

Routine Proceedings

Here in the national capital region, Wildlife Festival '92 will include events such as displays at shopping centres and museums, an international film festival and nature tours.

One of those nature tours will take place right here on the Hill on Tuesday, April 7. I invite all members of the House of Commons and their staff to join with me on a "walk on the wild side" of the Hill around the Parliament Buildings.

I am very pleased that the Speaker of the House of Commons will co-host this walk on Parliament Hill. The walk will be under the direction and guidance of a biologist from the Canadian Wildlife Service. Following the walk, we will have an opportunity to express our own wildlife artistry in a special painting, and our co-operative artwork will be displayed in the Wildlife Festival '92.

Canada's wildlife is a vital part of our history. It is up to all of us to ensure that it is also part of our future. I encourage Canadians to join with their governments, their local conservation authorities, their communities and their friends in celebrating this year's National Wildlife Week.

Mrs. Marlene Catterall (Ottawa West): Mr. Speaker, the ingredient necessary, if we are to preserve this fragile ecological sphere, is political will.

National Wildlife Week has a great deal to do with creating that political will. We must make Canadians more aware of our wildlife and more aware of the peril in which many species find themselves. Without that increased awareness eventually stiffening political will and backbone to protect those species and to ensure that Canadians for generations to come will continue to enjoy as our parents, grandparents, those who first came to these shores and those aboriginal Canadians who were here for many centuries before have done, the richness of life in this country.

Species do not live in isolation, and wildlife requires wilderness. Endangered species are also a question of endangered spaces. We have to look not only at what will look nice in a picture, because if that is primarily where we focus our efforts, all we will have in a few generations

is pictures. We have to look at wildlife where it actually lives.

I know all members of Parliament are aware of this marvellous book and the marvellous program on endangered spaces that is seeking to protect the very habitat which ensures that species can survive and thrive.

There is little doubt that a strong, unifying bond among Canadians is our deep appreciation of our natural environment. One of the things that unites us from coast to coast is to know that we share in common some of the most beautiful and unique natural spaces that exist on the face of the earth.

For members who have not looked through this book in some time, I encourage them to do so. They will see the diversity of forests, tundra, water, all of which to some extent without political will are endangered. Without us protecting those spaces, the natural environment in which wildlife flourishes, our wildlife is in danger.

A week is important because it focuses public attention. Children learn, we all learn that we are not doing all we should to make sure future generations will enjoy what Canadians now have.

It is beyond the commitment of Canadians. It is a commitment that we have to the world to protect a unique environment that exists nowhere else. That is why Canada has in principle adopted the world-wide commitment to protect 12 per cent of natural areas in this country.

However, we would all admit that we are far from achieving that. As we have been cautioned by the Canadian Nature Federation which will soon be appearing before the environment committee, the real test of our commitment is: Do we allocate our resources to accomplish the goals that we say we want to accomplish?

In the budget that was presented to Parliament just a month ago and in the estimates that were tabled more recently, do we have the funds to ensure that we are preserving not only national and natural treasures but world treasures? That is the responsibility and the stewardship we have for being fortunate enough to live in Canada. We have a responsibility to preserve what is ours so that we can share it with the world.