

The governor's message to the legislature, accompanying the bills, follows:

Many farmers in the state are asking for constructive assistance in the solution of certain problems in the management of their farms and in their business which call for expert scientific research. This assistance must come from those who by training and experience are in a position to deal fundamentally and comprehensively with the specialized technical and scientific problems involved.

I, therefore, recommend the passage of three bills which have been prepared, for investigations, research work and for necessary personal service, and construction work incidental thereto, by the New York State College of Agriculture at Cornell University, the New York State Agricultural Experiment Station at Geneva and the New York State College of Home Economics at Cornell University.

These bills provide for appropriations totaling the sum of \$168,530 to be spent on investigations of muck land problems in their soil and pathological aspects, crop adaptation, fertilizing and cultural practice, potato diseases, city markets, regional readjustments and development of cooperative marketing, rural government, animal husbandry, peach moths, codling moths and allied insects, and the question of living costs on the farm.

These expenditures have been recommended to me by the Agricultural Advisory Commission which I appointed last December and represent the minimum of what ought to be done this year to help the farmer to meet his farm problems.

### THE "SLOTH PIT" IN NEW MEXICO

THE Peabody Museum of Yale University and the U. S. National Museum at Washington, acting jointly, sent an expedition on March 25 to New Mexico to excavate completely the extinct fumarole in which the fossil of the Yale ground sloth was found. Yale will be represented in the expedition by Fred W. Darby, in charge, and the National Museum by N. H. Boss. Ewing Waterhouse, of El Paso, Texas, one of the discoverers of the sloth, will assist the party. It has been agreed that all bones recovered will be divided between the Peabody Museum and the National Museum, with the understanding that, should another sloth be found, it is to go to the National Museum.

The work is to be done in Dona Ana County, New Mexico, about forty-five miles northwest of El Paso, Texas. This is an extensive volcanic region where lava flows are a characteristic feature. Near the town of Aden lies the low cone of an extinct crater rising about two hundred feet above the surrounding country. Within the crater the floor is flat, about a quarter of a mile across, and is sparsely covered by cacti and other desert plants. On the east side the crater rim is broken by a gap which forms a passage into the interior, with gradually narrowing walls. In the floor of this passage lies a seemingly bottomless pit, the aperture of which is about eight feet in its longest

diameter and covers the entire width of the passage. This forms a natural death trap, and it was into this pit that the sloth now at Peabody Museum blundered, possibly when pursued by wolves.

At a vertical depth beneath the surface of about one hundred feet is a cavern full of bat guano, the accumulations of thousands of years, in which the sloth was found. The guano afforded the means of preservation of the entombed fossils. This cavern, which is estimated to contain about ninety tons of bat guano, will be excavated by the expedition. This means sifting the guano with fine-mesh sifters to insure against the loss of any bones, no matter how small, either fossil or recent.

As but little of the guano deposit has been disturbed, it is believed that more specimens will be found contemporaneous with, or older than, the Yale sloth, which may be upward of 500,000 years old. Professor Richard S. Lull, director of the Peabody Museum, has said that while the place could never have been occupied as a den, "it is hardly thinkable that our sloth was the only unfortunate of his day to blunder in."

### RESEARCH ON DEAFNESS

GIFTS aggregating \$40,475 for research into the cause and cure of deafness were announced at a luncheon held on March 20 in the Hotel Commodore by the laymen's committee which is assisting the American Otological Society's Research Fund Committee in an effort to reach its goal of \$500,000 by June 30.

These gifts are to become a part of the \$2,500,000 permanent fund which the Otological Society, a branch of the American Medical Association, hopes to collect for a study of diseases and affections of the ear in the hope of discovering methods of dealing with the problem of chronic progressive deafness. The society is particularly concerned over those varieties of deafness, including otosclerosis, for which no cure is known at present.

Dr. Edward B. Dench, New York otologist, who was present at the luncheon representing the board of trustees of the research fund of the society, emphasized the importance of having \$500,000 available by the end of June in order that the important research work which has been started in several medical institutions under a grant by the Carnegie Corporation need not be interrupted. Dr. Dench made the statement that one out of every four persons in the United States is suffering from hearing defects of some sort.

The campaign was announced at a dinner given last week at the New York Academy of Medicine to a group of prominent otologists and interested laymen.