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FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

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PRICES UP SLIGHTLY AT GOVERNMENT FUR-SEAL AUCTION

Government-owned fur seal skins registered a small advance averaging 3.4 percent at the semiannual fur auction held in St. Louis, Mo., on October 10, Secretary of the Interior Douglas McKay announced today.

The sale was well attended by both United States and Canadian buyers. Bidding was rapid and orderly.

The grand average for all skins sold for the account of the United States Government was \$94.14. At the April 1955 sale the grand average was \$92.81.

A total of 24,610 skins, products of the sealing industry administered by the Department of the Interior's Fish and Wildlife Service on the Pribilof Islands of Alaska, brought \$2,316,735. This compares with 24,746 skins sold for \$2,296,757 at the April auction, and 26,590 skins sold for \$2,045,326 at the October 1954 auction.

Of the Alaska skins, 15,152 were dyed "Matara" brown, 1,528 were "Safari" brown (a lighter brown), and 7,930 were black. The Matara-processed skins averaged \$91.89, an increase of 4.6 percent above the April auction. The Safari skins sold for an average of \$68.01, up 6.5 percent. The black skins averaged \$103.46, up 1.1 percent.

A total of 1,330 Matara- and Safari-processed skins, representing part of the United States share of skins taken off the Japanese coast in 1952 as part of an international research program, averaged \$46.52, for a total of \$61,868.

In addition to the United States skins, 4,325 Cape of Good Hope fur seal skins were sold for the South African Government at an average of \$32.98, up 8.4 percent. Six hundred and eighty Uruguay fur seal skins were sold for the Uruguayan Government at an average of \$44.30.

Prior to the opening of the sale, Mr. G. Donald Gibbins, President of the Fouke Fur Company, which has the contract for processing and selling the Government-owned skins, announced that after several years of negotiation the company had acquired property adjacent to its plant at 1328 South Kings Highway which will provide new auction room and other facilities. The additional space will be ready by next fall.

The tentative date for the next auction is April 16, 1956. At that time the quantities to be offered are expected to be slightly in excess of offerings at yesterday's sale.

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