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Animal Concern is a pressure group registered as a non-profit making Limited Company (Co. No. SC109126) incorporated in 1988 as Animal Concern (Scotland) Ltd.

Animal Concern incorporates the Scottish Anti-Vivisection Society which was founded in 1876.

Scottish MPs have been asked to attend Parliament on Wednesday to support the Wild Animals in Circuses (Prohibition) Bill. Will Quince, Conservative MP for Colchester, has raised his Ten Minute Rule Bill in a bid to ban the use of exotic animals in circuses in England and Wales. This issue was highlighted in Scotland during the winter of 2014/15 when a number of circus lions and tigers were kept in small cages on an Aberdeenshire croft for several months. In November 2014 Scottish Government Minister Richard Lochhead said he would bring forward plans to legislate on this issue but over a year later no legislation has been proposed.

John Robins of Animal Concern Advice Line states: "If we can get wild animals banned from circuses in England and Wales that should also end their use in circuses in Scotland. To be viable travelling circuses need to tour the whole of the UK and not just one country within the UK. Around 30 countries already have full or partial bans on the use of wild animals in circuses and many local authorities in the UK refuse to let public land to circuses with animals. A clear law banning the keeping of exotic animals in circuses is long overdue in this country. We should be leading the way on this, not lagging far behind other countries."

EDITOR'S NOTE: Our e-mail to all Scottish constituency MPs is copied below:

Dear Member of the Westminster Parliament,

Will Quince MP is raising a Bill aimed at banning the use of exotic animals in circuses in England and Wales. His Ten Minute Rule Bill will be presented to the House on 10th of February; Wednesday of this week.

I have contacted our support list and later today you may well hear from some of our supporters in your constituency asking you to attend the House and give your support to the Wild Animals in Circuses (Prohibition) Bill.

I am lobbying the Scottish Parliament for similar legislation up here. Legislation was promised in Scotland after a member of the Chipperfield overwintered his lions and tigers on an Aberdeenshire Croft but so far nothing has happened.

If England and Wales lead the way and ban the use of exotics in circuses it is likely all travelling circuses throughout the UK would stop using animals as they usually include England, Wales, Northern Ireland and Scotland in their tours.

Over the years I have seen lions, tigers, elephants, bears, hippopotamus, zebra and other exotic animals dragged around the UK in travelling circuses. When not performing the animals are forced to spend their lives in beast wagons and tiny travelling cages. In Perth I watched a bear driven so totally mad by his close captivity that he could not be taken out of his cage far less used in the Big Top. It is extremely common to see big cats endlessly pacing in tiny circles in their small cages. Thankfully there are no elephants suffering in UK circuses at the moment but that could happen again unless the law is changed to make it illegal.

When not travelling with the circus, as well as being caged on an Aberdeenshire croft, exotic animals, including elephants, have been kept chained for periods in excess of two months in a semi-derelict barn in Bishopbriggs and, in the years after the barn fell down, an abandoned Glasgow warehouse.

I hope you will attend on Wednesday and help the Wild Animals in Circuses (Prohibition) Bill go through. Keep this in mind – if a UK zoo kept animals the way they are kept in the very best travelling circuses the zoo could be prosecuted for cruelty and closed down.

Kind regards,

John F. Robins,

Animal Concern Advice Line