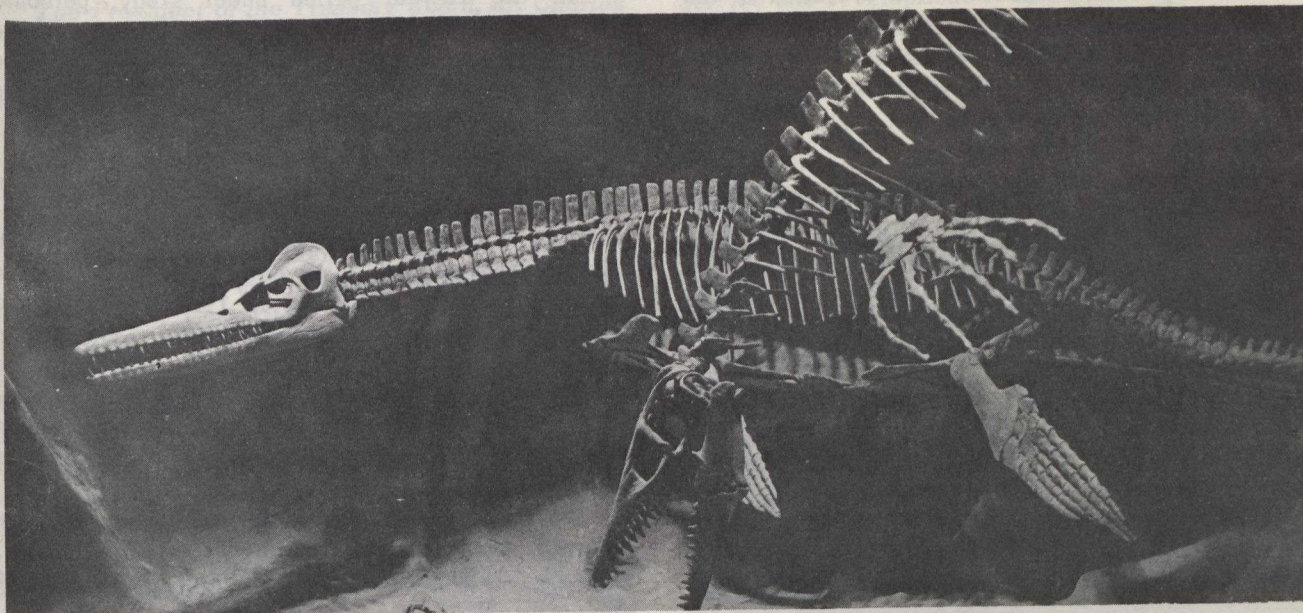


FOSSIL GALLERY OF ROM GOES MODERN



Aquatic reptiles of an another age.

The Hall of Vertebrate Evolution, a new gallery in the Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto, was opened in January by its former director the noted paleontologist W.E. Swinton.

The opening of the gallery, which is concerned with the evolution of man, the Age of Mammals and early aquatic life, is the first phase in the creation of dramatic settings in the ROM's vertebrate paleontology collections. The second phase, which will create an environment for the Museum's dinosaur

skeletons, will be completed in about two years.

In the introductory area to the Hall of Vertebrate Evolution, the public will find explanations of paleontology, the geological ages, and of how scientists excavate and document fossil remains. Dominating the Hall is the huge skeleton of a mastodon that roamed the Great Lakes region about 10,000 years ago. Standing more than nine feet high and supporting a tusk eight feet long, it resembles the skeleton of a modern elephant. The other tusk of the mastodon was lost when the animal was young. Lighting effects create the subtle impression that the giant beast is moving through a forest of spruce.

EVOLUTION OF MAN

A major section of the new gallery, devoted to the evolution of man, explains that man is a two-legged primate, unique among the animals. Skeletons of a man and an upright bear placed back-to-back show that the bones of man and other mammals are identical but that the proportions are different owing to man's upright posture.

A tree festooned with skulls and skeletons presents various forms of primates including humans, and spans 60 million years. It shows that man developed from Ramapithecus, a small ape-like creature that probably lived in trees 14 to 15 million years ago. When the forests changed to treed savannahs, some creatures stayed in the trees, while others came down to the ground and remained four-footed like baboons. Others developed into Australopithecus, a two-footed animal, the immediate predecessor of true man. It was the development of the ability to make tools and weapons that allowed man to compensate



Craftsmen Gerry O'Connor and Paul Geraghty prepare exhibits.