

ENGINEER SAYS SILICOSIS CAN BE EASILY PREVENTED

Washington, D. C. (AFLNS).—The use of wet drills and safety equipment in tunneling and mining operations will protect the workers from silicosis. This was the plain statement which Wm. P. Yant, supervising engineer for the United States Bureau of Mines at Pittsburgh, Pa., made before the House Labor Subcommittee which is investigating the tragedy in connection with the construction of the Hawk's Nest power tunnel at Gauley Bridge, West Virginia.

Representative Marcantonio of New York, who is sponsoring the investigation, charges that hundreds of men have already died of silicosis and hundreds more are still dying of the disease contracted by breathing dust from silica rock while boring the tunnel in 1930 and 1931. He charges that the Rinehart & Dennis Company of Charlottesville, Va., the firm that built the tunnel, did not provide the workers with safety equipment and compelled them to use dry drills which produced the silica dust.

Confronted with testimony that in the Hawk's Nest tunnel dust was so thick that workmen could not distinguish objects 10 feet away. Mr. Yant said such a "very high concentration of dust" was certain to expose men to silicosis.