of a young elephant were those of a lynx, snow leopard, or wolf magnified by melting of the snow at their edges.

Some people, while not accepting the "snowman" footprints as those of a giant bipedal primate, have nevertheless regarded them as primate in origin and have attributed them to the langur or black-faced Himalayan monkey. Pranavananda, however, rejects this interpretation, since the langur is seldom or never seen above the tree line and, hence, does not wander on the snow. Moreover, he says, langurs in the upper Himalayas move down to lower, warmer regions well in advance of the snowfall.

Another probable factor in the creation of the "abominable snowman" legend is a linguistic one. The author notes that different persons have translated differently—and sometimes grossly mistranslated—the original local Tibetan words designating the animal that has been identified as the "abominable snowman." In this connection, it is to be noted that most of the current "snowman" stories come from India rather than from Tibet itself. It appears likely that mistranslation of local Tibetan words by foreigners has been responsible for some misconception.

The fact that the matter has not been thoroughly investigated on the Tibetan side of the Himalayas—where the local population has a correct knowledge of the identity of the animal—has helped perpetuate the wrong conception of the animal, according to Pranavananda's view. *Mi-te,* which has been translated by some Himalayan expeditionists as "abominable, filthy, disgusting to a repulsive degree, dirty," actually means "man-bear." *Kangmi,* or "snowman," is merely an alternate word for the same animal. Hence the term *miteh-kangmi,* from whence "abominable snowman," represents an incorrect combination, owing to mistranslation, of two terms that are essentially synonymous.

Thus the "abominable snowman" would seem, on the basis of the best evidence now available, to be no other than the Himalayan red bear. The matter, of course, cannot be conclusively settled until a specimen of undoubted "snowman" is secured for study.

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New Fossil Plants

Roland W. Brown of the U.S. Geological Survey has described several previously unknown species of fossil plants that he found among specimens recently acquired by the U.S. National Museum. In a report on "Paleobotany—new items in Cretaceous and Tertiary floras of the western United States" that appeared in a recent issue of the *Journal of the Washington Academy of Science,* Brown states that while some of these new additions to the museum come from localities and formations already known, others are from strata not yet named. Therefore, they will contribute toward the dating of the strata as well as to a clearer concept of the species the plants represent. Rather than postpone their description to an uncertain time when monographs can be published, it was decided to present the essential facts immediately.

The newly described species include two ferns, two legumes, and others. Of special interest is a small leaflet that has been identified as "the first unequivocal fossil foliage of *Ailanthus.*" Hitherto, Brown points out, the assignment of leaflets to the same species as well-recognized seeds from identical localities, has left much to be desired. None of the leaflets so assigned has clearly shown the characteristic basal, glandular teeth.

In the museum's newly described specimen, however, all the features are comparable with those seen in modern, living *Ailanthus,* especially the glandular tooth. This means that the *Ailanthus* has known ancestors as far back as the mid-Eocene period of geologic history, with evidence now based on leaf structure as well as on fruit. Brown named his find *Ailanthus eureka.*

Great Bahama Bank

The first members of a team of nine research workers and their assistants left New York recently to continue work on a geologic and ecologic survey in the West Indies that may throw new light on the relationships between present-day communities of living organisms and those that existed thousands of years ago. The expedition, which is led by Norman D. Newell, curator of historical geology at the American Museum of Natural History, will make use of such techniques of investigation as skin diving and underwater and aerial photography in an attempt to bring back evidence of the history of life to be found in the waters of the Great Bahama Bank.

The Bank is a limestone platform of some tens of thousands of square miles, almost entirely covered by shallow seas, that is southeast of Florida. Portions of the platform rim projecting above the water constitute several of the Bahama islands. This region is of special interest to geologists because it is one of the few examples of a shallow limestone sea such as those that long ago covered North America.

The expedition is the second in a 3-year project. The study includes comparisons of living plants and animals with their fossil counterparts, which are found in abundance petrified in the rocks of Bimini. This comparison will be a test of the limitations of fossil sea animals in general as indicators of past environmental conditions.

The expedition will remain in the field for 6 weeks. Base of operations will be the Lerner Marine Laboratory. The American Museum's field station on North Bimini Island.

Peat as a Binder

Edgar L. Piret, professor of chemical engineering at the University of Minnesota, has reported that a research team working under the sponsorship of the state's Iron Range Resources and Rehabilitation Commission has found that ground peat reinforced with an alkali solution is an excellent binder for the balling or pelletizing of powdered taconite concentrate. As it is mined, taconite contains only about 25 percent iron. Since this iron content is too low for direct feed of the rock to the blast furnaces, the ore must be concentrated. This is accomplished by grinding taconite into tiny particles and then separating the magnetic iron from the mother rock in magnetic separators.

The resulting purified ore contains about 62 percent iron but is much too fine for the blast furnace. To obtain a suitably loose packing that will allow the furnace blast to pass through the ore during the smelting operation, it is necessary to form the powdered ore into ½- to ¾-inch pellets in a balling drum. The pellets then are baked or sintered in a furnace to strengthen them so that they will withstand handling, shipping, and feeding into the blast furnace.

Scientists in the News

JOHN A. BEHNKE, associate administrative secretary of the AAAS, will resign on 30 June to accept a position as vice president and science editor of the Ronald Press Company, New York.

WALTER H. ZINN, director of Argonne National Laboratory, has been presented with a special commendation by the U.S. Atomic Energy Commission. The presentation was made at a luncheon given in honor of the recipient by the University of Chicago. The citation read:

"In recognition of his achievements as scientist and administrator in the U.S. Atomic Energy Commission program beginning with essential contributions to the production of the world's first self sustaining chain reaction on December 2, 1942 and continuing during 10 years of