

# BRITISH PACE ALL BY NEW NAVY BILL

## 1939-40 Estimates for Outlay of £153,666,681 Reveal an Unexampled Building Speed

## CURB ON JAPAN HASTENED

## Experts See London Finishing 9 New Battleships a Year Faster Than Rivals

Wireless to THE NEW YORK TIMES.  
LONDON, Feb. 28.—The unexampled speed of Great Britain's naval rearmament was disclosed today with the publication of naval estimates calling for the gigantic expenditure of £153,666,681 in the coming financial year.

This is the biggest naval expenditure in the peace-time history of the British Navy and is three times as high as the annual outlay on the fleet during the "disarmament" period six or seven years ago.

But from the standpoint of the new balance of power in the world the colossal cost of Britain's navy is less significant than the speed with which ships are passing from the blueprint stage into finished fighting units.

Today's estimates show that no other maritime power is expanding its navy at the same breakneck pace or to the same extent. The French battleship Richelieu, for instance, was only ready for launching three years and three months after having been laid down; the German 35,000-ton battleship Bismarck was launched the other day, two years and eight months after her keel had been laid.

**Time Taken by Britain**  
But the British 35,000-ton battleship King George V was launched two years and one month after the laying down, and the other ships in Britain's vast program are being rushed to completion with corresponding vigor. Indeed, there are naval experts in this country who predict that each of Britain's nine new battleships will be completed twelve months faster than any of their rivals now under construction in other countries.

All this shortens the time in which Japan can continue her offensive against British and French interests in the Far East. For the object of Britain's naval building is to place a complete battle fleet at Singapore, and its effect within three years should be to block the Japanese advance southward toward the East Indies.

If Japan waits only until 1942, the British believe, their possessions and vital interests in the East will be safe. And if the naval shipyards can save months on each vessel, it will bring the day of safety just so much nearer for the hard-pressed British, who now see their interests challenged by three great powers for the first time in their history.

Another big aircraft carrier capable of holding seventy planes will be included in the armada of new ships to be commissioned for active service during the financial year beginning April 1. This is the 23,000-ton Illustrious, now nearing completion at Vickers-Armstrongs at Barrow, a companion ship of the 22,000-ton Ark Royal, which joined the navy a few months ago.

In addition, the coming financial year will mark the commissioning of two 10,000-ton cruisers, three 5,450-ton cruisers, fifteen destroyers, fourteen big submarines, one 8,900-ton submarine depot vessel and twenty-four miscellaneous craft.

**Two Big Ships Refitted**  
Two older capital ships that have been undergoing extensive refits also will rejoin the fleet during the coming year—the 29,000-ton Revenge, which has been undergoing repairs and anti-aircraft rearmament at a cost of £300,000, and the 31,000-ton battleship Valiant, which will emerge as a virtually new ship at a cost of almost £3,000,000.

No fewer than four of the new 35,000-ton battleships will be launched in the 1939-1940 financial year, not including the King George V, which slid down the ways on the Tyne last week. These are the battleships Prince of Wales, Duke of York, Jellicoe and Beatty, all armed with ten 14-inch guns.

The 23,000-ton aircraft carriers Victorious, Formidable and Indomitable also will be launched in the new financial year, as well as their sister ship, the Illustrious, which will be launched in April and ready for service before the financial year ends in March, 1940. As for the cruisers, four 5,450-ton vessels of the Dido class are due for launching within the next six months.

Construction also will be rushed during the year on two 40,000-ton battleships, the Lion and the Temeraire, which will be armed with 16-inch guns and which will be destined for eventual service in the Far East. These ships, authorized under last year's program, have just been ordered, but today's estimates show that the Admiralty plans to spend more than £600,000 on each of them in the coming financial year.

There could be no clearer indication that British shipbuilders will not be resting on their oars despite the unprecedented output of the new year.

**Program Was Foreshadowed**

Today's estimates give a clearer picture of the 1939-40 construction program, which was foreshadowed in its chief categories in the defense White Paper issued a fortnight ago.

The complete program will consist of two capital ships of 40,000 tons each, one aircraft carrier, four cruisers, two flotillas of destroyers, four submarines, twenty fast escort vessels of a new type, two escort vessels of the "normal" type, ten minesweepers, one large hospital ship, one fast minelayer and more than a dozen miscellaneous craft.

Work will also be begun on a new royal yacht to replace the historic Victoria and Albert, which was built in 1901 and is long overdue for replacement.

At the King's own wish, the new yacht will be specially designed so that it can be used as a hospital ship in the event of war.

The estimates are unusually secret about details of the new escort craft, which will be fast, light ships heavily armed with anti-aircraft guns and anti-submarine devices to counteract any possible threat from Germany's new submarine building.

On the financial side the esti-

mates show that the taxpayers will be asked to pay far less for their navy than in the past year. Of the total expenditure of £153,666,681, more than £80,000,000 will be borrowed, compared with only £30,000,000 in the financial year now ending. Consequently only £69,400,000 must be met from revenue, compared with £96,117,000 in the current year.

The total cost of the new year's construction program is estimated at £60,500,000, not including the royal yacht, which has not yet been designed.

**Bigger Outlay Next Year Seen**

LONDON, Feb. 28 (AP).—With nine battleships and almost 200 other warships building or planned, Great Britain has met German fleet expansion with her largest peacetime naval program and a hint that next year's would be even bigger, the estimates for 1939-40 disclosed today.

The Admiralty revealed that special attention was being paid to Australian, South African, Canadian and Hong Kong defenses.

The disclosure was made by the Earl of Stanhope, First Lord of the Admiralty, in a statement accompanying the estimates.

The Australian Government has progressed considerably toward completing "naval and seaward defenses for main ports in order to secure them against attacks by submarines and mine layers," Lord Stanhope said.

Dispatches from Sydney said that the Australian Cabinet today had approved a plan to give the Commonwealth a standing army of 10,000. At present Australian permanent forces number approximately 2,300. Australia has also increased munitions productions and strengthened fixed coast defenses.

South Africa's bases, Cape Town and Simonstown, are to be strengthened and modernized as the result of a complete review of defense needs with Oswald Pirow, South African Defense Minister, last Fall.

Canada is considering purchasing from Britain a destroyer flotilla leader to head her "naval force of six modern destroyers," Lord Stanhope said. Six new motor torpedo boats were shipped to Hong Kong in the past year.

A high naval source disclosed that during the 1939-40 fiscal year £11,800,000 would be spent on the naval air corps. The peak in naval rearmament, this source said, would be reached next year.

Britain was described as leading the world in aircraft carriers, with six building in addition to seven already in service.

Sir Victor Warrender, Financial Secretary to the War Office, announced a big increase in recruiting for Britain's regular and territorial [militia] armies at home. The number of recruits accepted for home regulars during 1938 was 38,827, as compared with 26,094 the preceding year, and the territorial recruits increased from 45,350 to 77,142.