

ALL AROUND CUBA

MUSEUM GETS UNIQUE FOSSILS FROM CUBA

The American Museum of Natural History, through the courtesy of Prof. Carlos de la Torre, of the University of Havana, who, by systematic explorations succeeded in securing large collections of fossil mammals and fossil reptiles at three different localities in Central Cuba, was recently permitted to join in further explorations for these unique specimens. It was announced that the Museum had succeeded in recovering a very large series, especially from a hot spring near Cienfuegos.

Mammals of the West Indies, living and fossil, are of peculiar interest. They afford a clue to the geologic history of the islands, and the effects of insular conditions upon evolution of a race. The living mammals are very few in number, and of peculiar types, widely different from those of the mainland, except for such as have been or may have been introduced by man. Very little has been known of the extinct mammals.

The remains found were chiefly skulls, jaws and skeleton bones of extinct ground sloths, representing four distinct genera, all of peculiar type, and rather distantly related to any of the genera that formerly inhabited the continental regions to the north and south. Their nearest known allies are *Megalonyx*, a genus of gigantic extinct quadruped, of the Pliocene and Pleistocene of North America, and of the Miocene of Patagonia. Their small size compared with their contemporaries on the mainland, and peculiar characters indicate that the island has long been isolated from either North or South America.

With these ground sloth remains were found, also, rodents related to the living *Capromys* of Cuba, large crocodiles of the species now living on the island and peculiar to it, giant tortoises, aquatic turtles and lizards. Sufficient remains of the extinct ground sloth were found to enable the Museum to select two complete skeletons for mounting, one for this museum, the other for the Academy of Sciences in Havana, in return for the courtesies extended by that society.

ANCIENT CUBAN DOCUMENTS

The Bulletin of the Pan-American Union makes mention of the recent discovery in the

Royal Archives at Seville, Spain, of many ancient documents relative to the history of Cuba from the year 1508 to a very recent period. The documents in question consist of royal decrees, orders, etc., reports of conferences between the King and his Council of the Indies, often annotated in the Monarch's own handwriting, letters from the Colonial Governor to the King, letters of royal officials, letters from members of the clergy and also letters from private individuals. It is thought that material hitherto unknown has been found, which will be of great service to students of the history of Cuba.

OIL LANDS

According to press reports, there are good prospects for the development of oil lands in the Province of Pinar del Rio. Claims have already been made for oil rights at Guayabal and vicinity.

PIGEON RACE

It is proposed to have a race of carrier pigeons and to establish a station at Chaparra, Oriente, and one at Havana. It is thought that President Menocal will give three prizes, one of \$50, one of \$30, and one of \$25.

CUBAN MINES

According to the *Havana Post*, the number of new mines discovered in Cuba has been greater in the Province of Pinar del Rio, some 200 claims having been filed with the Government. Hitherto the Province of Oriente has been considered the richest in mineral wealth.

CUBAN NAVY

It is reported that the Springfield rifle has been selected for future use of the navy in place of the Krag-jorgensen, hitherto used.

FORAGE FOR THE CUBAN ARMY

After considering the various bids received, the Cuban Government placed a contract for the supply of forage to the Cuban army with Fred R. Rohl, Inc., of New York, terms and conditions submitted by these bidders presenting more advantages to the Government.