

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
UNITED STATES GEOLOGICAL SURVEY

WASHINGTON, D. C., June 15, 1892

Prof. O. C. Marsh,
New Haven, Conn.

Dear Sir:

Herewith I enclose to you a copy of a note from Senator Allison, Chairman of the Appropriations Committee, which will explain itself, and, in accordance with Mr. Allison's suggestion, I also forward Professor Osborn's communication.

Major Powell is temporarily absent from the city and I therefore send you the papers, which have just been received, in order that you may have an opportunity to prepare a statement or indicate such action as you may think proper, the same to be submitted to Major Powell on his return.

Yours, with respect,

A. C. Rizer
Chief Clerk. *per W. F. M.*

Copy
New York, June 13, 1892.

Senator William B. Allison,

Chairman, Committee upon Appropriations.

My dear Sir:

In reply to your letter of June 9, requesting information regarding the Vertebrate Department and suggestions regarding the appropriations for paleontology, I would respectfully submit the following. As before, I request you to kindly send a copy to Director Powell, and I enclose one for that purpose.

First. It is absolutely essential for the progress of the Survey that the work in Invertebrate Paleontology be continued, because this is the principal and, in many cases, the only means by which the relative age of Strata can be determined and is, therefore, at the basis of all geological work.

Second. While not quite so essential, Vertebrate Paleontology is an important part of the Survey, for the same reason. For determining the age of strata, the systematic work of this department should be done with great accuracy to insure permanence, and as it is of a less practical and of a more purely scientific character, it should also foster the interests of this branch of science in this country.

My opposition to a renewal of the appropriation for Vertebrate Paleontology is based upon the fact that neither of these ends are being attained. The systematic work is inaccurate and if published by the Government will subsequently require complete revision and republication. Secondly, the department is conducted as if it were a private bureau and the collections were private property, instead of as a public bureau with public responsibilities.

All these costly collections are retained in the private store-rooms of a college museum, instead of being transported directly to the National Museum. The only exception to this is one large case of specimens, which, after the department had been established over ten years, were sent to Washington in 1891 apparently for the benefit of the foreign visitors to the International Geological Congress. It is stated that there is no room for these fossils; the fact is that the cost of a single Monograph issued by this department would provide a large exhibition room; no serious effort has ever been made to accomodate these fossils in Washington.

b. The above concerns the public. It is also true that students and specialists are not granted general access to these Government collections, even under the ordinary safeguard regulations of Museums. They can only be seen and studied by a few persons, as a matter of personal favor, and

under conditions which do not admit of free access and study. It is absolutely necessary for the progress of this branch of science in this country, that the type specimens should be made readily accessible.

c. The publications which are being prepared with such lavish expenditure, contain very inaccurate systematic work and are, therefore, not of a permanent character; they will all require revision. As a single example, a monograph now in preparation is entitled "The Brontotheridae," such a name has no recognition. This lack of permanence is the most serious defect, from a purely scientific standpoint.

d. This Government department is unfriendly to similar work in other institutions. I speak from personal knowledge as regards several Museums. The Trustees of this Museum recently founded a Vertebrate Department, and as Curator I engaged collectors who offered their services and had formerly been in the employ of Professor Cope and Professor Marsh. Professor Marsh used every means to prevent the Museum from collecting in one of the great horizons of Wyoming, upon the ground that the Government had prior rights there, and formally claimed for the Government all fossils thus found.

If the Director of the Survey should provide that these

matters be reformed - that the collections be sent where they belong and managed like the other National Collections - that proper precautions be taken to secure accurate and permanent work - that the Vertebrate Department cooperate with similar departments in other institutions - it will then become of scientific and educational value and will as fully deserve the support of the Government as our Fish Commission or United States National Museum. It will also receive the hearty support of many who are now strongly opposed to this appropriation being continued.

I am, dear sir,

Very respectfully yours,

(Signed) Henry Fairfield Osborn.

Copy

SENATE CHAMBER

WASHINGTON,

June 15, 1892.

Major J.W.Powell,

Director U.S.Geological Survey.

My dear Sir:-

I have a letter addressed to me by Prof.Osborn with the request that a copy be sent to you. I send it as requested. It is our intention to print this letter of Prof.Osborn with our other documents. So that, should Prof.Marsh desire to make any response, it should be made at once. I will thank you to send me an accurate statement of the appropriation expended annually for vertebrate paleontology, and how much for other branches of that service.

Yours Very Truly,

(Signed) W.B.Allison.

(Duplicate)

18185

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
UNITED STATES GEOLOGICAL SURVEY
DIVISION OF VERTEBRATE PALEONTOLOGY
NEW HAVEN, CONN.,

February 9, 1894.

To the Indian Agent,

Pine Ridge Agency, S.D.

Dear Sir: -

In carrying on my work for the United States Geological Survey, it is important for me to have some specimens of fossil animals found in the Bad Lands on your reservation. I cannot come for these myself, as I have done in years past, and have therefore arranged with Mr. H. F. Wells, a reliable man, with much experience in this line, to collect the specimens for me, and forward them here.

You will do a great favor to the U. S. Geological Survey and to me personally, if you will grant Mr. Wells permission to collect such specimens, beginning March 1st, 1894, if the weather permits. Mr. Wells is now at Sturgis, S.D. Will you kindly send a pass to him there for the above purpose? and greatly oblige,

Yours, very truly,

O. C. Marsh

Paleontologist, U. S. G. S.