

## MONSTERS TRAPPED IN ASPHALT POOL

Dr. Merriam Tells of Finds  
Made Near Los Angeles—  
Question of Brains.

Dr. J. C. Merriam, president of the Carnegie Institute for Research and vice-president of the University of California, lectured before the Royal Canadian Institute, Toronto, on Saturday evening, when the Convocation hall of the university was crowded to hear him. His subject was: "Some ancient forms of life on the American continent."

It dealt with the discoveries made in some tar pools near the city of Los Angeles, California, which had become the resting place for the bones of innumerable pre-historic animals, and which during the last fifteen years or so have been investigated by the University of California paleontological authorities of whom Dr. Merriam is the head.

Arthur Hewitt presided over the meeting and gave a brief sketch of the speaker of the evening and his contributions to modern scientific information.

Dr. Merriam said that the asphalt beds had been worked since the early 70's, the product being shipped to San Francisco



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for pavement and other uses. It had been found to contain much foreign matter and was heated in great caldrons, the heat fusing the asphalt which was run off. The dregs, mostly bones and pieces of wood, were thrown aside. In 1876, a pamphlet was written on these bones, but as its author was a non-scientific man it never attracted the attention of the intelligentsia, and it was not until 1906 that the bones came to his personal attention through the hands of one of his students. The sample included relics of a saber-tooth tiger and one or two ex-

tinct species, and immediately he started investigations. The California petroleum has an asphaltic base and the pools occur immediately over the apex of an anticline in the oil-bearing formation, indicated that the asphalt is seepage through fissures in the top of the fold. In cold weather the surface is hard except in the centre. In warm weather it is all soft and animals walking on it today are immediately enveloped by the black mass. So during the centuries preceding countless animal lives were engulfed. Dr. Merriam gave

as his belief that the period of life represented by the most ancient bones existed about 300,000 years ago. Only one human remain had been uncovered, a skull and a thigh-bone. With them were found bones of extinct animals and others of animals existing today. The skull was nine feet under the surface and resembled in character very much the type of Indian inhabiting the islands along the coast of California today. Whether it was an evidence of man existing contemporaneously with prehistoric fauna he could not say.

### Pools a Hunting Ground.

From the large number of bones of maimed carnivorous animals found, he hazarded the opinion that the pools were the hunting grounds of the incapable who trapped their prey and then, through inattention or other accident fell victims to the all-engulfing pools themselves. The bones found included those of the mammoth mastodon, horse, camel, wolves, coyotes, ground sloths, saber-toothed tigers, lions, pumas, bears, foxes, badgers, skunks, rhinoceros, lynx, deer, tapir, and a variety of others. Excavations have been made at some twenty points and over 3,000,000 bones had been recovered, the commonest being that of the wolf. The predominance of this carnivore, many of them maimed in the feet and legs, bore out his theory as to the death trap. There were fewer coyotes, and the coyote skulls showed greater brain capacity, which might explain his lighter casualty list.

The saber-toothed tiger was found in great numbers. Before the excavations started, there were only half-a-dozen samples in the world of this animal. The lions were larger than they are today. The camel type was somewhat similar to the llama now existing in South America. One giant bird, larger than the condor, the greatest of the carnivorous birds, said the lecturer, a kind of combination eagle and turkey-buzzard, was uncovered. They had found fragments of this creature which created great interest as it was previously unknown, and a reconstruction was attempted. When at last an intact specimen was uncovered, the model of the scientists was found to be out only one-twenty-fifth of an inch.

The lecture was profusely illustrated with stereoscopic views of the scene of operation, the bones in place in the asphalt and the mounted specimens of actual skeletons entire. At the conclusion of the pictures, Dr. Merriam said that he could not accept the theory of some that many of these strange animals merely indicated that the Creator was experimenting with forms of life. It meant that the conditions of life then were different than today and that the peculiar forms of that period were necessary for livelihood. There was no cataclysm to wipe them out, just gradual change.

His researches had shown him that it was the animal with the greater brain power that survived, and that there was always the tendency for higher types. It meant to him that in the life of which we are a part, we must either progress or be wiped out. Man of today may be a product of evolution or whatever you care to call it, but he comes from a great race going back millions of years through which time he has always shown progress and development. Man has taken out of the water, earth and air things from which he has built a complicated civilization. We should back up this social inheritance and not subscribe to the theory that every civilization kills itself. Adam and Eve, he said, suffered because they ate of the fruit of tree of knowledge, and we, in our wisdom, he said might suffer a similar fate, but for himself he did not believe it. His studies of ancient forms of life revealed always an upward tendency, and this he felt was the destiny of man, to keep on developing.

### BEYOND THE PACIFIC.

(New York Evening Post)  
Ratification of the last of the Washington conference treaties virtually without opposition signals for this country the beginning of a new epoch and a new state of mind. We have emerged out of the doldrums of timidity and partisanship. We have escaped out of that "ugly epoch" of which Woodrow Wilson spoke the other day. We have entered upon an adult diplomacy.

The settlements in the Far East are a notable achievement in themselves, but their significance is not confined to the Pacific and Asia. Christopher Columbus sailed west in order to get to the Far East. It is our belief that Mr. Hughes and the Administration turned their backs to the Far East in order that they might ultimately reach the continent across the Atlantic. Beyond the Pacific lies Europe.

Credit for the record of the last five months at Washington cannot be assigned to one man or one party. Credit, in the first place, should go to the inevitable logic of events. Credit is due to Woodrow Wilson, in spite of his mistakes, for sounding the call to international understanding through conference. Credit is due to Mr. Harding for acquiescing in the great principle. Credit is due to Mr. Borah for his activity in reminding Mr. Harding. Credit is due to those Democratic Senators who saw that party advantage this time coincided with national duty. Credit is due in the largest measure to the American people, for the zeal with which it backed up a great cause and its courage and readiness in paying the price.

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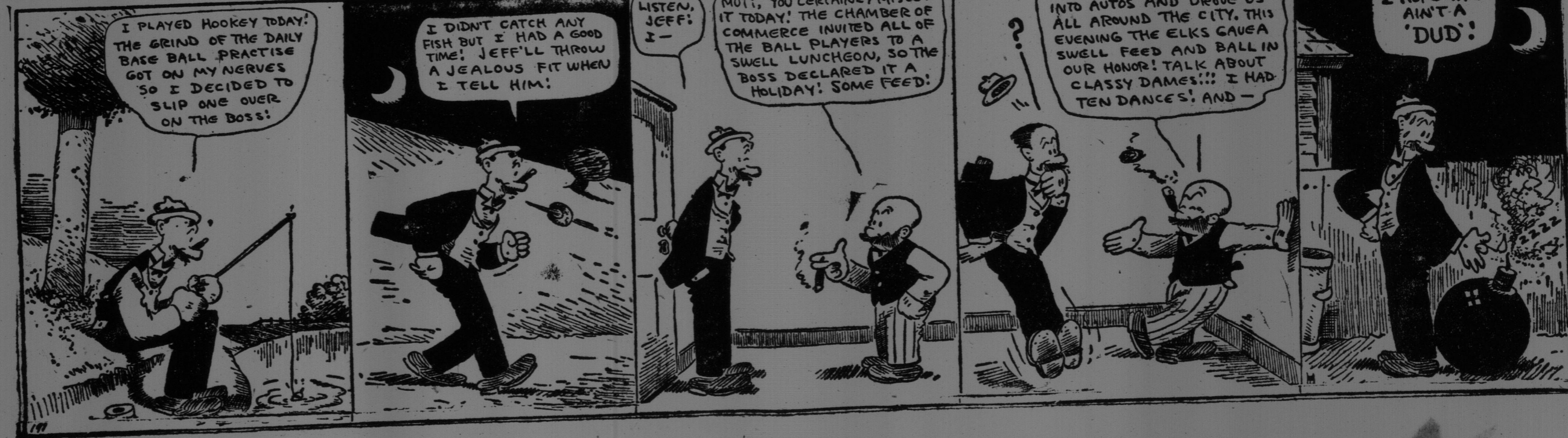


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## MUTT AND JEFF—MUTT BREAKS TRAINING FOR ONE WHOLE DAY



By "BUD" FISHER