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Liberty Ships Praised Despite Welding Flaws

Although 3% of the all-welded Liberty ships built have cracked, New York shipping experts testifying yesterday before a Senate subcommittee sitting at the Federal Building praised the vessels highly.

"We have operated these ships

tions," said Philip Iglehart, vice president in charge of operations for the Grace Lines, "The performance of the ships has been excellent in the opinion of our captains and of the marine superintendent."

However, most of the witnesses agreed with Senator Mon. C. Wallgren (D-Wash.) that the ships should not be used to carry troops or as hospital ships. Wallgren said he approved the abandonment of the Liberty ship building program in favor of the construction of the Victory class of merchant ships which are larger and have both riveted and welded plates.

Testimony showed that the Liberty vessels cracked at their welded seams. But—paradoxically—the shipping men said they believed the vessels were stronger and better ships after their cracks had been repaired than before. The witnesses also agreed that the cracks usually appeared when the vessels were in ballast or lightly loaded rather than when carrying heavy cargos.

Yesterday's hearing was conducted by a sub-committee of the Senate's War Investigation Committee, headed by Senator Harry S. Truman (D-Mo.). Truman is a member of the subcommittee which is headed by Wallgren. Senator Harry M. Kilgore (D-W. Va.) was the third member of the committee.

The committee adjourned after a single session here. Other hearings will be held in cities on both the East and West Coasts. Among the witnesses yesterday were John Lyle Wilson, assistant chief surveyor of the American Bureau of Shipping; George H. Hoeft, American South African Lines; G. F. Ravenel, United States Lines, and R. T. Lemon, War Shipping Administration.