199. September 13, 1711. A letter from Runckel in answer to the message of the Committee for Foreign Needs that Ritter has arrived in Holland with the refugees. For the further collection of the money, which those who departed from Switzerland have left behind, it is especially necessary that they send an official statement of the government of the place where they have permanently settled, which particularly applies to Melchior Zahler. Runckel hopes to send his bill before long, but is perplexed as to whether certain expenditures are the responsibility of the Committee for Foreign Needs or the States General.

[page 1]

Schaffhausen,[[1]](#footnote-1) September 13, 1711.

Very worthy,

My especially highly honored Sirs,

Since my last communication of the 2nd of the past month, I have not only been laid up with gout, but have also, since then, been overtaken with such pressing and vexatious business affairs that it has been impossible for me to attend to matters and correspondence other than the absolutely most urgent, although I would have gladly done so. For this reason, requesting my highly Honored Sirs to take no umbrage at my unusually long silence, I hope rather to obtain favor, since there has been no danger in delay.

Meanwhile I have received your welcome letter of the 25th of the past month, and from it have learned to my very great satisfaction that my

letters of July 18, 23, and 26, and of August 2 have arrived safely with you,[[2]](#footnote-2) as well as Mr. Ritter and the people entrusted to him, with the exception of a few persons who deviated along the way here and there. [page 2] All this, as also those additional favorable events which have transpired since the arrival of these unfortunate people, has caused me to rejoice not a little, but with my whole heart, and accordingly to thank God on high from the depth of my soul that He has willed to direct, conduct, and dispose everything so wisely and favorably.

Moreover, I learn from the transmitted legal certificate, which persons have arrived with you, who have several claims to settle [in] the illustrious Canton of Bern, and I will not be lacking in the most useful service possible. My only comment in this matter is that the illustrious Canton of Bern does not desire so much a certificate of their arrival in Holland as a certificate from the government of those places which divine Providence will show them and where they will actually settle and will have located as residents. Then the Canton may be so much the more assured that such persons will not come back again—because past events make such a return to be feared in the future.

Besides, it will be especially necessary that every man and every woman of them who are claiming something yet in the land [that is, in Bern] on the above certificate of their new government [have] also a formal instrument or power of attorney for someone of their relatives or acquaintances, who needs to pursue their claims in the countryside as well as in the city and legally to adjust such business affairs. So likewise [page 3] [they need] to send in an orderly listing of those possessions, for which they yet appeal, where and with whom they are located, also further on what conditions, and certainly everything in an authentic and credible form. The purpose is that everything might progress more easily and orderly and also that the illustrious Canton, or their Anabaptist Commission, might find that much less excuse to deviate from the promises made to me in this matter.

All of this, then, in regard to the respected Melchior Zahler: the additional submission of an energetic and strong letter of recommendation from his present government to the illustrious Canton of Bern will be essential and necessary because the Canton has to deal with quite bad and malicious people.[[3]](#footnote-3) They know how to make friends here and there by [expropriating] his, that is Melchior Zahler’s, own possessions and how to make their own claim plausible.

And because now at Bern the autumn holidays begin, in which time all the local courts are closed, and will continue until toward St. Martin’s Day.[[4]](#footnote-4) During such time neither this, nor other matters (unless it touches the well-being of the fatherland and of the canton), not even the slightest matter, is to be handled. So these dear, good people will have time yet and season enough to submit the above necessary documents; all the more so [is this an advantage] as I will thereby find an opportunity better than the present moment to recommend, assert, and carry out these affairs most effectively. All of which could not occur without much correspondence back and forth and effort and toil. [page 4] This was impossible for me at that time because of the excessive load of other business.

My bill has already been presented. However, in its preparation I have noted that since November of the past year, I have been occupied not so much with the service of their High and Mighty Lords of the States General as with the service of my highly honored Sirs and the unfortunate Anabaptists at Bern, and also I have made the trip to Basel on their behalf. Accordingly I do not know whether the daily allowance of eight Dutch guilders per day assigned by their High and Mighty Lords from the said time onwards until my return here, and further the travel expenses to Basel, ought to be submitted as a bill to their most highly honored High and Mighty Lords or to my highly honored Sirs.

So to avoid any confusion and before and previous to sending in my bill, I have wished to inquire of my highly honored Sirs and learn of their sentiment on this topic in order that the bill would not later need to be

altered retroactively. The trip from Basel here [to Schaffhausen] I will include in the bill of their High and Mighty Lords because they have intended to compensate me yet for such a trip from Bern. Would my highly honored Sirs accordingly please be so good as to let me know your opinion about this as soon as possible? Meanwhile, I acknowledge my preliminary thanks owed for that kindness which you will have in my favor in respect to my [page 5] request[[5]](#footnote-5) with their High and Mighty Lords. I take the liberty to recommend again this negotiation for something better and to appeal for your much esteemed good offices. This then may make a much greater and better impression since it is conceded by The Hague that several members of their High and Mighty, praiseworthy Assembly are not indisposed to grant me my most obedient request.

Moreover, I remain greatly obliged to my highly honored Sirs both concerning the kindly reception and taking in of the poor little orphan, Christen Brand,[[6]](#footnote-6) as also for the very excellent wishes on my behalf and my household.

I am most humbly praying God, the Almighty, that He would guard the same according to His pleasure in fatherly grace and toward my highly honored Sirs and your very dear families, and grant a hundred fold in return[[7]](#footnote-7) as also to those brothers and sisters coming from Switzerland. To those having turned aside He wants to give His holy Spirit[[8]](#footnote-8) so that they, as well as we all, may learn what can serve to our true redemption and salvation. Amen.

With this, besides a mutual commitment to God’s strong, gracious protection, also the best commendation of myself and mine, who again greet you all heartily, to your devoted prayer, with my whole soul I am continually and remain,

My highly honored Sirs’

Most devoted servant,

Johann Ludwig Runckel.

1. 199 This document is translated into Dutch in Vorsterman’s Relaes (A 1392) on pp. 230-232. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. In Document 173 the expression in costÿ angelanget also occurs, and in Document 138 in costÿ zu verfertigen. This expression is translated “bÿ uwE” line 4, and “bÿ uwE” line 12 in Vorsterman’s Relaes p. 231. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. unscrupulous Bernese, former neighbors of Zahler. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. November 11. Familien Kalender Für das Jahr Unseres Herrn 1923. (Scottdale, Pa.: Mennonite Publishing House, 1923) p. 25. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. This probably refers to Document 188, dated August 2, 1711. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. The orphan, Christen Brand, is listed in Documents 175 and 185. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Matt. 19: 29. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Luke 11: 13. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)