140. February 25, 1711. Letter from Runckel to the Committee, accompanying some printed copies of the proclamation by the government of Bern in which the amnesty for the Mennonites is secured. He reports that through the embassy he will attempt to dissuade the King of Prussia from his opinion (revealed in Documents 120 and 129) that there were some wealthy among the Swiss Mennonites. He asks at the same time permission to pay the 25 rixdollars head tax for ten of the fifteen prisoners, from the remittances of the Committee. The printed proclamations are missing.

[page 1]

Bern[[1]](#footnote-1) the 25th of February 1711.

Very worthy, etc.

My especially highly honored Sirs,

My last communication was from the 21st of this month, which I hope will have safely arrived. Since then nothing further has occurred with regard to the affairs of the poor local Anabaptists, except that the proclamation of freedom finally[[2]](#footnote-2) has been printed and published, as my highly honored Sirs will be pleased to learn from the accompanying copies. At present or very shortly it will be publicly read off in all churches and promulgated and posted at the customary places throughout the whole land. I will make it my business to send it both to Neuchâtel and also to all places otherwise where possibly some Mennonites are staying so that they gain advantages and may do so in time.

Among those fifteen Anabaptists still here in the [page 2] prison, are ten persons who, although their bail is paid, nevertheless will not be set loose before they have each paid 25 rixdollars administrative costs, just as all

the others. Because they are not able to pay this sum of 25 rixdollars in their deep poverty, I am laboring to bring the illustrious Canton of Bern, if possible, to the point that such sum be either entirely or at least in part omitted for them. If this should not succeed, then I would endeavor to help them from the few funds on hand and otherwise, which money my highly honored Sirs transferred to me, so that they also may enjoy the freedom although they do not have much to gain because of their deep poverty.

Moreover, I have been obliged with this to communicate to my highly honored Sirs in confidence two official replies[[3]](#footnote-3) of his royal Majesty of Prussia to his local minister Mr. Bondeli so that in any case you could take action. It appears that the royal Prussian court is so jealous and troubled to have these poor people in [page 3] his lands for no other reason than that he imagines that they are simply [rich as] Croesus and so is pleased to bring them into as it were the promised Peru.[[4]](#footnote-4) Consequently, in order to relieve the said court of their ill-founded opinion, I will present Mr. Envoy Bondeli with a few remarks, which will certainly place the contrary before the eyes of his lord and master.

Meanwhile I remain, with a mutual commitment to divine protection and best commendation of myself and mine to your devoted prayer,

My especially honored Sirs’

Most devoted servant,

J. Ludwig Runckel.

1. 140 This document is translated into Dutch in Vorsterman’s Relaes (A 1392) on p. 147. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. The manuscript is creased here and not readable. The missing word was translated in Vorsterman’s Relaes p. 147, line 6, as “eÿndelyk.” [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Both Documents 120 and 129 are replies to his minister at Bern. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Croesus and Peru are sarcastic references to wealth. Cf. “Peru with its riches” in The Conquest of Peru II, Chapter 4, by William Prescott. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)