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Fur-bearing animals in Alaska. Letter from the Secretary of the Treasury, in response to a resolution of the House calling for information in regard to the lease of the right to take fur seals in Alaska.

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FUR-BEARING ANIMALS IN ALASKA.

LETTER

FROM

THE SECRETARY OF THE TREASURY,

IN RESPONSE TO

A resolution of the House calling for information in regard to the lease of the right to take fur seals in Alaska.

MAY 4, 1888.—Referred to the Committee on Merchant Marine and Fisheries and ordered to be printed.

TREASURY DEPARTMENT,
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY,
Washington, D. C., May 3, 1888.

SIR: I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of a copy of a resolution, adopted on the 27th ultimo, requesting the Secretary of the Treasury—

To inform the House of Representatives what contracts or leases of the right to take fur seals or other fur-bearing animals in Alaska have been made by the Treasury Department, to whom made, for what length of time, for what considerations, and upon what conditions, and when the same will expire; and also to inform the House what sums of money have been expended by the Government to prevent the unlawful killing and extermination of fur seals and fur-bearing animals in Alaska, and for the enforcement of the laws in relation thereto; and what sums have been received by the Government on account of any leases of the right to take fur seals and fur-bearing animals in Alaska, and on account of any and all other Government charges for the taking and shipping of such furs from Alaska; and also to inform the House as to whether or not the terms and conditions of any such contracts or leases for the taking of fur seals and other fur-bearing animals in Alaska have been violated and to what extent; and whether or not other persons and vessels than those authorized by the laws of the United States to do so have been engaged in taking fur seals and other fur-bearing animals in Alaska and transporting such fur from there, and who and to what extent.

In response to said resolution, I have the honor to state, that the lease of the right to take fur seals in Alaska for the term of twenty years from the 1st day of May, 1870, was made on August 31, 1870, to the Alaska Commercial Company, a corporation established under the laws of the State of California, upon conditions and for considerations specified in the copy of the lease herewith submitted, marked A,

and that the condition in the lease relative to a tax of 55 cents per gallon on seal oil was rescinded by a letter dated February 16, 1874, of Hon. W. A. Richardson, then Secretary of the Treasury, a copy of which accompanies the copy of lease.

I have the honor further to state that the total receipts from the sources mentioned in the resolution, from May 1, 1870, to June 30, 1887, were \$5,059,065.67, and the expenditures during the same period \$299,901.94, as shown in detail for each year, in the statement herewith marked B; that the records of this Department so far as I am advised do not show any violation of the terms and conditions of said lease by the lessees, and that other persons and vessels than those authorized by the laws of the United States to do so have been reported and seized for engaging in taking fur seals during the past three years, as exhibited in the statement marked C, also submitted herewith.

Respectfully yours,

C. S. FAIRCHILD,
Secretary.

HON. JOHN G. CARLISLE,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

EXHIBIT A.

Copy of lease from the United States to the Alaska Commercial Company of the right to take fur seals in Alaska, delivered August 31, 1870.

This indenture, in duplicate, made this third day of August, A. D., eighteen hundred and seventy, by and between William A. Richardson, Acting Secretary of the Treasury, in pursuance of an act of Congress, approved July 1st, 1870, entitled "An act to prevent the extermination of fur-bearing animals in Alaska," and the Alaska Commercial Company, a corporation duly established under the laws of the State of California, acting by John F. Miller, its president and agent, in accordance with a resolution of said corporation duly adopted at a meeting of its board of trustees held January 31st, 1870. Witnesseth:

That the said Secretary hereby leases to the said Alaska Commercial Company, without power of transfer, for the term of twenty years from the first day of May, 1870, the right to engage in the business of taking fur seals on the islands of St. George and St. Paul within the Territory of Alaska, and to send a vessel or vessels to said islands for the skins of such seals.

And the said Alaska Commercial Company, in consideration of their right under this lease, hereby covenant and agree to pay for each year during said term, and in proportion during any part thereof, the sum of \$55,000 into the Treasury of the United States, in accordance with the regulations of the Secretary to be made for this purpose under said act, which payment shall be secured by deposit of United States bonds to that amount; and also covenant and agree to pay annually into the Treasury of the United States under said rules and regulations, a revenue tax or duty of \$2 upon each fur-seal skin taken and shipped by them, in accordance with the provisions of the act aforesaid; and also the sum of 62½ cents for each fur-seal skin taken and shipped, and 55 cents per gallon for each gallon of oil obtained from said seals for sale on said island or elsewhere and sold by said company. And also covenant and agree, in accordance with said rules and regulations to furnish, free of charge, the inhabitants of the islands of St. Paul and St. George annually, during said term, 25,000 dried salmon, 60 cords fire-wood, a sufficient quantity of salt, and a sufficient number of barrels for preserving the necessary supply of meat.

And the said lessees also hereby covenant and agree during the term aforesaid, to maintain a school on each island in accordance with said rules and regulations and suitable for the education of the natives of said islands for a period of not less than eight months in each year.

And the said lessees further covenant and agree not to kill upon said island of St. Paul more than 75,000 fur seals, and upon the island of St. George not more than

25,000 fur seals per annum; not to kill any fur seal upon the islands aforesaid in any other month except the months of June, July, September, and October of each year; not to kill such seals at any time by the use of fire-arms or other means tending to drive the seals from said islands; not to kill any female seal or any seal less than one year old; not to kill any seal in the waters adjacent to said islands or on the beaches, cliffs, or rocks where they haul up from the sea to remain.

And the said lessees further covenant and agree to abide by any restriction or limitation upon the right to kill seals under this lease, that the act prescribes or that the Secretary of the Treasury shall judge necessary for the preservation of such seals.

And the said lessees hereby agree that they will not in any way sell, transfer, or assign this lease; and that any transfer, sale, or assignment of the same shall be void and of no effect.

And the said lessees further covenant and agree to furnish to the several masters of the vessels employed by them certified copies of this lease to be presented to the Government revenue officers for the time being in charge of said islands, as the authority of said lessees for the landing and taking said skins.

And the said lessees further covenant and agree that they, or their agents, shall not keep, sell, furnish, give, or dispose of any distilled spirits or spirituous liquors on either of said islands to any of the natives thereof, such person not being a physician and furnishing the same for use as medicine.

And the said lessees further covenant and agree that this lease is accepted subject to all needful rules and regulations which shall at any time or times hereafter be made by the Secretary of the Treasury for the collection and payment of the rentals herein agreed to be paid by said lessees; for the comfort, maintenance, education, and protection of the natives of said islands, and for carrying into effect all the provisions of the act aforesaid, and will abide by and conform to said rules and regulations.

And the said lessees, accepting this lease with a full knowledge of the provisions of the aforesaid act of Congress, further covenant and agree that they will fulfill all the provisions, requirements and limitations of said act, whether herein specifically set out or not.

In witness whereof the parties aforesaid have hereunto set their hands and seals the day and year above written.

WILLIAM A. RICHARDSON, [SEAL.]
Acting Secretary of the Treasury.

ALASKA COMMERCIAL COMPANY, [SEAL.]
By JNO. F. MILLER, *President.*

Executed in the presence of—
J. H. SAVILLE.

TREASURY DEPARTMENT, OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY,
Washington, D. C., February 16, 1874.

SIR: Referring to your letter of the 15th ultimo, relative to the taking of seal-oil on the islands of Saint Paul and Saint George by the Alaska Commercial Company, upon which oil a tax of 55 cents per gallon was agreed to be paid by the lease entered into between the United States and said company, I have to say that upon due consideration I have decided to waive the collection of tax upon such seal-oil as may be taken by said company and shipped from said islands; such waiver to stand in full force until otherwise ordered by the Department.

I am, very respectfully,

WM. A. RICHARDSON,
Secretary.

H. M. HUTCHINSON, Esq.,
Of Alaska Commercial Company, Washington, D. C.

FUR-BEARING ANIMALS IN ALASKA.

EXHIBIT B.

Statement of the receipts and expenditures of the Government relating to seal fisheries of Alaska, as appears from the books of the Register of the Treasury.

RECEIPTS.

From tax on seal-skins and rental for right of taking seal furs in Alaska:

1871	\$101,080.00
1872	322,863.38
1873	307,181.12
1874	327,081.25
1875	317,494.75
1876	317,584.00
1877	291,155.50
1878	253,255.75
1879	317,447.50
1880	317,400.25
1881	317,594.50
1882	316,885.75
1883	317,295.25
1884	251,875.00
1885	317,400.25
1886	317,489.50
1887	317,452.75

5,028,536.50

Sale of seal-skins taken by Government agents, 1874	29,529.17
Forfeiture for unlawful taking fur seals, 1886	1,000.00

EXPENDITURES.

Buildings at seal fisheries, Alaska, 1872	6,000.00
Collecting information respecting fur trade of Alaska, 1875	787.51

Salaries and traveling expenses of agents at seal fisheries, Alaska:

1876	\$2,752.68
1877	8,080.49
1878	10,892.50
1879	16,381.78
1880	9,571.02
1881	4,248.09
1882	15,263.06
1883	11,090.32
1884	13,811.64
1885	13,102.61
1886	7,937.49
1887	16,174.13

129,305.81

Protection of sea-otter hunting grounds and seal fisheries, Alaska:

1878	15,546.00
1879	2,681.52
1880	22,902.88
1881	619.12
1882	19,559.10
1883	20,000.00
1884	25,000.00
1885	25,000.00
1886	15,000.00
1887	17,500.00

163,808.62

TREASURY DEPARTMENT,
Register's Office, May 1, 1888.

W. S. ROSECRANS,
Register.

EXHIBIT C.

List of vessels seized under orders of the Treasury Department.

Date.	Vessel seized.	By what vessel seized.	Commanding officer.
<i>For violation of section 1956, R. S.</i>			
1884.			
Sept. 1	Hamburg schooner Adele.....	Revenue steamer Corwin.....	Capt. M. A. Healy.
1886.			
July 17	American schooner San Diego.....	do.....	Capt. C. A. Abbey.
Aug. 1	British schooner Thornton.....	do.....	Do.
1	British schooner Carolena.....	do.....	Do.
2	British schooner Onward.....	do.....	Do.
1887.			
July 2	British schooner Anna Beek.....	Revenue steamer Rush.....	Capt. L. G. Shepard.
9	British schooner Wm. P. Seyward.....	do.....	Do.
12	British schooner Dolphin.....	do.....	Do.
16	American schooner Lilly L.....	do.....	Do.
17	British schooner Grace.....	do.....	Do.
Aug. 6	American schooner Ellen.....	do.....	Do.
6	American schooner Annie.....	do.....	Do.
6	British schooner Alfred Adams.....	do.....	Do.
8	American schooner Alpha.....	do.....	Do.
8	American schooner Kate and Anna.....	do.....	Do.
18	American schooner San Jose.....	do.....	Do.
25	American schooner Allie I. Algar.....	Revenue steamer Bear.....	Capt. W. A. Healy.
25	British schooner Ada.....	do.....	Do.
Sept. 2	American schooner Sylvia Handy.....	do.....	Do.
<i>For violation of section 1961, R. S.</i>			
1887.			
June 30	American schooner Challenge.....	Revenue steamer Rush.....	Capt. L. G. Shepard.

1885, no seizure.

H. Ex. 296—2