

EIGHTH BLAST VICTIM DIES

Catalina Tragedy Inquest Scheduled Friday

LOS ANGELES, Nov. 13. (CNS) —While experts surveyed the scene of yesterday's tragic powder blast at a Santa Catalina Island rock quarry which claimed eight lives, Coroner Frank Nance today tentatively set his official inquiry into the deaths for Friday.

Although the inquest previously had been expected to be held in Avalon tomorrow, Coroner Nance said he believed additional time was necessary for expert study of the circumstances of the explosion and also to obtain addresses of relatives of the victims.

Negligence Doubted

Indication that the inquest may be brief was given today when Inspector William J. Bright of the sheriff's bureau of investigation announced he was convinced that the fire blast was purely an industrial accident in which reasonable care had been taken and that there was no evidence of criminal negligence.

Although only one man died at the scene of the powder explosion in the Rohl-Connolly quarry, 2 miles from Avalon, six others died within a few hours of being taken to a hospital and the eighth victim, John Halvorson, 32, died this morning.

Tells of Tragedy

From Oscar Larson, 38, the construction foreman and from evidence at the scene of the explosive fire, authorities pieced together the story of the tragedy. The men were breaking open cans of black powder at the edge of the quarry and pouring it into sacks to be transported to a vault in the face of the cliff. Three hundred of the 900 cans of powder had been opened and Mr. Smith and Mr. Hall were opening a can, using a pick and mallet.

According to investigating experts, a metal ring on the pick-handle must have struck a rock or another piece of metal to cause a spark. With a flash, the explosive fire swept through the opened cans. Mr. Larson escaped serious injury by leaping into the ocean, later swimming back to shore to help beat out the flames with his water-soaked garments.