

Rumble, rumble —more trouble!

NEWS ON CAMERA

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THE VILLAGE of Bridge, straddling the A2 three miles south of Canterbury and already shaken to its ancient foundations by inter continental lorries, today faces a new menace the jumbo-sized juggernaut.

Some Common Market countries want the British lorry limits of 32 tons overall weight and 10 tons axle weight raised to 40 tons and 11 tons. And they want the change made before the end of the year . . . before Britain enters the Common Market and has a vote.

Any new limits decided in Brussels would affect all Market countries—and places like Bridge more than anywhere.

Militant

For an hour—from 1.14 p.m. to 2.14 p.m. yesterday—I monitored 43 huge freighters rumbling through the high street of Bridge.

In parts, this main artery between London and the Continent is a mere 16ft. wide.

At the village entrance a hand written notice pleads: "How many more must die before Bridge is bypassed?"

This is a reference to an accident last May when a Continental-bound lorry loaded with meat crashed into a shop. The driver was killed and several villagers narrowly escaped death.

Under the great, unyielding concrete bridge, where heavy lorries and trucks pass, claims



A GERMAN TANKER trundles on its 10 wheels past the boarded butcher's shop.



A PEDESTRIAN stands back as a lorry and a mobile crane—neither of them trans-Continental—pass with inches to spare through Bridge's narrow street.

painted by militant villagers. A huge slogan reads: "Ban TIR's now! Bypass Bridge."

The Environment Department has recently said a road will be built round Bridge, but few believe it will be ready in less than five years.

The juggernauts I saw heading for Hamburg and Mannheim, Sofia and Belgrade, and from several East and West European countries would be minis compared with 40-ton giants.

The superjuggernauts, which France and Belgium want, would damage more buildings, bring down more ceilings and increase accident risks, claims

the powerful anti-juggernaut lobby.

They would also damage roads built for much lighter vehicles.

On average a juggernaut passes through Bridge every two minutes of the day and night. For every 10 last year there are now 14.

Narrowly missed

Cross-Channel shipping operators believe the traffic will double within two years and are backing their judgment by building more ships.

Even the pavement seemed to shudder as I watched a heavily-laden TIR (Transport International Routier) lorry pass

within three feet of ancient cottages on its way to London.

It narrowly missed another freighter heading for Dover docks. In 90 seconds, four juggernauts lumbered through the village which has been the scene of many protests and numerous near-accidents.

Several Tory MPs are bitterly opposed to bigger juggernauts and threaten to vote against the Government unless assurances are given that British weight limits would not be increased.

Bridge, founded in quiet horse-and-buggy days, is now a noisy place where danger always lurks. And this is the quietest part of the year.