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JANE GOODALL BILL

BILL TO AMEND—SECOND READING—
DEBATE CONTINUED

Speech by:
The Honourable Patricia Bovey

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BILL TO AMEND—SECOND READING—DEBATE CONTINUED

Hon. Patricia Bovey: Honourable senators, I speak from the unceded territory of the Algonquin people.

I rise today in full support of Senator Klyne's Bill S-241, An Act to amend the Criminal Code and the Wild Animal and Plant Protection and Regulation of International and Interprovincial Trade Act.

Several aspects of the act, as stated in the preamble, are of particular interest to me:

Whereas animal care organizations that meet the highest standards of animal care may serve the interests of animals across many species with regard to animal welfare, conservation, non-harmful scientific research and public education . . .

[Translation]

Whereas animal care organizations may contribute to wildlife rescue and rehabilitation, the provision of 25 sanctuary for animals in need, the restoration of wild populations and field research;

[English]

These summarize the goals, purposes and work of the Assiniboine Park Conservancy in Winnipeg — its zoo, gardens and parks. All the bill's goals have proven to be attainable.

I recently met with Margaret Redmond, CEO, and Grant Furniss, Senior Director of Zoological Operations, at the Assiniboine Park Conservancy, located on Treaty 1 territory within the Province of Manitoba, the traditional lands of the Anishinaabe, Cree, Oji-Cree, Dene and Dakota peoples and the homeland of the Métis Nation. I can attest to the fact that the conservancy supports this bill in its current form. They referred to it as, “. . . a fantastic bill, trailblazing and revolutionary, and people are talking about it.”

First, I declare an age-old personal history with this zoo. In the 1950s, my father, a knowledgeable animal conservationist, was the chair of the zoo's board. He and I went often — he walking, I on my bike. We spent much time behind the scenes with the keepers. As I can say, the attitudes I experienced then do not differ from those expressed throughout this bill. I am pleased to see those principles and standards coming into wide use.

Mr. Furniss told me the public is increasingly aware of animal welfare standards, expecting our zoos to be transparent and meet high standards — standards that constantly improve.

The Winnipeg Zoo's Journey to Churchill exhibit is an excellent advance expression of this bill. It is a rescue centre for orphaned polar bear cubs; they are rehabilitated at the

Leatherdale International Polar Bear Conservation Centre and are on view in an expanded habitat. There is a truly informative education centre with panels in various languages, Indigenous ones included. They are also conducting a northern denning project as polar bear dens in the wild are under threat given fires and climate change.

The conservancy aims to assist in protecting the area — another goal of this bill.

This bill encourages field work. In addition to the Journey to Churchill exhibition, the Assiniboine Park Conservancy, in keeping with the scientific and animal welfare principles, does significant field work. A team goes to Churchill annually for their Beluga Bits program in which they monitor the belugas, and invite anyone in the public to participate. In this work, they connect with traditional knowledge, profiled in their Journey to Churchill. They also work with the Churchill Northern Studies Centre, and their climate change research includes University of Manitoba academics and others.

Internationally, they have signed a memorandum of understanding with Japan's Maruyama Zoo dealing with bears and climate change. There, brown bears — like our polar bears — are encroaching on populated areas. Both zoos are learning from each other's experiences and the impacts of climate change on those species.

In keeping with the conservation aspect of this bill, the Assiniboine Park Conservancy has worked diligently to preserve the Poweshiek Skipperling butterfly, which is dependent on the tall grass prairie. Their research has saved the species from extinction. Only about 50 were extant at the outset of their work. This year, they are about to release 300 back into nature; their first release several years ago was only six. This important conservation project, mirroring what this bill calls for, was based on primary research, breeding and release.

Zoos are moving away from being roadside entertainment centres to ones focused on animal welfare and rights, animal care, rehabilitation, wildlife rescue, sanctuaries, conservation and science. The Winnipeg Zoo's current master plan discussions include creating larger habitats for the animals. This may mean fewer animals and the creation of mixed species habitats.

Will the public be concerned about fewer species? No. Consultations have shown the public supports the zoo in ensuring animals have space and proper habitats. I was told it was important for animal care professionals not only to know the group of animals, but know them individually — their habits and reactions. The public also wants good information and education opportunities for lifelong learning and engagement.

Some question that this bill might create a two-tier system. It will not. It is not just for big zoos. I have been assured that any zoo of any size or budget can apply for accreditation. As Ms. Redmond said, “The door is open to all to apply for the licence.”

I was also candidly told that had the Assiniboine Park Conservancy applied for accreditation in 2012, they know they would not have been successful. In 2014, they applied and were accredited. The fact is that they now support a bill that would have closed them down.

The accreditation process is rigorous, and CAZA, Canada's Accredited Zoos and Aquariums, and AZA, the Association of Zoos and Aquariums, are there to assist. The accreditation criteria are scientifically based on publicly available standards. The zoo's entire operation is examined, including animal welfare, veterinary care, conservation, education, guest services, physical facilities, safety, staffing, finance and its governing body.

As we heard from Senator Klyne, there are 250 accredited zoos in North America. None — and certainly not ours — want to ally themselves with the lowest common denominator.

These zoos work together to make a positive difference. In the last year, they contributed \$200 million to conservation science. That's a huge contribution.

These organizations are aiming to be ready to repopulate species if they become extinct or are nearing extinction in the wild. For those determinants, accredited zoos rely on the International Union for Conservation of Nature, or IUCN, the global authority on the status of the natural world and biological diversity, and the required safeguarding measures.

Using quantitative criteria to evaluate extinction risks of thousands of species, the IUCN researches and maintains the Red List of threatened species. The Red List is currently assessing 134,425 species; 35,000-plus are threatened. Zoos make their breeding decisions based on that list and on scientific, genetic findings.

[Translation]

Education is important for students and for adults, who continue learning throughout their lives. The Morris & Rosalind Goodman Family Foundation has funded a school program for students in grades four to six since 2018. The students participate in a two-week immersion program with the Assiniboine Park Conservancy, during which they learn about climate change in Manitoba, to better understand its impact on Arctic animals.

[English]

What is the current status regarding wider agreement for these changes in the field? There is actually now an alignment of organizations that was deemed impossible a few years ago — humane societies, zoos, and Zoocheck are working together in creative and exciting ways. Is the public concerned about such shifts in our zoos? I don't think so.

Remember the Shrine Circus that travelled across Canada many decades ago? We went as kids and loved it, but after animals were banned in circuses, did we miss the dancing

elephants? No, we did not. Were we upset when new regulations were put in place in pet stores? No, we were not. I honestly believe that society feels money should not be made off animals, whether in zoos, pet stores or elsewhere. Society wants good animal care, animal welfare and action on animal rights. That is what this bill is about — animal rights under human care.

Colleagues, zoos are museums. I recently gave the Canadian Museums Association's Fellows Lecture, titled *Museums to Lead*. Highlighting museological roles of collecting, preserving, presenting and educating, I said the following:

[Translation]

Museums manage our material, natural, scientific and creative past and present, as they always have, but I think that they play an increasingly critical role in our rapidly changing modern world, with its many profound paradigm shifts, including climate change. As leaders, museums have the opportunity and the responsibility to bring about substantive social change in the areas of public education, understanding, and humanitarian and environmental realities.

[English]

North America's accredited zoos do just that. As Mr. Furniss and Ms. Redmond opined, standards for animal care will continue to improve, and more zoos will seek and achieve that accreditation. Colleagues, this Jane Goodall act ensures animal welfare will be the determinant for a licence to operate. It is not about the size or budget of the zoo. It is about sanctuary, rehabilitation and operational standards based on science and in collaboration between zoos internationally. Experience has already shown that attendance has increased in places enshrining these values.

Before I conclude, I want to invite you to the Assiniboine Park Conservancy and our zoo. On entering, to your right are the bison, and their importance to the history and life of Canada's First Nations and Métis people is evident. There is an offering bowl presented by First Nations leaders and informative Indigenous interpretation panels. A white buffalo is in the herd. White buffalo are considered sacred or spiritually significant in a number of Indigenous beliefs and are often visited for prayer and other religious rituals. Winnipeg Indigenous artist Jackie Traverse's painting *White Buffalo Calf* reflects that rich spirituality. She has included white handprints linking the human dimension with animal welfare and spirituality.

Colleagues, as Senator Harder mentioned, the Jane Goodall bill has been publicly supported by Coastal First Nations. In their letter, they stated the reason for their support. Coastal First Nations CEO, Christine Smith-Martin, said:

For far too long, our relatives, bears, wolves, cougars, whales, seals, sea lions, birds, salmon, halibut, herring, and all living creatures have not been recognized by Crown governments and modern society for the individual beings and collective societies they are a part of.

We live together and need each other to be healthy in the biosphere that the Creator placed us in. . . . Therefore, it is not difficult for our peoples, working through our Nation authorities, to say we support a law that offers protection to the animals we live and interact with.

Colleagues, human care, animal welfare, conservation, rescue, relocation and education are paramount in this bill. I congratulate Senator Klyne for this iteration of the bill, Senator Sinclair for its

initial introduction and, of course, Jane Goodall for her dedicated and impressive career, vision and support.

I hope you will join me in moving this important piece of legislation to committee as soon as possible. Let's make animal lives better — those in human care and those in the wild — while assisting and ensuring their habitat meets their needs. After all, it's really about us in the end, and we need to do what's right in becoming true stewards of this planet. Thank you.
