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A FIVE YEAR REVIEW OF THE CANADA/ONTARIO/INDUSTRY ROCKBURST PROJECT

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MARCH 1990

MRL 90-064(SP)

MINING RESEARCH LABORATORY
SPECIAL REPORT SP 90-
DIVISION REPORT 90-064(SP)

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BACKGROUND

Rockbursts first started to occur in Ontario hardrock mines in the early 1930's, mainly in the gold mines at Kirkland Lake and some of the nickel mines in Sudbury. The rockbursts reported to the Ontario Ministry of Labour and the associated fatalities are shown in Figure 1.

By the late 1930's, rockburst incidents and fatalities were increasing at an alarming rate. This led to an extensive research effort, within the mining industry, to develop methods to alleviate the problem. The Ontario Mining Association also appointed the "Morrison Inquiry", in 1940, to investigate the problem. Recommendations, based on observation, experience and trial-and-error methods, included avoidance of remnant pillars, systematic sequencing of extraction, and procedures for mining around dykes and faults. These methods were partially successful and the frequency of bursting declined.

Until the 1980's the level of rockburst activity in Ontario mines was relatively low. A noticeable exception was in 1964 when a series of major rockbursts caused the closure of the Wright-Hargreaves Mine at Kirkland Lake.

There was a significant increase in rockburst activity in Ontario mines in the 1980's. Fourteen mines in Red Lake, Elliot Lake, Sudbury and Kirkland Lake were affected. A peculiar feature of this recent activity was the multiple nature of the occurrences. Previously, rockbursts had occurred mainly as isolated events followed by some microseismic activity.

Multiple rockburst sequences first started at Rio Algom's Quirke Mine at Elliot Lake in 1982, followed in 1983 by Placer Dome's Campbell Mine at Red Lake. 1984 was a particularly active year. First a series of rockbursts at Falconbridge's No. 5 shaft resulted in four fatalities and closure of the

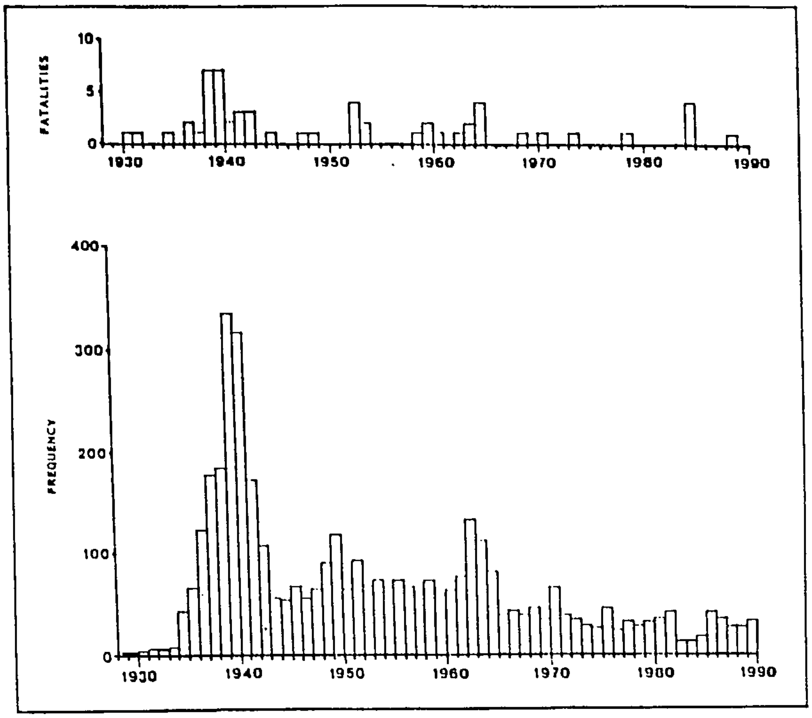


Fig. 1 - Reported rockbursts and associated fatalities in Ontario mines, 1928 to 1989.

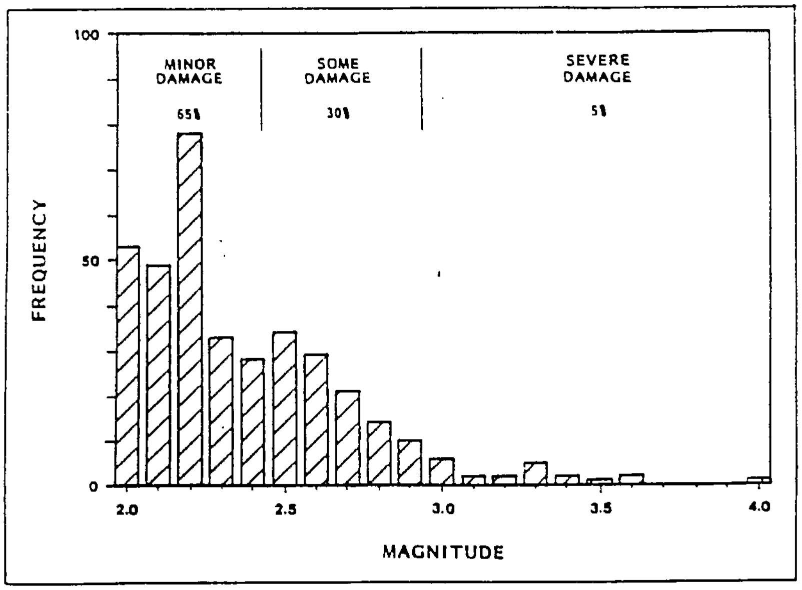


Fig. 2 - Distribution of seismic events by magnitude in Ontario mines, 1984 to 1989.

mine. A few weeks later, at Inco's Creighton Mine, a rockburst of magnitude 4.0 was felt throughout the city of Sudbury. Finally, Quirke Mine became active again and over an eight month period 120 rockbursts of magnitudes up to 3.5 were recorded on the regional seismic network.

This level of rockburst activity, in a short time-span and at four separate mines across the province, attracted considerable attention from the public, media, mining industry, unions and government agencies. The Ontario Ministry of Labour also appointed an inquiry into ground control and emergency preparedness in Ontario mines.

In response to this increased rockburst activity the Canada/Ontario/Industry rockburst research project was initiated in 1985. The Government of Canada, through the Canada Centre for Mineral and Energy Technology (CANMET), provided staff to operate the project. The Government of Ontario, through the Ministry of Northern Development and Mines and the Ministry of Labour, provided funds for equipment and services. The Ontario mining industry, through Denison Mines Ltd., Falconbridge Ltd, Inco Ltd., Lac Minerals Ltd., Placer Dome Inc., and Rio Algom Ltd., contributed their existing microseismic monitoring systems, assisted in the installation and operation of new equipment, provided data on rockbursts and conducted in situ trials on various aspects of rockburst alleviation or control.

The rationale and objectives of the rockburst project were first to develop new seismic monitoring systems capable of capturing complete waveforms. Then to investigate the causes and mechanisms of rockbursts by using improved source location techniques, first motion studies, peak particle velocity, liberated seismic energy and spectral frequency analysis. These techniques would then be used in conjunction with field trials to evaluate methods of alleviating rockbursts or to control their damaging effects or to control the timing of a burst.

During the five year project seismograph stations have been installed at Red Lake, Elliot Lake, Sudbury and Kirkland Lake to record the larger bursts and determine their magnitude. Macroseismic systems have been installed at Rio Algom's Quirke Mine, Falconbridge's Strathcona Mine, Lac Mineral's Macassa Mine, Placer Dome's Campbell Mine and Inco's Creighton Mine. These systems record seismic waveforms and are used to determine rockburst mechanisms and focal parameters. The mining industry in Ontario has increased the number of microseismic monitoring systems in their mines from 3 to 16, to determine the location of seismic events.

Destress blasting trials on crown/sill pillars have been done at the Campbell and Macassa mines. At the Creighton Mine a destress slot trial was done in a large crown pillar between levels. Falconbridge has investigated the stability of fault systems using numerical modelling techniques. The use of stiff backfill to limit the damage from rockbursts has been implemented at the Macassa Mine and backfill has been used at Denison Mine to control violent pillar failure. Inco Ltd., Falconbridge Ltd., and Placer Dome Inc., have all tested yielding types of support systems to contain rockburst damage.

SEISMICITY IN ONTARIO MINES

Since 1984, mining induced seismic events, including rockbursts, have been classified by their magnitude. A rockburst is defined as a seismic event which causes injury or damage to equipment or the displacement of more than five tonnes of rock. In most years there are more recorded seismic events than reported rockbursts.

Magnitude values are determined from the Eastern Canada Seismic Network operated by the Geophysics Division of the Geological Survey of Canada. The Nuttli magnitude scale is used, which is specific to eastern North America, but in many respects is similar to the Richter magnitude scale used elsewhere. For most mining camps in Northern Ontario, the level of detection is a magnitude 2.0 event or greater. Starting in 1985 the Seismological Service of the Geological Survey of Canada began to publish a quarterly report on 'Mining-Related Seismic Activity in Canada', which lists all the events recorded on their seismograph stations.

The distribution of mining-induced seismic events of magnitude 2.0 and greater are listed in Table 1, by mining camp for the years 1984 to 1989, and in Table 2 by the number of events that have occurred in each mine and the largest magnitude recorded. During this six year period, mines at Elliot Lake and Sudbury dominated the statistics accounting for 40% and 46%, respectively, of the 367 seismic events recorded. Most of the seismic activity at Elliot Lake was concentrated in 1984 and 1985 and since then activity has rapidly declined. At Sudbury mines seismic activity tends to be more constant, except for 1989 when there was a relatively low level of seismic activity across the province.

On a mine-wide basis Quirke Mine at Elliot Lake has been the most seismically active, followed by the Creighton and Strathcona mines in Sudbury. Other mines with more than ten events of magnitude 2.0 and greater are the Copper Cliff North Mine in Sudbury, the Campbell Mine at Red Lake, the Denison Mine in Elliot Lake and the Macassa Mine at Kirkland Lake.

The frequency distribution of the seismic events by magnitude are shown in Figure 2. As expected there are many more smaller magnitude events than larger events. The distribution can be split into three broad groups. Magnitudes between 2.0 to 2.4 account for 65% of the total, and the damage associated with these events is usually minor, involving a few tonnes of displaced rock. Events of magnitude 2.5 to 2.9 account for 30% and more damage would be expected in the order of tens of tonnes. Events of magnitude over 3.0 only account for 5% of the total but the damage is more severe typically involving hundreds, up to thousands, of tonnes of displaced rock. Over the six year period these large events have averaged 3.5 per year in Ontario mines.

Table 1 - Distribution of seismic events of magnitude 2.0 and greater by mining camp, 1984-1989.

Mining Camp	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989	Totals
Red Lake	18	3	6	0	0	0	27
Elliot Lake	46	74	13	8	1	4	146
Sudbury	15	20	35	56	36	10	172
Kirkland Lake	5	2	3	3	5	2	20
Timmins	0	0	0	0	0	3	3
Totals	84	99	57	67	42	19	368

Table 2 - Distribution of seismic events by individual mines, 1984-1989.

Location	No.	Largest Magnitude	Location	No.	Largest Magnitude
<u>Sudbury</u>			<u>Red Lake</u>		
Falconbridge	7	3.5	Campbell	23	3.3
Fraser	2	2.5	Dickenson	4	2.1
Lockerby	5	2.8			
Strathcona	46	3.2	<u>Elliot Lake</u>		
Copper Cliff N.	23	3.3			
Creighton	60	4.0	Denison	11	2.8
Frood-Stobie	2	2.9	Quirke	135	3.5
Levack	5	2.6			
Stobie	1	2.4	<u>Kirkland Lake</u>		
			Kerr Addison	3	3.3
			Macassa	14	3.1

Over the life of the project certain trends and characteristics on seismic activity have emerged from the different mining camps. For mines at Red Lake, Elliot Lake and Kirkland Lake most of the seismic activity is concentrated in pillars within the orebody. The cause and mechanism appears to be overloading of the pillars followed by their violent failure. For the mines in Sudbury, most of the large events occur outside the orebody on geological structures. The mechanism appears to be fault-slip, similar to earthquakes.

Seismic events in the Elliot Lake mines and most of the events in the Red Lake mines occur in old mined-out areas of the mines and are related to past mining practice. Events at the Sudbury and Kirkland Lake mines tend to occur near active mine workings and are related to present mining.

A number of triggering mechanisms have been identified including nearby blasting, rehabilitation involving scaling and bolting, pulling broken ore from a stope, inflows of water from surface or drainage water from backfill and variations of temperature and/or air pressure.

SEISMIC MONITORING SYSTEMS

When the rockburst project started in 1985 there were three microseismic systems in operation in Ontario mines, plus one seismograph unit in Sudbury. By the end of the first five years of the project there were sixteen microseismic systems in operation, five macroseismic systems, and an additional five seismograph stations were installed in Ontario's mining camps. This level of coverage is comparable to that of the gold mining districts on the Witwatersrand in South Africa.

As previously mentioned, the Geophysics Division of the Geological Survey of Canada operates the Eastern Canada Seismic Network. This system is used to calculate magnitudes of the events, and for the very large events, their focal parameters. The locations of the seismograph station in and around Ontario are shown in Figure 3. This network has been augmented by additional seismograph stations at Sudbury, Elliot Lake, Red Lake and Kirkland Lake. Of these the network in Sudbury is the most sophisticated, involving three stations located around the rim of the basin, as illustrated in Figure 4. Signals from each station are continuously transmitted over dedicated phone lines to a computer and display facility at Science North. From there the three signals are continuously transmitted to the Geophysics Division in Ottawa. CANMET employs a person at this facility in Ottawa to look after the Sudbury network and discriminate between blasting and mining-induced seismic events. Typically 200 events are recorded each month, of which 60% are blasts and 12% are mining-induced events within the Sudbury mines. The remaining 28% are events emanating outside the Sudbury Basin, either naturally occurring earthquakes or mining induced, including blasts.

The first macroseismic system, designed under contract by Noranda Inc., was installed at the Quirke Mine in 1987, followed by other installations at Strathcona, Macassa, Campbell and Creighton mines. Each system consists of five triaxial sensors installed in boreholes on surface, or underground, or a mixture of both. To prevent saturation of the sensors they are usually installed 0.5 to 1.0 km from the active mine workings. Accelerometers are used in the Strathcona system, whereas the other four systems use velocity gauges. Typically, the macroseismic systems record seismic signals in the 10 to 300 Hz frequency range and are capable of detecting seismic events of magnitude 0.5 and greater.

These systems record the complete waveforms (i.e., generally 2 seconds long) of seismic events, an example of a velocity signal is shown in Figure 5a. In the time domain the arrival of the P and S waves can usually be distinguished. The time difference is related to the distance from the event to the sensor and using the five sensor array the location of the event can be calculated. The arrival of the P wave also shows a first motion either

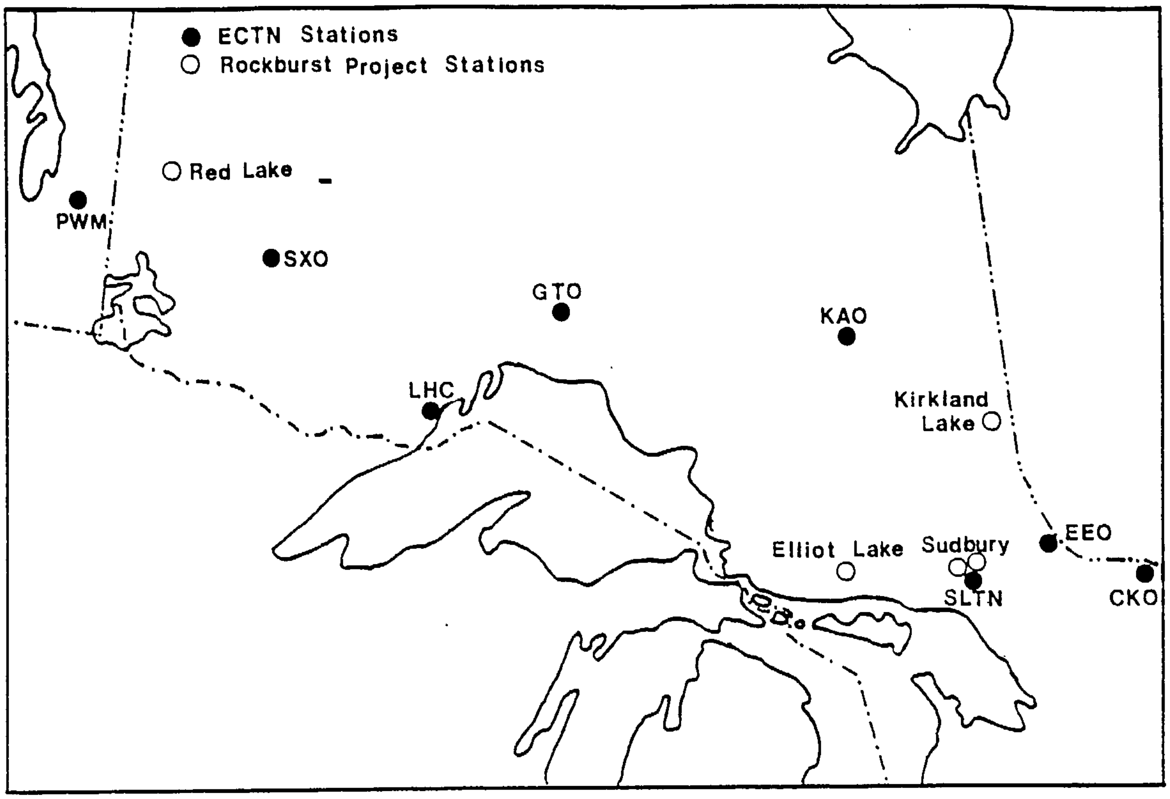


Fig. 3 - Location of seismograph stations in Northern Ontario.

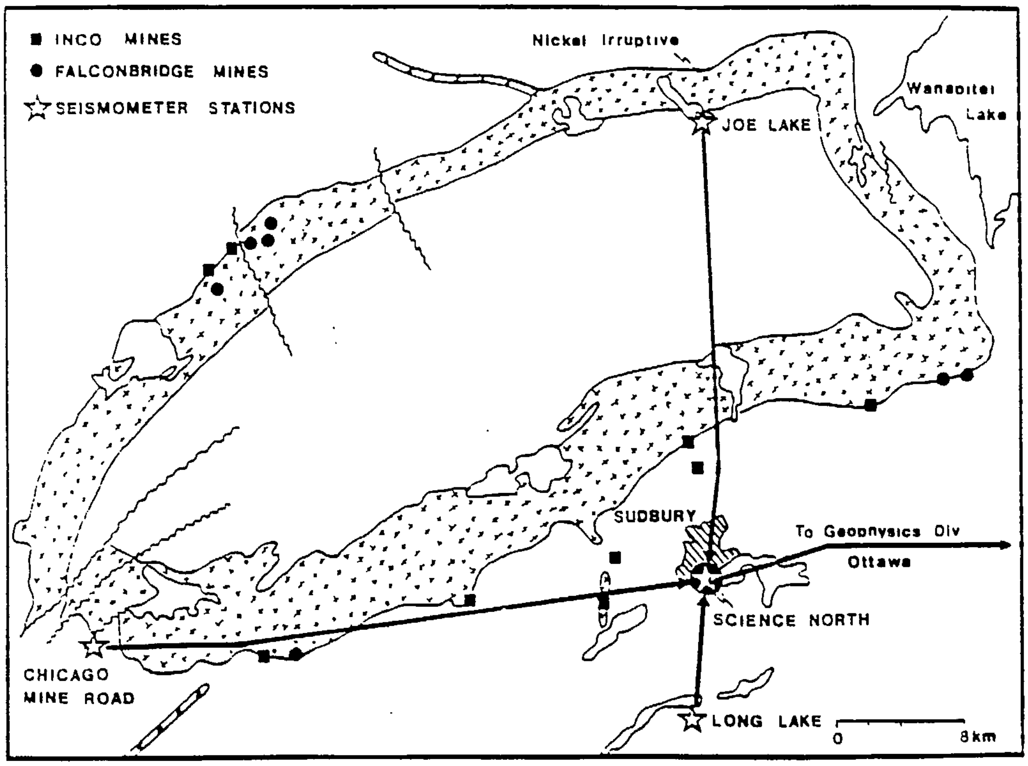


Fig. 4 - Location of the seismograph network around the Sudbury Basin.

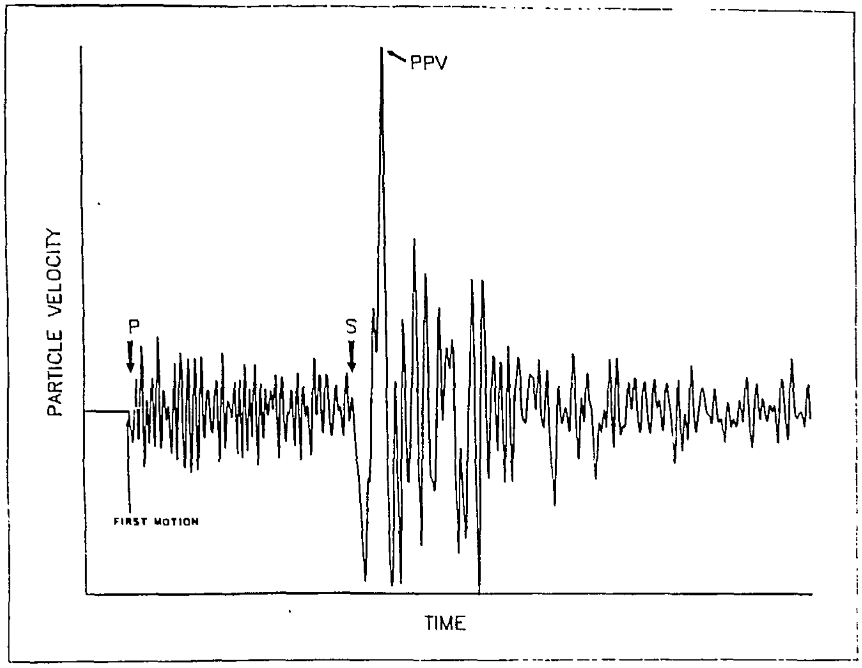


Fig. 5a - Typical seismic waveform recorded on a macroseismic system.

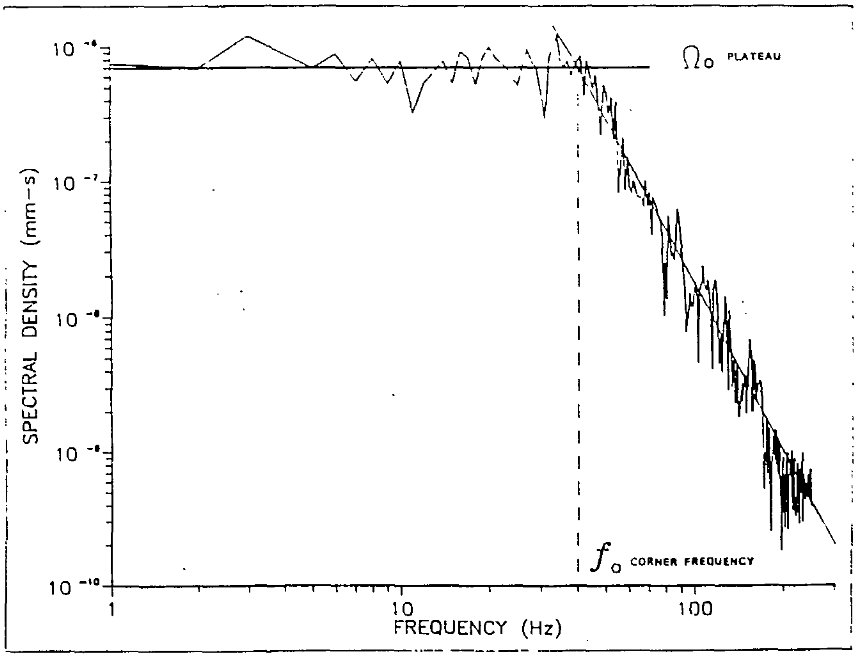


Fig. 5b - Analysis of a seismic signal in the frequency domain.

towards or away from the sensor, which provides information on the mechanism of the seismic event. The peak particle velocity (PPV) is used to assess the damage potential of a rockburst. Integration of the squared velocity signal gives the seismic energy liberated.

Analysis of the same seismic data in the frequency domain is shown in Figure 5b. The spectral density exhibits a plateau at low frequencies and a steep decay at higher frequencies. The plateau is related to the seismic moment, which is an alternative measure of the magnitude of a rockburst. The intersection of the plateau and the decay slope is the corner frequency, which is related to the areal extent over which slippage is occurring.

Two types of microseismic systems are being used in Ontario mines; the Electrolab MP250 system, and a system developed at the Geosciences Department of Queen's University. The Electrolab systems employ up to 64 sensors installed around the underground working and records the arrival times at different sensors when the seismic signal exceeds a threshold value. From these arrival times the location of the seismic event can be calculated. A single sensor also acts as an energy channel and the signal from this sensor is integrated to provide a comparative seismic energy value. In the Queen's system the complete seismic waveforms are recorded, which allows the P wave arrival to be picked accurately rather than a threshold value. Also, seismic analysis of the waveforms can be done, similar to the macroseismic systems, but for small sized events since the sensors are extremely sensitive and are saturated by the larger events.

Most mining companies have digitized their mine plans and can automatically plot the location of microseismic activity on plans and sections. An example is illustrated in Figure 6 which shows the seismic activity following a rockburst of magnitude 3.6 Mn at the Creighton Mine in October 1987.

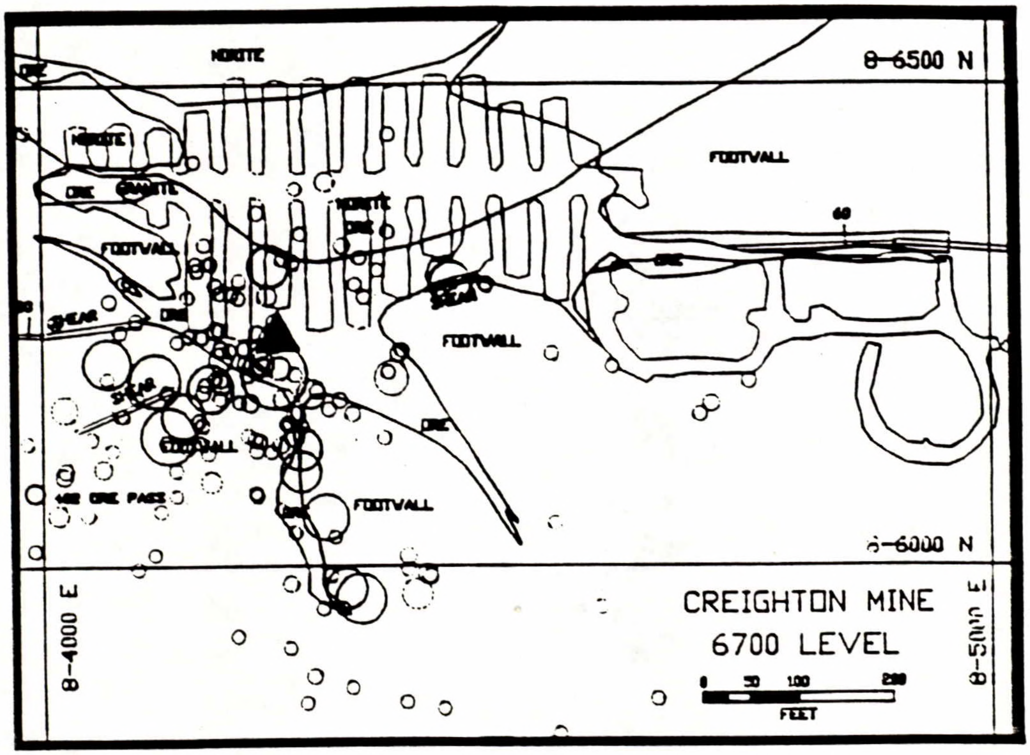


Fig. 6 - Plot of seismic activity following a 3.6 Mn rockburst at the Creighton Mine.

SCALING RELATIONSHIPS

At the beginning of the rockburst project there was very little information on the inter-relationship between magnitude, seismic moment, seismic energy, peak particle velocity and acceleration, for mines in Northern Ontario. Relationships developed in earthquake seismology or for gold mines in South Africa had to be used. By 1990, sufficient data had been recorded on the macroseismic systems, as well as a portable seismograph unit, to start defining relationships specific to Northern Ontario.

Figure 7 shows the relationship between seismic energy (E_s) and magnitude (Mn). There is a clear trend to the results in the form:

$$\log E_s = 1.3\ \mathrm{Mn} - 1.75 \quad \text{in MJ}$$

However, it was found that typically 22% of the total seismic energy is contained in the P wave, compared to less than 10% in the South African gold mines.

Besides magnitude (Mn) the seismic moment (Mo) is preferred in seismology, as a measure of the size of an earthquake since it provides information on fault dimensions and slippage. The relationship between seismic moment and magnitude for Ontario Mines is shown in Figure 8. A study by Hawagawa in 1983, for naturally occurring earthquakes in the Canadian Shield, produced the following relationship:

$$\log \mathrm{Mo} = 0.94\ \mathrm{Mn} + 1.32 \quad \text{in G.N.m}$$

The results from the mines tend to follow this same relationship.

Peak particle velocity, and to a lesser extent, peak acceleration are used to evaluate potential damage from rockbursts. Both of these parameters are controlled by the magnitude of the rockburst and distance from source. A cube root scaling factor used in blasting studies was used to evaluate the measurements. The relationships for peak particle velocity and acceleration are shown in Figure 9 and 10, respectively.

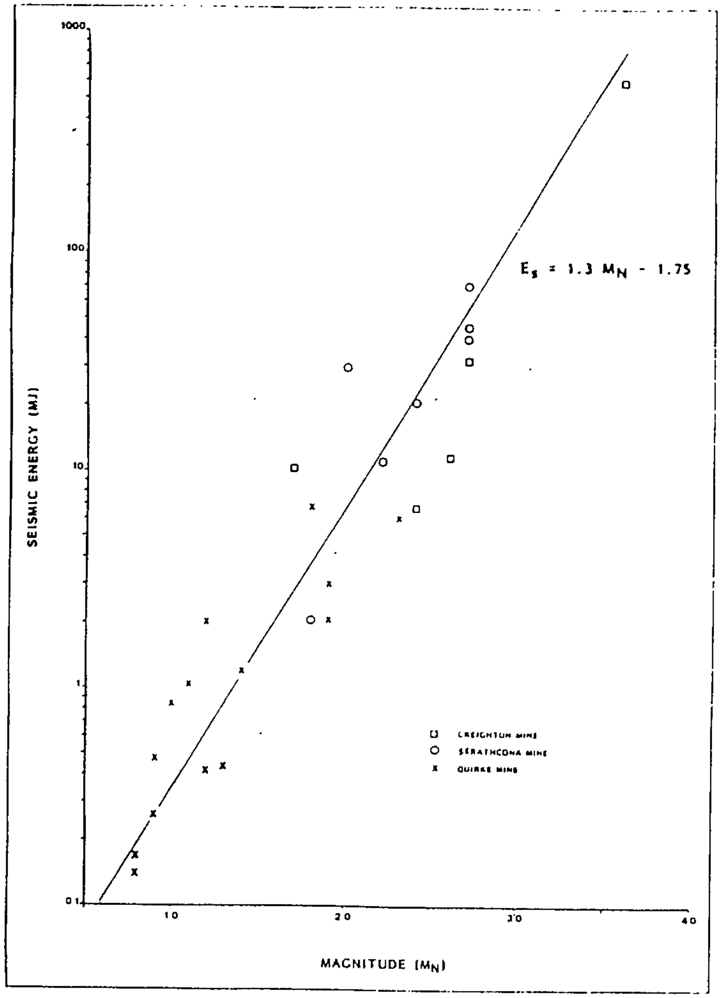


Fig. 7 - Relationship between seismic energy and magnitude for Ontario mines.

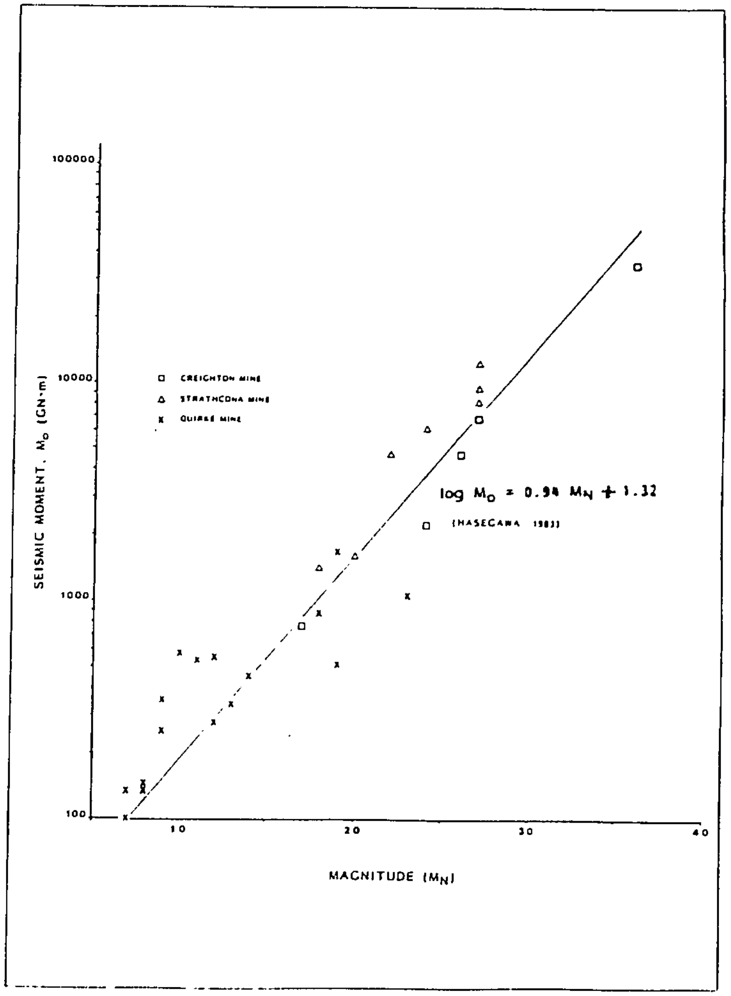


Fig. 8 - Relationship between seismic moment and magnitude for Ontario mines.

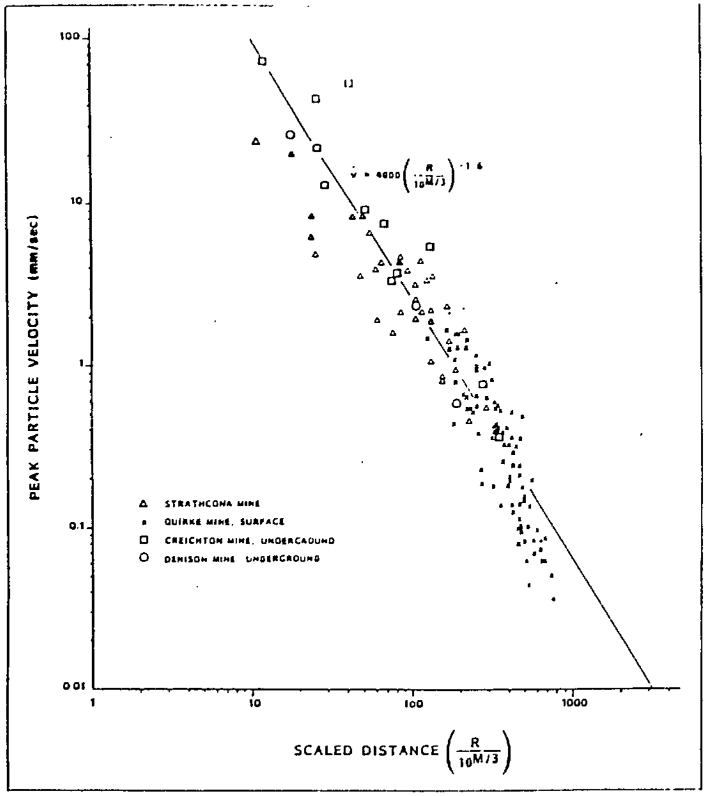


Fig. 9 - Peak particle velocity as a function of scaled distance Ontario mines.

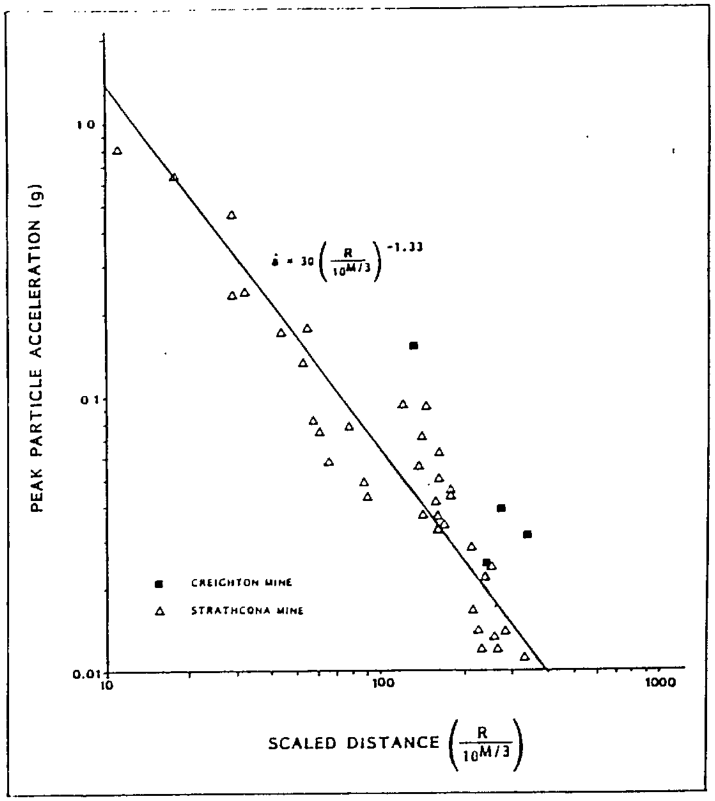


Fig. 10 - Peak particle acceleration as a function of scaled distance for Ontario mines.

For peak particle velocity $\hat{v}$

$$\hat{v} = 4000 \left(\frac{R}{10^{M/3}} \right)^{-1.6} \quad \text{in mm/s}$$

and for peak particle acceleration $\hat{a}$

$$\hat{a} = 30 \left(\frac{R}{10^{M/3}} \right)^{-1.33} \quad \text{in g}$$

The attenuation of the seismic signals with distance (i.e., $R^{-1.6}$ and $R^{-1.33}$) are similar to those found in blasting studies and represent near-field effects. At greater distance the attenuation factor should be R^{-1}.

In contrast to natural earthquakes, and rockbursts in South Africa, it is quite common in Ontario mines for the peak acceleration to occur in the P wave and the peak velocity in the S wave. This and the higher percentage of seismic energy in the P wave may suggest a different type of mechanism than a fault-slip rockburst.

A sufficient number of rockbursts have occurred in the Quirke, Creighton and Strathcona mines to examine the release of seismic energy over a period of time as shown in Figure 11. Most of the seismic energy releases at Quirke Mine occurred continuously over a 6 month period. Creighton Mine is characterizedby a few large events (3.3 to 4.0 Mn) spaced at 12 to 28 months apart, whereas at the Strathcona Mine seismic energy is released at a more gradual pace.

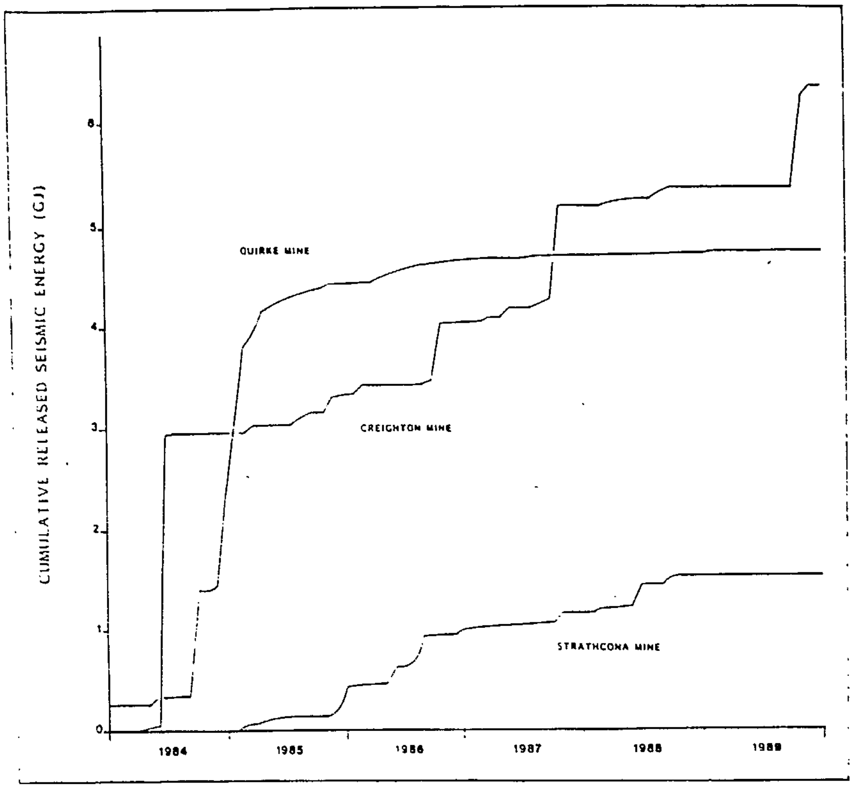
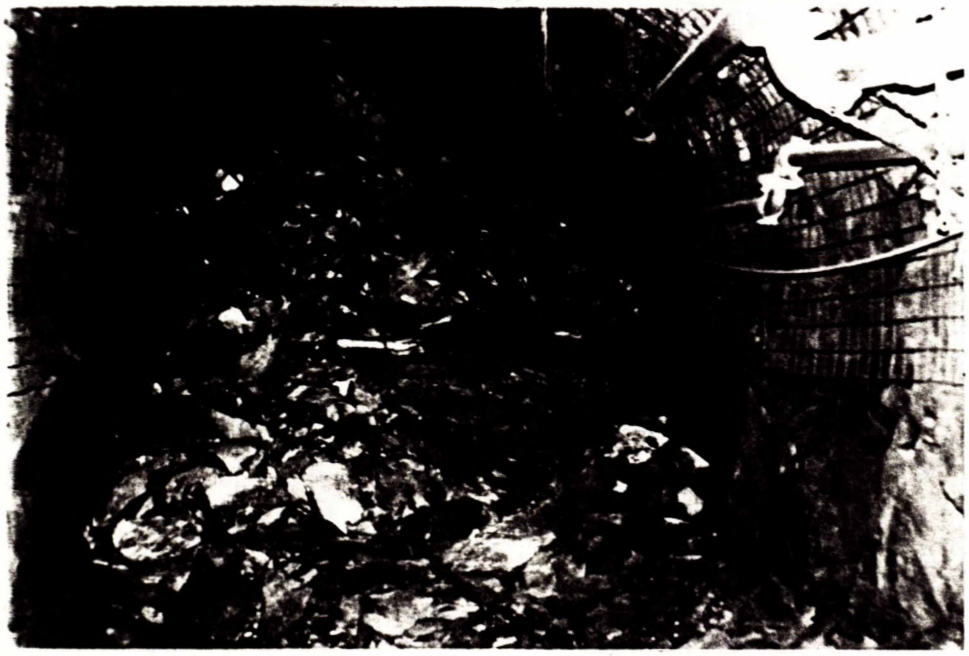


Fig. 11 - Temporal release of seismic energy at the Quirke, Creighton and Strathcona Mines.



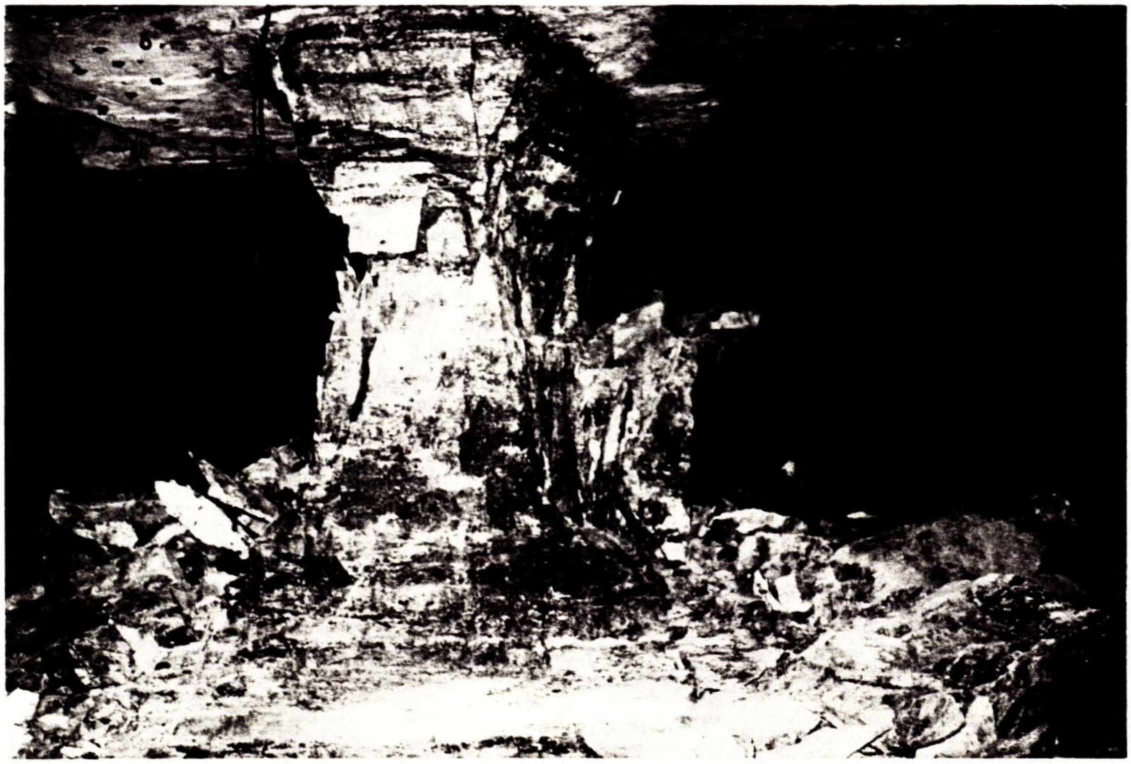
Damage to a drift on the 6600 level of Creighton Mine, caused by a 3.6 Mn rockburst about 25 m away.

Crown pillar at the Campbell Red Lake Mine, which was destressed then mined using longhole methods.

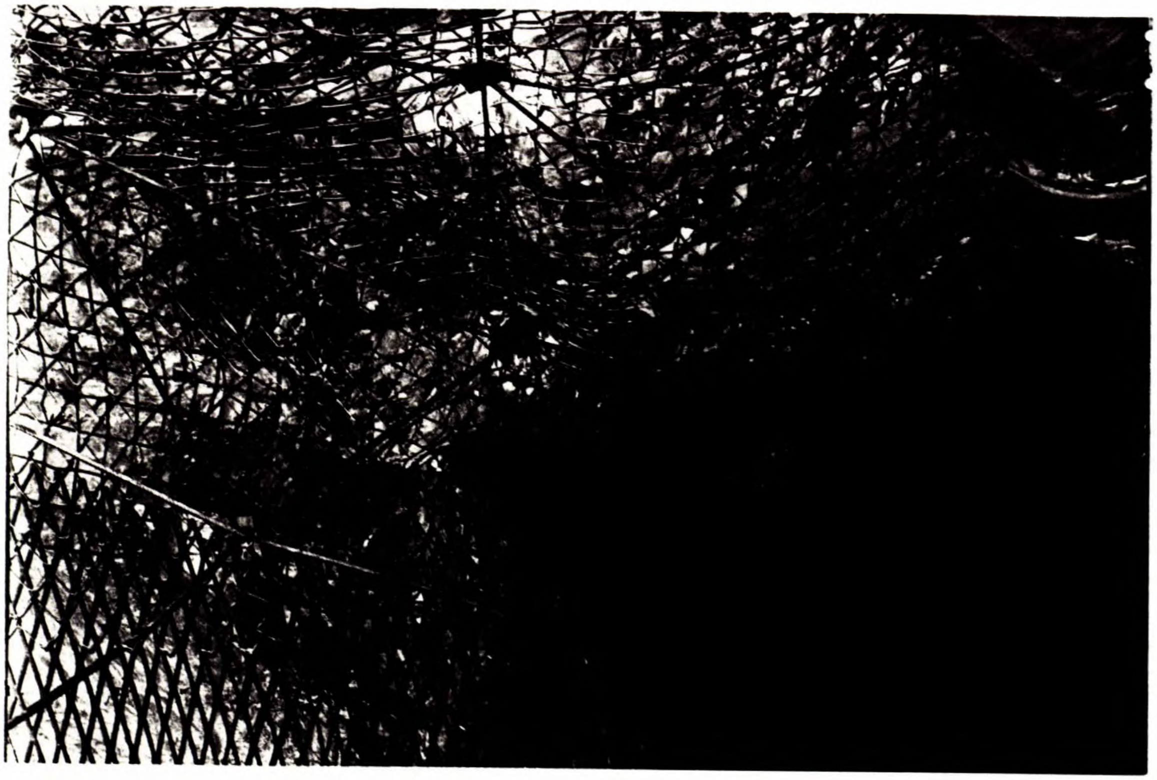
Displacement of the track due to fault-slippage at Falconbridge's No. 5 shaft.

Rockburst damage to a drift supported by timber posts and beams at the Macassa Mine.

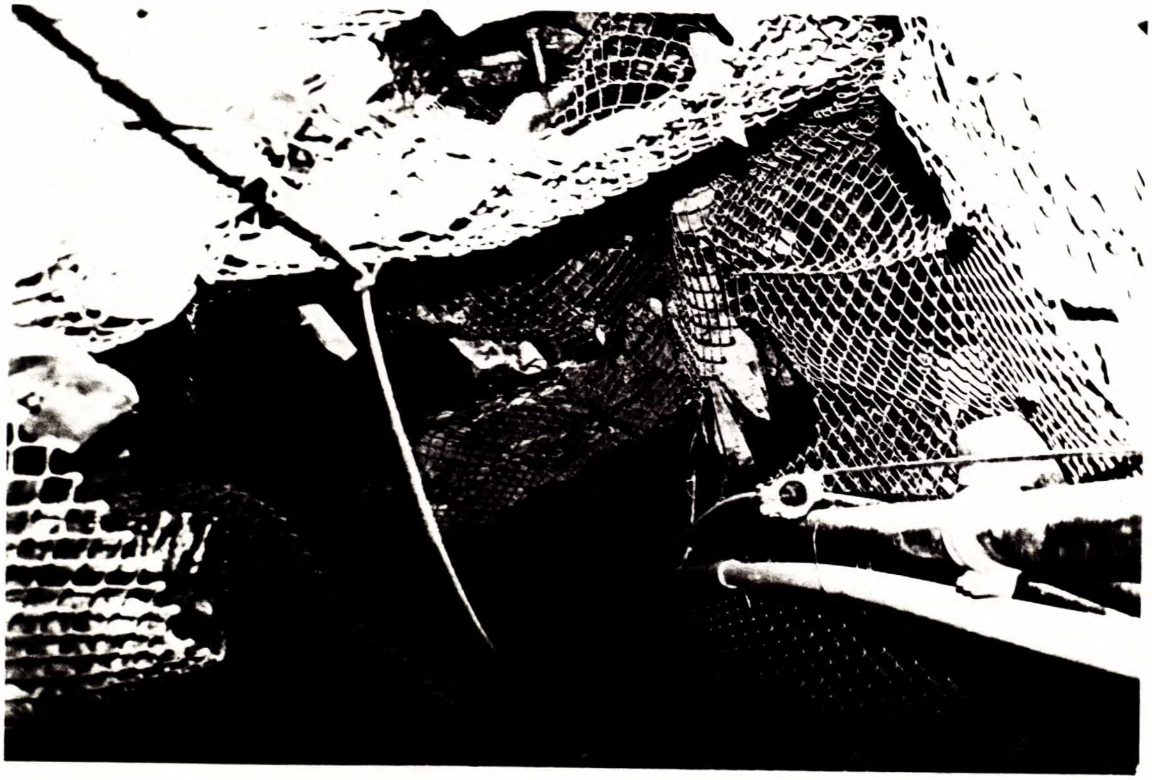
Over 800 tonnes of displaced rock due to two small (2.0 Mn) rockbursts in an isolated haulage drift at Strathcona Mine.



Spalling of a rib pillar in the rockburst area on the east side of Denison Mine.



Lacing installed at the Strathcona Mine. This type of support survived a rockburst of magnitude 3.0 Mn 40 m away without damage.



Damage from a 3.1 Mn rockburst at the Macassa Mine. Bolts and chain-link mesh prevented complete closure of the drift.

Damage to a sill drift at the Quirke Mine.

Backfill being poured around a failed pillar at the Denison Mine.

ELLIOT LAKE MINES

Rio Algom Ltd.

The rockburst incidents at Quirke Mine were a classic example of a chain-reaction of pillar failures. Over a five-year period over 160 seismic events, up to a magnitude of 3.5, were recorded by the Eastern Canada Seismic Network. An area over 70 ha was affected underground.

A plan of the eastern part of the main reef at Quirke Mine showing the locations of the rockbursts is illustrated in Figure 12. The rockburst problem started in 1982, next to a trial trackless area. There was a major increase in activity and expansion of the rockburst area in late 1984 to early 1985. Two patterns of activity were observed. Violent failure of the pillars at the edge of the affected area which allowed the area to expand. Later, a number of events were located in the centre of the affected area accompanied by a sudden increase in water flow of 1000 L/min into the mine and a drop of 4 m in the water level in a small lake directly above the area. These latter events probably occurred in the hanging wall and were caused by slippage along near-vertical faults, or along bedding contacts. Since the hanging wall fractured through to surface, the level of microseismic activity has substantially decreased as well as the number and magnitude of the larger events. The affected area has stopped expanding and has essentially stabilized.

As part of the rockburst project two diamond drill holes were put down from surface to investigate the degree of fracturing in the hanging wall above the affected area. The first hole utilized an old exploration borehole. Continuous loss of drilling water down the borehole occurred throughout the drilling operations. Also, it was found that the old borehole had been laterally displaced, due to slip along bedding contacts, at a number of locations. Eventually, the borehole had to be abandoned at a depth of 265 m about 240 m above the orebody.

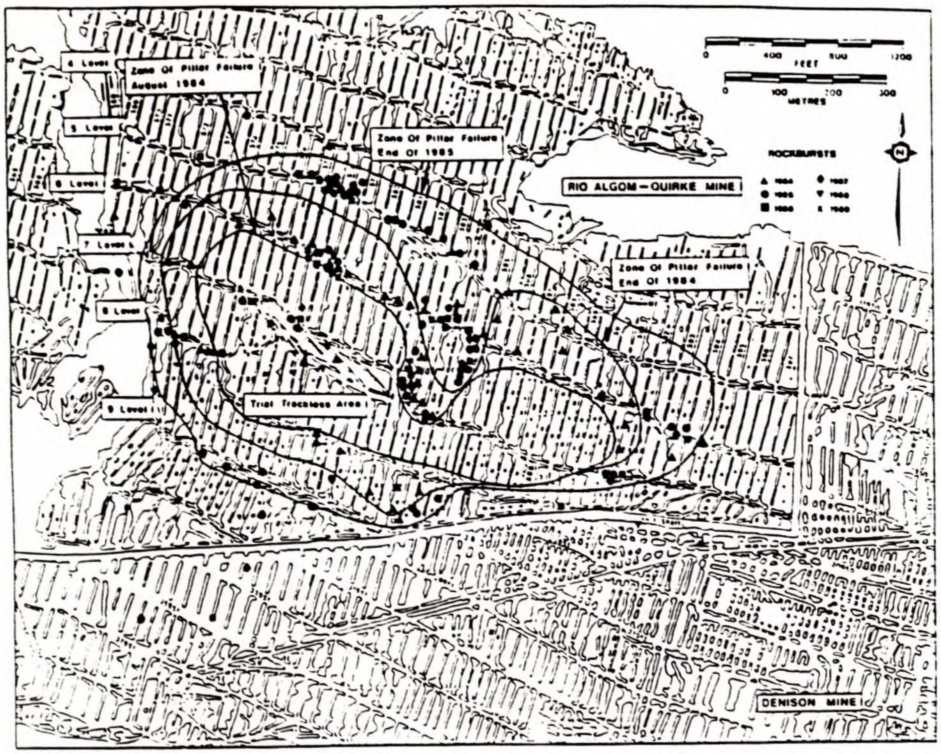


Fig. 12 - Plan of Quirke Mine showing rockburst locations, 1984 to 1989.

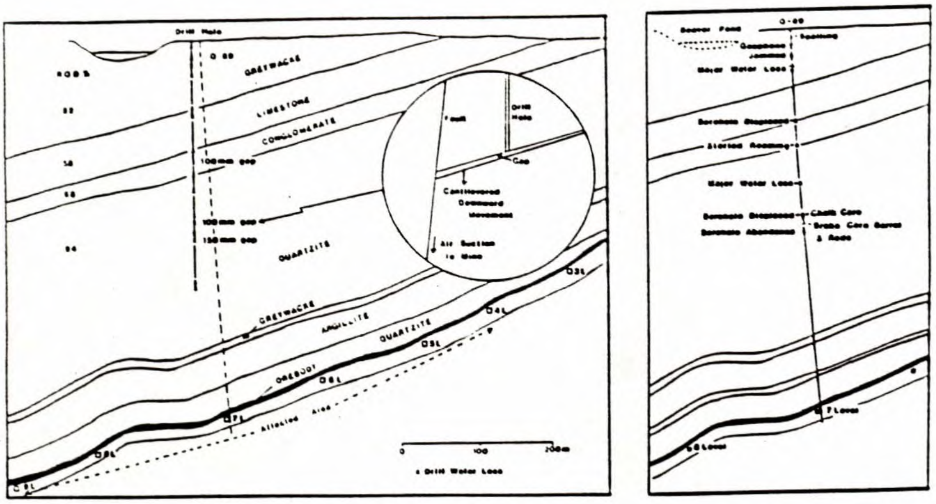


Fig. 13 - Problems encountered during drilling of two boreholes above the rockburst area at Quirke Mine.

A new diamond drill hole, directly over the centre of the rockburst area, was drilled from surface in 1988. Drilling progressed to a depth of 317 m, about 170 m above the orebody, before the hole was abandoned due to water loss problems. Two types of open fractures were encountered. Down to a depth of 150 m, water circulation was lost at eight locations, which were mainly attributed to minor open fractures on bedding contacts. At a depth of 155 m a 100 mm wide gap was encountered and air was being sucked down the borehole into the mine. Similar open gaps of 100 mm and 150 mm were encountered at depths of 234 m and 255 m.

For water and air to flow down the borehole into the mine requires vertical fractures. It is postulated that caving is confined to the first few metres of the hanging wall. For the next 350 m, extremely large blocks or slabs are moving down along vertical faults in a cantilever fashion. The top 150 m is subsiding without major vertical fractures.

Denison Mines Ltd.

Two areas of Denison Mine are seismically active: one directly down-dip from the main rockburst area at Quirke Mine, and another isolated area about 2 km to the east. In both areas de-slimed tailings and cementitious slag, in a ratio of 30:1 is being poured to stabilize the pillars. Prevous laboratory tests conducted by CANMET on rock specimens surrounded by cemented fill had indicated that backfill had no effect on the peak strength of the pillars, but did effect the post-failure behaviour. With increasing cement contents the stress on the pillar after peak strength gradually reduces and stabilizes at a significant residual strength (i.e., 60% to 75% of peak strength). Consequently, failure is non-violent and the seismic energy released is minimal.

A plan of the boundary pillar area of Denison Mine, showing the stopes backfilled and the location of seismic events during 1989 is illustrated in Figure 14. Most of the seismic events are occurring at the edge of the

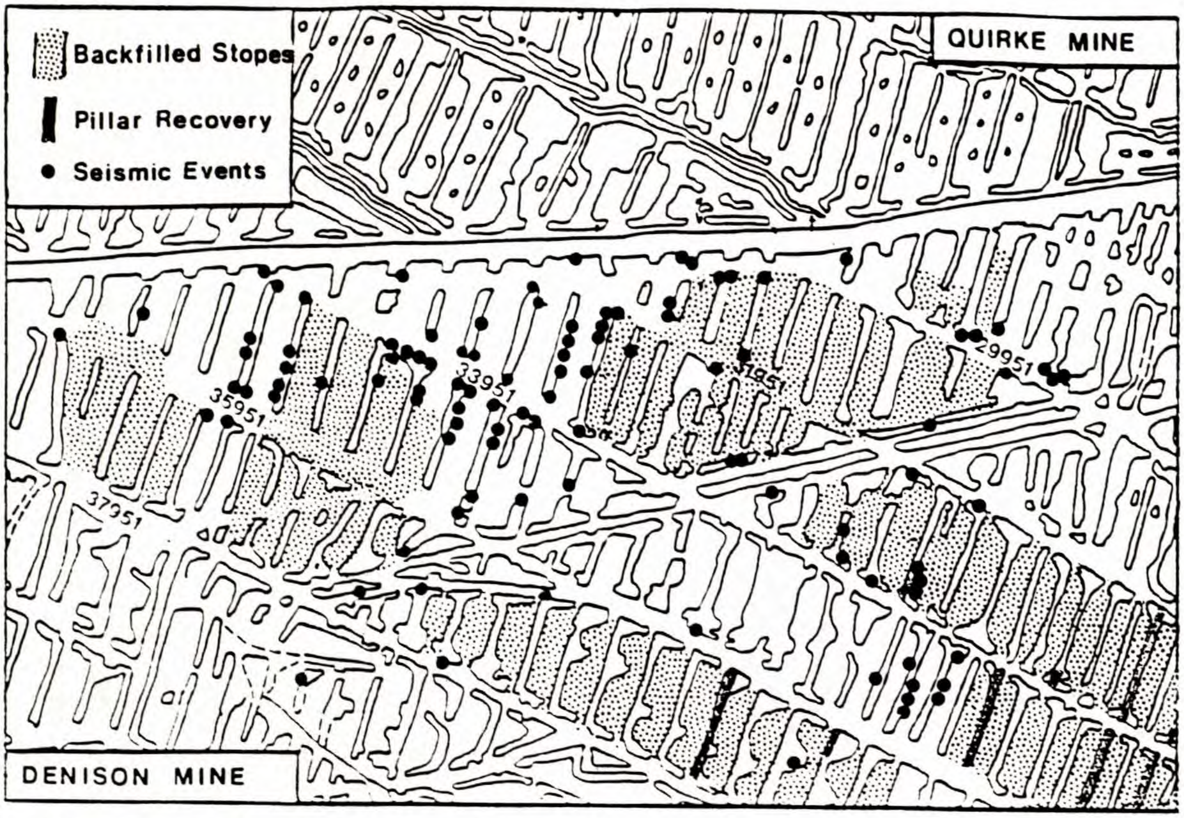


Fig. 14 - Plan of Denison Mine showing the location of seismic events in the boundary pillar area during 1989.

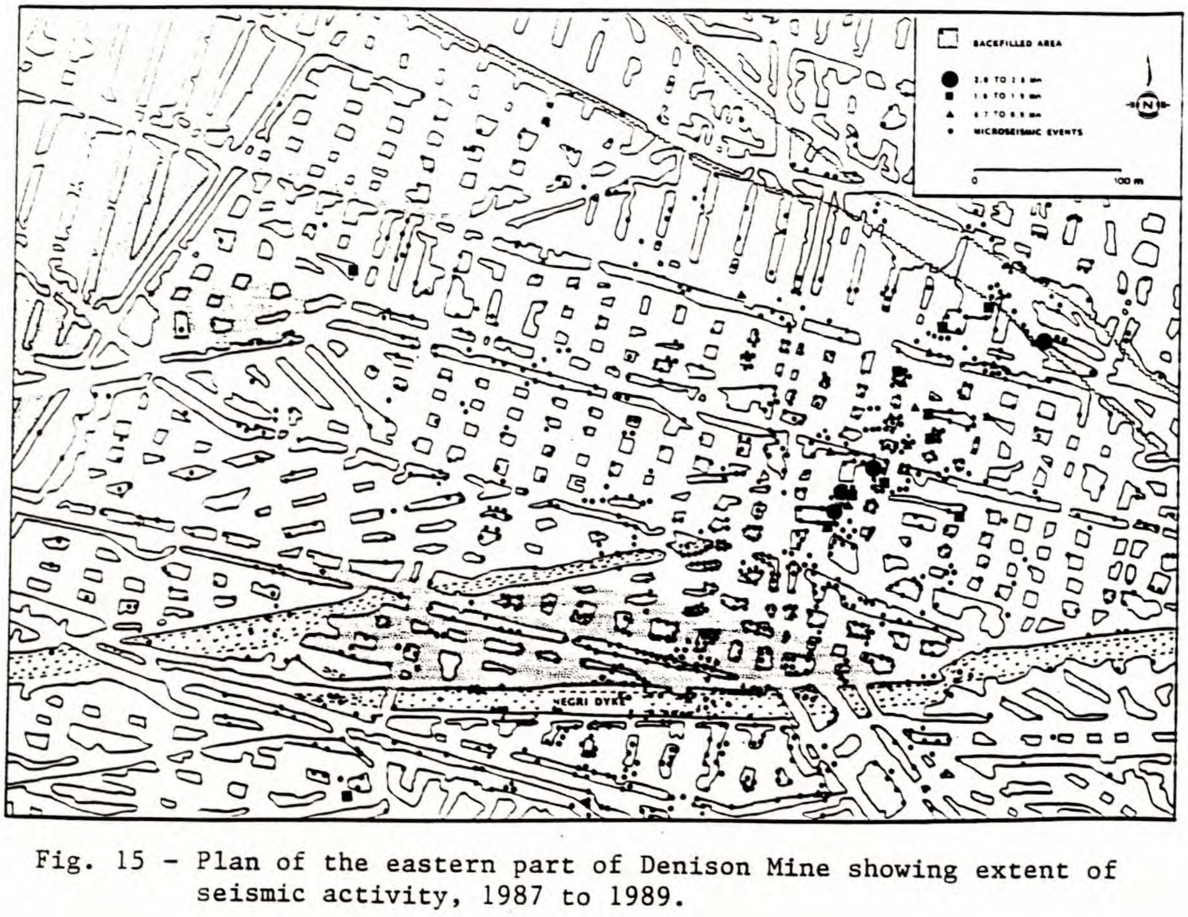


Fig. 15 - Plan of the eastern part of Denison Mine showing extent of seismic activity, 1987 to 1989.

backfilled area in pillars not surrounded by backfill. The main exceptions are where pillar recovery operations are taking place between backfilled stopes. In this case it appears that the backfill controlled the violent failure of the pillars and the seismic energy emitted from the backfilled areas is minimal.

Figure 15 shows the backfilled stopes and location of seismic activity, between 1987 to 1989, in the eastern area of Denison Mine. A number of large events of magnitudes up to 2.8 Mn have occurred in a narrow band extending north-east to south-west across the area. Microseismic activity is more widespread extending 800 m on strike by 500 m on dip, although again there is a concentration around the larger magnitude events. In this case there is considerable microseismic activity in some pillars surrounded by backfill. This activity mainly occurred during the pour and is thought to be caused by the water reducing the rock strength on the edge of the pillars. However, once the pillars were encased in backfill, seismic activity in them essentially ceased. This type of behaviour was not observed in the boundary pillar area since the pillars there were larger and less highly stressed.

To contain the affected area shown in Figure 15, Denison Mine has begun to pour a 120 m wide backfill barrier in the stopes along the north-west boundary of the area.

KIRKLAND LAKE MINES

Lac Minerals Ltd.

The gold mines at Kirkland Lake have a history of rockbursts dating back to the early 1930's. Of the original seven mines, Macassa Mine is the only one left in production. The steeply-dipping narrow-vein orebodies extend to a depth in excess of 2200 m, and are mined using cut-and-fill techniques. Over 400 rockbursts have been reported at the Macassa Mine during 55 years of continuous operation, these have ranged from strain bursts in development drifts to pillar bursts during mining of the crown pillars. Most of these bursts occurred shortly after central blasting. About 10% of the rockbursts are classified as 'heavy' having displaced more than 50 tonnes of rock. Destress blasting and stiff backfill are being used at the Macassa Mine to reduce the hazard, severity and damage from rockbursts.

Levels are driven at 45 m vertical intervals and mining proceeds by overhand cut-and-fill techniques, originally using unconsolidated waste development rock as backfill. Rockburst problems normally occurred in the crown pillars when their nominal thickness was reduced to 15 m with an extraction ratio of about 67%. Computer models indicate perpendicular stresses of about 150 MPa on these pillars. A fairly common procedure is to destress the pillars at this point.

As part of the rockburst project a destress blast in a crown pillar below the 5725 level was monitored using a microseismic array and convergence meters between the hanging wall and footwall. Prior to the blast three rockbursts had occurred in the pillar, two in the raises at each end of the pillar, and one in the stope back. The blast was designed with 14 holes in the orebody spaced at 3 m centres with a powder factor of 0.15 kg/m^3. Boreholes adjacent to the two raises could not be loaded properly due to squeezing ground.

Considerable microseismic activity, as shown in Figure 16, followed the blast, mainly clustered around the crown pillar. However, some parts of the pillar were free of seismic activity, especially next to the first borehole by the east raise, which was not fully loaded. Significant convergence of about 25 mm also occurred in the stope except for only 6 mm next to the east raise. Subsequent mining of the crown pillar triggered a small rockburst at this raise causing damage to the timber stalls, also the convergence in this area increased to 33 mm. It was concluded that the initial convergence and microseismic activity was indicative of only partial destressing of the crown

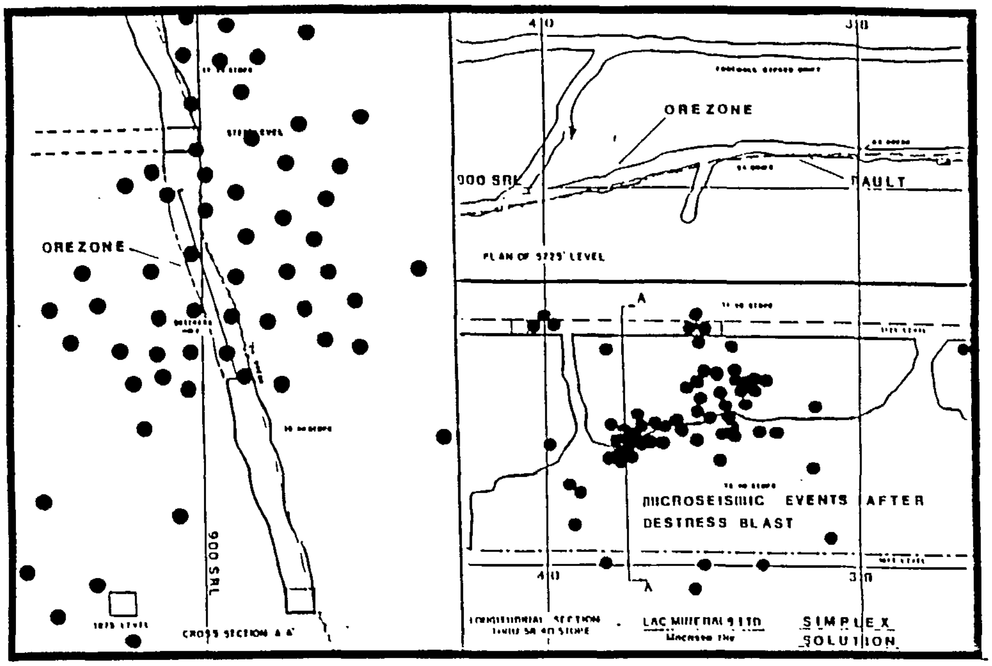


Fig. 16 - Location of microseismic activity following a crown pillar destress blast at the Macassa Mine.

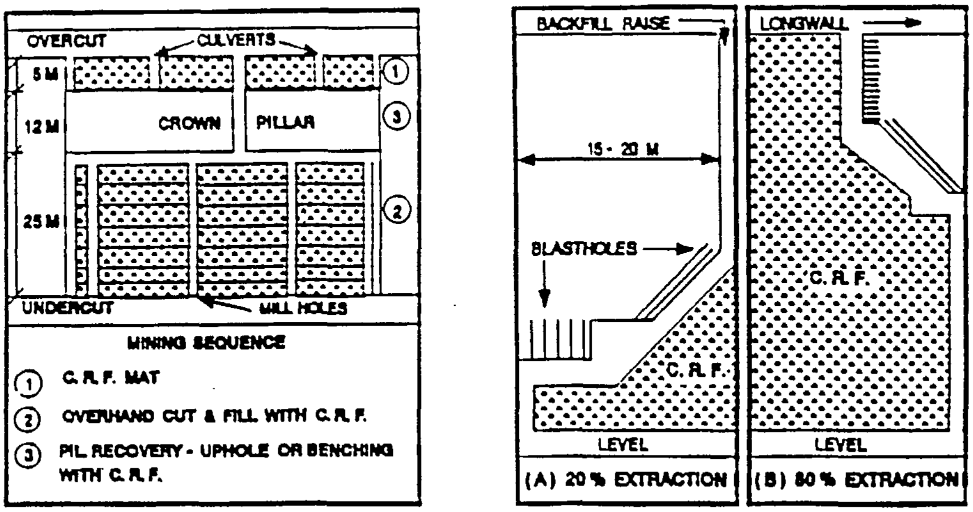


Fig. 17 - New mining layouts being used with cemented backfill at the Macassa Mine (after W. Quesnel, et al., 1989).

pillar.

Subsequently, about one year later, a series of rockbursts occurred after blasting in the crown pillar immediately above the destressed pillar. Damage amounted to about 1000 tones of displaced rock and included damage to the drift adjacent to the destressed crown pillar. This drift was above a waste pillar that had not been destressed. In the final analysis destressing of the crown pillar improved recovery of the pillar itself but may have contributed to rockburst problems in the surrounding pillars.

Prior to 1986 Macassa Mine used unconsolidated development rock as a backfill material. When large rockbursts occurred this rockfill tended to run into the drifts making rehabilitation costly and time consuming. With the sinking of the new No. 3 shaft to a depth of 2202 m the backfilling systems were reviewed. Initially concrete was placed in undercut-and-fill stopes, which limited the wall convergence but was too costly. Trials were then conducted on pouring a cement slurry over the development rockfill with a 5% cement content. The purpose of the cemented rockfill is twofold: to reduce the closure of the wall rocks, hence reducing the change in potential energy, and to absorb energy otherwise released as seismic energy.

It is possible to compare the reaction of both unconsolidated and cemented rockfill to major rockbursts. In 1982, a rockburst of magnitude 3.1 Mn occurred in a stope with unconsolidated rockfill after an extraction of only 15%. It resulted in over 1000 tones of displaced rock including closure of complete drifts and took 5 months to rehabilitate. A second rockburst, of the same magnitude, occurred in the stope above in 1989. Cemented rockfill had been placed in this stope with extration at 40%. In this case only 130 tonnes of rock was displaced which took one month to rehabilitate.

The improved ground conditions with cemented rockfill has made destress blasting redundant and has allowed improved methods for recovery of crown pillars. Figure 17 illustrates one method being used for crown pillar recovery, and another rill stoping technique for mining at depth without crown pillars. In both cases maximum reduction in potential energy and absorbtion is being utilized.

RED LAKE MINES

Placer Dome Inc.

The Campbell Mine of Placer Dome has experienced rockbursts since the early 1960's. These bursts have mainly occurred in the crown pillars of both shrinkage and cut-and-fill stopes. In many respects the narrow steeply-dipping orebodies, mining methods and rockburst problems at Red Lake are similar to those at Kirkland Lake.

An exception is the rockbursts in the 'F' zone shrinkage stopes at the Campbell Mine. This orebody, about 2 m wide, extends 450 m on strike and has been mined to a depth of 700 m. Boxhole pillars and 6 m wide sill pillars were left with an extraction of about 80%. When the broken ore is removed from a shrinkage stope the mining layout becomes an open stope and pillar layout which is prone to a chain reaction of pillar failures similar to the occurrence at Quirke Mine at Elliot Lake. This happened at the end of 1983 when 22 major rockbursts, up to a magnitude of 3.3 Mn occurred accompanied by intense microseismic activity over a 28 hour period. The end result was the closure of seven levels over a vertical distance of 280 m and no mining has taken place in this orebody since that time.

As part of the Rockburst Project a back analysis of crown pillar failures in both shrinkage and cut-and-fill stopes was undertaken. Displacement discontinuity numerical models with elastic and post-failure behaviour were used. Figure 18 is a graph showing the average stress on crown pillars as mining progresses upwards. Pillar strength is derived from an empirical equation relating rock mass strength and pillar width and height. In the examples shown, pillar failure occurs at a width of 6.5 m on the 16

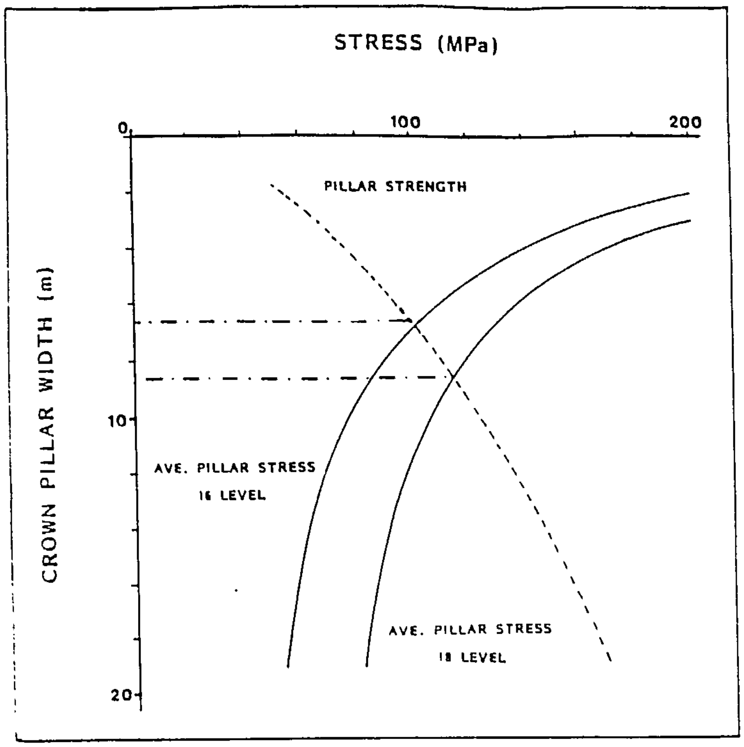


Fig. 18 - Analysis of stress and strength of crown pillars at the Campbell Mine.

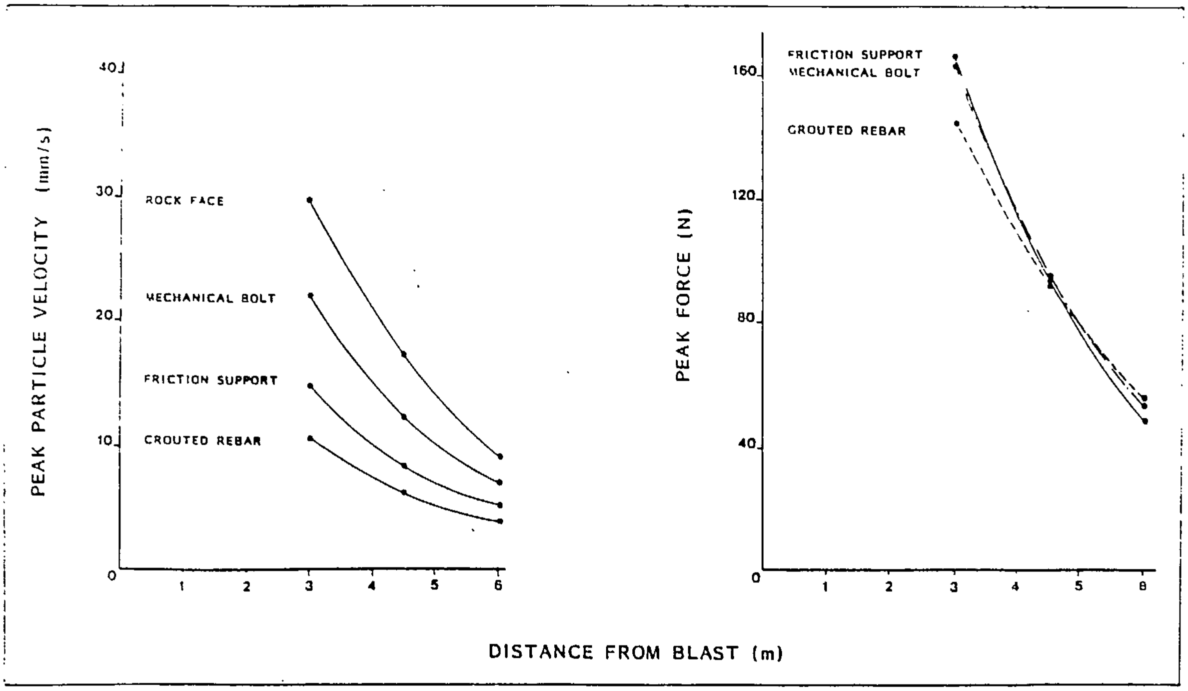


Fig. 19 - Peak particle velocity and force on different types of support systems subjected to blasts.

level, and 8.5 m on the 18 level. However, ground conditions will deteriorate prior to this due to the higher stress concentrations on the stope back. This type of analysis indicates when destress blasting is required or a change in mining method from horizontal slices to vertical longhole techniques.

Since 1982, four destress blasts have been done in pillars at the Campbell Mine, with varying degrees of success. The main purpose of destressing is to reduce the potential energy of the rock mass. This is achieved by fracturing the pillar and allowing the hanging wall and footwall to converge.

Two destress blasts were done in the crown pillars of cut-and-fill stopes. In one case a rockburst occurred within seconds of the blast and the pillar was subsequently recovered without any stress problems. In the second case a rockburst occurred three days after the blast at a location where very little closure was measured following the blast.

Destress blasting in boxhole pillars of shrinkage stopes triggered rockbursts on other levels. This indicated that destressing in a shrinkage stope layout (or on open stope and pillar layout) is not recommended.

As part of the Rockburst Project a destress blast in the crown pillar of a cut-and-fill stope on the 15 level was investigated. In this case the blast was made in an offshoot vein in the footwall and was aimed at providing a low stress 'shadow' when mining the main vein. Numerical models were used to estimate the stresses and displacements prior to, and after, blasting. The microseismic system was augmented with a recorder to capture the complete seismic waveforms.

After blasting, convergence and stress instruments indicated a reduction in rock modulus of about 50% as determined by the numerical models. However, only 8 microseismic events were recorded opposite the crown pillar, perhaps indicated that the pillar was not heavily stressed. Subsequently, the pillar was recovered without any stress problems.

Also as part of the Rockburst Project trials were undertaken on the reaction of various support systems to dynamic loading. Eight types of supports, 2 m long, were installed in a small section of a drift and explosive charges were set off at fixed distances from the supports. Geophones were attached to the ends of the supports, as well as the rock face, to measure the peak particle velocity. Typical results for selected supports (i.e., tensioned mechanical bolts, grouted rebar and friction type supports) are shown in Figure 19. It was observed that the peak particle velocities on these supports were consistently less than at the rock face and also there was consistent differences between supports. Probably at greater distances the peak particle velocites on the rock and support converge to a common value. When the peak force pulse on the supports is calculated then the reaction of the three different support systems is very similar as shown in Figure 19. The force takes into account the difference in the cross-sectional area of the steel supports. These results suggest that a constant force model rather than a constant peak particle velocity or stress pulse is applicable for the design of support systems subject to rockbursts. Much further research is required in this area.

SUDBURY MINES

Falconbridge Ltd.

Falconbridge operates six mines in the Sudbury Basin, all of which have experienced rockbursts to varying degrees. However, most rockburst activity has been confined to the Falconbridge No. 5 Shaft and the Strathcona Mine. Studies have been undertaken by the company in association with the Itasca Consulting Group on fault-slip mechanisms, and the Geoscience Department of Queen's University on tomography studies and back analysis of microseismic data. Trials on a lacing support system were first tried at the Strathcona Mine.

The rockburst incidents at the No. 5 Shaft in 1984 unfortunately resulted in four fatalities and closure of the mine. These incidents added impetus to the formation of the Canada/Ontario/Industry Rockburst Project.

These rockbursts were the first clear evidence of a fault-slip mechanism in Ontario mines. An analysis of the microseismic aftershock patterns following two major rockbursts indicated that all the seismic activity was confined to the footwall in a quadrant configuration. Activity was spread over a radius of 180 to 200 m, centred on the locations of the bursts, which agreed reasonably well with theoretical models.

At the Strathcona Mine an irregular tabular orebody extends about 800 m on strike and dips at about 45°. A horizontal sill pillar was left between the 2000 and 2400 levels, with the stopes above and below having been mined out and backfilled with cemented tailings. Mining of the sill pillar using blasthole methods started in 1983, and since 1985 over 40 rockbursts, up to a magnitude of 3.2 Mn have occurred in the sill pillar. Figure 20 is a longitudinal section of the sill pillar showing the location of the rockbursts and mining activity. Although the rockbursts are mining-induced, the mechanism appears to be slippage along geological structures. These structures are sub-parallel or branch systems associated with the main dyke which passes through the centre of the sill pillar. There has been no major rockburst located on the main dyke itself, only microseismic activity. In many cases the rockbursts occurred within 24 hours after production blasts. These are usually scheduled for the last shift on Friday night, which leaves two days for the mine to quieten down.

The mechanisms of slippage on structures around the 23-200 stope were investigated by the company and Itasca Consulting Group using a distinct element block model. Figure 21 shows the stress trajectories and slippage on structure during stages of mining in the 23-200 stope. During initial stages of mining (Figures 21(a) and (b)) slippage was confined to structures on the

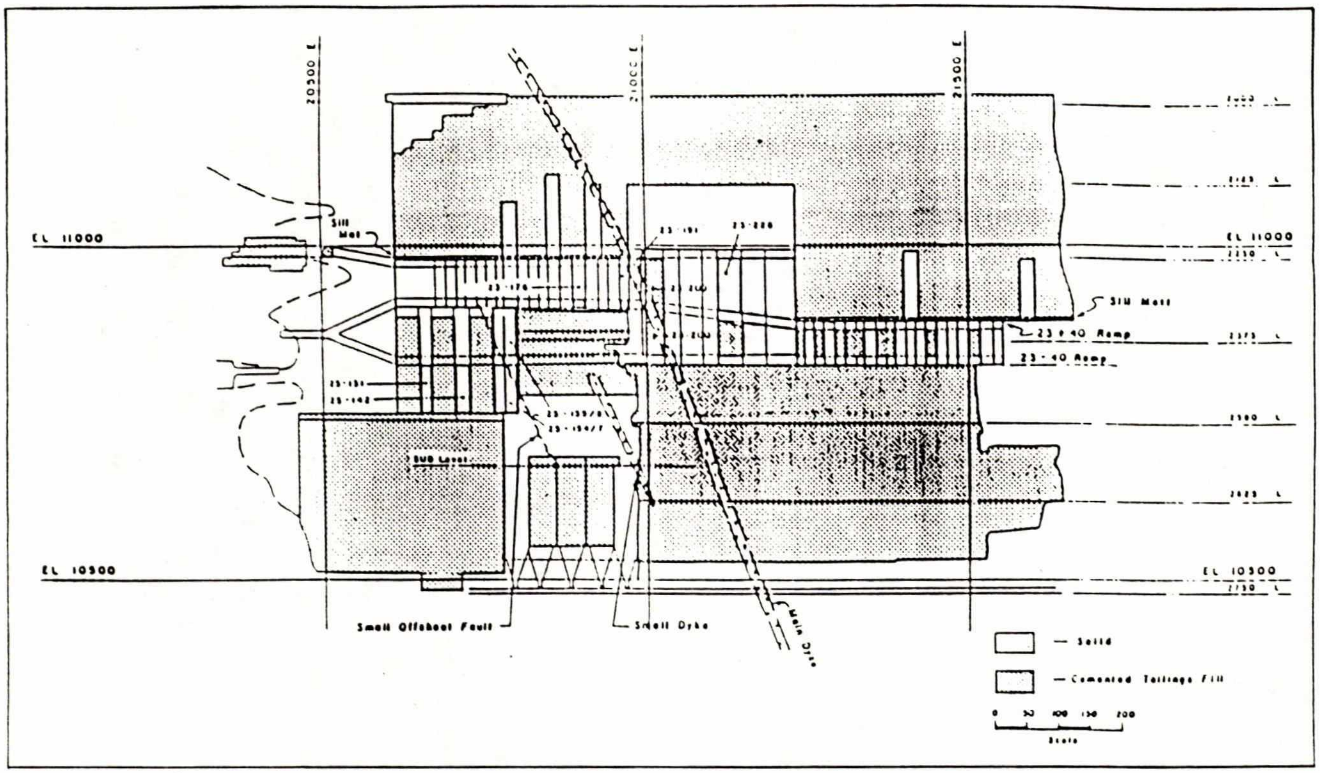


Fig. 20 - Longitudinal elevation view of the Strathcona Mine showing the major structural features, the backfilled regions and the remaining panels to be removed (after Davidge, 1987).

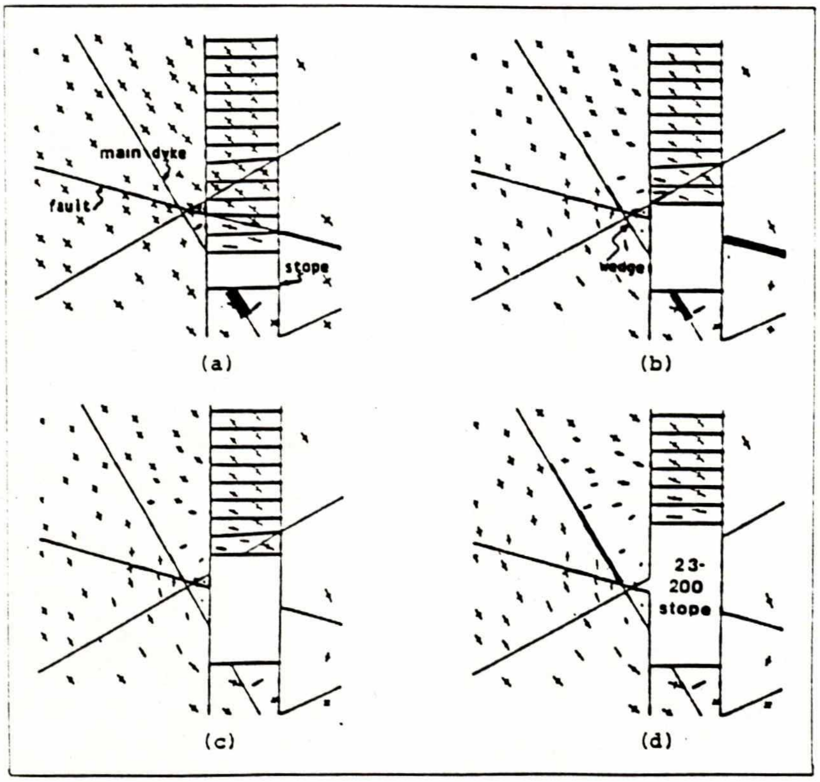


Fig. 21 - Calculated shear displacement associated with stope extraction at the Strathcona Mine (after Brady, 1988).

south east side of the stope. Further mining (Figures 21(c) and (d)) produced a change in slippage to structures on the west side of the stope. The pattern of microseismic activity was consistent with this analysis.

In response to this rockburst problem the company initiated a program of lacing support system in the access drift to the sill pillar. The multi-component system consisted of 14 mm diameter mild steel eyebolts, fully grouted into 1.8 to 2.4 m holes spaced at 1.8 m centres. Galcanized chain-link mesh with 100 mm apertures was held against the rock face with plates on the eyebolts. Wire cable 12.5 mm diameter was threaded through the eyebolts in a diamond configuration and tensioned to about 2.5 tonnes.

After the drift had been supported with lacing a rockburst of magnitude 3.0 Mn occurred in the area. This burst severely damaged the conventionally supported stope overcut (grouted rebar and wire mesh) whch was about 25 m away. The nearest lacing was about 40 m from the burst. This area suffered no damage, although some bagging of the screen and loading of the flexible cables was observed. In another incident at 2.7 Mn rockburst resulted in one broken wire cable and some bagging and loading of the screen and cables.

The Rockburst Project has funded studies by the Geoscience Department of Queen's University to back analyze microseismic data at the Strathcona Mine. The accuracy of source location techniques and the relationship between the pattern of microseismic activity and mining sequence has been examined.

A comparison was made between the P-wave time arrival peaks from the Electrolab MP-250 microseismic system and the whole waveforms recorded by Queen's microseismic system. It was found that the MP-250 systems sometimes triggers on a noise spike or the S-wave arrival time which produces erroneous source locations. Also, the MP-250 records non-seismic events, including blasts, drilling, mucking, vibrations from equipment and re-triggers of long-duration events. On re-evaluation only about 30% of the total number of events recorded were true seismic events. Due to the source location algorithm being used (i.e., least squares) the non-seismic events tended to line along linear trends, which could be interpreted as indicating activity along geological structures.

Inco Ltd

Inco, at present, operates nine mines in the Sudbury Basin. Since the early 1930's some of the mines have experienced rockbursts. Initially, the Frood Mine was the most seismically active, but in recent years the Creighton and Copper Cliff North mines have experienced most seismic activity. At present, five microseismic systems have been installed in these mines.

Over the years Inco has developed techniques and strategies to deal with the rockburst problem. These have included: destress blasting in shafts, drifts and stope pillars; sequencing of extraction to minimize the hazard; and more recently, identifying which geological structures are seismicly active.

Inco has classified their rockbursts into three categories:

a) Events which occur in development drifts due to high stress concentrations which can be dealt with by tactical solutions such as, opening shape, destress blasting, or enhanced support systems;

b) Events that occur in the stoping operations including pillar bursts and fault-slip, which can be dealt with by strategic approaches such as, designing yielding pillars and sequencing of extraction to even out energy release;

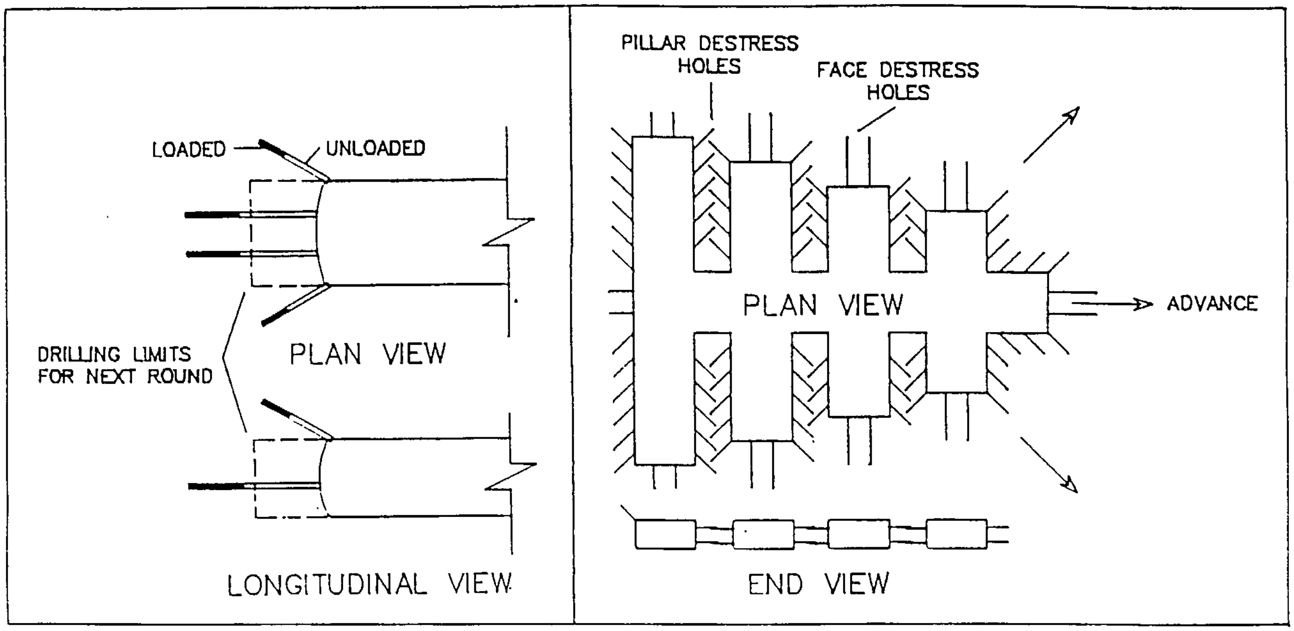
c) Events that occur in the wall rock away from the orebody, which are inevitability caused by fault-slip and are related to regional mining activity. Little can be done about these bursts except for enhanced support systems.

Creighton Mine has experienced rockbursts since 1934. Mining has now extended to a depth of 2200 m under very high stress conditions. On the 6600 level, for example, field stresses are about 95 MPa parallel to the orebody, 70 MPa across the orebody and 60 MPa vertical. Under these conditions destress blasting is routinely undertaken in drifts and pillars. Figure 22(a) shows the layout of the destress holes in a drift, and Figure 22(b) in pillars in cut-and-fill operations.

In drifts, holes are drilled out ahead of the face and angled out into the corners at the roof line. Sometimes holes are also angled out into the floor corners. Only the bottom part of the holes are loaded with explosive. The destress holes are blasted with the round but are timed to detonate just before the main blast. The purpose is to create a fractured zone for the next advance of the drift. The walls and back are supported with bolts and wire mesh.

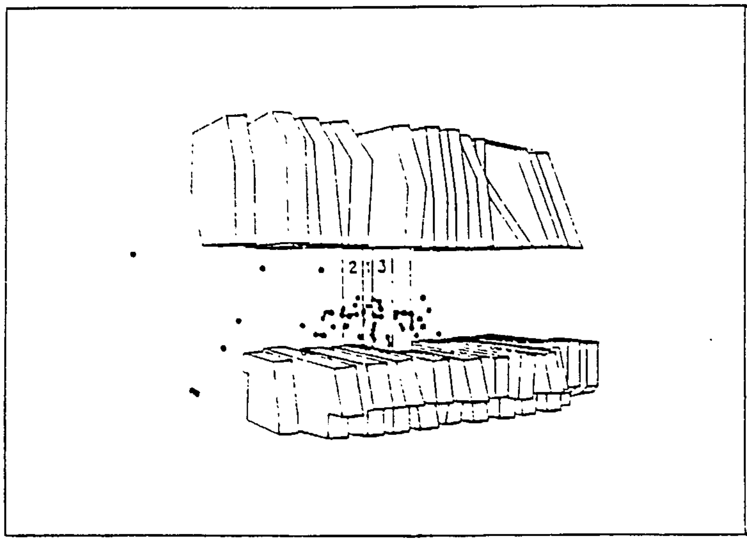
Below 2000 m depth rockbursts were being experienced in the pillars during silling out in mechanized cut-and-fill stopes. The pillars usually had a with/height ratio of 1 and had not yielded at this stage. The destress pattern shown in Figure 22b) included both destressing the pillars and the face of the slopes. Although this did not stop rockbursts it reduced their intensity, and most occurred shortly after the blast.

Crown pillars in cut-and-fill stopes were a major source of rockbursts in deep mining operations. Techniques were developed to advance the stoping sequence in an inverted 'V' formation. This limited rockburst problems to the lead stope. With the conversion from cut-and-fill to vertical retreat mining below 6600 level it was decided to create a destress slot across the orebody in the crown pillar. The aim was to redistribute the stresses in the crown pillar and change the potential energy in the rock mass at the beginning of the mining cycle rather than at the end. Figure 23 shows a perspective view of stopes above and below the crown pillar on the 6600 level. The slot was blasted in stages and backfilled after each stage. Thousands of microseismic events were recorded during mining of the slot, usually within two hours of blasting. Mining, using vertical retreat methods, has since progressed in the crown pillar without any high stress problems.



(a) (b)

Fig. 22 - Layout of destress boreholes in drifts and pillars at the Creighton Mine.



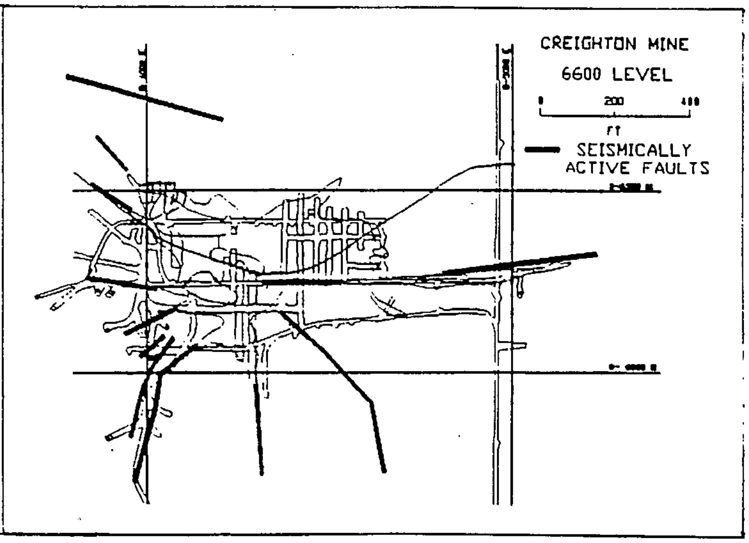


Fig. 23 - Destress slot in crown pillar below the 6600 level at Creighton Mine and the location of seismic activity.

Fig. 24 - Location of seismically active fault zones at the Creighton Mine.

Most of the large seismic events, of magnitude over 3.0 Mn, at the Creighton Mine are located in the wall rocks away from the mining zones. This lead to a systematic evaluation of geological structure at depth. Figure 24 shows the location of prominent shear zones at the 6600 level. All of the shear zones are seismically active, some only with microseismic activity whereas major seismic events occur on others.

As part of the Rockburst Project the Geomechanics Centre of Laurentian University is investigating the properties of the shear zone materials.

The orebody at the Copper Cliff North Mine is 8 to 24 m wide, steeply dipping and tabular. Mining is done with vertical retreat methods in alternating 12 m wide stopes and 24 m wide pillars. At present, mining is concentrated between the 3600 and 3935 levels, and the layout is shown in Figure 25.

There were no ground control problems prior to 1986 when mining almost all of the primary stopes. However, there were operational problems with the backfill system and several stopes were unfilled. Seismicity and rockbursts started to occur during the mining of the 113 stope at the extreme southern end of the orebody.

After a crown pillar blast, which itself registered a 3.1 Mn magnitude, four rockbursts of magnitude 2.2 to 2.9 Mn occurred within a one hour period. These damaged sill access on the 3835 level. Further mining in 113 stope further damaged this access and those on the 3600 and 3935 levels. On the basis of the location of the rockbursts and seismic events it was concluded that the adjacent 114 pillar had violently failed. Mining of the pillar produced further rockbursts and caves of ground. In all, 23 events of magnitude 2.0 Mn and over have been located in and around these levels. In contrast to the Creighton Mine these events are not controlled by structural features.

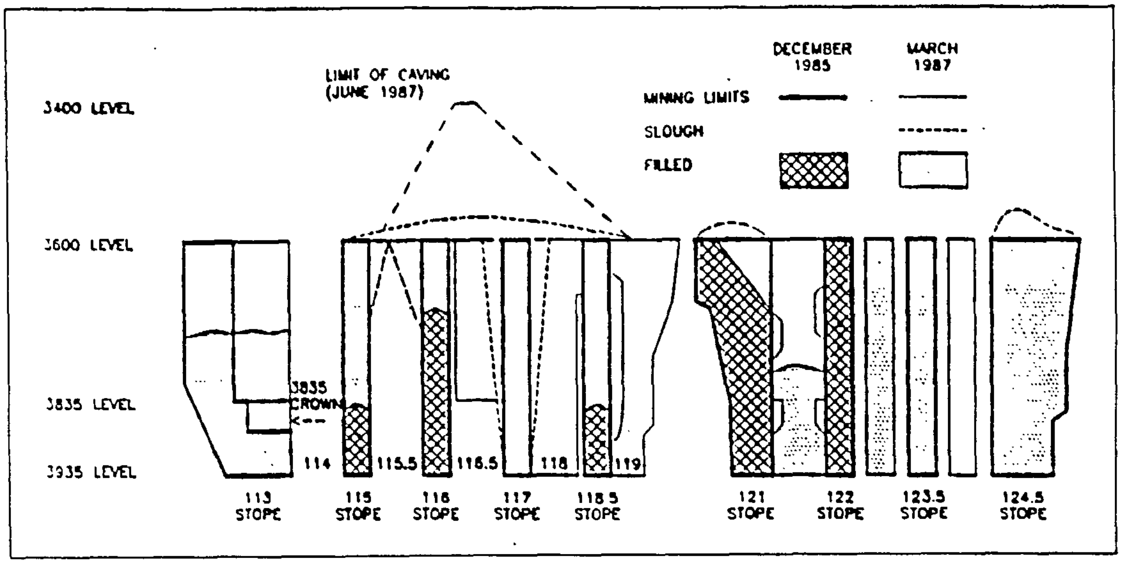


Fig. 25 - Longitudinal section of Copper Cliff North Mine showing stopes mined and filled (after Morrison 1990).

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