

RELATIVE EFFICIENCY OF SHIP YARDS BUILDING LIBERTY SHIPS

In the months of March, April, and May of 1941 the Maritime Commission awarded contracts for a group of 312 Liberty ships to nine yards. The Liberty ship was chosen for mass production by the Commission because of its adaptability for standardization and the relative ease of its construction.

Subsequently, another group of contracts for these ships was awarded in October of 1941, another in January and February of 1942 and a final group in March and April of 1942.

Inasmuch as contracts for these ships were awarded to various yards at substantially similar periods of time, and since the same type of ship is being built by these yards, it is possible to show the relative efficiency of the various yards building Liberty ships by using as the base, the total percentage of completion of various Liberty ships under construction or completed.

Chart I shows the allocation of contracts to the various yards constructing Liberty ships.

Chart II shows the progress made by the nine yards first awarded contracts in March, April, and May of 1941. One hundred points represents a completed ship. Therefore assuming a yard has a contract for 55 vessels it will have to accumulate 5500 points to complete the contract. By dividing the total number of points actually accomplished by a certain yard as of a certain date by the total number of points required to complete the contract, the percentage of completion may be calculated. Then comparing the percentages of

completion of the various yards awarded contracts at an approximately similar period, the respective speed with which Liberty ships are being built at different shipyards may be observed. Thus, comparing percentages of completion in Chart I, one group of yards show from 90 to 100 per cent performance and a second group from 54 to 71 per cent.

Chart III illustrates a similar variance in percentage range from 28 per cent for the slowest yard to 81 per cent for the fastest by yards awarded contracts in October 1941.

Chart IV lists the percentages of completion of yards awarded contracts in January and February 1942.

Chart V illustrates the percentages of completion of yards awarded contracts in March and April of 1942. It should be noted that the Richmond Yard No. 2 of the Permanente Metals Corporation has a percentage of completion of only 1.9 per cent. However, it should be born in mind that on March 3 when a contract for 24 Liberty ships was awarded to this yard, it had previously received substantial contracts for Liberty ships. This necessarily did not permit concentration of full production on the March 3 contract. The other four yards listed in Chart V on the other hand had not previously received Maritime Commission contracts, and hence could devote their efforts to the single contracts. A fair comparison would therefore be confined to these latter four yards.

Contracts in addition to those in Charts II, III, IV, and V have been let for Liberty ships but at such a recent date that comparison at this date of the rate of progress would serve no useful purpose.

It should be noted that on the basis of these charts the three yards performing at the slowest rate are the South Portland Shipbuilding Company, the Delta Shipbuilding Corporation and the Houston Shipbuilding Corporation. The South Portland Yard is the slowest of the three and the Delta next.

As contrasted with these yards, the California Shipbuilding Company and the Oregon Shipbuilding Company are performing the fastest with the Permanente Metals Corporation a close third. The Bethlehem-Fairfield, the Alabama Drydock and Shipbuilding Corporation, and the North Carolina Shipbuilding Company follow in that order.

Of the four yards entering into the Liberty ship program in March and April of 1942, the St. Johns Shipbuilding Company of Jacksonville, Florida, is the slowest with the J. A. Jones Construction Company of Panama City a close second.