

CABOT JAMES MARTIN

Who was Cabot Martin?

Cabot trained as a lawyer with a focus on marine law and served for many years as an energy advisor to the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador.

Cabot undertook legal research into the province's claim to own the subsea resources which it brought with it into Confederation with Canada and which it did not transfer to the federal government under the Terms of Union with Canada. He developed a plan whereby the development of its subsea oil and gas resources could transform its economy to benefit present and future generations.

He helped design a management and regulatory system to encourage proper development to maximize local benefits. He participated in the creation of the 1985 Atlantic Accord which enabled the province to exercise management control of offshore resources. The Accord encouraged devolution of decision-making to people living in the province and enhanced local participation in this new industry.

Cabot believed that coastal communities should have priority rights to harvest local fish stocks and should be the principal beneficiaries of the rich adjacent fishery resources. He was an advocate of joint fisheries management, as well as joint management of petroleum development.

Cabot had a vision for the fishery as a renewable resource whose management should rest more fully with those living adjacent to the resource, particularly inshore fish harvesters. His vision for offshore oil and gas framed public policy in the province long before any drilling had begun, and he was instrumental in shaping the emerging industry so that its development would bring maximum benefits, both social and economic, to adjacent communities. He advised the government to defend its strong claim to ownership; Newfoundland had not relinquished its right to these resources in the Terms of Union with Canada.

Cabot advised the provincial government that it should move its case on two tracks, one through the courts, to assert ownership, and another through negotiations with the federal government, to seek management rights and royalties. Royalties to the province should be no less than those from resources within the borders of the province and on land.

Cabot was a member of the negotiating team which achieved joint management through the Atlantic Accord between the governments of Canada and of Newfoundland and Labrador covering offshore petroleum resources, signed in February 1985. While the province lost in the Supreme Court it succeeded in its negotiating strategy, achieving most of the management control and revenues the government of the day was seeking but through a negotiated settlement with Ottawa, rather than through the courts.

Long before the cod moratorium of 1992 Cabot foresaw the imminent collapse of groundfish stocks. He advocated action through the Inshore Fisheries Association and worked with a group of scientists at Memorial University to document the low recruitment into the fishery and the impact of overfishing. This was in advance of other reports such as the Task Force on Northern

Cod chaired by the late Dr. Leslie Harris. If Cabot's warnings had been acted upon earlier, our cod stocks might now be restored and not remain under moratorium, after more than 30 years.

Cabot was an advocate for more aggressive intervention by Canada as the coastal state and the extension of its 200-mile limit to the edge of the continental shelf to control foreign overfishing. The Harper government adopted this extension in its election platform but failed to act, leaving the Nose and Tail of the Grand Banks open to virtually uncontrolled fishing.

Cabot was also an entrepreneur. He invested in fish farming and created a local oil company. His cod farming venture heralded aquaculture as a growth industry in his native province, harvesting small cod and then holding and feeding them until they reached marketable size. Cabot also established Deer Lake Oil and Gas, to explore and promote the province's onshore potential for oil and gas development. His deeds spanned a broad compass, as did his vision.

Cabot spoke out strongly against the Muskrat Falls project. He believed that it posed a threat to the safety and security of people living below the dam and he wrote extensively about the potential risk that the North Spur might collapse. He wrote *Muskrat Madness* which summarized his detailed research into the project and its impact. Cabot believed that the Holyrood Thermal Generating Station should be replaced with a plant fueled by natural gas, either from the Grand Banks or using imported liquified natural gas, which would be a more cost effective solution to the replacement of the Holyrood plant and avoid the risk which Muskrat Falls posed to people living close to it.

Just before his untimely passing on September 2, 2022, Cabot produced a phased plan where gas would first be piped to shore from existing oilfields and later from new gas fields, drawing upon gas hitherto used primarily to maintain pressure on existing oilfields but also to bring natural gas discoveries into production.

Cabot believed in participatory democracy, speaking out with his strong reasoned voice to encourage private citizens to engage directly on major public policy issues. He convened small groups to discuss fishery issues and to plan the future of an emerging natural gas industry. He, and others, successfully opposed the privatization of NL Hydro. He believed firmly that a strong democracy and strong local voices were the keys to achieving maximum benefits from our resources.

Cabot also believed that with an informed and educated public the government could manage the province's rich natural resources, enriching the lives of its citizens and making Canada stronger. His many writings, lectures and interviews were designed to inform and educate the public and to advise the government. The Cabot Martin Award for Research in Regional Policy and Development intends to empower students, faculty and staff at Memorial to continue the work which Cabot set out to do.