

letter to the Minister of Works, protesting about Greymouth County's vandalism.

"My father, uncle, grandfather and great uncle, unaided by financial subsidy, cut this road through to provide access to their isolated farm without detriment to the surrounding countryside. How can \$60,000 now be justified to upgrade it — and for what? It leads only to Newcombes farm (now Grooms) and there terminates.

"I am appalled to note the unnecessarily wide swathe being cut, turning a scenic and historic area into an unsightly muddy mess." [In a gross breach of Catchment Board regulations some trees along the road were even felled into the Grey River.]

Norma Streeter is not alone in her protests. Vic Hawker owned Newcombes and farmed very successfully there for nearly 20 years until he sold it last year after his wife passed away. Throughout his time in the Upper Grey he fought to protect the huge trees and the scenic roadway of Palmers Road. The narrow scenic road didn't handicap his farming operation. He too is outraged by Greymouth County's action. On 4 February, Forest and Bird's 320-strong West Coast branch passed a unanimous motion at its AGM deploring the Greymouth County's actions. They called on the Minister of Works to suspend taxpayer funding for the road improvements [the County claims they have cleared the 30 metre wide strip in

order to widen the existing road formation from 3.5 metres to 4.8 metres!].

Similar concerns have been expressed throughout Westland. There is growing recognition on the Coast that scenic gems like Palmers Road distinguish Westland from the rest of New Zealand and are the basis of Westland's character and its booming tourist industry.

Footnote: let Newmans show you New Zealand

The Nelson Chipmill is 50 percent owned by the Newmans Group, leaders in the tourist industry. "Let Newmans show you New Zealand" is one of their mottos. Does that include Palmers Road, Maruia Valley, the Gowan Valley approach to Nelson Lakes National Parks and all the other scenic gems their woodchipping has destroyed? Is it too much to hope for more sensitivity from this industry giant that depends on our scenic beauty for its survival. Certainly Newmans should be able to afford it. They recently announced that their interim trading profit had leapt by 83.6 percent. The Royal Forest and Bird Protection Society would far prefer to work with Newmans to promote nature tourism, described in our February journal, than fight them over chipmilling.

Until December 1984, Palmers Road wound beneath huge red beech trees beside the Upper Grey river (see road at bottom right).

Photo: David Harding



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