

4-19-75

SIF
ch read

Matter of Safety

PFEL Suspends Vietnam Service

Pacific Far East Line yesterday suspended cargo service to Saigon because of the uncertain military situation there.

"Concern for the lives of our crew members and the safety of our ships was the major reason," said PFEL vice president Porter Smith.

Another reason, Smith said, was that the war risk surcharge customers must pay on top of regular per ton freight charges is going up rapidly.

PFEL is the third of four shipping companies on the West Coast to withdraw from the Saigon trade. American President Lines and States Steamship Company temporarily suspended cargo service to Saigon two weeks ago.

Sea Land Service, the fourth West Coast shipper, said it is still accepting some Saigon-bound freight,

which would be transferred to smaller vessels at Hong Kong.

Smith said PFEL's LASH ship *China Bear* is in Manila and that the Saigon cargo she is carrying will be unloaded there.

Another LASH ship, the *Thomas E. Cuffe*, is en route to the Far East with some Saigon cargo that will be discharged at a port yet to be decided, Smith said.

A third PFEL vessel, the *Japan Bear*, is due to sail from San Francisco on April 23, but PFEL has stopped booking Saigon-bound cargo aboard her.

Pacific Westbound Conference, the rate-making association of steamship companies, reported yesterday that the war risk surcharge per ton of cargo on ships going to Saigon was \$6 three weeks ago and will be \$54 today and \$125 on April 30.