191. August 4, 1711. Memorandum of what has been decided by officials of the King of Prussia concerning the conditions proposed by the representatives from Switzerland and affirmed by the Committee for Foreign Needs on behalf of the Swiss. This is a response to Document 128.

[folio 1 recto]

Done on August 4, 1711

At the home of His Excellency Lord General Lieutenant Count of the Court present were: His High Noble Excellency; also Lord General Mayor of the Court; Mr. Reutter, Judge at the Court of Justice; Mr. Dozler, Councilor and Chamber President; and Mr. Hofmann Steur, Councilor.

The matters brought in and read aloud by the representatives of the Swiss Mennonites have been resolved as follows:

1 There is no doubt that, since His Royal Majesty allows them to settle in this land, he will most graciously also grant them liberty of conscience and

the free exercise of their religion.

2 It has been demonstrated to the representatives that the proposed three separate farms in the Kukernese authority, namely Neusorge, Old, and New Schopen, cannot be granted as inheritable property to the Mennonites, since they are royal domains. They have understood this and have declared that if this is not possible, they are willing to negotiate a lease of thirty or forty years, on the condition, however, that the rent agreed on not be raised after passing of time, but (since they are paying double rent as is the practice in Dutch settlements[[1]](#footnote-1)) that the contract may be renewed from thirty to [again] thirty or from forty to [again] forty years; to this they have added the proposal that they might be free to sell their farm to another or to be released from it by other means, since this is the practice here and cannot be disadvantageous to His Royal Majesty.

3 Concerning the places for which they would like to negotiate, that are not desolate, but provide His Royal Majesty with actual rent and other income: it has been proposed to them that they could not be allowed a few years’ respite [from taxes] for these. But if they were to choose for settlement such places that are desolate because of the plague and at present are uninhabited, they would more likely be granted the requested few years’ respite [from taxes].

4 The necessary wood for building can be offered to them without charge for the first structures, but they would have to pay for firewood and future buildings and pay the usual fee for wood and timber in the same way as other subjects of His Royal Majesty.

[folio 1 verso]

5 Concerning the freedom to bake: this is allowed, but regarding the matter of brewing, the government officials and the innkeepers must first be heard and thereafter fair negotiations be made with them with respect to the brewing of beer and drink.

6 Concerning fisheries: this will be fairly negotiated.

7 In such cases one year’s exemption is the practice in these lands, but, depending on His Royal Majesty’s graciousness, he will allow them more years.

8 In the case of chance happenings, His Royal Majesty would take responsibility for damage through war, plague, and fire from heaven, but other unhappy occurrences such as the death of cattle, floods, crop failure, hail and the like would have to be borne by the renters, although application can be made to moderate the annual rent thereafter.

9 Since this goes against the principles of their religion and they left Switzerland for this reason, it is hoped that His Royal Majesty will exempt them from this.

10 This point can be granted them.

11 This can be permitted them, since it is already the practice in the Werders and the Dutch settlements.

12 The free sale of their grain and food products is permitted them according to the custom of the land, but if His Royal Majesty forbids the export of such products from the country, they would have to adhere to this. Also, they cannot be exempted from paying toll.

13 This offer is accepted and will be arranged with the priests accordingly.

14 The rent on the estates to be farmed shall be arranged in such a way that what His Royal Majesty has received from them until now shall serve as the basis [for payment]. The rent will be arranged accordingly.

Nevertheless, the representatives still cannot rightly identify which place they want to choose for their settlement and intend to inspect other places besides the Kukernese area, which they have already seen. Since, before having consulted with their fellow brothers concerning it, they are also reluctant on grounds of harmony to make a declaration that they will look for something, [folio 2 recto] nothing more could be done on this matter at present. In the meantime, however, the course of things on the three separate farms—Neusorge, Old, and New Schopen—and on the shared farm villages that belong with them and are located nearby, will be communicated to the representatives. If they should propose a few other places, an estimate will be made of these as well and passed on.

The representatives have committed themselves, besides, to buying the cattle on the separate farms indicated in the inventory at a fair price and to provide the seed for sowing from their own means.

Done as above

Andrea Lilienthal

1. 191 See note about Holländerei on the facing page. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)