

if one had occurred then. He stated, however, that while severe, they were not extraordinarily so, but that they had often been observed in the past, of even greater intensity.

He cited the opinion of his predecessor, the late Rev. F. A. Tondorf, S. J., that the low pressure area produces a shaking of the entire coast, which is

recorded on the sensitive seismograph. Microseisms differ from earthquakes in that they are continuous, while the actual earthquake record is separated into well-defined phases. The microseism vibrations have a period of four or five seconds, while the earthquake waves are much longer.

Science News Letter, December 27, 1930

ORNITHOLOGY

Talking Bird From India Found Wild in California

Fearing Spread of Another Pest Like Sparrow and Starling, Authorities Destroy Mynah Colony and Look for More

A TALKING bird from India, that can mimic human speech better than a parrot, has been found wild in Los Angeles, nesting in a tile air vent of a Spanish house. But instead of being welcomed, this bird, the common or house mynah, was immediately set upon as an undesirable alien and the little colony, seven individuals all told, exterminated by the authorities. They are now hunting for other possible mynah colonists, determined to keep this foreign species from gaining a foothold in America.

The objection to the mynah is essentially the same as the objection to the English sparrow and the European starling, which have become widespread pests in this country. Interesting enough individually, and even well liked as pets, mynahs in the wild state form huge, noisy flocks that haunt the homes of men, nesting under the eaves and in all other crannies they can find about buildings. They multiply with surprising rapidity and become a menace to native birds, not only because they compete with them for food but also because of their overbearing truculence against other species. Their huge flocks are also troublesome feeders in fruit-raising regions.

Though the common mynah has gained a foothold in many localities outside its native land, it has never before been reported from North America in a wild state. A close relative, the crested mynah or Chinese starling, however, has established itself in British Columbia, and its spread into the United States is to be feared.

The common mynah can be identi-

fied by its large size (slightly greater than that of a robin), its dark plumage, with white wing and tail feathers showing prominently in flight, its conspicuous yellow bill, yellow legs, and bare patch of yellow behind the eye.

The discovery of the Los Angeles mynah colony was made by Dr. Calla E. Starbuck. She reported her find to the Los Angeles Museum and to the University of California at Los Angeles. George Willett, ornithologist of the museum, and Dr. Loye Miller, chairman of the biology department of the university, confirmed the identification. Deputies of the Los Angeles County Agricultural Commission destroyed the colony.

Science News Letter, December 27, 1930

INDUSTRIAL SAFETY

Young Girls Oftenest Hurt in Industry

OF THE women injured in industrial accidents, the greatest numbers are in the younger age groups, the U. S. Women's Bureau has found from a study of cases receiving employee's compensation in eight states.

In Maryland, over 40 per cent. of the compensation claims allowed during one year were for accidents to young girls under 21 years of age. This number is way out of proportion to the number of that age employed in industry, for census figures show less than 21 per cent. of employed women in Maryland to be under 20. In other states the proportion of injured under 21 years run from 25.5 per cent. in Massachusetts to 37 per cent. in Georgia.

Although fewer girls than boys were



UNDESIRED IMMIGRANT

Agreeable as a pet, but a nuisance as a neighbor: the common mynah of southeastern Asia, whose appearance in Los Angeles was hailed with anything but joy by the authorities.

hurt, the proportion of young people was higher for the women. Young people were most often hurt by machinery; older ones by falls. The most serious injuries occurred in the laundry industry.

Science News Letter, December 27, 1930

CHEMISTRY

Missouri Chemists Refine Radium From Watch Paint

CHEMISTS at the University of Missouri, Columbia, Mo., under supervision of Dr. Herman Schlundt, have started in operation the only known factory in the United States for refining radium from the paint off luminous dials of old watches and clocks. Already several thousands of dollars' worth of the precious element has been recovered in this manner.

Out of several hundred pounds of paint about one-hundredth part of an ounce is radium. At the present market price this element is nearly \$70 a milligram, or almost \$2,000,000 an ounce.

A refining plant for mesothorium, another commonly used radioactive element, was also established by Dr. Schlundt at the University of Missouri and has been in operation several years. Last year between \$25,000 and \$50,000 worth of mesothorium was refined.

By way of comparison it has been pointed out that mesothorium is worth about \$40 a milligram while radium is worth nearly twice that amount. Radium endures thousands of years but its substitute loses one-half its strength in seven.

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