



Prime Minister

2

HOUSE OF LORDS,
SW1A 0PW

25 February 1982

Dear Margaret.

Possible Enquiry into Medical Ethics

I have read a copy of Norman Fowler's letter to you about a Royal Commission on Medical Ethics, suggested by Mrs. Williams.

I have also read a copy of the answer which he has suggested that you should send to Mrs. Williams. It is a temporising answer and I agree with the line taken. But in due course a substantive answer will be required and, when we reach that point, I hope that the moral and theological implications of the subject will not be overlooked. In particular, the Roman Catholic Church teaches that every fertilised ovum has a human soul and to destroy it amounts to murder in their moral theology. Without underwriting this view any Enquiry must take account of its existence and this must have a bearing on the membership and the terms of reference. Moreover, the legal problems to which Norman refers are many and important, involving a reappraisal of such concepts as adultery and legitimacy and associated property rights (succession to titles etc.). I agree with Norman that we must proceed with very great care.

I am sending copies of this letter to Norman Fowler and to those named in the last paragraph of his letter.

Yrs :

The Right Honourable
The Prime Minister

8
7
6
5
4
3
2
1
D
11 12 1

26 FEB 1982