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SENATE

} REPORT
No. 934

CONSTRUCTION OF 10 VESSELS FOR COAST GUARD

MAY 26, 1926.—Ordered to be printed

Mr. JONES of Washington, from the Committee on Commerce, submitted the following

REPORT

[To accompany H. R. 5026]

The Committee on Commerce, to whom was referred the bill (H. R. 5026) to provide for the construction of 10 vessels for the Coast Guard, have considered the same and report thereon with an amendment, and as so amended, recommend that the bill do pass.

Amend the bill as follows:

Line 7, change the period to a colon and add the following clause: "Provided, That the equipment be bought in open competition."

The bill has the approval of the Department of the Treasury, as will appear by the annexed communication.

The report of the House on this bill is attached to and made a part of this report.

TREASURY DEPARTMENT,
Washington, May 24, 1926.

HON. WESLEY L. JONES,
Chairman Committee on Commerce,
United States Senate.

MY DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: Receipt is acknowledged of your communication of May 21, 1926, referring to me a copy of the bill (H. R. 5026) to provide for the construction of 10 vessels for the Coast Guard and requesting me to furnish the committee with such suggestions as may be deemed proper touching the merits of the bill and the propriety of its passage.

I will call attention to the fact that bill H. R. 5026 is identical with Senate bill 1382, which was introduced by you on December 14, 1925, and upon which I commented at some length in my report to your committee under date of January 4, 1926, and stated that this department strongly recommends the passage of the bill.

In view of the urgent need of the Coast Guard for these vessels to enable it to meet the proper demands of the American merchant marine for the protection and assistance that the Coast Guard is expected to furnish. I heartily approve the bill and express the earnest hope that it may be favorably considered by the Senate during the present session of Congress.

Respectfully,

A. W. MELLON,
Secretary of the Treasury.

[House Report No. 1021, Sixty-ninth Congress, first session]

The Committee on Interstate and Foreign Commerce, to whom was referred the bill (H. R. 5026) to provide for the construction of 10 vessels for the Coast Guard, having considered the same, report thereon with a recommendation that it pass.

The Coast Guard is one of the finest and most valuable of Government services. It is not necessary here to recite its splendid history, which goes back for 135 years. The purpose of this bill is to authorize the construction of some new vessels which it greatly needs and has needed for a number of years. These new vessels are needed for the performance of the normal duties of the Coast Guard, quite independent of the additional duty imposed in the prevention of liquor smuggling. This additional duty of maintaining a rum blockade has, of course, increased the need. The Secretary of the Treasury in every annual report for five or six years has stressed the need for this new construction. Extracts from these reports will be found in the printed hearings held on this bill. The message of the President transmitting the Budget for 1927 contains the following statement:

"It is also proposed to recommend to the Congress that legislation be enacted which will authorize the construction of 10 new Coast Guard cutters which will cost approximately \$9,000,000. While the initial cost of these cutters is large, we will effect an economy, as they will replace the destroyers now being used and which are expensive of operation. The normal functions of the Coast Guard alone require these additional cutters so that their construction will serve a twofold purpose. Every available resource of the Government will be employed for prohibition enforcement. The recommendations which I propose to make to the Congress are for the purpose of increasing this available force. Such reinforcement is needed. It should be provided."

Information in detail as to the present vessel equipment will be found in the printed hearings, copies of which are available.

The bill is strongly recommended by the Secretary of the Treasury, who sets out the situation clearly and forcefully in the following letter:

TREASURY DEPARTMENT,
Washington, January 4, 1926.

HON. JAMES S. PARKER,
*Chairman Committee on Interstate and Foreign Commerce,
House of Representatives.*

MY DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: Receipt is acknowledged of your communication of December 16, 1925, submitting to me the bill, H. R. 5026, "To provide for the construction of 10 vessels for the Coast Guard," for a report thereon, and for such views as I may desire to communicate.

The Coast Guard is in great need of the 10 vessels contemplated by the bill for the efficient performance of the important and varied duties with which the service is charged.

In general, the duties of the Coast Guard, aside from the prevention of liquor smuggling from the sea, may be classified as follows:

1. Rendering assistance to vessels in distress and saving life and property.
2. Operating as a part of the Navy in time of war, or when the President shall so direct.
3. Destruction or removal of wrecks, derelicts, and other floating dangers to navigation.
4. International ice patrol in the vicinity of the Grand Banks off Newfoundland.
5. Enforcement of law and regulations governing the anchorage of vessels in navigable waters.
6. Protection of the customs revenue.
7. Protection of the seal and other fisheries in Alaska, etc.
8. Enforcement of law to provide for safety of life on navigable waters during regattas and marine parades.
9. Enforcement of navigation and other laws governing merchant vessels and motor boats.
10. Extending medical aid to American vessels engaged in deep-sea fisheries.
11. Enforcement of laws relating to quarantine and neutrality.
12. Suppression of mutinies on merchant vessels.
13. Enforcement of sponge fishing law.

While the foregoing represent the principal duties, it is difficult to enumerate all the tasks that fall to the service, for it is essentially an emergency service, and it seems to be generally recognized that all the great departments of the Govern-

ment should call upon the Coast Guard for any special work of a maritime nature for which no other vessels are especially maintained or are available.

It is perfectly evident that the duty of rendering assistance to vessels in distress at sea and of affording the aid to the merchant marine which it rightfully expects from the Coast Guard, the duty of destroying or removing derelicts, often found at long distances from the coast, the very important duty of maintaining the international ice patrol in the bad weather prevailing on the Grand Banks, and the valuable and arduous work of the service in Bering Sea and Alaskan waters, require for their efficient performance first-class, able, sea-going ships and an adequate number of them. The services of Coast Guard vessels are required on the Atlantic coast, on the Gulf coast, on the Pacific coast, on the Great Lakes, in the waters of Porto Rico, and in the waters of the Hawaiian Islands. The international ice patrol demands the use of two of the ablest ships for a large part of the year. The protection of the seal herds and fisheries and the various humanitarian services rendered in Alaskan waters necessitate the withdrawal of several vessels from the Pacific coast each year for long periods, thus leaving that coast inadequately protected. You are doubtless aware that annually the President designates the seagoing cutters on the Atlantic coast to cruise actively during the winter season, for the specific purpose of rendering assistance to mariners in distress.

In addition to the duties above enumerated, the Coast Guard has been assigned the tremendous task of preventing the smuggling of liquor along 10,000 miles of American coast line. The resources of the service have been augmented for this law enforcement work by the acquisition of a considerable number of small craft (patrol and picket boats) and 20 old destroyers, 1 mine sweeper, and 1 seagoing tug obtained from the Navy Department. The Coast Guard is making steady and gratifying progress in breaking up the smuggling of liquor into the United States from the sea, and results accomplished have fully justified the temporary enlargement that has been authorized for this work.

The Coast Guard now has had large experience in operating against rum vessels off our coasts, and an outstanding feature of that experience is the imperative need for first-class seagoing vessels to scout at long distances offshore for rum vessels and to take care of the patrol boats offshore and to supervise and direct them. The patrol boats were intended to cruise along the shore and to picket rum ships lying at a reasonable distance, say, 20 or 30 miles, off the coast. As a result of the successful operations of the Coast Guard the foreign rum vessels have now adopted tactics that require the Coast Guard craft to go often long distances offshore, thus making the work of the small patrol boats much more difficult and hazardous.

The Coast Guard must have sizable, sturdy, and habitable craft to scout over wide expanses of sea area in order to locate rum vessels and to assist and safeguard the small patrol craft offshore. The operation of small patrol boats off the North Atlantic coast in the wintertime is attended by considerable risk to human life, and larger vessels should be available to succeed them when necessary. Quite recently the crews of two patrol boats had to be taken off by passing ocean liners, one of which stood by all night to rescue the Coast Guard men. The crew of another patrol boat had to abandon their vessel, and the craft has never been recovered. The courage, endurance, and fortitude of the crews of these patrol boats, operating offshore under dangerous and most arduous conditions, are worthy of the highest commendation, and the men deserve the protection and moral support that the known presence of a cutter within a reasonable distance would afford.

The enlargement of the Coast Guard for law enforcement work did not include authorization of the construction of any first-class cutters. In my report for the fiscal year ended June 30, 1923, I recommended, with a view to lessening the smuggling of liquor into the country, that funds be appropriated that would permit the acquisition of 20 additional seagoing Coast Guard cutters. In lieu of these 20 cutters, 20 old destroyers were transferred from the Navy and reconditioned and placed in service in the Coast Guard. While destroyers are a decided asset in combating the smuggling of liquor on the coasts, they are unsuitable for general Coast Guard duty and are entirely unfitted for the important rescue and assistance work of the service.

It was confidently hoped that when the Coast Guard fleet was augmented by the additional craft authorized for law enforcement work, it would not be necessary to continue the regular cruising cutters on this antismuggling duty. Such, however, has proven to be distinctly not the case. The regular cruising cutters are now actively and strenuously engaged in this work, and must con-

time to be so employed indefinitely. Considering the necessity for the cutters to perform their rescue and assistance work and other duties, and the fact that destroyers, no matter how efficiently operated, can not remain constantly at sea, it is plain that the Coast Guard should have more regular cruising cutters.

For the performance of all the varied duties outlined above and to cover the wide sea expanse on which the Coast Guard must operate, the service has available just 16 vessels that may be classed as cruising cutters of the first class, as follows:

Name	Age (years)	Paramount duty
1. Algonquin.....	28	Alaskan cruising; assistance work, Pacific coast.
2. Bear ¹	52	Arctic cruising; patrol duty, Pacific coast.
3. Gresham.....	29	Assistance work, Atlantic coast.
4. Haida.....	5	Alaskan cruising; assistance work, Pacific coast.
5. Manning.....	29	Assistance work, Atlantic coast.
6. Modoc.....	5	Ice patrol; assistance work, Atlantic coast.
7. Mojave.....	5	Antismuggling duty; withdrawn from regular station at Honolulu.
8. Ossipee.....	11	Assistance work, Atlantic coast. (Smaller than standard type.)
9. Redwing.....	7	Antismuggling duty; assistance work, Atlantic coast.
10. Seminole.....	26	Assistance work, Atlantic coast.
11. Seneca.....	18	Do.
12. Tallapoosa.....	11	Assistance work, Gulf coast. (Smaller than standard type.)
13. Tampa.....	5	Ice patrol; assistance work, Atlantic coast.
14. Tuscarora ²	24	Assistance work, Atlantic coast. (Smaller than standard type.)
15. Unalga.....	14	Alaskan cruising; stationed at Juneau.
16. Yamacraw.....	17	Assistance work, Atlantic coast.

¹ An appropriation has been made to replace the Bear.

² It has been necessary to withdraw this vessel, temporarily, from her regular station on the Great Lakes. This vessel has inadequate steaming radius, because built for service on fresh-water lakes.

The Alexander Hamilton, a vessel transferred from the Navy and 30 years old, is not included above, because she is used as a cadet training ship.

Vessels of the Coast Guard are subjected to the hardest kind of service. The World War presented an urgent need for combatant vessels, both in European waters and on our own coasts. As in previous wars, the Coast Guard became a part of the Navy, and its vessels, being armed and seaworthy, were put to valuable use. Six first-class cutters were dispatched overseas to the war zone and served as ocean escorts for the protection of large merchant convoys against submarine attack. The best available ships of the Coast Guard were sent over, while the remaining ones performed valuable service in the patrol of the coasts of the United States. The Coast Guard squadron was based on Gibraltar and operated between there and the British Isles and in the Mediterranean. It consisted of the following vessels:

Manning, a vessel built in 1897, which had seen active duty on the Cuban coast in the war with Spain.

Algonquin, built in 1898.

Yamacraw, built in 1909.

Seneca, built in 1908.

Ossipee, a considerably smaller cutter, built in 1915.

Tampa, built in 1912. This vessel was sunk in the Bristol Channel by an enemy submarine, with the loss of every officer and man, 115 in all.

These ships were actively engaged in most arduous duty throughout the war and suffered considerable deterioration. The other cutters, held on the American coasts, also had active duty and likewise suffered from losses and depreciation. Besides the *Tampa*, sunk by enemy attack in European waters, the Coast Guard lost two of its ships, the *McCulloch*, a veteran of the Battle of Manila Bay, and the *Mohawk*, both sunk by collisions in American waters. Shortly after the war three other first-class cutters had so deteriorated that they were beyond repair and were disposed of. These vessels were the *Onondaga*, *Androskoggin*, and *Itasca*.

When the Coast Guard was returned from the Navy to the Treasury Department, after the war, and resumed its arduous peace-time duties, its vessel equipment was weakened by the above-mentioned losses and by age and deterioration. The subsequent years of activity in the protection of shipping from the perils of the sea, and the placing upon the Coast Guard of the great task of combating liquor smuggling, have imposed a heavy strain upon its vessels, which have been kept cruising under practically war-time conditions,

While a number of ships were constructed, under appropriations made during the World War, for various agencies of the Government, the only additional seagoing vessels that have been constructed for the Coast Guard since 1915 are four first-class cutters and one vessel of the tugboat type, built under war-time appropriations for the Navy. Besides one large tug of the mine-sweeper class, the Coast Guard has just four modern, able, seagoing ships that are less than 10 years old, these being the *Haida*, *Modoc*, *Mojave*, and *Tampa*. Two of them have for their chief duty the patrol of the trans-Atlantic steamer lanes for the protection of vessels against icebergs, the third is primarily occupied with Coast Guard duties in Alaska; and the fourth, formerly stationed at Honolulu, has been brought to the Atlantic coast to assist in the antismuggling work of the service. The Secretary of the Treasury, in annual reports, has called attention to the needs of the Coast Guard for additional vessel equipment each year since 1920.

The vessel equipment of the Coast Guard has been, and is, entirely inadequate for the performance of the normal duties with which the service is charged, and before the present great problem of combating liquor smuggling arose, various expedients to strengthen the Coast Guard fleet were resorted to. Vessels known as Eagle boats, built for antisubmarine war duty, were transferred from the Navy and tried on Coast Guard duty. They proved entirely unsuitable and were abandoned, as they did not possess the seaworthiness and staunchness required for the heavy Coast Guard work. Efforts to utilize the equipment of the Shipping Board were made and a few tugs were transferred and placed in the service of the Coast Guard. They have been of only very limited usefulness, not being sufficiently seaworthy for offshore work. The larger Shipping Board craft are cargo vessels of a size much greater than necessary for Coast Guard duty, with resultant larger costs of operation and without the power and maneuvering qualities essential for Coast Guard assistance work. Some vessels have been obtained from the Navy, but recent conferences have developed the fact that the Navy has no craft available for transfer that are suitable for general Coast Guard duty.

Reference has been made to the fact that 20 old destroyers were transferred from the Navy to the Coast Guard and were reconditioned and placed in service, to be used in the Coast Guard's operations against smuggling. They are used by the Coast Guard only in its law enforcement work. They are of great value to the Coast Guard in its antismuggling operations, because they augment its resources for scouting and for operations generally against the rum fleet, pending the acquisition of cruising cutters, but they are poorly adapted to the regular normal work of the service, particularly with respect to assisting vessels in trouble. These old destroyers are being operated in the law enforcement work of the Coast Guard off the North Atlantic coast in all weathers and in all seasons, with a large percentage of untrained personnel in the enlisted force, in a very efficient and successful manner. On account of their age and their delicate and complicated machinery, these destroyers are constantly in need of repairs, and they are not capable of sustained, arduous, patrol duty at sea to the same extent as are Coast Guard vessels of the regular cruising type. The destroyers are of particular use to the Coast Guard, however, in its antismuggling campaign, to fill the gap pending the acquisition of a sufficient number of additional regular cutters.

It has been demonstrated, after much practical experience in combating rum running, that the first-class, seagoing Coast Guard cutter, in addition to being the peculiar type of ship best adapted for rescue work at sea, is also a type which can be efficiently operated in the prevention of smuggling. Originally, it was contemplated, in the temporary enlargement of the Coast Guard, to provide a special force of vessels for this antismuggling work, namely, the destroyers and patrol and picket boats, and to leave the regular Coast Guard cutters to perform the normal duties of the service. In practice, however, it has been found necessary to employ nearly all the vessels of the Coast Guard actively and energetically in antismuggling operations, in addition to all the other important work with which the Coast Guard is charged. The destroyers, being useful only in the antismuggling operations, have been of little help in the regular work of the Coast Guard. I believe that a sound, logical policy calls for a fleet of vessels that can be used with advantage in all the different phases of Coast Guard work.

The most efficient administration and the best, far-sighted economy, in my judgment, call for the construction of the 10 cruising cutters contemplated in the bill under consideration. There is no doubt in my mind that the Coast Guard fleet should be augmented with respect to able, seagoing, offshore vessels. The

Coast Guard now has a large amount of important, difficult, and arduous work to do, and, in order to perform that work in a satisfactory and efficient manner, it should be given an adequate fleet of first-class, seagoing ships. The first-class cruising cutter is the type of vessel best adapted to all the varied requirements of the Coast Guard. Such a vessel, with the proper fuel capacity, can remain at sea for long periods, and the chances of her being forced into port on account of machinery breakdowns are almost negligible. The 10 new cutters contemplated by the bill will render most valuable service in all the lines of activity with which the Coast Guard is charged, and, in my judgment, the construction of these vessels will be in the best interests of the public service.

This department strongly recommends the passage of the bill.

Very truly yours,

A. W. MELLON,
Secretary of the Treasury.

