85. November 15, 1710. Another letter by Runckel to the Mennonite Committee in Amsterdam: A new offer from the King of Prussia has arrived, which, since Bern continues to insist on the old conditions, really will lead to nothing. For this reason he again strongly recommends settling in the Netherlands.

[page 1]

Bern,[[1]](#footnote-1) the 15th of November 1710

Worthy, etc.

My especially highly honored Sirs!

My last letter of the eighth of the present month, I hope, will have safely arrived and my highly honored Sirs will have learned from it how pleased people here are and would be if the poor local Mennonites could find a shelter in the territory of your High and Mighty Lords and government.[[2]](#footnote-2)

Since then, an answer from his royal Majesty of Prussia has arrived in the Illustrious Canton of Bern, which was read before the Sovereign Council. It becomes evident from it that his royal Majesty is yet minded at any time to receive and take these good people under his protective care, but at the same time wants also to hope that the Illustrious Canton will lift the emigration tax for those moving property out of the country and that, making no difference between rich and poor in his expenses, to bring them to boundaries of his royal Majesty’s territories, etc. In response, the present government again has decided to offer as an answer to his royal Majesty [page 2] that they are still of the intention not to turn over these people to his royal Majesty otherwise than in return for the customary emigration tax for the possessions they are taking from the land, and to deliver the people no farther than to Frankfort—and indeed the poor persons at the expense of the Canton, but those with means at their own expense, etc.

Moreover, they clarify their position to his royal Majesty, that, because the present government has misgivings concerning permitting a deputation of the local Mennonites to go to him, they have resolved to write to the

Mennonite congregations in Holland and at Hamburg [requesting] that they might send some deputies out of their own midst to Berlin. With them they could consider best how, where, and in what manner to place the Mennonites waiting here, and perhaps what further measures yet to take. I do not doubt that his royal Majesty’s letter for the accomplishment of this has already reached my highly honored Sirs, or that you have made the necessary decisions concerning it, and have either refused such a deputation, in case you have seen or found means in your last planned general meeting in order to place our local Mennonites under the jurisdiction of your High and Mighty Lords, or, on the other hand, in case this cannot be, have actually appointed and sent the deputies to his royal Majesty.

[page 3]

The best and most desirable solution for these poor people would be if they could find a retreat under the protection of your High and Mighty Lords. It is clear that his royal Majesty only wants to delay the matter, especially since authorities here have firmly resolved not to deviate a hair’s breadth from the resolution of September 26, neither to release those actually imprisoned, nor to publish an amnesty for the others who still stray around in freedom, before and previous to a complete settlement about the emigration of these poor people. A reasonable fear is that it may be spring, in fact, perhaps summer itself may arrive again before and previous to the completion of negotiations with his royal Majesty. If this is the case, then entirely far too little time might be allotted to these poor people to arrange matters for their pressing needs before their departure out of the land. In short, it boils down to this: the sooner the Illustrious Canton of Bern can be shown that a place of settlement has been found for these poor people

where they can be sent, the sooner the government will resolve to set the poor prisoners free and to publish an amnesty for others still scattered around.

Would my highly honored Sirs graciously reflect on this and honor me at the earliest opportunity [page 4] with an answer, from which can be perceived what is to be hoped or not in this case. Then one could lay his hand on the work properly and push it to a conclusion as much as is doable for the present. This will be so much more pleasant for me, for I do not know whether the High and Mighty Lords [of the States General] will permit me to tarry longer here and can sanction and approve the resultant expenses here.

With this, besides a mutual commitment into God’s mighty, gracious protection and my kindest commendation to your pious prayer, I continually am and remain, My especially honored Sirs’

Most obedient servant,

Johann Ludwig Runckel.

1. 85 This document is translated into Dutch in Vorsterman’s Relaes (A 1392) on pp. 92-93. A translation into Dutch is included with A 1286 (but not given here since the German is the original). [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. This refers to the government of the Netherlands. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)