptions fortnightly?

Applicant: I should have to try and find someone.

The Chairman: Your Committee would have to find someone.

By Lieutenant Marshall: He had a brother who lived at home, but he was in business himself.

Against his Nature.

The Chairman: You have a further objection. What is your conscientious objection?

Applicant: Combatant service would be repulsive to me.

The Chairman: Why?

Applicant: Because I feel I could not do it. It would be against my nature.

The Chairman: You shrink from anything that is dead?

Mr. Harris: You could not kill a rabbit?

Applicant: I have never done so.

Mr. Harris: A rabbit, not a rat?

Applicant: I have never done so.

The Chairman: It is not on religious grounds that you shrink from the shedding of blood?

Applicant: Anything of that kind would be repulsive to me.

Mr. S. S. Marshall: Would you think it wrong to do it?

Applicant: It's against my nature.

Mr. Marshall: Not for other people?

Applicant: No.

The Chairman: Are you a vegetarian?

Applicant: No.

Mr. Marshall: You eat meat that somebody else has killed?

Applicant: Seldom. I don't eat a lot.

"He Did Not Know."

Mr. Harris: If a young man should assault your young lady would you do anything?
 Applicant: I don't know what I should do.
 Mr. Harris: Would you do anything?
 Applicant: It would depend on circumstances.
 The Chairman: You would land him one between the eyes?
 Mr. Harris: Would you stand by and see him do it?
 Applicant: I don't know.
 The Chairman: Do you belong to any particular religious body?
 Applicant: Not any particular body.
 The Chairman: You are not setting up a conscientious objection on religious or moral grounds, but it is merely a repulsion to the shedding of blood?
 Applicant: Not particular.
 Mr. S. S. Marshall: You don't object to benefiting by the shedding of blood by any one else. Men are dying for you at the front, and are you going on living here at the expense of other men shedding their blood?
 Applicant: I don't see why not.

Never Killed A Fly?

You don't object to benefiting from other people shedding blood?
 Applicant: I don't like to think of it.
 You don't like to think of it, but you don't mind taking advantage of other people doing it?
 The Chairman: You have told us already that you object to killing a rabbit or a rat; but you think it is alright to eat meat which somebody else has killed?
 Applicant: I dislike the thought of killing anything.

Mr. Drewitt: Haven't you every killed any thing as a boy?

No.

Not killed a fly on the window pane? (Laughter).

There was no answer.

Mr. S. S. Marshall: Never killed an insect of any kind? (Laughter).

No answer.

A military officer, who accompanied Lieutenant Marshall, asked the applicant if he belonged to any religious body, and he replied that he was a Non-conformist.

Any particular name?

No, nothing in particular.

Do you attend any place of worship?

Sometimes I go to the Wesleyans, sometimes to the Baptists.

There are a good many Wesleyans and Baptists doing their duty at the front now. Their religious leaders have spoken in favour of service in the circumstances of this war.

Mr. Drewitt: And they have gone out there to minister to them.

If the Germans Come Here.

Do you ever read the papers about the battles of the war?

Yes, I do.

The Chairman: You have read of the outrages that the Germans have committed in Belgium on women and nuns, who are always regarded as sacred?

Not particularly.

But you have read of these outrages?—Yes.

You know the Germans have said that if they come over here they would act very much worse and commit the same outrages on our women folk. Don't you feel you are justified in taking action to prevent that occurring?

I should not care to take combatant action.

What other action could you take?

No answer.

The applicant having retired, the Tribunal decided to refuse exemption on the ground that the application did not rest on religious or moral convictions.

The applicant said he would appeal.

Lieutenant Marshall remarked that he had seen a letter from a man in the R.A.M.C. saying they did not want conscientious objectors in that body.