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SCIENCE, which is now combined with THE SCIENTIFIC MONTHLY, is published each Friday by the American Association for the Advancement of Science at National Publishing Company, Washington, D.C. The joint journal is published in the SCIENCE format. SCIENCE is indexed in the *Reader's Guide to Periodical Literature*.

**Editorial and personnel-placement correspondence** should be addressed to SCIENCE, 1515 Massachusetts Ave., NW, Washington 5, D.C. Manuscripts should be typed with double spacing and submitted in duplicate. The AAAS assumes no responsibility for the safety of manuscripts or for the opinions expressed by contributors. For detailed suggestions on the preparation of manuscripts and illustrations, see *Science* 125, 16 (4 Jan. 1957).

**Display-advertising correspondence** should be addressed to SCIENCE, Room 740, 11 West 42 St., New York 36, N.Y.

**Change of address notification** should be sent to 1515 Massachusetts Ave., NW, Washington 5, D.C., 4 weeks in advance. If possible, furnish an address label from a recent issue. Give both old and new addresses, including zone numbers, if any.

**Annual subscriptions:** \$8.50; foreign postage, \$1.50; Canadian postage, 75¢. Single copies, 35¢. Cable address: Advancesci, Washington.

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## Humane Treatment of Animals

When Mead and Metraux asked high school students to describe a scientist, the composite image turned out to be that of a pretty unpleasant sort of fellow: "He may wear a beard, may be unshaven and unkempt . . ." His laboratory is identified by "the bubbling of liquids in test tubes and flasks, the squeaks and squeals of laboratory animals, the muttering voice of the scientist . . ." He experiments with plants and animals, cutting them apart, injecting serum into animals" [*Science* 126, 384 (1957)].

This unpleasant, even sinister, image seems to have influenced the 13 senatorial sponsors of a bill (S. 3570) aimed at curbing scientists' presumably inhumane treatment of their animal subjects [*Science* 131, 1658 (1960)]. The sponsors agree that animal experimentation is essential. They agree that experimental animals should be treated humanely. With these premises scientists would also agree. But few will agree with the implicit assumption that cruelty to animals is a common occurrence in research laboratories or with the proposed means of preventing it.

The bill would require recipients of federal grants who engage in experiments or tests upon vertebrates to secure licenses from the Secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare. It would require agencies of the Federal Government and institutions receiving federal grants to comply with a number of regulations concerning the care of laboratory animals. The regulations themselves are unobjectionable; they say what every good laboratory director insists upon anyway. The objectionable features are the procedures required: advance approval of experimental plans by the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, burdensome record keeping, annual or more frequent reports to HEW, additional costs for the government and for every laboratory involved, and the general nuisance of establishing and living under a new and unnecessary amount of red tape.

It would be silly to deny that there may be occasional violations of good practice, but passage of this bill would punish the many in the hope of preventing lapses by the few. It would hamper the work of many laboratories and especially those that observed its requirements most meticulously.

The bill will not be acted upon this year; but it may be introduced again. In the long run, the solution is not to oppose each nuisance bill as it is introduced, but to correct the false ideas that allow such bills to be taken seriously. We are reminded of the very different image of the scientist drawn by John R. Baker in his essay on *Science and the Planned State* (Allen and Unwin, London, 1945). Among the social duties of a scientist, Baker includes the obligation "to encourage kindness to animals." He contrasts the humane treatment of laboratory animals with the cruelty involved in shooting and trapping wild animals and in the methods of castration and ovariectomy frequently used on domestic animals. Because the biologist knows more than other men about the pain sense of animals, Baker suggests that biologists try to educate others concerning the pain they inflict on animals.

The supporters of S. 3570 seem to have taken their cue from the high school students' image of a scientist instead of from the behavior and principles of scientists themselves.—D.W.