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Wilfred Creighton & the Expropriations: Clearing Land for the National Park, 1936
Edited from Mr. Creighton's Conversations with Kenneth Donovan Wilfred Creighton was a Provincial Forester and, eventually, Deputy Minister for the Nova Scotia Department of Lands and Forests. Early in his career • 1936 • he was given the job of negotiating payment for homes on land that had just been expropriated for the coming Cape Breton Highlands National Park. Wilfred Creighton: I was young and it was an entirely new job to me and I had to go ahead by trial and error.... When I was up in (Cape Breton in) 1936, I had no notion that there would be a national park there. But shortly after, whether it was that spring or the next year, engineers from the National Parks branch arrived in Halifax. They went up to Cape Breton and were looking over the property. And at that time, A.S. MacMillan who was Minister of Highways was the only provincial minister who had legal authority to expropriate land. So MacMillan made the expropriation and he sent (a fellow) down to Cape Breton to negotiate settlements. And from the stories I got when I finally arrived, (that fellow's) approach to a landowner--a person would file a claim for \$3,000. They told me (this fellow's) approach was: "We'll make it \$5,000--that'll be \$4,000 for you and a thousand for me." Well, I can't vouch for that, but this is what people told me. And he was there for some time. (They said that) he spent most of his time drinking rum. And he finally had the DTs and they Above: Wilfred Creighton. Top: Assessing the Pepin Camus property at Cap Rouge. had him in the hospital at Cheticamp. The nurses had him and he dirtied their beds and threw up, was an awful character. He eventually disappeared from Cheticamp and when I got there he hadn't paid his bills. And MacMillan sent down (another fellow)-- he didn't drink rum, he preferred gin. And Cape Breton's MAGAZINE • Number Sixty-Nine Wreck Cove, Cape Breton, Nova Scotia BOC IHO Publications MaU Registration Number 3014