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IMMIGRATION OFFICERS EVADED; CHINESE STARLINGS SPREAD SOUTH

During the week, the biggest deportation party of aliens in several years left Portland under the guards of the Immigration Service. The federal laws are tightened to keep out undesirable foreigners, and Uncle Sam's men keep busy catching and deporting those who slip past the guard lines.

The government laws regarding the importation of foreign feathered residents are stricter than those relating to the human species, but it will take more than the immigration officers, the Biological Survey, the state police forces, the Army and the Navy to stop the flocks of crested mynas or Chinese starlings now sweeping across the Canadian border and spreading south.

This member of the starling family, a native of central and southern China, is now a well established resident of the city of Vancouver, B. C. Thousands are living in the business blocks of the main section of the city, which is the established stronghold. Here the young are raised and have spread to surrounding towns and especially the agricultural area along the Fraser River.

Recently flocks have been seen across the boundary line as far south as Bellingham. One starling was reported in Portland a few years ago by Mr. Ira N. Gabrielson, but this may have been an escaped cage bird. On the other hand, it may have been one of those advanced scouts sizing up the country for the coming invasion.

The question arises as to what the future effect of this introduced species may have upon our native birds *and* agriculture. In a bulletin published by the Biological Survey of the Department of

Agriculture in April of this year, the Myna is reported to drive out flickers that nest in holes in trees and native hixas songsters that live in bird houses. As it becomes more abundant, it is likely to affect crops by feeding on berries and fruit.

No one seems to know just when and how this starling got a foothold in Canada. It may have been brought in by some Oriental resident to perpetuate memories of his home land. One report is that a large wicker cage containing a number of these birds, consigned to a Japanese resident, was broken open before delivery and the birds escaped.

According to the records, these Chinese birds were first seen at Vancouver about 1897. In 1920 Mr. Kermodé of the Victoria Museum said there were about 1200 roosting during the winter in the buildings in the busiest part of the city on Carroll and Cordova Streets. They roost ^{and} nests in the eaves of buildings. By 1925, it was reported the numbers exceeded 20,000.

The crested Myna is a bird easily identified on sight. It is about the size of a robin but looks more like the common black-bird because its coat is black. Its distinctive mark of identification is the band of white on its wings, also a tuft of short feathers at the base of the beak and inclining forward and upward like a pom-pador.