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January 6, 1948.

The Secretary of State for External Affairs announced today that the United States and Canada had exchanged notes providing for continuing protection of the fur seal herd of the North Pacific. The exchange of notes effected December 26, 1947, will continue the present Provisional Fur Seal Agreement between those two countries until a permanent convention can be arranged.

The original Sealing Convention for the Protection and Preservation of the Fur Seal Herd of the North Pacific Ocean was signed in 1911 by the United States, Great Britain, Japan, and Russia. In October 1941, this Convention was abrogated by Japan. During the war the Governments of Canada and the United States felt it advisable that the two countries should continue the protection of the herd. They therefore entered into a provisional Agreement for the duration of the emergency and twelve months thereafter in order to carry on the fur seal conservation program during the war.

The Fur Seal Conservation Program was designed to rehabilitate the stock of fur seals in the North Pacific, which had become seriously depleted by the practice of ruthless pelagic sealing. The original convention was intended to rebuild the herd, primarily by the prohibition of pelagic sealing. In 1912, the first year that the Convention was in effect, the size of the Pribilof Islands herd was about 216,000; by sound conservation and management practices the herd has now increased to over 3,600,000, according to the annual census taken in August, 1947. The sealing operations in these Islands are administered by the Fish and Wildlife Service of the United States Department of the Interior.

Canada receives 20 per cent of the fur seal skins, which in the fiscal year 1946-47 yielded net returns to the Government of Canada of \$632,722.00.