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FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
Bureau of Commercial Fisheries

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ALASKA SEALSKIN CONTRACT AWARDED TO FOUKE FUR COMPANY

Secretary of the Interior Stewart L. Udall today announced that a contract for processing, promoting, and selling Alaska sealskins for the account of the United States has been awarded the Fouke Fur Company, Greenville, S. C. A Letter of Intent covering the contract was issued by the Department March 31. The new agreement is based on a proposal filed by the company in April 1964.

Secretary Udall said the new pact is based on two major considerations. One provides that seven-eighths of the United States share of the raw sealskins harvested by the United States at the Pribilof Island rookeries from 1963-1967 will be delivered to the Fouke Company. The other relates to the retention of one-eighth of the skins by the Government for use in experimental processing contracts with other interested firms. Skins harvested in 1963 and 1964 were stored in Seattle until terms of the new contract were reached.

Secretary Udall said the Department continues to be concerned with improving processing techniques as well as developing competitive "know-how" in the handling of sealskins.

"Therefore," he said, "we are having up to one-eighth of the skins retained by the Government for use in experimental processing and marketing contracts with other interested firms."

The Department's Bureau of Commercial Fisheries, which manages the Pribilof Island herds, has invited proposals for experimental processing. Qualified firms have until May 17 to respond.

The new contract authorizes the Fouke Fur Company to conduct the semi-annual fur seal auctions through the spring of 1970.

Under terms of the North Pacific Fur Seal Conservation Convention, Canada and Japan each receive 15 percent of the annual sealskin harvest, including skins taken at rookeries managed by the Soviet Union. All four Convention countries are responsible for protecting the fur seals during their extensive migrations on the high seas.

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