**Citation:** James W. Lowry, "Document 131, 11 February 1711, translation," in *Documents of Brotherly Love: Dutch Mennonite Aid to Swiss Anabaptists* (Millersburg, OH: Ohio Amish Library), 717-23 (odd).

**Copyright:** The corpus of *Documents of Brotherly Love* series is copyrighted by the publisher, Ohio Amish Library. For availability, contact the publisher at 4292 SR 39, Millersburg, OH 44654.

**Date:**  11 February 1711

**Sender:**  Bern, Cantzleÿ

**Sender Place:**  Bern, Bern, Switzerland

**Language:**  English

**Translation:**

**131. February 11, 1711.***The new regulations added by the Anabaptist Commission in Bern, modifying the earlier Document 121 of January 28 at the insistence of Runckel. The changes here (and in the German original of the present document) have been marked in bold type.*

[page 1]

Copy

Resolution [of Council]

Pursuant to the transmitted communication of their High and Mighty Lords of the States General of the United Netherlands dated December 30, 1710, to the illustrious Canton of Bern, friendly negotiations were conducted by the expressly appointed Commission with Mr. Secretary Runckel, now present here. As a result of this bargaining, the local Anabaptist personages could be sent to Holland and there received, as well as also [they could] in Prussian territory. The illustrious Canton of Bern, according to the detailed report as understood today, in so far as various suggestions specifically have been settled with Mr. Runckel, wishes him to kindly notify his gentlemen superiors of the resolution prepared on the matter through the present decision of the Council:

1.) That the illustrious Canton of Bern continues yet with the same viewpoint and wishes to have granted that those Anabaptist people traveling from here to Holland be free to proceed from there into Prussian lands, if they wish. Nevertheless, in the hope based on the assurance of the said Mr. Secretary Runckel that according to the intention of his royal Majesty in Prussia, the Anabaptists will not be tolerated in our local neighborhood, as perhaps in[[1]](#footnote-11) the Earldom of Neuenburg and Vallangin,[[2]](#footnote-12) but

will be cleared out of there. Accordingly, the Canton of Bern has just approved the previous finding regarding the release of the possessions of these [page 2] Anabaptists so that the possessions of those departing,

which are actually disclosed or may yet appear, in recognized moderation, might be moved from here. Included also are intended the possessions of those who are actually imprisoned here, indeed even if some of them were assigned to the community or the church. But among these should not be reckoned the Anabaptist possessions which originate from other departed or banished Anabaptists and have been surrendered to their communities.

2.) Thus we rest satisfied once more that all Anabaptist personages, who either have left the land on their own initiative or otherwise from fear of being arrested have kept themselves hidden up to now, might again enter this land and make their appearance for settlement and removal of their possessions. At the same time, for weighty reasons, it cannot be granted that those actually banished (or sent away by the government), or preachers, or givers of testimony, may enjoy the same freedom, but shall be excluded from it.[[3]](#footnote-13)

3.) And since it was also approved that those Anabaptists who are now under governmental arrest will **be released**[[4]](#footnote-14) collectively on a set bail and furthermore should promise that at a certain desired, fixed time they would duly make their appearance, and meanwhile neither engage in Anabaptist meetings nor other disturbances. **Consequently, the illustrious Canton of Bern has conceded and granted to these and all those Anabaptists, who cannot in fact personally have the benefit of the amnesty, through relatives or representatives to obtain their** [page 3] **possessions perhaps yet in the country, which might be concealed, and to take them away without payment of emigration tax.**[[5]](#footnote-15)

4.) The departure time of these Anabaptist people shall be regulated and settled with Mr. Secretary Runckel. Time shall be granted to them for their emigration and departure up to the end of the coming June and beyond this deadline yet a year be permitted them, during which year they will bring their matters completely into order. Someone of especially good repute from each place shall be appointed for them under governmental

sanction, with whom they would speak and to whom particularly they would be accountable to keep their word. The concomitant intention is that all Anabaptists shall give an account of the required listing of all their possessions and goods honestly and specify them without trickery.

5.) Just as was already acknowledged by the illustrious Canton of Bern on the 23rd of the **past** month, that these departing Anabaptist people out of regard for the recommendation received from their High and Mighty Lords of the States General, but also especially considering that being burdened with no further expenses on behalf of these same people, such [Anabaptists] without payment from this Canton shall be taken from here as soon as possible down to Holland, and shall be spared and graciously have discontinued the deduction otherwise due from the possessions taken along. Thus let it be repeated and remain without change. \**And**[[6]](#footnote-16) **[we are] willing to grant yet beyond this that if Reformed** [page 4] **spouses or children wish to follow their Anabaptist spouses and parents, they should enjoy the same freedom from the emigration tax.**

6.) In regard then to a case in which only a man or wife, or only a child or so of the Anabaptist sect were joined to it, and yet together they wished to move from here, and whatever similar cases may come up, \the illustrious Canton of Bern has[[7]](#footnote-17) [agreed] **also in such a case that if Reformed spouses, also parents, children, who perhaps so wish to follow their respective Anabaptist-minded spouses, parents, or children voluntarily and want to travel away with them, that particularly then such persons shall be approved with the surrender of local and citizen rights.**[[8]](#footnote-18)

7.) Lastly, the illustrious Canton of Bern for weighty reasons cannot grant that Anabaptist deputies from Holland come here and hunt up the local Anabaptists in our land, but should expect that through the following proclamation the Anabaptists would themselves report and, without the

others, could depart from here.

Accordingly the illustrious Canton of Bern is requesting in a friendly manner Mr. Runckel, living here, Secretary of their High and Mighty Lords, to cheerfully transmit the well-intentioned decision about this to his lofty gentlemen superiors and to share the expected answer. In the meanwhile the Canton of Bern will make it their business to advance all favorable arrangements for the departure of these people in the best manner.

Given in Bern the 11th of February 1711.

Chancellery of Bern.

1. literally “behind. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
2. Valangin (Vallendis) referring to the larger territory, not the village in the Canton of Neuchâtel (Neuenburg). The Earldom of Valangin became united with Neuchâtel in the sixteenth century. Meyers (1906), XIV, 544; (1909) XIX, 991. See also footnote in Document 121. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
3. The following from Document 121 is here omitted “**but in contrast they shall be duly watched for.** [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
4. Synonyms are substituted here. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
5. These words are added at the end of point 3 and substituted for words omitted there. [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
6. See note in the original German text of this document. [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
7. Words from Document 121 are omitted here. [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
8. See Document 98 n. 9. [↑](#footnote-ref-18)