

# Youth Held Illegally in Cell Suicide

NORFOLK, Va., Dec. 7 (AP)

—The superintendent of the Norfolk City Prison Farm admitted yesterday that one regulation was violated in placing a 16-year-old youth in solitary confinement, but denied the youth "died hungry."

Supt. Guley Perry was one of 14 witnesses called by a subcommittee of the Advisory Commission to the Director of Public Welfare.

The subcommittee is investigating the death of Francis Ricardo West, who was found hanged in his solitary confinement cell at the prison farm on Nov. 11, in his ninth day of solitary. He was serving 60 days for traffic violations.

Perry was asked at the subcommittee meeting about a City Council resolution passed in 1954 directing that prisoners "unwilling or unable to work" be returned to the institution from which they came. West was sent to the farm from City Prison. He was put into solitary for refusing to work.

Perry said during questioning: "You gentlemen are trying to tell me I should have done that (obeyed the resolution). You're right."

Perry took issue with a newspaper account which he said "claimed . . . West died hungry." Perry said: "He was in there nine days and he had five meals. He did not die hungry."

West was placed in solitary without clothes and with only a blanket for covering. He was given a full meal on the first day, three slices of bread a day for the next two days, and a full meal on the fourth day.

Perry also told the subcommittee that West would have been removed from solitary any time he agreed to work. But, Perry said, West was never told that, or directly told why he was in solitary. Perry said West was also not told how long he would remain in solitary.

Perry maintained that West should have known of the rules for solitary through the prison grapevine. He said: "You don't know how fabulously a prison grapevine works."

Later, Perry said that one of the guards should have told West the rules.