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Tunnel job begins



Work has started on the massive reconstruction of the Mt Messenger tunnel (above). Contractors are building a reinforced earth wall which will eventually form a new road on the southern side of the tunnel. The new road will mean north-bound traffic can see through the tunnel, instead of approaching it blind via a sharp bend. The resident engineer with the Ministry of Works and Development in New Plymouth, Mr R. S. Dowsing, said yesterday the wall should be completed by the end of March. The wall was only the first stage in the improvements to the tunnel. The second

stage involved lowering the tunnel by a metre, so it was in line with the new road, and eventually widening it so two trucks could pass through at the same time, said Mr Dowsing. (At present the tunnel is one-lane wide). He said the whole reconstruction job on the tunnel would not leave much change out of \$500,000, but funds had only been allocated for the first stage. If there was a hold-up on the widening of the tunnel, Mr Dowsing said he hoped work could be done on the lowering of the tunnel so the new road could be put into use. Then drivers could at least see through the tunnel, he said.

D.N. Dec 22 1981

Widening highway

D.N. MAR 4 1982



Road and tunnel widening at this point (above) on Mt Messenger is running two to three weeks behind schedule — and motorists may be delayed between 8am and 5pm daily — because of unusually hard earth which needs to be removed in the area. A retaining wall has had to be built after massive excavations. The existing road will be dropped about 2.5 metres to create a new road, including that now being filled. The tunnel is also to be widened.

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