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William H. "Bull" Marsh • Still Fighting It has been a few years since we began the conversations that were edited for this visit with Bill Marsh, arguably the best known living coal miner and union leader from our region. First elected in June 1958, he was president of District 26, United Mine Workers of America, for 22 years. Few people have been more at the heart of Cape Breton industrial life. These talks are only a beginning. He doesn't tell us everything, but he tells us a lot. And a fair word of caution: some readers may find this a little more down-to-earth than they are used to. otherwise, it wouldn't be true to the man.... Name is William Marsh. Born on January 21st, 1922. Born right in town of New Waterford, one end of a company house. (You started in the mines....) 1938. I went in the mines with (my father). He'd been in since he was 11 years old, working in the coal mines. (When you say you went in with him--was it your choice, and was your father in favour of it?) Number One, it was a choice of mine. Because at the same time--I was probably about 15 1/2 at the time, about 16.... I dropped out of school at Grade 11. And of course, those were tough days, and in the Hungry '30s. And I was working part-time in the Co-operative (Store). Packing potatoes first, and then I went from packing potatoes to three days a week as a clerk. And I was just getting a permanent job as a truck driver. And my father came home on the same day. And he had a hard hat (for me) and the pit boots and the pit belt and all the rest of it. (But) he advised me to stay in the Co-operative. He said, "You might be managing the store some day!" So, naturally enough, I knew more than my father did at that stage--I was brilliant, eh? So, I said, "No...." See, he had been trying to get me a job in the coal mines, previous to that. He said, "If you're not going to go to school, you'll have to work." And of course, I was working in the Below: the cover of the August 1967 Issue of The Atlantic Advocate, prompted by the thrust to close Cape Breton's coal mines. g'ATUNTIC-ADVOCATE CHANGE FOR CAPE BRETON; Cape Breton's MAGAZINE • Number Seventy-Two Wreck Cove, Cape Breton, Nova Scotia BOC IHO Publications Mail Registration Number 3014