UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT of the INTERIOR

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FIVE FIRMS SEEK UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT SEALSKIN PROCESSING CONTRACT

Five firms, one of them in London, England, met the November 1, 1962 deadline for submitting proposals for processing and selling Alaska sealskins for the United States Government, the Department of the Interior announced today.

The Department stated that no contract will be awarded until the various proposals have been carefully evaluated and that it will be some time in 1963 before negotiation of a new contract can proceed. There are two phases to the evaluation: The first phase relates to the quality of work which the prospective contractor can produce and the second requires proof of his ability to fulfill the requirements of a contract. The U. S. Bureau of Standards will make physical and chemical tests of the sealskins submitted with the proposals. A panel of consultants will also make separate, subjective evaluations. The invitation for proposals to handle the sealskins for the Government follows last winter's announcement that the Department of the Interior was canceling its contract with the Fouke Fur Company of St. Louis on December 31, 1962. The Fouke Fur Company has processed the skins for many years.

As a basis for a new contract, the Fish and Wildlife Service's Bureau of Commercial Fisheries--the agency charged with managing the Alaska fur seal resource--issued on June 20, 1962, a prospectus for processing and selling these skins. The prospectus listed four steps in the specifications--preliminary processing of the sealskins on the Pribilof Islands, processing the skins from the cured stage to the finished luxury skin, developing the market, and selling the finished skins at public auction. This prospectus was distributed to all interested firms and individuals. Raw skins were supplied to 11 firms and individuals for use in developing an adequate process.

The firms that submitted proposals are:

Proposals for more than one operation:

1. Pierre Laclede Fur Co., St. Louis, Mo.
2. Supara, Inc., Chicago, Ill.
3. Fouke Fur Company, Greenville, S. C.
4. C. W. Martin and Sons Limited, London, England
5. Jonas Brothers of Seattle and Alaska, Seattle, Wash.

The firms interested in conducting the auctions only are:

1. New York Auction Company (Minnesota) Inc., Minneapolis, Minn.
2. New York Auction Company, Inc., New York, N. Y.
3. The Seattle Fur Exchange, Seattle, Wash.

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