65. September 26, 1710. This is an excerpt from the minutes of the Great Council of Bern, which Runckel sent along as an enclosure to his letter, Document 66.[[1]](#footnote-1)

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Letter C.[[2]](#footnote-2) Extract from the minutes of the Great Council of Bern

dated, September 26, 1710

According to the written statement submitted by the envoy Lord Bondeli, his royal Majesty in Prussia has shown himself very inclined to receive and to settle in Brandenburg territory all the Anabaptists from here, rich and poor without distinction, with the following conditions and explanation:

1) To the same [Anabaptists] would be approved the full and free release and disposal of their possessions owned in the land.

2) The same persons shall be transported up to the frontiers [of Prussia] without payment by his royal Majesty.

3) A deputation from the Anabaptists will be set up on a proper footing in order to regulate ahead of time matters concerning their settlement in order to avoid any trouble and disorder for the present.

So an answer about this to the envoy, Lord Bondeli, will be here subjoined:

1) In the case of the first point, the High and Mighty Lords and Rulers wish to concede that according to the above notification [from Prussia that the Anabaptists] [page 2] will list their possessions to be released, will dispose of them in the best possible manner, and will take along the value without any other deduction than the usual emigrant [tax] and removal of local and

citizen rights. In the same category [officials] also wish to have placed those Anabaptists who as of now are still under governmental arrest, in order that the portion of their possessions, discovered and seized by government or local officials be restored to them after the retention of the said emigrant tax and costs. Similarly, whatever [officials] later discover should be relinquished to them also in the same way.[[3]](#footnote-3)

2) Concerning the expense in dispatching these people up to the royal boundaries, the opinion of the High and Mighty Lords and Rulers runs along these lines: Because persons both with and without means will be involved, the former will reasonably undertake and provide for the journey at their own expense so far as their means reach. On behalf of those without means, the High and Mighty Lords and Rulers are volunteering to burden themselves with the expenses in the hope and official trust, however, that your royal Majesty will most favorably condescend to assume the expenses for these people [page 3] not at your frontiers, but perhaps [sooner] at Frankfort am Main and from that point to allow [the journey] to be at your provision and expense.

3) Finally, then, as to that which concerns the requested Anabaptist deputation, the High and Mighty Lords and Rulers indeed might have hit upon such ideas [themselves], but when they reflect on the obstinacy and reluctance that the baptizer people[[4]](#footnote-4) always show to leave their homes and for that reason are apprehensive that through all kinds of pretenses the exiles might attempt to mislead his royal Majesty to other thoughts or at least devise such notions for their own people that their emigration, if not completely thwarted, yet might be made very difficult. Accordingly without restriction on such grounds, it would be considered better if this deputation could be avoided.

This report[[5]](#footnote-5) was delivered to the envoy, Lord Bondeli, to send on to his superiors and to receive a counter response so that further developments can follow.

Done September 26, 1710

Chancellery at Bern

1. 65 De Hoop Scheffer’s number A 1278 includes three items: a.) the Dutch translation of an original letter to Fagel; b.) the original in French and in Runckel’s hand; c.) a German extract from an official record from Bern, three pages long. The present document is A 1278c only, the German extract, which of course is the original sent to the Committee in the Netherlands. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. This document is translated into Dutch in De Hoop Scheffer’s number A 1773, and a Dutch copy also exists in Vorsterman’s Relaes (A 1392) on pp. 75-76. The existence of multiple copies indicates the importance the Mennonites in Amsterdam attached to it. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. This sentence is given in Dutch in Vorsterman’s Relaes as, “en jnt gelyks ook ’t geene soo sÿ nog mogten ontdekken, op sulken wÿse sal overgelaten worden.” [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. The Swiss Anabaptists themselves preferred this term, “Täufferleute.” Lowry, Documents of Brotherly Love I, p. 13 n. 80; and John S. Oyer, “They Harry the Good People out of the Land” (Goshen, Ind.: Mennonite Historical Society, 2000), p. 81. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. This is given in the Dutch of Vorsterman’s Relaes as, “berigt.” [↑](#footnote-ref-5)