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FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

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PRICES CLIMB AT GOVERNMENT FUR-SEAL AUCTION

An increase of 6.3 percent in prices of United States fur-seal skins marked the semiannual auction of Government-owned furs at St. Louis on October 5, Secretary of the Interior Fred A. Seaton announced today.

A total of 26,890 skins, products of the sealing industry administered by the Department of the Interior's Fish and Wildlife Service on the Pribilof Islands, brought \$2,714,852. This compares with 27,017 skins sold for \$2,519,994 at the April 17 sale. The grand average for all skins sold for the account of the United States Government was \$100.96; at the April sale it was \$93.27. The grand average at the October 1955 sale was \$94.14.

The sale was well attended by United States, Canadian, and European buyers who commented favorably on the quality of the skins offered. Bidding was spirited because few skins are in the hands of dealers at the present time.

Of the Alaska skins, 17,555 were dyed "Matara" (brown), 419 were "Safari" brown (a lighter brown), and 8,916 were blacks. The Matara skins brought an average of \$97.26, an increase of 5.5 percent over the April auction. The Safari skins sold for an average of \$76.81, an increase of 18.3 percent. The black skins averaged \$109.38, an upward change of 7.25 percent over the April sale price of \$103.18.

In addition to the United States skins, 3,699 Cape of Good Hope fur-seal skins were sold for the account of the Government of the Union of South Africa at an average of \$34.33, an increase of 20.1 percent from the last sale. Four hundred and fourteen Uruguay fur-seal skins were sold for the Government of Uruguay at an average of \$48.78, a slight increase over the April price of \$45.12.

Prior to the auction an announcement was made that the Pribilof Island fur seal take for 1956 would amount to approximately 122,000 skins.

The next auction is scheduled tentatively for April 5, 1957, at which time the normal quota of United States skins to be offered for sale will be increased by about 3,000.

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