



PROMINENT LUNENBURGERS
Remembering the People that Make Us Special
1753-2013



Courtesy Fisheries
Museum of the Atlantic

The Hon. Robert Henry Winters

b. 18 August 1910 in Lunenburg, d. 9/10 October 1969 in California

Associated Places: Lunenburg Academy; Winters family home, 289 Pelham Street; cornerstone of the 'old' Post Office, 16-22 King Street; Hillcrest Cemetery

Contributions: Politics

Robert Winters was born in Lunenburg in 1910, and received his initial education at the Lunenburg Academy. He attained a bachelor's degree in Engineering at Mount Allison University and a Master of Engineering degree at the prestigious Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT). When war was declared in 1939 Winters was working at Northern Electric but he volunteered for the Corps of Royal Canadian Electrical and Mechanical Engineers, eventually rising to the rank of Lieutenant-Colonel.

At the war's end, Winters transitioned to politics, winning for the Liberal Party the federal seat for Queen's-Lunenburg in 1945. Three years later Prime Minister William Lyon Mackenzie King appointed him Minister of the Department of Reconstruction and Supply, and in the government of Louis St. Laurent he served as Minister for Resources and Development, and then as Minister of Public Works.

Winters was defeated in the 1957 election, and spent the next eight years as President of Rio Tinto of Canada. He served as director of many major Canadian corporations, and was founding Chairman of the Board of Governors of York University. York University subsequently honoured him by establishing Winters College in his name.

Winters returned to politics in 1965 to win the Liberal seat for York West in Toronto. As Minister of Trade and Commerce in Lester Pearson's cabinet, he was credited with the success of the Expo '67.

When Pearson retired in 1968, Winters contended for the leadership of the Liberal Party, but lost to Pierre Elliot Trudeau by a slim margin on the fourth ballot. He then resumed his career in corporate management, but died the following year at the age of 59. Despite his wide-ranging career, he always returned to Lunenburg, and is interred at Hillcrest Cemetery with his wife Eleanor, and a young son.



with contributions from Henry Winters