

According to a report in *Corriere della Sera*, whose correspondent seemed aggrieved at the unchivalrous treatment meted out to his countrywoman, the chairman of the fund greeted her arrival with the words "An abomination!", and proceeded to point out that one of Miss Lollobrigida's coats represented one-sixtieth of the world's tiger population. The World Wildlife Fund calculates that there are 600 tigers at large in the world and that it takes at least ten skins to make a coat of the type that Miss Lollobrigida was wearing. The fund holds her indirectly responsible for endangering the survival of tigers in the wild.

The fund's ire was also raised by the six other coats in Miss Lollobrigida's wardrobe—two jaguar, two mink, a leopard and a sable—which between them account for the pelts of some 250 animals. "Naturally," the *Corriere della Sera* report continues, "the unkindest barbs against Gina were shot by members of the fairer sex. Lady Dowding, president of another British association called 'Beauty without Cruelty', paid her the not overgracious compliment 'Gina Lollobrigida is not so young any more and I'm rather afraid her habit of clothing herself in animal skins only goes to show her age'."

The World Wildlife Fund denies that its chairman called Miss Lollobrigida an abomination, but it confirms the rest of the story. The Fauna Preservation Society, however, is not so happy with the estimate of Miss Lollobrigida's impact on the tiger population. Quite apart from the six species of tiger listed in the Red Data Book as being critically or apparently in danger, no less than 2,500 are estimated to roam the Indian subcontinent. Nonetheless, the ten tigers killed to make Miss Lollobrigida's maxi-coat are not a negligible fraction of the total and, in Mr Peter Scott's words, a leopard skin looks better on a leopard.

Miss Lollobrigida seems to have been more than a little perplexed by the reception accorded to her attire. She is quoted as saying, "It's not I who hunts the tigers. If I didn't buy the skins, certainly some other woman would. You might as well stop people eating chicken so as to prevent hens being killed."

ASTRONAUTS

Death of a Spaceman

from our Soviet Correspondent

THE death of Colonel Pavel Belyaev on January 10, 1970, has robbed the Soviet Union of yet another of her cosmonaut heroes, the first to die of (apparently) natural causes.

Belyaev, born on June 26, 1925, a former lathe-operator and navy pilot, was the oldest of the original group of trainee-cosmonauts recruited in 1959. After an exceptionally hazardous training programme, he took part in the Voskhod-2 mission as "pilot", supervising and controlling the first space-walk of his crew mate Aleksei Leonov, afterwards returning the Voskhod-2 to Earth in the first fully manual landing of a Soviet spacecraft.

Since the Voskhod-2 mission, Belyaev had been concerned mainly with the training of new cosmonauts. An enthusiast for manned rather than automatic missions, he is known to have taken part in a number of simulator experiments in astronavigation, designed to enable a future Soviet Moon mission to make

position, trajectory and velocity corrections independently of ground computing centres.

Medical reports indicate the cause of Belyaev's death as peritonitis following an operation for stomach and duodenal ulcers. Although, unlike Komarov and Gagarin, he did not lose his life on active service in the space programme, the cause of his death may not be entirely independent of his training and service as a cosmonaut. The rigours of the psychological training programme of Soviet cosmonauts are well known. In Belyaev's case, these already searching tests were intensified by a complex and painful injury to his ankle during a parachute jump (leading to a year of uncertainty in which it seemed highly unlikely that he could continue with his training) followed by a fire, from an electrical short circuit, in the "chamber of silence" while Belyaev was undergoing one of the numerous isolation tests. On this occasion, Belyaev was greatly admired by his fellow cosmonauts and the training supervisors for neither ringing for help nor abandoning the tests, but simply extinguishing the fire and making an emergency electrical repair. Following the landing of Voskhod-2, Belyaev and Leonov were marooned for two days in the snow-covered Siberian scrub forest, and it was a further two days before they could be returned to the Baikonur space centre. Added to the already intensive stresses of the training programme, these additional factors may well have been a major cause of the fatal ulcers, and accordingly, although Belyaev's remains are to be interred in the Novodevichi cemetery, and not with those of Leonov and Gagarin in the Kremlin wall, the public lying-in-state which is preceding the funeral seems to indicate that, like them, Belyaev, too, is considered to be one of the martyrs of space progress.

PREHISTORY

The Oldest Australian

from a Correspondent

THE oldest human bones yet found in Australia have now been sufficiently studied for preliminary pronouncements on their significance. They were unearthed accidentally last year by a geologist working between Mildura and Ivanhoe in south-western New South Wales. Archaeologists then excavated the site. The bones are those of a young woman who had been cremated and buried. They were found in association with stone tools and the remains of fish, animals and eggs, evidently used for food.

In Canberra last week, one of the archaeologists who took part in the excavation, Mr Rees Jones, research fellow of the Australian National University, revealed that the finds were about twice the age of a skull discovered in Queensland which until now has been the oldest human relic known in Australia. The New South Wales skeleton is dated at between 25,000 and 32,000 years old. The later Queensland skull showed characteristics that are a blend of the modern Aborigine and of Java Man who flourished a quarter to half a million years ago.

Of particular interest is the evidence the new find brings to the uncertain question of when human beings first reached Australia. This is still entirely open. Mr Jones has pointed out that the new discovery assists the development of theories on the settlement of Australia by humans.