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Information relating to fur seal in Bering Sea. Letter from the Secretary of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to House resolution of the 23d ultimo, additional information relating to fur seal in Bering Sea.

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INFORMATION RELATING TO FUR SEAL IN BERING SEA.

LETTER

FROM

THE SECRETARY OF THE TREASURY,

TRANSMITTING,

Pursuant to House resolution of the 23d ultimo, additional information relating to fur seal in Bering Sea.

FEBRUARY 11, 1895.—Referred to the Committee on Ways and Means and ordered to be printed.

TREASURY DEPARTMENT,
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY,
Washington, D. C., February 7, 1895.

SIR: I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of House resolution dated the 23d ultimo, the text of which is as follows:

Resolved, That the Secretary of the Treasury be requested to furnish the House, in addition to the information called for in its resolution of December eleventh, eighteen hundred and ninety-four, with all information in the Treasury in regard to the taking of fur seal in Behring Sea since January first, eighteen hundred and eighty-nine, including all contracts made in relation thereto, any suits or claims against the United States growing out of or based on such contracts, the loss of revenue from suspensions of sealing, and an itemized statement of the expenditures of the United States in relation to the Paris arbitration. Also what expense the United States has incurred and is paying in consequence of the treaty for the Government of Samoa.

In reply thereto, and in the order of the inquiry, I have to state, in regard to the taking of fur seal in Bering Sea since January 1, 1889, that there were taken by pelagic sealers during the years 1889 to 1894, inclusive, in Bering Sea and the North Pacific Ocean 489,154 seal skins. Of these 89,099 were taken in Bering Sea. These figures are obtained from calculations based upon the number of seal skins offered for sale in the markets of London, to which place all skins are shipped, upon figures collected from the various ports in this country and Canada at which seal skins are entered by pelagic sealing vessels, and upon other reliable estimates. The tabulated statement hereto annexed shows in detail the number of skins that were taken each year during the period in question.

In reply to the request for information concerning all contracts made by the Government with reference to the taking of fur seals, I have to inform you that in 1870 a contract was entered into between the Alaska Commercial Company and the United States, under which said company was granted the exclusive right of taking fur seals on the Pribi-

of Islands in Alaska. The company agreed to pay for the privilege the sum of \$55,000 per annum as rental, \$2 as internal-revenue tax for each seal skin taken, and in addition 62½ cents for each seal skin taken. This contract continued for a period of twenty years, and the number of seals which were allowed to be taken it was stipulated should not exceed 100,000 per annum. Upon the expiration of this contract, and pursuant to the provisions of chapter 3, title 23, of the Revised Statutes, the Secretary of the Treasury on March 12, 1890, executed a contract between the United States and the North American Commercial Company, under which said company was granted the exclusive right of taking seals for a term of twenty years from May, 1890.

Under this contract the company agreed to pay to the United States each year as annual rental the sum of \$60,000 and, in addition thereto, a revenue tax of \$2 per skin for every seal skin taken and shipped, and a further sum of \$7.62½ each for every seal skin taken and shipped from said islands. The company also agreed to take proper measures for the maintenance, care, and comfort of the native inhabitants on said islands. It was stipulated that for the first year the number of seals taken by them should not exceed 60,000. No mention was made of the number which might be taken after the first year; the right to regulate the number to be killed was, however, vested in the Secretary.

During the first year of its occupancy, 1890, the company took within the limits of the sealing season 20,995 skins. In the settlement with this Department, of the date of April 1, 1891, of the amount due the Government under its lease the company was allowed to pay, in consideration of the reduced catch, as annual rental the sum of \$12,597 in discharge of the sum of \$60,000 which they were obligated to pay by the terms of the lease.

Under the operation of the so-called *modus vivendi*, which became operative from the date of its signature, June 15, 1891, the taking of seals was prohibited, except 7,500 each year, which were to be taken on the Pribilof Islands for the subsistence of the natives, and in view of this restriction the then Secretary of the Treasury, on June 27, 1892, and January 25, 1893, respectively, in computing the amount due the United States from the North American Commercial Company under its lease, reduced during the years 1891 and 1892 the stipulated amount of \$60,000 rental and the bonus of \$7.62½ per skin to an amount lessened in the proportion that the maximum number of 100,000 bore to the number taken on the islands by the company.

From an examination of the contract between the United States and the North American Commercial Company I became convinced, upon the advice of the Attorney-General, that the action of my predecessors in making reductions in rent and bonus which the company agreed to pay under its contract was without warrant of law, and that said company was indebted to the United States in amounts remaining due and unpaid under its contract. The company was therefore informed by me that there was due from it as lessees of the right to take fur seals on the Seal Islands for 1893 the sum of \$132,187.50, which amount includes the rental of \$60,000, the tax on the number of skins taken at \$2 each, and the bonus on the same number of skins at \$7.62½ per skin. A demand was also made upon the company for the payment, on account of the years 1890, 1891 and 1892, of the difference between them of the amounts paid by them during said years at a reduced rental and bonus and the whole amount which under its contract the company agreed to pay, the aggregate of such years, together with interest thereon, amounting to \$320,807.31.

The company refusing to accede to either of these demands, but offering in settlement of its indebtedness for the year 1893 the sum of \$23,789.50, suit was commenced in the United States district court for the southern district of New York to recover the whole amounts claimed by the Government as being due from said company for the year 1893. This suit is still pending.

In reply to your request for information as to any suits or claims against the United States growing out of or based on the above contracts, I have to inform you that no suits have been filed against the United States, but the North American Commercial Company has made a claim for \$500,000, which amount it alleges it has been damaged by reason of the restrictions placed upon its catch.

The resolution further requests information as to the loss of revenue from suspension of sealing. In reply, I have the honor to state that at no time since Alaska was purchased by the United States has sealing on the Pribilof Islands been entirely suspended. Undoubtedly, if there had been no pelagic sealing, the number of seals which could have been taken on the islands would have been very greatly increased. It would be impracticable, however, to estimate exactly what such number would be to-day under these conditions.

In reply to the request that I furnish the House with an itemized statement of the expenses incurred by the United States in connection with the Tribunal of Arbitration at Paris, I have to inform you that a statement of these expenditures was furnished, upon request, by the Secretary of State, a copy of which is inclosed herewith, from which it appears that out of the total amount of \$230,000 appropriated for that purpose, the sum of \$224,514.39 has been expended.

Expenses of the Tribunal of Arbitration of Paris.

Baron de Courcel	\$2,412.50	
G. W. W. Gram	2,412.50	
G. W. W. Gram, personal expenses	1,737.00	
Marquis Venosta	2,412.50	
Marquis Venosta, personal expenses	2,991.50	
		\$11,966.00

ARBITRATORS.

John M. Harlan	13,000.00	
John T. Morgan	13,373.75	
		26,373.75

COUNSEL.

James C. Carter	15,000.00	
James C. Carter, special appropriation	15,000.00	
E. J. Phelps	16,000.00	
E. J. Phelps, special appropriation	15,000.00	
Henry W. Blodgett	12,698.82	
Frederic R. Coudert	15,427.97	
F. W. Whitridge	3,500.00	
William Williams	5,848.81	
Robert Lansing	5,955.00	
Russell Duane	1,365.42	
A. Porter Morse	500.00	
John B. Moore	100.00	
		106,396.02

AGENT.

John W. Foster	15,000.00
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DISBURSING CLERK.

E. W. Halford	1,800.00
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Expenses of the Tribunal of Arbitration of Paris—Continued.

CLERKS.

John T. Coughlin	\$1,020.00	
Hubbard T. Smith	1,256.50	
Francis S. Jones	1,312.68	
William H. Lewis	1,824.50	
John W. Hulse	1,955.75	
J. Stanley Brown	1,965.00	
E. H. McDermott	1,421.06	
		\$10,755.49

MISCELLANEOUS.

Clerical services	8,967.65	
Traveling expenses, hotel bills, affidavits, etc.	6,209.07	
Printing	18,375.53	
Ocean transportation	1,594.00	
Photographs, maps, etc	2,629.74	
Stationery	176.91	
Cablegrams	478.80	
Freight and expressage	951.18	
Hotel Continental, Paris	8,764.72	
Loss by exchange	219.00	
Miscellaneous, including documents, press clippings, cab hire, boxes, books, and office expenses in Paris (\$155.53)	3,866.13	
		52,222.73
Total		224,514.39
Amount appropriated		230,000.00
Amount expended		224,514.39
Balance		5,485.61

Statement of number of seal skins taken by pelagic sealing vessels during the years 1889 to 1894, both inclusive.

Years.	North Pacific Ocean and Bering Sea.	Bering Sea.
1889	43,158	15,497
1890	51,814	18,976
1891	69,788	23,041
1892	73,394	Modus vivendi.
1893	109,000	Modus vivendi.
1894	142,000	81,585
Total	489,154	89,099

NOTE.—These figures include seals caught off the Japan and Russian coasts. Prior to 1893, the Japanese and Russian catch can not be accurately distinguished from the catch on the American side of the North Pacific Ocean and Bering Sea.

Statement of seals killed on Pribilof Island.

Year.	Number.
1889	102,617
1890	25,701
1891	14,406
1892	7,509
1893	7,390
1894	15,033
Total	172,656

Replying to that portion of the resolution relating to the expense incurred by the United States in consequence of the treaty for the Government of Samoa, I have the honor to inclose copy of a statement

submitted to me by the honorable the Secretary of State of expenditures made from the appropriations for the protection of the interests of the United States in the Samoan Islands. The aggregate of the expenditures, it will be seen, is \$71,346.19. In submitting this statement the Secretary of State calls attention to the fact that the German Government has recently notified this Government that its share of the expense of the imprisonment of Mataafa and his subordinate chiefs on one of the islands of the German group amounts to 5,000 marks (\$1,190), for which an account will soon be presented.

Respectfully, yours,

J. G. CARLISLE, *Secretary.*

Hon. CHARLES F. CRISP,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

H. Ex. 33—18

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