

output of the Commander Islands has been reached, and probably will have to be decreased in the future. There must be through these regulations some curtailment of the contribution of the sealing schooners, and the result of all this will be that seal skins will demand a higher price. Should that price reach a figure which will compensate for the obstacles which the regulations place in the way of the pelagic sealer, then we will have the changed conditions referred to, and pelagic sealing with its attendant evils will go on as before. If there is doubt in the minds of anyone upon this point it is only necessary to turn to the history of the sea otter, which, though nearly exterminated, is as eagerly sought after to-day as it ever was, simply because the ever-increasing price the trade is willing to pay for its skin still compensates for the small numbers now taken. There is no reason to believe that the career of the fur seal will be different from that of the sea otter.

Another possible source of changed conditions lies in the regulations themselves, for they provide, as we have seen, for their own modification every five years, and the pressure will come heaviest from the pelagic sealers' side of the case. Indeed, the regulations require that each pelagic sealer—an interested party—shall keep records which are to be made available when the question of modifications of the regulations arises. Now, while there never was a more fearless and courageous set of men than these pelagic sealers, it will be something entirely new in their history if their records do not appeal in the strongest possible terms for a modification of the regulations in their favor.

The final question that arises in regard to these regulations is, will they, as they now stand, ever be put in operation? The interested powers have yet to agree upon measures for giving effect to them. Is it likely that, when a neutral tribunal found the making of regulations so tedious and difficult, the interested powers will be able without interminable delay and possibly irreconcilable conflict to agree upon "concurrent measures" putting them in force? England has won on the great law points of the case, but these regulations are objectionable to Canada, for they bear somewhat heavily upon pelagic sealing; and these "concurrent measures" offer tempting fighting ground for securing their modification in favor of the Dominion.

Under the circumstances it is only to be expected that the arts of diplomacy will be vigorously exercised in that direction. There is but one course, however, for the United States to pursue—permit no modifications, stand squarely for the prompt carrying out of these regulations, and let time reveal how much value they possess for protecting the seal herd. England will champion no plan of greater protection; she has all to gain and nothing to lose from delay, and it will require all the energy and firmness of the Executive to put effectively in force the regulations as adopted by the tribunal.

CONCLUSIONS.

After more than two years of close study of this question it is my conviction that the only way in which the world can secure the largest benefit commercially from the fur seal wherever found is by taking the surplus immature males upon land under the most favorable conditions suggested by experience; that securing seals by any other methods introduces the fatal element of indiscriminate killing; that the life of the herd is jeopardized in proportion to the number of females killed; that the injury inflicted on the northern herds by pelagic sealing increases from January to August, grows greater as Bering Sea is approached, and