

Golden Age

Continued

Turtles were abundant as represented by numerous shell fragments. Vertebrae of fish were also recovered, the largest of which measured 1 5/8 inches in diameter.

Groups of animals of the Oligocene specimens in the collections of the Provincial Museum are the Hyaenodont (wolf like animals,) Hemisalodonts (giant bear-like carnivores,) Dinictis (a small member of the cat family,) and Meshippus (a small primitive three-toed horse).

Although there is great variety of fossil bones in this deposit, representative of many species of animals, they are in a very disjointed, intermingled state of distribution. Several expeditions in which the National Museum, Royal Ontario Museum of Palaeontology and Saskatchewan Provincial Museum of Natural History, participated individually, failed to recover any complete skeletons or even a portion of one. Many of the specimens, although well preserved were eroded or fragmentary, however the most important part of the material as recovered by the Provincial Museum, the jaws, skulls and teeth, were in a relatively complete condition showing little evidence of erosion.

Possibly the most interesting and intriguing feature of the collection of specimens is the immaturity of the animals when they died, as indicated by the relatively unworn condition of the teeth and incompleteness of the dental series of the jaws. This probably indicates that living was a severe trial for these animals in Oligocene times and that carnivores, unsuitable food conditions or epidemics caused these animals to die while they were relatively young.

Although there is a great wealth of information yet to be obtained from the Cypress Hills deposits, which have been explored to a comparatively slight degree; the specimens so far recovered have contributed greatly to knowledge of faunal life of Saskatchewan 30 million years ago. Therefore, as this is the only fossil bearing deposit of Oligocene age in Canada, the people of Saskatchewan should recognize in this formation, a great asset, to the province and to the country as a whole, in the form of an Encyclopedia of Prehistoric Natural History.

Will They Be Lost Again ?

By J. H. Yerex, Clair

I have a modest collection of artifacts picked up around Clair. It pays to advertise, for as soon as folks knew I was interested in Indian relics they brought me many excellent specimens which would otherwise have been left around and eventually lost.

As is the case with most collectors I have a few museum pieces that should be preserved for those that follow after us. What will become of these pieces? Will they be thrown out in the rubbish after we pass on, or will they be properly taken care of?

It seems to me collectors should make some provision for the disposal of their collections. Perhaps something can be worked out so that anyone who wishes to could make provision for a reliable museum to pick this material up when the collector passes on. A form could be provided to be attached to the will requesting that a certain museum be advised that such and such had gone to the "Happy Hunting Ground" and has left it his entire collection of artifacts, etc.



Nature Artist

The Provincial Museum is very fortunate in having engaged for a few months, this winter, the services of Robert E. Symons, an outstanding artist of wildlife, who hails from the Peace River Block, near Fort St. John, B. C. He will return to his ranch there in the spring.

Mr. Symons has been painting scenic backgrounds for museum wildlife exhibits. The following painting of winter birds of the Canadian Zone, which illustrates Mr. Bards article is an example of the type of work he produces. He has just completed a curved background, some ten or twelve feet in length for a group of deer. The painting shows a small meadow, surrounded by the trees and hills of Qu'Appelle Valley -- a scene from a secluded spot near Craven.