

Aptos Fire Board Ignites Fireworks

An evaluation committee's report on the public relations finesse of the Aptos Fire Department touched off some fireworks at Tuesday evening's meeting of the Aptos Fire Protection District board.

Board chairman Richard Duchscher, returned from an extended vacation, chided other board members for failing to act on the committee's recommendations, which were originally delivered to the board in May.

The report, prepared by Clayton Ward, president of the Rio Del Mar Improvement Assn.; and Harry Bright, president of the Council of Improvement Associations, dealt with the public relations profile of the department following last year's furor over the citation of the Poor Clares Retreat during a fire inspection.

Duchscher felt the report should have been accepted by the board before this time, "rather than raising the chair of some secretary."

Director Walt Jordan, who responded heatedly to Duchscher's comments Tues-

day, had no further response today, other than to remark, "I think we handled the matter rather nicely." He also pointed out that Duchscher has missed the previous two board meetings during his vacation, and that the board did act on various matters at those meetings.

The final upshot of the meeting was to ask the committee's help in preparing a public relations brochure that would be mailed to Aptos home owners preceding home fire inspections.

Clayton Ward, however, indicated he and Bright have already done their share of the work, having delivered "a fully outlined and detailed plan" for the brochure, and that the plan is "ready to go," according to Ward. "We just don't have time for the nuts and bolts," he added.

Rather than ruling out further participation in fire district affairs, Ward emphasized that he and Bright would continue to take an interest in fire department activities, noting, "We'll be glad to confer with whomever they designate."