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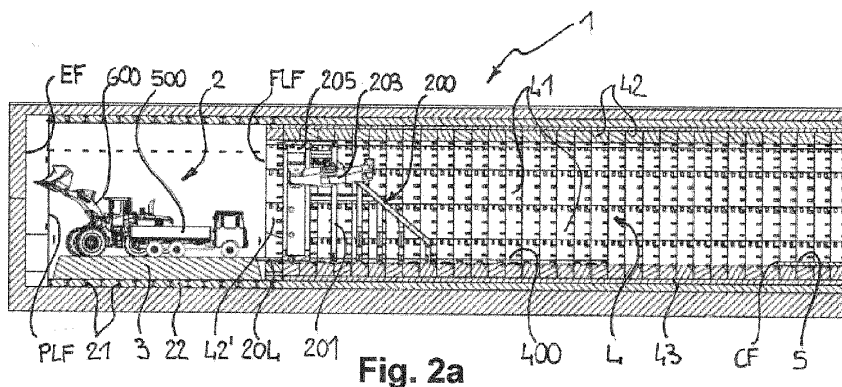
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(54) Title: TUNNEL CONSTRUCTION METHOD AND MACHINE



(57) **Abstract:** A method for constructing natural tunnels comprises the steps: a) advancing an excavation front (EF) of a tunnel (1) by a predetermined advance length by means of point excavation with one or more self-propelled excavating machines (100); b) removing excavated material from a work region, located between the excavation front (EF) and a final lining front (FLF) of the tunnel (1), by means of one or more dump trucks (500); c) applying a primary lining (2) onto walls exposed by the excavation at the advance length of the excavation front (EF); d) advancing the final lining front (FLF) by a predetermined advance length by creating a final lining (4) on the primary lining (2) applied at the same advance length in a previous advance cycle; e) repeating steps a) to d) until the tunnel (1) is completed. The step d) of advancing the final lining front (FLF) comprises assembling at least one full ring (42') of prefabricated segments (41) and is carried out simultaneously with step a) of advancing the excavation front (EF). Furthermore, the step d) of advancing the final lining front (FLF) is carried out by means of a segment placing machine (200) having a tubular frame (201), and a passage or displacement of operating machines (100), vehicles, or equipment from/to said work region during said steps b) and c) takes place through the tubular frame (201) of the segment placing machine (200). A segment placing machine (200) for use in said method is also described.

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