

No Emergency at Quentin: Jury

No "new emergency situation" exists in San Quentin's Adjustment Center despite a recent hunger strike that at one point required teargas to subdue a prisoner, the Marin Grand Jury has reported.

In a letter to the Marin County Board of Supervisors, which requested a report on the six-day hunger strike last month, the grand jury committee also lauded prison guards and other personnel for showing "remarkable restraint and professionalism under very trying circumstances."

During visits to the maximum security Adjustment Center, the committee heard complaints from inmates about inadequate medical care, food served on paper plates and cold. Prison staff members, however, present-

ed evidence that health care was adequate and justifying the serving of food on paper plates, Jury Foreman Milan Dempster told the supervisors.

He said the committee felt it significant that there was only one inmate complaint about the use of force — an incident of the inmate being gassed which was not checked out by the jury.

Associate Warden Joseph O'Brien confirmed the gas incident, saying teargas was used to get an inmate out of his cell. "In such a situation . . . you have to use teargas," he said.

The report noted that the two dozen inmates in the Adjustment Center had been locked up since the Aug. 21 violence at the prison which took the lives of three prisoners and three guards.

"The men understandably feel aggravated at being locked up in their cells since Aug. 21, except for individual showers twice a week and for rare visits to the visitors room under chain and shackle.

"We question whether they help themselves by throwing food and human

feces on the officers as they admittedly did last month."

Nevertheless, the committee recommended that the staff allow the men out of their cells for "a measure of relaxation and recreation" but added: "This depends to some extent on how the men behave."