

LITERARY DIGEST

December 12, 1936

p. 15

BATTLE-SHIPS: America to Spend \$100,000,000 Building Two, 85 Per Cent. Going to Labor

You could build two Empire State Buildings for fifty million dollars if you left some stories off the second one.

Or, if you preferred, you could build two palatial liners nearly as large as the S.S. *Queen Mary*.

You could buy five-sixths of the products of the fisheries of the United States and Alaska, or five-sevenths of the buildings in Rockefeller Center, or five-eighths of the handsome new bridge between Oakland and San Francisco.

With fifty million dollars, you could have bought Alaska from Russia in 1867, keeping \$42,800,000 in your pocket, or have made the Louisiana Purchase in 1803 and still have retained \$35,000,000 for other investments. Or you could have defrayed virtually all the expenses of the State, Labor and Justice Departments for the fiscal year 1936.

If you wanted to buy an ultramodern, 35,000-ton battle-ship, however, \$50,000,000 would not be a cent too much. The Federal Government will discover the fact when it begins work on two such battle-ships early next year. They will cost about \$50,000,000 each, plans for them are now being drawn up, and the riveters will sound off as soon as President Roosevelt gives the word.

Acting under authority conferred on him at the last session of Congress, he is expected to give it as soon as he returns to Washington from his South American trip.

Treaty to End—At midnight, December 31, the Naval Limitation Treaty of 1930 will expire and, tho a treaty of a sort was negotiated last April, apparently it will not be ratified and put into effect by the end of the year.

In fact, it probably will not be ratified at all. All indications are that, on the stroke of midnight, December 31, the roof will be off as far as naval building by its signatories is concerned.

Britain has already announced that she will begin to strengthen her fighting fleet after January 1. Plans for these two superdreadnoughts indicate that the United States will do likewise.

The fundamental reason for the battle-ship's cost is labor. From bolts and washers to paints and varnishes, the materials used in a modern battle-ship are endless; they come from every State in the country. But, directly or indirectly, labor explains fully 85 per cent. of their cost. It takes at least three years to build a battle-ship, to fashion its hull, attach its armor, instal its batteries and machinery, and outfit it to house a thousand men.

And is it worth it, in these days of fleet and deadly torpedo planes or great diving bombers clutching demolition bombs weighing a ton apiece? Naval experts think so. The battle-ship, they say, is still the backbone of the battle-fleet. In the phrase of the street, the battle-ship can dish it out,