

Heavy Shipping Traffic In B.C.

VANCOUVER, B.C. — (A P) — Twenty-seven America-bound freighters arrived here during the weekend to avoid the U.S. West Coast dock strike and severely taxed Vancouver's already overloaded port facilities.

Severe longshore gang shortages were reported and confusion began to mount, with a total of 40 unexpected ships in port. The Vancouver Merchant's Exchange, which regularly issues statistics on shipping and cargo flow, had only partial figures available yesterday.

"It's going to get much worse before the week is out," said acting port manager Bill Duncan. "But we shall give priorities to customers who regularly use the port."

Most stevedoring firms said cargo is moving over the docks with little congestion.

"It's going to get jammed up in places, but so far it's moving through well," said an official at Empire Stevedoring Ltd.

Perishable cargo is the big problem, said Duncan, as "we have no refrigerator facilities to speak of."

Railways have prepared for the strike. A Burlington Northern official said his railway had been watching the longshore negotiations for some time and as a result "we've got plenty of equipment up here now."

An official of the Vancouver local of the International Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Union, which has struck 24 ports on the U.S. West Coast, said yesterday it plans to handle all cargo coming into Vancouver.