Parliament House
WELLINGTON 1.

Telephone 719 999

24 July 1991

Mrs Bette Overell
New Zealand Anti-Vivisection Society Inc
P O Box 2065
WELLINGTON

Dear Mrs Overell

PETITION 1987/1100 OF BETTE OVERELL AND 100,640 OTHERS

Enclosed are the submissions requested by you in relation to the above petition. Among these is a submission by the Medical Research Council. This Council no longer exists as it has been replaced by the Health Research Council. Professor Gluckman of Auckland University appeared before the committee to speak on behalf of these organisations.

Hearings of evidence are not generally recorded, so there is no transcript of those meetings available. However, the committee did record the evidence of Professor Gluckman who appeared on behalf of the Health Research Council as the only written paper was that of the superseded Medical Recearch Council. The corrected transcript has been released to you by the committee.

Where transcripts of evidence are made available to members of the public, a committee's resolution to release the transcript should not be construed as giving authority for that record of evidence to be used in any legal proceedings. The position of those giving evidence before a select committee is protected by the Bill of Rights 1688 which forbids the calling into "question" the proceedings of Parliament in "any court or place out of Parliament.".

Yours sincerely

Donna Tunnicliffe

Donna Tunnicliffe
Clerk of the Committee
Primary Production Committee

TRANSCRIPTION 5TH JUNE 1991
PRIMARY PRODUCTION COMMITTEE

My name is Professor Peter Gluckman. I'm Professor of Pediatrics at the University of Auckland, Director of the Animal Research Laboratories at the University of Auckland, I'm also a member of the biomedical research committee which is the principal sub-committee of the Health Research Council of New Zealand, responsible for the distribution of funds associated with animal research and other biological based research. It expends approximately $9m a year in government funding. I have been appointed spokesman for the Health Research Council for matters relating to animal research. I have been a member of the Animal Ethical Committee at the University of Auckland since 1980, I have been involved in animal and human based biological and biomedical research since 1972, I am the author of over 400 scientific papers of relevance.

The Health Research Council's position on this petition is simple. It submits that this petition is fundamentally erroneous and should be rejected out of hand. It makes a number of charges which are patently erroneous. Progress in health and in the New Zealand economy (which remains based on the pastoral industries) will rely significantly on animal research for the foreseeable future.

While alternatives to animal based research are always preferred when they can provide the answers needed, there is no alternative approach to animal based research for most of the research activity using animals used in New Zealand. New Zealand has adopted an excellent and internationally regarded approach to the control of animal research in a humane way. Animal research has and will continue to make critical contributions to the welfare of the New Zealand population and also to the welfare of the New Zealand economy through the pastoral industries. There are no grounds to the claims of the petitioner, and we submit that the petition should be rejected.

The Council is happy to offer any assistance to the committee, it may do so. By way of helping the committee, I think a number of examples of research done in New Zealand using animals which has or is likely in the immediate future to assist the human welfare of New Zealanders would be useful. Perhaps the most illustrative example is that of Professor Liggins who is internationally known for his work.

Respiratory distress syndrome is a disease which effects premature infants. In the early 1960s this was the real

do that I described. Primarily there were 89 rabbits used, all the rabbits were used to raise antibodies for clinical measurement of certain things in blood, there was no other way of raising those antibodies available. The remaining animals used were 177 pigeons, none of which were killed, they were kept there for teaching physchology students, 929 fish which were used by the fisheries research people at Leigh in their research done on fish, there were 19 lizards used (none of them were killed but were part of the conservation studies done by the Department of Zoology), and there were 359 toads used which were used in teaching advanced medical students and physiological students. That is the total number of animals used by the University of Auckland last year.

I would guess that represents at least 35% of the animals used in medical research and in all those other activities of the universities other than the agricultural universities in New Zealand over the last year.

There were no LD50 tests done in New Zealand, they are banned by the National Animal Ethical Committee and there has never been an LD50 test done in New Zealand as far as I can ascertain. Yet this is the one test that Ms Overell objects to most. It's an ancient test used for killing where you test the toxicity of a drug by raising the dose in rats until 50% of them had died from that dose. That test hasn't ever been used in New Zealand as far as we can ascertain, there were alternatives that were developed a long time ago. Such alternatives are the only test used by the drug development unit of the cancer research laboratories in Auckland which are the only people really in that business in New Zealand.

Well I'm not entirely certain of the FDA rules now but they have changed them dramatically. There are minimal dose toxicity tests now allowed in New Zealand and in the FDA which involve the death of one animal for any drug. In other words what you do is you escalate the dose of a drug on individual animals until one looks unwell and then you backtrack from that. To my knowledge is only done on very rare occasions in New Zealand and involves perhaps 10-15 rats per year.

I think it's fair to say that New Zealand can be proud that for 3.5m people it's made more than its fair share of contributions to the health research development around the world. We don't have a fully fledged pharmaceutical society but we can do a lot of things that are by collaboration developed further with drug companies around the world. A large amount of money for research has flowed into New Zealand through such collaborative arrangements.