64. September 26, 1710. A letter from the Dutch Committee to Brechtbühl at Mannheim with a report of their letter to Runckel and specific questions about the proposal of draining marshes in order to settle them in Switzerland.

[recto]

Bendicht[[1]](#footnote-1) Brechtbühl Amsterdam, September 26, 1710.

Dear and much beloved one, [we wish you blessings of] salvation,

Your recent letter[[2]](#footnote-2) of August 27, including the attached letter from the friends in Alsace and the Palatinate concerning the imprisoned brothers and sisters in Bern, has arrived safely. But as we have information from Mr. Runckel on the 30th of last month[[3]](#footnote-3) that they are all still in prison, it seems likely that the feared deportation of those miserable ones did not proceed immediately, or did not happen at all. Meanwhile, we hope that the coming of Lord St.-Saphorin and his verbal intercession will not worsen matters. However, we still know nothing positive concerning any diminishing [of their suffering] and have received no concrete reply from the Swiss friends in general to our letters of July 10 and 18 and the reported offer of the King of Prussia.

So the Committee members here wish from you and all the friends, whom it is possible for you to get together or through their written report, to understand your and their conclusions and thoughts about the same proposal of the King of Prussia, so that they [we] might know what they [we] might answer the same ambassador Baron Schmettau if he would ask about it.[[4]](#footnote-4)

A suggestion has been made to us indirectly about drying out and making productive two marshes located in the Bernese area, one between Murten[[5]](#footnote-5) and Aarberg near Lake Murten and [Lakes] Neuchâtel and Biel; the other at Lake Neuchâtel between Yverdon and Orbe; to have the friends live near each other there and to be allowed, by the government of Bern, the free exercise of their religion there. However, since we are wholly ignorant of the situation of those places, it is our earnest desire that you will take counsel together as to whether it is worthwhile to have the government of Bern spoken to concerning this, and that you speedily write us:

1. whether those places are known to you or anyone of the brothers;

2. whether the friends in Switzerland would indeed like to move there and accept that work;

3. whether money would be needed there, and how much, to drain and make those marshes productive to the extent that the friends might be able to maintain themselves there together with wife and children and to make a living.

It is necessary that you let us know this and all the rest that is to be considered in this matter without fail before the beginning of coming November, because we are resolved to call the ministry of many congregations together around that time for the purpose of deliberating about these and all your concerns and to decide what will be judged most suitable, and in particular to consider whether the costs would not be too great to bear, although we gladly take some expenses upon ourselves to keep you and the friends in their country and to see that you acquire the free exercise of your religion. Committing ourselves to this, we commend all of you to the protection of the Most High, and we remain, after sincere greetings to all the friends,

The Committee members of the Mennonites

in the Netherlands, and signed in their name,

Abraham Jacobz Fries

Jacob Vorsterman.

Copy of the letter from the Committee

to Bendicht Brechtbühl

dated September 26, 1710. etc.

Nr. 5.

1. 64 This document is also copied in Vorsterman’s Relaes (A 1392) on pp. 60-61. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Document 58. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Document 60. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. This paragraph is translated from Vorsterman’s version given in the note on the facing page. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. For the location of these places see note in Document 60. The first marsh lies in a bilingual area; the French Morat is Murten in German and the French Neuchâtel is Neuenburg in German. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)