

Obituary of Robert B. Elver



Robert Bruce Elver, one of Canada's foremost mineral economists, died in Kingston, Ontario, on July 16, 1979, following a brief illness.

Dr. Elver was born in Toronto in 1934 and graduated from the University of Toronto in applied geology in 1957. He joined the then Mineral Resources Division of the federal Department of Mines and Technical Surveys and remained with that organization and its successors until his death. Working first as a commodity specialist in iron ore and later in iron and steel, he subsequently became chief of the Research and Planning Division in 1969 and in 1975 the director of the Mineral Economics Division.

In his initial capacity as ferrous industry specialist, Dr. Elver was heavily involved in the work of the first Steel Committee of the OECD and the Steel Committee of the Economic Commission for Europe. He initiated Canadian involvement with those committees in the mid 1950s, contributing much original work himself and coordinating Canadian industry and government participation. Recently, he represented the Department at the charter meeting of the new Steel Committee of the OECD, set up to study the problems of the world steel industry in the 1980's.

During his 22 years with the federal government, Bob Elver twice took educational leave to study mineral economics at Pennsylvania State University. He obtained an M.Sc. in 1958 and a Ph.D. in 1967.

In the late 1960's, as the responsibilities of the Branch were broadened, Dr. Elver became involved in regional economic development. He pioneered Canadian work in regional mineral resource evaluation, which has become an important part of the Sector's responsibility. He also developed close interdepartmental links and federal-provincial liaison that resulted in greatly enhanced mineral development in several provinces and in the signing of the first federal-provincial mineral development agreement.

As his interest in the role of minerals in the Canadian social and economic milieu grew, Dr. Elver became more involved with the process and substance of mineral policy review. He was coordinator of the office of Mineral Policy Review in 1971-1974, a time of growing public awareness of the mineral sector when there was a demand for involvement at various levels of government. Dr. Elver was instrumental in the publication of two documents that summarized the federal-provincial consensus of the time: *Mineral Policy Objectives for Canada (Phase I)* and *Towards a Mineral Policy for Canada (Phase II)*.

As director of the Mineral Economics Division of the Mineral Policy Sector of EMR, he was responsible for numerous staff studies, including in 1976, *Mineral Industry Trends and Economic Opportunities*. He continued to publish articles in professional journals and was active in the mineral economics community at large, including service as Chairman of the Research Advisory Committee of the Centre for Resource Studies, at Queen's University.

Dr. Elver participated in the activities of the CIM, both in the Ottawa Branch and also on the national level. In 1974, he made the presentation to Council seeking approval for the formation of the Mineral Economics Committee and subsequently became its founding Chairman. For a number of years, he had been the CIM representative on the Council of Economics of the AIME. He became a Junior Member of the Institute in 1958 and was elected to full membership in 1971.

In his energetic pursuit of issues and broad appreciation of the problems and opportunities that face the industry, he will be missed by his friends and colleagues in both the federal and provincial governments, in industry and in the academic community.

Transcribed from CIM Bulletin September, 1979, pp 44-45.