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BUILDERS LAUD LIBERTY SHIPS AT TRUMAN GROUP HEARING

Members of the Truman war investigating committee today were to inspect Bay Area shipyards in winding up their investigation here of Liberty ships.

Late yesterday the committee, headed by Senator Harry S. Truman (D., Mo.), was told in a hearing at the Postoffice Building by local shipyard and shipping executives that Liberty ships, considering the emergency conditions under which they were built, constitute an excellent emergency cargo ship.

In giving the ships a favorable bill of health it was revealed that of 182 Liberties built here and now in operation, 10 have developed serious fractures and an additional 10 have developed minor fractures in their plates.

Clay Bedford, general manager of the Richmond shipyards, told the six committee members present that techniques have been "improved" with the result that Liberties produced since June, 1943, at Richmond have not developed a single fracture.

Another witness, R. O. Demarest, general superintendent of the Sudden & Christenson, Inc., steamship line, said that only one of his company's Liberties had cracked, necessitating \$12,500 in repairs.

Other witnesses included Joseph A. Lunny, of the McCormick Steamship Co.; Frazer Baily, of the Matson Navigation Co., and W. J. Bush, operating vice president of the American President Lines.

Reasons for the "fractures" were summarized as:

Design changes which have been and are being made; materials which "aren't as good as they would

be under normal conditions"; temperature stresses, because "cold weather conditions have been predominant where difficulties occurred"; errors in construction and faulty distribution of ballast on return trips.

Recommendations for prevention were:

Design changes dictated by experience, which are continuing; changes in welding operations, including the riveting of certain connections where welding has parted under stress; use of quickly controllable water ballast in addition to immovable sand ballast on "light load" returns to counteract strains to which the ship might not be equal under arbitrary convoy regulations.

At noontime the group which included Senators Mon C. Wallgren (D., Wash.), Harley M. Kilgore (D., W. Va.), Homer Ferguson (R., Mich.), Carl Hatch (D., N. M.) and Samuel Jackson (D., Ind.) gave individual six minute talks before the Commonwealth Club at the Palace Hotel.

Senator Kilgore, chairman of the committee's sub-committee on shipbuilding, said that part of the war effort has been "unparalleled in history" and is the result of "new ideas and co-operative competition."