

Free enterprise at Aptos High

By BILL AKERS

Rep. Burt Talcott believes the free enterprise system is in trouble, partly because it is not being taught in the schools.

Don Schwerling, principal of Aptos High School, puts the ball back in Talcott's court. Any trouble the free enterprise system may be experiencing is due mainly to the special legislation being constantly enacted on behalf of special interest groups in the country.

A couple of months ago, Talcott wrote a letter to the Aptos Chamber of Commerce, expressing his concern about the fate of the free enterprise system. It is in trouble, Talcott wrote, "partly because it is not being taught, understood nor promoted" in the schools. He asked the chamber to become actively involved in a curriculum development effort on behalf of free enterprise.

The chamber, wondering what Aptos High was doing in behalf of the system, turned the letter over to Schwerling for study and a reply. He gave the directors his reply Thursday morning.

In a lengthy letter, Schwerling outlined the many classes and activities at the school in which the students come into contact, directly and through learning theory, with the free enterprise system.

These include such things as the Distributive Education Club, in which students develop business enterprises. One such example was an ice cream parlor operated by the students at Rancho del Mar two years ago, and an arts and crafts shop a year ago.

The curriculum is full of business classes already, Schwerling told the directors. Classes include those in accounting,

business law and mathematics, career survey, banking and finance, introduction to business, personal finances and others.

He told how the students run the student store at the school, thereby learning about inventories, ordering, bill-paying and all other facets of running a small business.

They have also organized and are running a student credit union, he said.

Further, social science classes teach about governmental budgets, taxation, economics and government at all levels.

Agreeing with Talcott that the free enterprise system "is the best ever devised," Schwerling parted company with the Congressman on the causes of its problems.

If the system is in trouble, he said, "it is not because it is not being taught, understood or promoted. It seems to me, it is because of the constant pressure by special

interest groups who ask for and receive special legislation . . ."

Beyond providing an education, Schwerling said one of the most important things adults can do is "to set an example for them in business, social and political matters.

"It is in the world of business and government that the rules of the game are learned," he said. "And all of us need to examine the rules by which we play the game and see if that is what we want to teach our young."

After hearing the report, a chamber director asked Schwerling if he thought Talcott was aware of what was going on in Aptos High School.

Remarking that Talcott has made several visits to the campus, Schwerling replied, "I'm not at all sure he knows what is going on in the high schools (in general)."