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From: THE PRIVATE SECRETARY



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cc Blup
HOME OFFICE
QUEEN ANNE'S GATE
LONDON SW1H 9AT

27 February 1985

Dear Tim,

ANIMALS (SCIENTIFIC PROCEDURES)
LEGISLATION

As I mentioned to you on the telephone,
we thought the Prime Minister might find it
helpful to see before Cabinet tomorrow the
.... attached note which summarises the background
to the proposal to include this Bill in the
1985/86 legislative programme.

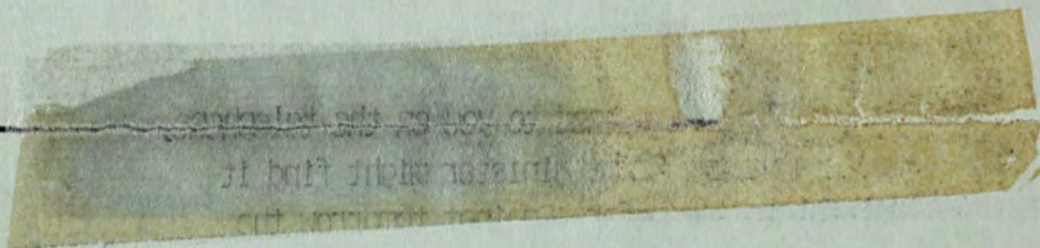
I am sending a copy of this letter and
its enclosure to Janet Lewis-Jones (Lord
President's Office),

Yours
Nigel

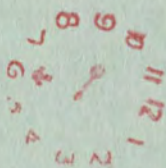
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Tim Flesher, Esq.

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ANIMALS (SCIENTIFIC PROCEDURES) LEGISLATION

This note sets out the background to the plan to include Animals (Scientific Procedures) Bill in the 1985/86 legislative programme. Although it is bound to be quite controversial (although not on party lines), Home Office Ministers are convinced that it is a politically sensible initiative.

First, because it is a commitment from two successive Manifestos.

Second, because it is widely expected.

2. The May 1983 White Paper "Scientific Procedures on Living Animals", which committed the Government to legislation, was widely welcomed by moderate animal welfarists, by the veterinary profession and by science and industry. Although the Cruelty to Animals Act 1876 still works surprisingly well, it does not provide a very satisfactory basis for regulating science over a century later. And the need to replace it now with modern legislation is in the view of Home Office Ministers irresistible. Public confidence must be restored in the Government's desire and ability to protect animals from abuse, and to enable scientists to get on with their work in peace. The legislation can't satisfy the extremists, but it can go a long way to satisfying the middle ground in the animal welfare movement.

3. The Government had worked very closely with the British Veterinary Association, with Lord Houghton's Committee for the Reform of Animal Experimentation, and with the Fund for the Replacement of Animals in Medical Experiments. In addition, the Government has kept

step by step in touch with science and industry. The proposed supplementary White Paper modifies the proposals in a few details to make them less difficult for scientists to comply with. There have been consultations throughout with the Advisory Committee, of which Lady Warnock is Chairman, and Lord Adrian and Sir William Paton of the Royal Society are leading members. Sir John Vane of the Wellcome Foundation has given most helpful advice. Above all, there has been unstinted co-operation from the President of the Royal Society, Sir Andrew Huxley, who has been determined to make the new legislation a success.

4. The proposed legislation would clip the wings of the increasingly violent extreme anti-vivisectionist movement by isolating them from moderate opinion. By satisfying moderate opinion it would lay to rest a politically difficult issue which has led to considerable criticism of the Government, much from its own supporters. In short, given the expectations which have been raised by successive Manifestos and given the evidence of support for the proposals from moderate groups, to decide not to legislate now would leave the Government in the worst possible situation, facing criticism from all those who have taken an active part in the debate.