

Calendar No. 835

74TH CONGRESS }
1st Session }

SENATE

{ REPORT
{ No 792

CAPT RUSSELL WILLSON, UNITED STATES NAVY

MAY 13 (calendar day, JUNE 5), 1935 — Ordered to be printed

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

REPORT

[To accompany H R 5564]

The Committee on Naval Affairs of the Senate, to whom was referred the bill (H R 5564) for the relief of Capt Russell Willson, United States Navy, having considered the same, report it to the Senate without amendment with the recommendation that the bill do pass

The purpose of this bill is to give Captain Willson \$15,000 in full settlement for a certain invention of his used in connection with the secret communication facilities of the Navy

This bill, if enacted, would involve an additional cost to the Government of \$15,000, but the bill is recommended by the Navy Department and the committee feels that this is a just claim in view of the great value his invention has been to the Navy

The House report, which explains this bill in detail, is hereby made a part of this report

[H Rept No 284, 74th Cong 1st sess]

The Committee on Naval Affairs, to whom was referred the bill (H R 5564) for the relief of Capt Russell Willson, United States Navy, having considered the same, report it to the House with the recommendation that it do pass

The purpose of the proposed legislation is to give Capt Russell Willson, United States Navy, \$15,000 in full settlement for a certain invention of his used in connection with the secret communication facilities of the Navy

The value to the Navy and to the Government of this invention cannot be measured in dollars and cents Its value to the Government may be judged by the fact that it was used during the World War in all dispatches between the Navy Department and naval headquarters in London, including those concerning movements of transports, where its secrecy protected thousands of lives and millions of dollars worth of property

Being aware of comparative ease with which confidential and secret messages were intercepted and decoded by unauthorized persons, Captain Willson conceived and perfected this invention while on a tour of sea duty in 1916 For

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CAPT RUSSELL WILSON, UNITED STATES NAVY

Captain Willson to have patented this invention would have destroyed its usefulness in that it would then have been open to public inspection, instead, he gave it to the Navy

The efficiency of the device may be more fully appreciated from a statement made before the committee during the hearings on this bill which is quoted as follows

"Toward the end of the World War a dispatch from a diplomatic agent in Copenhagen reported that copies of all cables were reaching Berlin and all were being deciphered except those in Navy cipher

This bill provides for long-delayed compensation for a device which during the World War was the basis of the Navy's system of secret communications

The Navy Department favors this proposed legislation as is indicated by the letter of the Secretary of the Navy to the Speaker of the House of Representatives which is hereby made a part of this report

NAVY DEPARTMENT,
Washington, February 4, 1935

THE SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, D C

MY DEAR MR SPEAKER There is transmitted herewith a draft of a proposed bill for the relief of Capt Russell Willson, United States Navy The proposed legislation provides that the Secretary of the Treasury is authorized and directed to pay Capt Russell Willson, United States Navy, out of any money in the Treasury not otherwise appropriated, the sum of \$15,000 in full settlement for a certain invention of his used in connection with the secret communication facilities of the Navy

Captain Willson while serving at sea in 1916 conceived and designed this invention relating to the secrecy of naval communications, and developed it in 1917 without suggestions, ideas or help from any other person at any time He submitted the invention to the Navy Department, which accepted it in 1917 The invention has been used by the Navy continuously since that time For reasons of public policy, it has never been patented Captain Willson has not in any way, directly or indirectly, received any compensation for his work in producing this invention, nor for its use by the Navy during and since the war

The sum of \$15,000, which the Navy Department believes should be appropriated, is modest in comparison with the value of the invention to the Government during the World War and during the 16 years thereafter that it has been in continuous use

The Navy Department recommends that the proposed legislation be enacted
Sincerely yours,

CLAUDE A SWANSON

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[PRIVATE—No 79—74TH CONGRESS]

[H R 5564]

AN ACT

For the relief of Captain Russell Willson United States Navy

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That the Secretary of the Treasury be, and he is hereby, authorized and directed to pay to Captain Russell Willson, United States Navy out of any money in the Treasury not otherwise appropriated the sum of \$15 000 in full settlement for his invention which has been accepted by the Navy Department for use in connection with naval communication facilities.

Approved, June 13, 1935