26. March 31, 1710. Letter from Hendrik Toren and Jan van Gent at Rotterdam to Jacob Vorsterman at Amsterdam, concerning the measures taken by them on behalf of the Bernese and Palatine Mennonites, who are going by way of England to North America. The protection of the Queen of England, as requested, should be easy to obtain.

[folio 1 recto]

Rotterdam, March 31, 1710[[1]](#footnote-1)

The Honorable Jacob Vorsterman:

Dear Brother,

Yesterday’s agreeable missive from you to our friend Adriaan van Alkmaer,[[2]](#footnote-2) besides the copy of the request of those in Bern and the answer to it from their High and Mighty Sirs, has been put into our hands. As a result, we (who have to the present been employed in the transportation of those poor Palatines to England and in the distribution of the money designated by the Queen of Great Britain for those who returned from there) may have the earliest opportunity of hearing about that business and what we may do as a consequence, and to advise you of it.

The gentleman who had informed us that fifty of our fellow believers had been sent off on the 30th of this month, told us today that the people from Bern are unhappy about the negative response of their High and

Mighty Sirs to the request they made. That the agent or other gentlemen from Bern will have a conference about it today in The Hague with a few gentlemen from our government for the purpose of discussing whether they cannot in some way moderate their different view in this matter. That he, the Mr. Michel[[3]](#footnote-3) with whom we spoke, will go to Nijmegen today or tomorrow to find those sent off or [folio 1 verso] to wait for them. He has promised to inform us of their arrival and has sought assistance in looking for a ship and a good skipper to transport them to England, in the same way we have been employed for such a purpose with respect to several families who came here voluntarily and have set their sights on Carolina. These are mostly Mennonites from the Palatinate.[[4]](#footnote-4)

In order to act as circumspectly in this matter as possible, we are today sending two copies of the said request and response, one to Mr. Mayor van der Poel in Briel, who is the passage-master of the packet boat in Helvoet,[[5]](#footnote-5) and another to the Queen’s secretary, who issues passports for England, with the request that we might be informed in case those [persons] sent off, or something regarding them, may appear. On account of this we are convinced that they will not be sent off without our knowledge. This secretary assured us a few days ago that, inasmuch as we required the intercession of his Queen on behalf of the persecuted, he had no doubt that Her Majesty would be prepared to provide this. You will be informed of further developments in this matter. In the meantime remaining, after having wished both you and the friends all the best and having greeted you affectionately,

Your willing servants,

Hendrik Toren[[6]](#footnote-6) and

Jan van Gent[[7]](#footnote-7)

[folio 2 recto]

Mr.

Jacob Vorsterman

Merchant at Amsterdam

Postage [paid]

1. 26 Müller (p. 366) connects this with the six Anabaptists waiting in London in Document 45. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Gulik DB (1909), p. 130. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Franz Luis Michel von Schertzwendi. Ruth, Maintaining the Right Fellowship, p. 89; Earth Is the Lord’s, pp. 143, 1236 n. 2. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. The group mentioned here would arrive in Philadelphia in the following September and settle at Conestoga as the pioneers of the Lancaster Mennonite community. Ruth, Earth Is the Lord’s, pp. 167, 178. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Briel = Brielle; Hellevoet = Hellevoetsluis. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. ME IV, 738-739. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Gulik DB (1908), p. 92. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)