

House Ex. Doc. No. 132, Fifty-third Congress, third session.

## LETTER

FROM

# THE SECRETARY OF STATE,

TRANSMITTING,

*Pursuant to House resolution dated December 15, the correspondence touching the Bering Sea controversy.*

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DECEMBER 21, 1894.—Referred to the Committee on Foreign Affairs and ordered to be printed.

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### THE SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES:

The undersigned is directed by the President to respond to the resolution adopted by your honorable body on the 15th instant, requesting the Secretary of State "to communicate to the House of Representatives, if not inconsistent with the interests of the public service, all correspondence, reports, and other documents not heretofore made public touching the payment by the United States of \$425,000 to Great Britain for damages growing out of the controversy as to fur seals in Bering Sea or the seizure of British vessels engaged in taking seals in those waters."

The undersigned accordingly has the honor to communicate to the House of Representatives copies of the correspondence exchanged on the subject covered by the resolution, in which will be found a statement of the claims filed by Great Britain for damages sustained by British subjects by reason of the seizure of their sealing vessels in Bering Sea or of being warned to cease operations therein.

The Paris Tribunal of Arbitration held that the United States had no right of protection or property in the fur seals in Bering Sea outside the ordinary 3-mile limit.

Article 8 of the convention of February 29, 1892, whereby the questions which had arisen between the two Governments concerning the jurisdictional rights of the United States in the waters of Bering Sea were submitted to arbitration, recited that the high contracting parties had been unable to agree upon a reference which would include the question of the liability of each for the injuries alleged to have been sustained by the other, or by its citizens, in connection with the claims presented and urged by it, and that, being solicitous that this subordinate question should not interrupt or longer delay the submission and determination of the main questions, they had agreed "that either may submit to the Arbitrators any question of fact involved in said