



10 DOWNING STREET

THE PRIME MINISTER

10 September 1979

*Original in G/Rom*  
cc: HO  
MAFF  
SO  
NIO  
Press office  
*Have affairs*

*Dear Tam,*

Thank you for your letter of 23 August about the Cruelty to Animals Act 1876.

The Government is already pledged to introduce its own legislation to update the 1876 Act. The Home Secretary, who has departmental responsibility for the matter, made clear in a written reply on 14 June (Official Report, Col. 267) that in doing so the Government will have regard to the progress in the Council of Europe on a convention for the protection of laboratory animals. In consultation both with the animal welfare organisations and with research and professional interests the Government is playing a full part in the Council's discussions and the legislation will take the provisions of the convention into account in due course. No doubt the Bill which has been introduced by Lord Halsbury and the alternative Private Member's Bill to be introduced by Peter Fry will provide a useful opportunity for Members to give preliminary consideration to some of the issues which will arise when the Government's own legislation is prepared.

Meanwhile, the Home Secretary is reconstituting his Advisory Committee on the Administration of the Act. It will be renamed the Advisory Committee on Animal Experiments, it will have wider terms of reference, including the duty to consider proposals for revision of the law, and new members will be appointed. In considering matters referred to them the Committee will have regard on the one hand to the legitimate requirements of science and industry and on the other to the protection of animals against avoidable suffering.

*Thank you very much for writing as you did.  
Yours sincerely  
Margaret Thatcher*

Tam Dalyell, Esq., M.P.

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