129. February 9, 1711. Letter from the King of Prussia to his minister at Bern to accompany a copy of his writing to Baron von Schmettau on February 9, 1711, in which he is resigned to the decisions with regard to the travel of the refugees to Holland, but repeats once more his earlier objections.

[page 1]

A copy of the letter of His Majesty, the King of Prussia to his minister at Bern. From Berlin on the ninth of February 1711.

Sir,

I see from the letter of January 28 the present state of the Mennonite case. Since it was decided that these people would be taken into Holland by water, it should be considered what the next step should be, and in which country they should establish themselves.

You will learn what my impressions are concerning the matter, through the subjoined copy of my letter to Schmettau, which you may use whenever you deem it necessary.

Copy of the letter of His Majesty, the King of Prussia, written to Baron von Schmettau, dated at Berlin February 9, 1711.[[1]](#footnote-1)

Frederick, King of Prussia, etc.

What has come to Our hand further from the envoy Baron von Bondeli concerning the Swiss Mennonites under discussion, you will receive in writing along with this. We are more and more strengthened in the opinion

[page 2] that with all the apparent sincerity which you experienced there [in The Hague] as to whether they wanted these people to come to our land and settle here, there is not a serious intention [to do so], but that for a while now they have had the resolve to move them to the Netherlands and to settle them there. However gladly we might have served our own interests in this opportunity, to replace in some measure the diminution of

our former subjects, we will have to allow to occur what by all appearances cannot well be changed. The transport by water of all these people to Holland will take place immediately because they can allow and permit them to come from there on farther to our land, that those with means as well as the poor repair thereto. So will We concern Ourselves for them in such a manner and arrange for their settlement after such a fashion that they should have cause to thank God and Us. For also in our lands there is not the least to be feared from the epidemic, which has stopped completely everywhere. Rather, this dying has created so much more convenience, when such foreigners come into our lands, for us to be able to provide them without great costs comfortable houses as well as field inventories,[[2]](#footnote-2) farming implements and [page 3] whatever else is required for their work, to give them full employment. With all of this, however, We still remain fully resolved, if perhaps they should have the opinion to keep the best and the well-off among the Mennonites in Holland and to send the worst and impecunious to Us, that We would withdraw entirely from the matter and prefer to allow the whole colony to remain there all together; and that you will not fail to make such known there at the proper place and time.

Being, etc. Cölln [on the Spree],[[3]](#footnote-3) February 9, 1711.

Frederick I, King of Prussia from 1701 to 1713. Negotiations for Swiss Anabaptists to settle in his lands never came to fruition. See note in Document 120.

1. 129 The italicized words on page 1 are translated from French; the rest of the letter is from German. For the death of von Schmettau on February 9, 1711, see note in Document 76 and also Document 130. This unexpected death may be the reason for the multiple copies mentioned in the note on the facing page. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Perhaps the writer means “livestock.” [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. See note in Document 125. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)