

# Calendar No. 856

69TH CONGRESS }  
1st Session }

SENATE

{ REPORT  
No. 847

TO AUTHORIZE CERTAIN ALTERATIONS TO THE SIX COAL-BURNING BATTLESHIPS TO PROVIDE BETTER ARRANGEMENTS FOR AIRPLANES

MAY 17 (calendar day, MAY 18), 1926.—Ordered to be printed

Mr. HALE, from the Committee on Naval Affairs, submitted the following

## REPORT

[To accompany H. R. 10503]

The Committee on Naval Affairs, to which was referred the bill (H. R. 10503) to authorize certain alterations to the six coal-burning battleships for the purpose of providing better launching and handling arrangements for airplanes, having considered the same, report favorably thereon without amendment and recommend that the bill do pass.

Funds having been provided for modernizing the six coal-burning battleships (*Florida*, *Arkansas*, *Texas*, *Utah*, *Wyoming*, and *New York*), to consist of three specific alterations—first, the installation of additional protection against submarine attack; second, the installation of anti-air attack deck protection; and, third, the conversion of such vessels to oil burning; and in addition for the *New York* and *Texas*, the purchase, manufacture, and installation of new fire-control systems, the time is opportune during this modernization to do further work in order to make them more efficient in their missions.

The bill provides for the installation of airplane catapults and handling arrangements on the battleships *New York*, *Texas*, *Arkansas*, *Wyoming*, *Florida*, and *Utah*, at a total cost for all six battleships not to exceed \$1,350,000. In the interest of economy it is desired to undertake the installation of catapults on the several vessels at the time these vessels are laid up for the purpose of accomplishing the alterations authorized by the act of December 18, 1924.

The installation of airplane catapults was not requested at the time the previous alterations were authorized, as no suitable location could be found for the type of catapult then in use. The catapult then in use was of the air-impulse type and was not considered suitable for installation on a turret, which is the only location available on these vessels. Since that date the development of a powder-impulse catapult has been brought to successful issue, and catapults of this type are being installed on the turrets of our latest battleships and

have proved a success in actual service. The installation proposed on the battleships listed above is the same as is being adopted for the later battleships.

Airplanes are now assigned to the six battleships, but, due to the absence of catapults, the planes must be lowered to the water and take off from the water. This method of handling airplanes requires the ship to stop in order to lower the airplane to the water. Unless the sea is fairly smooth, the airplane can not take off, and actual experience in service has demonstrated that weather that causes no interference whatever with launching an airplane from a catapult will prevent an airplane rising from the water. Without the catapults, therefore, the movements of the vessel itself when approaching the enemy are seriously hampered and, except under the most favorable conditions of weather, the vessel is deprived of the use of its airplanes when the need is most urgent.

The value of airplanes for service with the fleet has been amply demonstrated and the proposed alteration constitutes a very important military improvement well worth the expenditure involved. The installation of catapults on the turrets of these vessels necessitates a change in the mainmasts and also the relocation of some of the antiaircraft guns. These changes, while somewhat increasing the cost of the work, give a better arrangement of the antiaircraft battery and an improved radio installation.

The bill provides that the funds appropriated for the alterations already authorized to these six battleships be made available also for the installation of the catapults. The alterations authorized by the act of December 18, 1924, are now under way on the *Texas*, *Arkansas*, and *Florida* and will, it is estimated, be completed in the late fall of the present year. It is desired to proceed promptly with the catapult work so that when the battleships are again placed in service they will carry the appliances necessary for the effective use of their airplanes.

In order that, when these vessels leave the navy yards after completion of the alterations already authorized, it be not necessary that they return shortly thereafter for the further work involved in incorporating the alterations covered by this bill, the additional changes now proposed should be undertaken in the several coal-burning battleships during the time those vessels are laid up for the alterations authorized by the act of December 18, 1924. This latter mentioned work is now under way on the *Florida*, *Arkansas*, and *Texas*, and will, it is estimated, be completed in November, 1926. If the additional alterations now contemplated are to be completed on those vessels within the time available, it will be necessary to start the work on those three vessels prior to July 1, 1926. It is planned to make the other three battleships—*Utah*, *Wyoming*, and *New York*—available for the alterations already authorized beginning September, 1926, and if the additional alterations are to be completed within the same period they must be started well in advance of July 1, 1927. The foregoing plan would require the expenditure of the total amount requested for the additional alterations about as follows:

Fiscal year 1926.....	\$200, 000
Fiscal year 1927.....	700, 000
Fiscal year 1928.....	450, 000
Total.....	1, 350, 000