

Tunnel Workers Called as Quiz Opens On Silicosis Deaths

Washington, Jan. 20 (AP)—Men who helped bore the Hawk's Nest, W. Va., water diversion tunnel were called today before a House labor sub - committee inquiring into charges that hundreds died from working on that big project.

Among those summoned was Charles Jones, said by those who instigated the inquiry to be a victim of silicosis, a disease caused by silica dust settling in the lungs, contracted at Hawk's Nest. His wife, Mrs. Emma Jones, also was called to testify in connection with the deaths of their three sons after working on the tunnel.

Representative Vito Marcantonio (R., N. Y.), author of the resolution which started the investigation, charges 476 men died of silicosis from breathing fine dust on the West Virginia project. Another 1,500, many of them residents of Gauley Bridge, near Charleston, W. Va., he says, are dying from the same disease—which slowly congests the lungs—as a result of their work at the tunnel.

The tunnel was a forerunner to operation of a mammoth hydroelectric power plant.

Marcantonio also charges the contractor for building the tunnel had an agreement with an undertaker at Summersville, W. Va., to bury those who died on the project at about \$50 each and that 169 bodies were dumped into a trench in a field with cornstalks as their only grave markers.

All of these charges the tunnel contractor, Rinehart & Dennis Co., of Charlottesville, Va., has branded as "gross misrepresentation and falsehood."