UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT of the INTERIOR

★ news release

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

For Release OCTOBER 25, 1963

INTERIOR DEPARTMENT TO CALL FOR NEW BIDS ON FUR SEAL CONTRACT

The Department of the Interior announced today that it will soon call for new proposals for a long-term contract for the processing and sale of Government-owned sealskins harvested on Alaska's Pribilof Islands.

The announcement was made by Administrative Assistant Secretary D. Otis Beasley. It follows a decision by the Comptroller General of the United States that a contract between the Interior Department and a joint venture known as Supara, of Chicago, Illinois, executed March 14, 1963, was not valid.

Assistant Secretary Beasley said that Supara has been notified that, in view of the ruling of the Comptroller General, the March 14 contract did not constitute a valid agreement.

Mr. Beasley also announced that the Interior Department had concluded that it would not be necessary to negotiate an interim short-term contract for the processing of the United States share of the 1963 sealskin harvest. Furs still to be processed under a previous contract are sufficient to meet the needs of the fur trade until a new long-term contract can become effective.

The Interior Department's Bureau of Commercial Fisheries recently completed the annual harvest of sealskins on the Pribilof Islands in the Bering Sea, amounting to 85,254 skins.

Under terms of the North Pacific Fur Seal Conservation Convention, Canada and Japan each receive 15 percent of the annual Pribilof sealskin harvest.

The sealskins harvested this year have been brine-cured and barreled, and await shipment from the Pribilofs. Assistant Secretary Beasley said it is anticipated that a new contract will be awarded next spring, and that the new contractor will process pelts from this year's harvest in time for auction to the fur trade in 1965.

x x x

P.N. 37102-63