27. April 1, 1710. Letter from the Committee for Foreign Needs to Ludwig Runckel with a report of what the States General have decided and a question about where a surmised one hundred other Mennonites are being transported.

[recto]

Copy Amsterdam, April 1, 1710

Worthy Sir:

On the 21st of the previous month we had the honor to send you the missive[[1]](#footnote-1) from their High and Mighty Lords, the States General, which in their fatherly goodness they have been pleased to send to you upon this occasion, in response to our humble request and for the good of our fellow believers oppressed by your Honorable Lords of Bern. We have taken the liberty not only to send our humble, yet heartfelt thoughts and desires concerning this, but also to provide the names of several prisoners[[2]](#footnote-2) and a translated copy of the Bern edict (in which we have discovered a printing error on the first page; it says there that the Anabaptists are decreasing rather than increasing in number, whereas in the German one it says that they are increasing rather than decreasing), plus our short summary of it. We do not in any way doubt that you, in your usual wisdom and vigilance (if only from Christian compassion for those who are suffering), are already dealing diligently with this matter and through the blessing of the Lord have achieved a good result therein.

However, in the meantime it has been reported to us that a few of these sufferers had already been transported from there before you received the above-mentioned plea and that, through Lord St.-Saphorin of the Canton of Bern, a memorandum concerning the prisoners has been delivered [to the

Dutch government], requesting a passport to transport fifty of them through these lands to America as well as a helping hand for their transport from the lords of the Admiralty in Rotterdam. But such assistance has been refused absolutely by their High and Mighty Lords, with the declaration that their High and Mighty Lords cannot and do not want to lend a hand in any way whatever to this or any persecution, but have determined that the aforesaid

St.-Saphorin be handed a copy of their High and Mighty Lords’ missive to the Canton of Bern, along with the recommendation to the named St.-Saphorin to attest the good intentions of their High and Mighty Lords in this matter. We hope to send you an authentic copy of this in the next mailing.

As you see, we could not neglect to inform you of this, with the purpose that you may, from it, better perceive the spirit of constancy of the just fathers of the fatherland (to the advantage of those oppressed ones also of our persuasion), and we consider ourselves assured that such action will double and inspire your noble zeal in the matter of informing the authorities in Bern with favorable thoughts concerning our fellow believers there. We pray fervently to the God of heaven that, just as He allows us to live quietly under the desired progressiveness, as noticed above, of such wise and very kind governments, at least it will please Him to move their hearts so that these simple, plain people may enjoy the desired liberty in their land. Amen.

Honored Sir, while writing this, we apprehend that besides the above fifty, an additional one hundred so-called Anabaptists have been transported, without our knowing their destination. Accordingly, we very humbly and earnestly beg [verso] that it might please you to inform us (even if it costs something) in detail on anything at all that you are able to discover. We ourselves will, besides, gratefully reimburse your zeal, and we acknowledge without the least doubt that you will be in God’s favor in doing this, and you will certainly be doing us a very great service. For this reason we beg Him in closing, that it may please Him to bless your person and doings with all possible success, while we remain,

very honored Sir, your dedicated servants

signed

Wilhem van Maurik

Hermannus Schijn

Jan Willink Jansz

Jacob Vorsterman

Cornelis Beets

Frans van Aken

[upside down]

Letter to Secretary Runckel, dated April 1, 1710.

1. 27 This apparently refers to Document 20, dated March 22, 1710, further building on Document 14 (a letter dated March 15) and Document 15 (an intercession dated March 15) all three from the States General. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Document 19 (dated March 21, 1710). [↑](#footnote-ref-2)