

## [Inside Front Cover - The Cabot Trail: A Political Story](#)

ISSUE : [Issue 62](#)

Published by Ronald Caplan on 1993/1/1

The Cabot Trail: A Political Story As we commemorate the 60th Anniversary of the Cabot Trail, it is valuable to see how complex a story there is yet to be told. The trail (and the Cape Breton Highlands National Park) continue to have profound social, economic and environmental impact • homes have been lost and are still mourned, and landscape of incalculable value has been preserved; non-ordinary work opportunities have developed as well as the social distortions created by seasonal work; emphasis on "heritage" has meant that some traditions have been preserved and some neglected, and some have even been created, in the desire to offer the visitor something both entertaining and authentic • not always reconcilable desires. The following is just one document in the very complex story; specifically, it is about which political party should get credit for the mixed blessings of the Cabot Trail. We are told in the text that it was written in 1952 by A. S. MacMillan, Minister of the Department of Highways under Premier George Murray. Title is MacMillan's. For easier reading, we have added some commas and paragraphing. A Dream Come True story of the Development of Tourist Industry in Northern Inverness and Victoria Counties In 1920 when I became head of the Department of Highways, I regarded as a duty to as far as possible to investigate the conditions of all roads in every section of the Province. In this connection I visited Cape Breton and made a special trip to the above mentioned places where reports reaching me were alarming. My first visit to the above places was in the summer of 1921 where by motor car I travelled over the road from Baddeck to Cape North via Englishtown, North Shore, Breton Cove and over "Smoky," South Ingonish, North Ingonish, Neils Harbour, Cape North, Dingwall, Bay St. Lawrence, Capstick and Meat Cove. Needless to say the roads were in an almost hazardous condition, not fit for motor travel and indeed dangerous for team travel. However, the grandeur of the scenery was almost beyond description of which I refer to in a later part of this story. We immediately started improvements on the roads which in many places could only be described as trails. We continued improvements each year as fast as money became available. During the following years I had repeated requests for something to be done to the road conditions in Northern Inverness County; more particularly, the Pleasant Bay district where there was no road communication with the outside world. The then members for Inverness County, Donald MacLellan and John Bournoit respectively, were pressing me continuously to visit Pleasant Bay and look into the situation. In the summer of 1924 I decided to visit Pleasant Bay to look into the possibility of giving them some kind of a road or outlet. In August of 1924 I went by motor car to Cheticamp and got a team to take me to Cap Rouge where I chartered a motor boat and proceeded to Pleasant Bay and by the way, almost lost my life in a storm. I spent the night at the Macintosh home and Mr. Macintosh got a number of the residents together to meet me and I listened to their tale of woe, of their being shut in for months without any outlet, no doctor, mail only occasionally by dog team, no provision for getting a doctor unless he was brave enough to face 25 miles on foot over a trail that was



not passable for even horseback, people dying without any medical attention. After listening to their stories I was indeed sympathetic but could make no promises. The next morning I investigated the situation between Pleasant Bay and Cape North where there was a trail passable only in Summer for a sure-footed horse, but im-

The Cabot Trail Story Continues on Page 66