



The Department is inviting proposals from qualified firms capable of demonstrating a potential for producing high quality luxury furs. Such contracts will be on a cost-incentive basis and will be limited in number according to the quantity of sealskins available for this purpose.

"We hope," said the Secretary, "that our invitation will generate sincere interest in the advancement of processing techniques and in the furtherance of this very valuable product. Revenues from this source are most important in furtherance of the international conservation program for fur seals. Such proceeds, moreover, are shared by the State of Alaska and are important to the economy of that State. Many considerations have prompted the actions which the Department is now taking. Significant among these are: (1) Continuity and stability in supplying fur seal market demands, (2) continuity in participation in sales proceeds by the State of Alaska, (3) desirability of expanding private industrial capabilities in fur seal processing, (4) provision through representative competition of improvements in processing, product diversification, and expanded markets, and (5) international interests of the United States as a participant in the treaty on conservation of fur seals and other pertinent international aspects."

The next sale of United States Government sealskins will be held on April 8 and 9, at which time the Fouke Fur Company will sell at auction about 29,000 Alaska sealskins, of which about 22,000 will be sold for the account of the United States Government. The other 7,000 skins represent Japan's share of the sealskin harvest.

The Alaska fur seals return each summer to the Pribilof Islands in the Bering Sea to breed and bear their young. During this time, the Government harvests some 70,000 to 80,000 surplus young animals which are not required to sustain the total herd at a level between 1,500,000 to 2,000,000 animals which has been determined to be the optimum.

The program for research and management is coordinated through the North Pacific Fur Seal Commission, an international body established by the treaty between the United States, Canada, Japan, and the U.S.S.R., for conservation of the North Pacific fur seals.

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