

Page 19 - Searching for the Highlands National Park, 1934 ISSUE : <u>Issue 43</u> Published by Ronald Caplan on 1986/8/1

upper waters of the Margaree River to some extent, in which case they will be well worth such development as will make them accessible to tourists. The point that it is desired to make guite clear at the outset is that the merits of the Cape Breton Park site rest on the coast line scenery and the Cabot Trail as a means of seeing it.... Advantages of Cape Breton Site In the first place, the scenic values of the site are outstanding. Starting north a- long the west coast, from the bridge a- cross Cheticamp River to Pleasant Bay, a distance of about 20 miles, a highway could be built along the coast which, in my opinion, would be the most spectacular marine drive that I have ever seen in any part of Canada. In full view of the sea and the rugged coast, it would be located high up on the cliffs in places and at oth? ers, would follow the grassy slopes at the entrance of picturesque valleys. It will be noted that this part of the Cab? ot Trail would have to be relocated and re? built, since the present Trail includes a number of excessive grades which I am sat? isfied you would regard as prohibitive in any National Parks highway. Continuing easterly across Cape Breton Is? land, from Pleasant Bay to Cape North, a distance of 19.2 miles, the Trail passes through first-class scenery of an entirely different character. Following up Grand Anse River through a narrow and gorge-like valley, filled with fine timber for a dis? tance of six miles, it emerges on the wes? terly edge of the central plateau. After traversing the more-or-less level plateau for 2% miles, it descends from an altitude of about 1,200 feet to the Aspy River, a distance of three miles. This three mile section is travelled on a well built road, high up on the steep valley side, which af? fords a number of excellent views of the beautiful Aspy River Intervale as well as of the deep timbered valleys below. From the bridge across Aspy River to Cape North is 7% miles of good gravel road following a low ridge on the south side of Aspy In? tervale. The fertile farms in the Aspy Riv? er bottom, backed by high mountains and the successive outlines of headlands to? wards Cape North, are very beautiful. The above 19.2 miles of road include a num? ber of grades up to 12% but it is well built material which provides good trac? tion, and might, I think, be accepted as part of a Parks system. From Cape North to Ingonish is 21.80 miles by the Cabot Trail. This part of the Trail is not particularly attractive from a sce? nic point of view, being out of sight of the sea for the most part. The Trail it? self is generally narrow, crooked, and not in a very good state of maintenance. A few miles of it have already been relocated, widened and brought to first-class condi? tion. There are no excessive grades on this part of the Trail, and it passes through a country without much rock so that road construction will present no dif? ficulties of either engineering or exces? sive cost.... CONTINUED NEXT PAGE Four views along the old Cabot Trail. Top left: Looking south from Cape Smokey. Bottom left: Workmen clearing a rock fall on the western side. Top right: Plank road on Smokey Mountain. (19