



The Royal Hawaiian Hotel, in Waikiki, scene of mighty battle between man and the mynah birds.

THE MIGHTY BATTLE AGAINST THE MYNAH BIRDS

(Continued)

This was kept up for several days and then the hotel engineer told Mr. Fischbeck that in his opinion the Royal Hawaiian mynahs were sending out scouts carrying messages to mynahs all over the island of Oahu, telling them to hurry over to Waikiki and get in on the fun. The engineer said that it looked to him as if the mynah population of the big tree had doubled since the rope trick was introduced. So the ropes were taken down.

BY THIS TIME Mr. Fischbeck was getting advice from hundreds of well-meaning people who wanted to help. One man said that mynahs were afraid of owls, especially white owls, and so a stuffed white owl was mounted in the tree. Nothing. Oriental snakes, made of colored paper, which wriggled in the breeze, were hung in the tree. The mynahs adopted them into their nation—made them honorary mynah birds. Then a kind of metallic spinner was used, but the birds paid no heed to it. Sheets of glittering tinfoil were suspended from the limbs, and the mynahs used them for swings.

Mr. Fischbeck had to conduct his war with caution and tact, in such a manner that humane groups and individual bird lovers would not be aroused. One aroused bird lover can be more dangerous than a pride of lions. Some of them already were writing to the newspapers, demanding that these outrages be stopped. So Mr. Fischbeck had to turn his back on all suggestions involving shotguns and flame throwers and poisoned seed.

Bob Krauss (a local news columnist), who had already put himself on record as being unfriendly toward the mynahs, found himself sympathizing with the plight of Mr. Fischbeck and wrote a column in which he tried to be helpful. He said that he did not believe the birds were ever going to leave. He said that their presence was naturally annoying to guests and that the trouble lay in the shrillness of their voices.

Mr. Krauss suggested that Mr. Fisch-

beck should work out some method of teaching the mynahs to sing "Aloha Oe," and this would be pleasing to the ears of the tourists, and wonderful publicity for the hotel. People would talk about it all over the world, the way they talk about "that place in Mexico where they got the swimming pool full of gardenias." They would speak in Zanzibar and Quito and Katonah of "that hotel in Hawaii with a million birds that wake you up every morning singing 'Aloha Oe.'"

I am told that there is no paper tough enough anywhere in the world to contain the words uttered by Mr. Fischbeck in regard to this Krauss proposal.

About this time, a sound engineer came to the Royal's manager and said he was certain he could rid the place of the mynahs. He said that he would set up electronic equipment which would produce high-frequency sound waves, and these sound waves would give every bird in the tree a raging headache, and they would all take the hint and leave. Mr. Fischbeck thought that at last he was getting somewhere, that finally he had come upon a scientific approach to the problem.

So the man set up his equipment and turned it on. I know next to nothing about electronics, but I'm told that high-frequency sound waves can be very eccentric and produce strange and eerie effects. In this case they did. Guests as well as hotel employees reported that weird and ghostly sounds were zipping around corners in the hotel, racing up and down the corridors, going wheeeeeee and whoooooo. There was, at the same time, an epidemic of toothache among the guests, and some of them reported that the fillings in their teeth had taken to vibrating. The sound engineer packed up his equipment and departed.

MR. FISCHBECK was now beginning to take on the aspect of a beaten man. Newspaper reporters trailed him around—the war against the mynahs had become big news. To one reporter, the hotel mana-

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