

30th October, 1953.

My dear Henry,

Thanks for your note. Of course it will be a great pleasure to me to support Sheppard.

About the ear clipping, the substantial fact is that the mouse appears to be unaware of the cut, though ^{acutely} ~~completely~~ aware of being held sufficiently closely to make a neat job.

The legal aspect seems to be, fantastically enough, that the cutting of living bodies is only vivisection if it is done in pursuit of knowledge, namely of the reaction of the subject to the treatment. A dog may have its tail docked without a vivisection licence because this is done for the pleasure and profit of the owner and not to learn anything about the vital reactions of the dog. The same applies to the castration of farm animals quite irrespective of the pain caused by the operation used. In fact, if I have the position rightly, ear clipping for the convenience of mouse management is not vivisection at all, although the injection of a harmless ^{gen} ~~antibody~~ for the sake of learning about the mouse's reaction would be. To take the point further, I believe it is true

that the injection of antigens, not for the sake of improving natural knowledge, but for the commercial production of antibodies is also outside our vivisection laws. There is, however, a Home Office officer who I think will be perfectly willing to explain the legal position in detail.

Yours sincerely,

Mr. Mole suggests sending you an ear punch, which will be sent separately. They are intended to punch for checks.