

**INCREASE OF PAY FOR THE COAST GUARD.
HEARING BEFORE THE COMMITTEE ON
INTERSTATE AND FOREIGN COMMERCE OF
THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES SIXTY-
SIXTH CONGRESS, FIRST SESSION ON H.J.
RES. 189 AND H.R. 9204, OCTOBER 14, 1919**

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Increase of pay for the coast guard. Hearing before the committee on interstate and foreign commerce of the house of representatives sixty-sixth congress, first session on H.J. Res. 189 and H.R. 9204, october 14, 1919 by Various

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COMMITTEE ON INTERSTATE AND FOREIGN COMMERCE.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

SIXTY-SIXTH CONGRESS.

JOHN J. ESCH, Wisconsin, Chairman.

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CONTENTS.

| Statement of— | Page. |
|--|-------|
| Capt. Commandant W. E. Reynolds..... | 6 |
| Hon. Joseph Walsh..... | 20 |
| Hon. Guy E. Campbell..... | 22 |
| Senior Capt. D. P. Foley..... | 29 |
| Boatswain N. Sjoberg..... | 32 |
| Communications submitted by Capt. Commandant Reynolds..... | 41 |

INCREASE OF PAY FOR THE COAST GUARD.

COMMITTEE ON INTERSTATE AND FOREIGN COMMERCE,
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Tuesday, October 14, 1919.

The committee met at 10 o'clock a. m., Hon. John J. Esch, chairman, presiding.

Mr. STINESS. Mr. Chairman, on September 11 I introduced in the House H. R. 9204 increasing the pay of the commissioned and enlisted men, 30 per cent for the commissioned officers and 50 per cent for the enlisted men. This was referred by the Speaker to the Committee on Military Affairs. Before I introduced the bill I consulted with Mr. Tyler Page as to what was the best way to proceed. He said that in 1908 when other measures of this kind were introduced, they were referred to one committee and that committee considered them, and the other committees took them up informally. Therefore, this bill was referred to the Committee on Military Affairs and was for increasing the pay of the Army, the Navy, the Marine Corps, the Coast Guard, and the Public Health organizations. The Committee on Naval Affairs began a hearing on this bill last Wednesday and have been holding hearings ever since and will continue.

The Esch bill, so called, refers to the warrant officers of the Coast Guard and as the men are here and ready, I understand, to go on with the hearing, I suggest that we follow the course of the Committee on Naval Affairs and hear all to-day, both about raising the pay of the commissioned officers and enlisted men, and putting the Coast Guard under the jurisdiction of the Navy, and I would suggest that we proceed in that manner.

The CHAIRMAN. In view of the fact that this committee only has jurisdiction of the Coast Guard, it might be well for the Coast Guard to be heard first.

Mr. STINESS. Yes; I simply wish to state that instead of introducing four or five different bills, I followed custom and introduced this bill, and this part comes to this committee.

The CHAIRMAN. Mr. Hamilton and I are on the subcommittee having in charge the railroad bill and will have to be excused. Congressman Sweet, of Iowa, will have charge of the hearings.

Mr. SWEET. Gentlemen, we are now ready to take up hearings on Joint Resolution No. 189, and H. R. 9204, which relates to the increased pay of the Coast Guard.

We will now be glad to hear from Capt. Reynolds, of the Coast Guard.

**STATEMENT OF CAPT. COMMANDANT W. E. REYNOLDS,
UNITED STATES COAST GUARD, WASHINGTON, D. C.**

Capt. REYNOLDS. Mr. Chairman and gentlemen, in regard to the House Joint Resolution 189, the purpose of this resolution is clearly indicated by its title. It is intended to equalize the pay and allowances of the personnel of the Coast Guard with those of the Navy, and with the permission of the chairman I will read a statement which completely covers the situation and suggests certain additions to that resolution as introduced, these additions, of course, being approved by the Secretary of the Treasury.

Mr. SWEET. You may proceed in your own way.

Capt. REYNOLDS. The Coast Guard is, by statute, part of the military forces of the United States, operating under the Treasury Department in time of peace, and operating as a part of the Navy, subject to the orders of the Secretary of the Navy, in time of war, or when the President shall so direct. Immediately upon the declaration of war, and under mobilization plans that had been prepared in advance, the entire Coast Guard was placed under the Navy Department, and served actively and energetically in precisely the same manner as the personnel of the Navy. Six of its vessels served with the naval forces in European waters; one of them, the *Tampa*, being sunk by an enemy submarine when all hands were lost. This disaster caused the largest loss of life suffered by any naval unit during the war, excepting only the case of the *Cyclops*, whose fate has never been ascertained. Officers of the Coast Guard commanded combatant ships of the Navy, served on cruisers and transports, in naval districts, in training stations, and, in short, performed exactly the same service as their brother officers in the Navy. Extremely favorable reports upon Coast Guard personnel have been made by ranking officers of the Navy. The Coast Guard performed its part in the great war not only with credit, but with marked distinction.

It was manifestly unjust that the personnel of the Coast Guard should undergo the same dangers, and suffer the same hardships as the Navy, and not receive the same pay. Congress recognized this injustice and took steps to remedy it, but, unfortunately, the remedy is limited to the continuance of the present war.

Section 15 of the act approved May 22, 1917, increased the pay of the enlisted men of the Navy, such increase to continue not later than six months after the termination of the war, and contains the following provision:

That during the continuance of the present war, warrant officers, petty officers, and enlisted men of the United States Coast Guard shall receive the same rates of pay as are now, or may hereafter be, prescribed for corresponding grades or ratings and length of service in the Navy.

Mr. DEWALT. May I interrupt you a moment? For my own information, what is a petty officer?

Capt. REYNOLDS. He is an enlisted man who by length of service and competency has been given an additional rate above the lowest rate, and he becomes a leader of certain sections, depending upon the department in which he is serving; that is, a leader of those under him.

Mr. DEWALT. How does he take rank with a yeoman, we will say?

Capt. REYNOLDS. The yeoman is a petty officer.

Mr. DEWALT. What other officers are included in this term "petty officers"?

Capt. REYNOLDS. We have ship's writers, coxswains, quartermasters, masters at arms, assistant masters at arms, and several others.

Mr. DEWALT. Those would be included within the provisions of this resolution?

Capt. REYNOLDS. Yes, sir.

This legislation placed the warrant officers and enlisted men on a just footing as far as pay is concerned with the corresponding personnel of the Navy during the war.

There still existed this unfair discrimination: Officers of the Navy receive an increase of pay of 10 per cent while on sea duty, but officers of the Coast Guard serving at sea in the war zone and those serving on the same ships with officers of the Navy, and performing exactly the same duty, were not, under the law, entitled to this 10 per cent increase. This markedly unjust condition was remedied in the naval appropriation act of July 1, 1918, by the following provision:

That officers of the United States Coast Guard on sea duty or on shore duty beyond the continental limits of the United States during the period of the present war shall receive the same increases of pay and allowances in all respects, as are now, or may hereafter be, provided by law for officers of the Navy of corresponding rank.

I invite attention to the fact that, while the law provided that the increase of pay for enlisted men of the Navy should continue not later than six months after the termination of the present war, the pay of enlisted men of the Coast Guard is made the same as that of the Navy only during the continuance of the present war. Recognizing the fact that enlisted men in the Navy faced a reduction of pay when the war emergency shall cease, Congress provided, in the naval appropriation act approved July 11, 1919, that the rates of pay prescribed in section 15 of the act of May 22, 1917, "are made permanent for the enlisted men of the Navy during their present current enlistment, and for those who enlist or reenlist prior to July 1, 1920, for the term of such enlistment or reenlistment."

Unless this resolution be enacted into law, the rates of pay for warrant officers and enlisted men of the Coast Guard must revert to their prewar basis when peace is declared. The Coast Guard rates of pay were fixed by the act of April 16, 1908. Though presumably fair at that time, they are to-day, because of the enormously increased cost of the necessities of living, wholly inadequate to the support of the men and their families. The merchant service is paying men in various ratings far more than the prewar Coast Guard rates of pay, and, without legislation of this character, it will be manifestly most difficult for the service to retain trained men or to obtain others in their places. There is no sea service in the country whose efficiency is more dependent upon a contented and well-trained enlisted personnel.

Mr. MERRITT. I beg your pardon, but I was not here when you began. Have you stated, or will you state later, what the difference in pay is now in the different grades?

Capt. REYNOLDS. That will come in later, and I shall refer to data which we have.

Mr. MERRITT. Very well.

Capt. REYNOLDS. Our vessels go to sea in all weathers, often in gales of wind, to render assistance to vessels in distress. It is obvious that we must have high-class men, and we simply can not get them unless we can offer them reasonable compensation.

I am sure the committee realizes the inherent justice that manifested itself in giving our personnel the same pay as the Navy during the war. All that we ask in this resolution is that this measure of justice be not abrogated when peace is declared, but that the pay of the personnel continue on the obviously just and reasonable basis of Navy pay. I am sure that no one will assert that the duties of the Coast Guard personnel in time of peace are less arduous than those of the Navy.

It will be noted that the resolution includes pay and allowances. I should like to explain briefly about this matter of allowances. The Navy has found that the efficient administration of a ship is greatly enhanced by granting certain small allowances to men in certain ratings, or performing certain special classes of duty. For example, the coxswain of a motor boat is allowed \$5 a month extra while on that detail. This gives him more money than the coxswain of a pulling boat receives, which is fair and reasonable. When a man from the deck force is detailed to duty in the fireroom, he receives 33 cents per day extra. Very often it is necessary on our ships, on account of a shortage in the fireroom force, to detail men from the deck to feed the furnaces for a day or so. These men receive no additional compensation. Most of them are probably aware that a man thus detailed in the Navy would obtain this extra 33 cents, and the knowledge that they themselves do not receive it, is not conducive to a spirit of contentment. A signalman, third-class, receives \$1 a month extra; a signalman, second-class, \$2 a month extra. These slight increases of pay incite the bridge force to perfect themselves in signaling. A man in the Navy who receives a good conduct medal gets 75 cents a month additional to his pay. This is a small sum, but the beneficial effect upon the ship's personnel is considerable.

Now, we have on board our ships precisely the same conditions; we have men who serve as coxswain of motor boats; men who have to perform additional duty in the fireroom; men who serve as gun pointers, and men whose conduct makes them worthy of good conduct medals, etc. It is necessary for the efficiency of our personnel, and only fair to them, that we should be able to grant these allowances, but we can not do so without the necessary legislation. If it be provided that our personnel shall receive the same pay and allowances as those of the Navy, the whole matter will be on a reasonable and just basis, and we shall not be confronted with the various problems incident to these inequalities of pay for what are exactly the same duties.

Particularly for warrant officers are the prewar rates of pay utterly inadequate to enable them to live properly and to support their families. Efficient warrant officers are a tremendous asset in the administration of the service. Their importance and value can not be overestimated. They are expected and required to be provided with proper uniforms and to present always a neat appearance that will be an example to the enlisted men. The warrant officers' corps of the Coast Guard is an honor to the service and to the Government. Its members are devoting their lives to the service, and their interests

should be properly protected. These warrant officers are now receiving the pay and allowances of warrant officers of the Navy. It will be most unfortunate and unfair if, upon the declaration of peace, they shall be compelled to revert to their inadequate prewar pay. I desire to emphasize to the committee the fact that this resolution simply grants to warrant officers and enlisted men of the Coast Guard the same pay and allowances that Congress sees fit to give to warrant officers and enlisted men of the Navy performing precisely the same, or markedly similar work.

AMENDMENTS.

The Secretary of the Treasury in his letter of September 9, 1919, strongly recommended this resolution, and asked that two amendments be inserted, and I should like to explain them to the committee. These amendments are:

1. Line 3, after the word "That" insert the words "commissioned officers."

This resolution is primarily intended to give to warrant officers and enlisted men the pay and allowances to which they are justly entitled, and thereby enable us to keep our ships and stations in operation. Commissioned officers of the Coast Guard now receive the same pay and allowances as officers of corresponding rank in the Army. It would be an anomalous situation to have the pay of officers based on that of the Army and the pay of warrant officers and enlisted men based on that of the Navy. By including commissioned officers in this resolution, this anomaly will be removed. The officers will not benefit financially at all, except in one respect. They are now, under existing war legislation, as previously described, receiving 10 per cent increase of pay while on sea duty. Officers of the Navy receive this increase in time of peace and no good reason can be advanced why officers of the Coast Guard are not equally entitled to it in time of peace.

Mr. DEWALT. Before you leave that, may I interrupt you again. If you were to include the amendments suggested by the Secretary, to wit, commissioned officers and also include what is now mentioned in the proviso, to wit, allowances, the question in my mind is this: Army officers are now allowed a certain amount for quarters and if, as I said before, you include commissioned officers and also carry in this resolution allowances, would that give the stipend for quarters to commissioned officers in the Navy as is given to commissioned officers in the Army, or quarters.

Capt. REYNOLDS. You mean commissioned officers of the Coast Guard?

Mr. DEWALT. Yes.

Capt. REYNOLDS. The law provides certain allowances for officers of the Navy and this resolution would give us similar allowances.

Mr. DEWALT. I am talking now specifically of quarters. For instance, a major in the Army, I think, gets four rooms, does he not?

Capt. REYNOLDS. Five rooms.

Mr. DEWALT. And that is calculated at so much per room?

Capt. REYNOLDS. Yes, sir.

Mr. DEWALT. Is that same thing applicable to the members of the Coast Guard?