

# Cruz Sentinel

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CRUZ, CALIFORNIA ☆ TUESDAY AFTERNOON, JUNE 15, 1965

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THIRTY-EIGHT PAGES

## \$250,000 Blaze Hits West Foods

A \$250,000 fire raced through the truck maintenance and engineering shop of the West Foods Mushroom Farm in Soquel last night, leaving little but a gutted ruin.

Soquel Fire Chief Ray Negro said he and his volunteers responded to the first alarm at about 7:30 p.m. Negro later called for assistance and units from Capitola, Live Oak and Aptos Forestry station arrived on the scene.

West Foods truck and motor pool superintendent Dwain Bethel, who estimated the damage at a quarter of a million dollars, said the fire was discovered by a West Foods buyer, Frank Boylan, who lives nearby. Bethel said Boylan happened to drop by the building, opened a stock room door and found the room aflame.

Bethel, of 4585 Cherryvale avenue, Soquel, said the stock room contained truck parts and tools.

"I can't figure it out," he commented. "It must have been the wiring or something." The fire spread rapidly through the building.

He said the wood frame structure, covered by corrugated steel, was built only two years ago.

The building, which also houses a West Foods subsidiary, Coast Engineering and Supply company, is maintenance headquarters for the fleet of trucks and other equipment used in the growth and distribution of mushrooms, Bethel said.

He said equipment in the building at the time of the blaze included two trucks, a fork lift and three truck motors.

"I'd moved a couple of big

ones out earlier this afternoon," Bethel said, indicating a row of truck-trailers parked in the motor pool in the rear of the building. They were undamaged.

The Pacific Lumber and Supply company yards next door also appeared undamaged by the blaze, as were other West Foods buildings nearby.

The fire, which sent clouds of acrid smoke into the sky, drew many spectators. Units of the California Highway patrol, the sheriff's office and the Capitola police department assisted in keeping traffic moving. No one was injured in the blaze.

The burned-out structure, which was still smoldering early today, is located on Hillcrest drive between Soquel drive and the Highway 1 freeway.

Surveying the destruction this morning, Boylan, 74, said: "What started it is anyone's guess. How can you ever tell in this mess?"

Boylan, a long-time employee of West Foods and former owner of Coast Engineering, lives at 2901 Hillcrest drive, just

across the street from the building.

He said it was his habit to take a look around the shops each evening. Last night, as he entered the main building at about 7:15 o'clock, he saw a wisp of smoke curling out from under the stock room door. He opened it and discovered the fire.

"I went immediately to Elden

Anderson's (a neighbor) to get help and had Mrs. Anderson call the fire department," Boylan said. Then he and Anderson and Anderson's two sons ran back to fight the fire with an extinguisher. Anderson is sales manager for West Foods.

"But it was too much for us," Boylan said. "The flames were big then and every once in a while there'd be an ex-

plosion and the flames would leap up again."

Boylan explained the store room also contained pressurized containers of fluid used in loosening bolts. He said these probably caused the explosions.

This morning Boylan and his fellow workers were preparing to carry on the truck maintenance portion of their duties in the parking lot adjacent to the burned-out plant.

## Parade Introduces Pageant

A parade by the percussion bands and drum corps introduced the pageant public tonight along Pacific Highway. The sixth annual pageant

### Special School Edition Today

The Sentinel today proudly presents The Class of 1965, composed of hundreds of graduates throughout Santa Cruz county, including sixth graders, eighth graders, senior high students and junior college students.

Extra copies of the fourth annual Graduation Edition are available in The Sentinel business office.

### 'Co Kil

Columbus troop-carrying vehicle collided and overturned at least once more, the

The big capable of smashed swampy area crashed, one Taking of