

passes of the Aleutian Islands, &c., and asking that a revenue vessel should be sent to protect the fishery. To this Mr. George S. Boutwell, who was then Secretary of the Treasury at Washington, replied, saying, '*I do not see that the United States would have the jurisdiction or power to drive off parties going up there for that purpose, unless they made such attempt within a marine league of the shore.*'

The 100,000 skins or less which were taken every year by the Alaska Commercial Company from the Pribylov Islands about supplied the market, and were worth about \$7½ a skin in 1885-87; the schooners, however, that escaped capture in 1887 put about 30,000 additional skins on the market, and this brought the price down to \$5. The Alaska Commercial Company was very influential, and it being evident their success was likely to be seriously interfered with commercially, an attempt was made to close the Behring Sea. The lease of this company came to an end a year or two ago, and the islands are now let to another company who made a higher bid.

There is no doubt that many female seals are killed by the schooners, and that it is not easy always to distinguish the females on the sea, when only their heads are above water. If this, however, is allowed to go on, there is grave danger of the species being eventually exterminated, as has nearly been the case with the sea otter. On the other hand, everyone has a right to fish and do so as he pleases in the open sea, and it is most important this right should not be interfered with.

The arbitrators now sitting at Paris for the settlement of this question consist of—British: Lord Hannen Sir J. D. Thompson; United States: Mr. Justice Haslan, Senator J. F. Morgan; French: Baron de Coureel; Italian: Marquis Visconti Venosta; Swedish: Mr. Gram; and whatever may be their finding, it is to be hoped that, although it is a most difficult question, some international agreement may be come to, to prevent the indiscriminate killing of female seals.

The only place where the fur seal is known to breed, in addition to the Pribylov Islands, is on Behring and Copper Islands, off the Russian coast. Two schooners were seized off these islands, but far from land, by Russian cruisers last year; so there is also a question to be settled with the Russian Government.

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