Telephone conversation with Dr. Maurice Visscher - 6/16/66 - Wash. D.C.

Dr. Dennis: Hello, Maurice, tell me what's going on.

Dr. Visscher: The Commerce Committee introduced the bill yesterday afternoon and Dr. Kingman and I are waiting for a possible appointment with Senator Ellender this morning. We understand that Senator Ellender has been approached already by others, perhaps Secretary Freeman, about the matter.

Dr. Dennis: What's Ellender's part in it?

Dr. Visscher: Ellender is Chairman of the Agriculture Committee in the Senate, and our first attempt is going to be to see whether the Agriculture Committee will ask for the re-referral of this Bill to its committee on the grounds that it was taken up by the Agriculture Committee in the House and on the grounds that Senator Mondale who's a member of the Agriculture Committee introduced a bill relating to the same subject, which was not taken into account by the Commerce Committee, at least not recognized at all, as a significant alternative.

Dr. Dennis: How is the Magnuson Bill come out?

Dr. Visscher: It comes out with three defects; 1) the other animals, and 2) a provision that opens up all research facilities to appropriate law-enforcement agencies, not Humane Society officers, but after all the big burly policemen may not be any better able to understand whether a dog with electrodes in his chest is being abused than a little old lady might be, and this is the second. The third is it still leaves the regulation of animals in stock conditions in laboratories; they call it storage I think in their lay report, under control of the Secretary of Agriculture. We're going to see what can be done to take it out.

Dr. Dennis: What's your frame of mind about it? Do you think it can be done?

Dr. Visscher: I'm very skeptical. That doesn't mean, however, that we should not fight.

Dr. Dennis: Anything I can do?

Dr. Visscher: We're going to let you know. Are you going to be in town in Brooklyn today and tomorrow?

Dr. Dennis: I expect to be.

Dr. Visscher: Ok. We'll be in touch with you.

Dr. Dennis: I'm calling you because I'm going over to a meeting of the State Society in a few minutes. I thought I'd like to be entirely up-to-date before I did so. Any special comments I should carry over there?

Dr. Visscher: These - that in order to keep faith with the House of Representatives we have been advised that it would be wrong for us not to oppose the things that we opposed in their Committee and got them to take out, and I think this is right.

Dr. Dennis: I do too.

Dr. Visscher: And even though we should lose, we're still in a better position as to our - you might call it integrity. I don't think we'll lose everything. There is a great likelihood that other animals will be taken out and I would hope that Mr. Poage would stand by his guns and perhaps take the other two things out in conference committee. If it's passed in its present form it will have to go to conference and we are attempting to set up this morning conferences with the leaders of the House of Representatives also in order to so-to-speak solidify their position.

Dr. Dennis: Yes, because it's going to have to come to compromise, isn't it?

Dr. Visscher: That's right, if the Senate passes this in its present form. We have telegrams ready to go out to a number of key people just as soon as we find out what Ellender is willing to do, but we won't know until this afternoon, and maybe not then, because he may not be willing to commit himself. He may want to wait until next week. This, of course, is our problem. Our immediate tactics have to depend upon what the Senators will do. We can't say to our constituency - urge that you vote for re-referral to the Agriculture Committee if the Agriculture Committee doesn't want it. So we are forced to determine our tactic as the whole thing goes along. In fact, that's why I'm here this morning.

Dr. Dennis: Well, good luck. Let me know if I can be of any use.

Dr. Visscher: We will let - I think that Harry Kingman has talked with Lowell Greenbaum within the last day or two. He talked with him yesterday, and he probably knows just about the same thing, but I think our strategy has to be to wait until we see whether Ellender will or will not accept this, and although he's been talked to we don't have a word back. We'll let you know.

Dr. Dennis: Thanks very much.

Dr. Visscher: Where are you meeting?

Dr. Dennis: It's in the Roosevelt Hotel at 10:30 A.M. in room E - F.

Dr. Visscher: How long will you be meeting?

Dr. Dennis: I suspect the meeting will go much of the day. I've got a crucial Executive Faculty meeting. They just moved the meeting two days ago. I think there were going to be too many people there, and I've got to be back here at 1 o'clock because we have a crisis coming up in the Executive Faculty meeting, so I'll not be there the entire time. I'll be there all I can.

Dr. Visscher: OK. Thanks for calling.