



DAVID HOPKINS, an American scientist working in Alaska and Andrei Sher, Candidate of Science (Geology and Mineralogy), who is engaged in research on the other side of the Bering Strait, had the opportunity to meet and discuss the problems of the Bering coast which was the subject of the symposium held in Khabarovsk (the Soviet Far East) in May this year.

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Land Bridge Across Bering Sea?

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Dr. David Hopkins, a geologist with the US Department of the Interior, was one of the participants at a symposium held in the Soviet Far Eastern city of Khabarovsk on the subject: the Bering region and its significance for the development of holartic flora and fauna in the Cenozoic Era.

The Khabarovsk symposium, sponsored by the USSR Aca-

demy of Sciences and the Far Eastern Science Center, attracted 150 leading geologists, paleontologists, anthropologists, biologists, botanists and ethnographers from Moscow, Leningrad, Novosibirsk and other Soviet cities, as well as scientists from the United States, Canada, Japan, the German Democratic Republic, the Federal Republic of Germany, the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic, and other countries.

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More than 100 papers were read by Soviet and foreign scientists on the history of the Bering region, which in the distant past linked the continents of Eurasia and America and on related topics.

Academician Alexei Okladnikov, Director of the Institute of History, Philology, and Philosophy of the Siberian branch of the USSR Academy of Sciences, recalled meetings with a famous American anthropologist, Ales Hrdlicka, a zealous supporter of the theory of the Bering land bridge, along which the ancestors of American tribes made their way from Asia to America.

Hrdlicka came to Siberia in 1912 to try to find ancestors of the Indians in a neolithic settlement in the Baikal area.

In 1939, at the age of 83, he paid another visit to the Soviet Union, and explored the excavations of a paleolithic settlement near the village of Buret on the Angara River, where a dwelling of mammoth hunters and specimens of their art were unearthed.

A burial-mound from the early Bronze Age was also found there. According to this American scientist, the unearthed skulls greatly resembled those of Shoshoni Indians which he had discovered earlier. Later, during the Second World War, Hrdlicka returned time and time again in his written works to his impressions of Siberia. As a prominent scientist, he did everything he could to build up and consolidate cooperation and friendship between the American and Soviet peoples.

Scientists at the Khabarovsk symposium agreed that the ancient inhabitants of America had a distinctive culture. Stone swords, made by fine chipping techniques, were widespread on the Japanese islands, in Mongolia, and in the Baikal area. Many ancient tribes of North and Central Asia thus contributed to the formation of ancient American cultures, and a definite road ran from the Northeast across the Bering bridge.

The prospects for the study of the Bering region are great and attractive, but the joint efforts of scientists from various countries and continents are necessary. The Khabarovsk symposium was fresh proof of their cooperation.