



4.1 A time of change

During the early 20th century the economy of Newfoundland and Labrador became increasingly diversified. The fishery was no longer the primary means of employment. (top left) Grand Bank, c. 1907; (top right) Ore Bed, Bell Island, c. 1920s; (left) Loggers stacking logs, c. 1916.

TOPIC 4.1

Diversification

What resources led to the creation of your town and other towns in your region?

What problems are associated with one-industry towns?

Introduction

European settlement in Newfoundland and Labrador was originally driven by demand for saltfish that was exported to southern Europe and the British West Indies. By the mid-1800s, however, several problems arose that limited the ability of the fishery to remain the primary economic activity. Recognizing this, the Newfoundland government began to look for ways to diversify the economy.

Changes in the Fishery

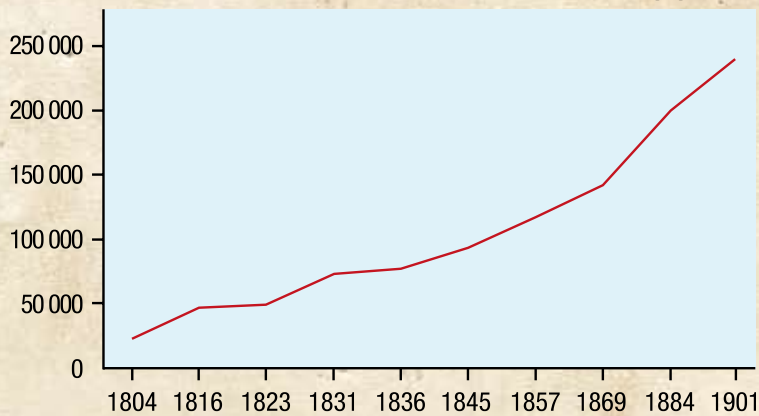
During the nineteenth century, the resident population of Newfoundland and Labrador grew, increasing the number of people seeking work in the fishery. This created two problems. First, the harvest rate per person declined as there was a limited amount of fish available to catch. In economic terms, all things being equal, each person involved in the fishery earned less. As

you will recall from your study of chapter three, to compensate for declining harvests per person, fishers sought new fishing grounds, such as those in Labrador, and took advantage of new technologies, such as cod traps, which increased their ability to catch more fish in less time.

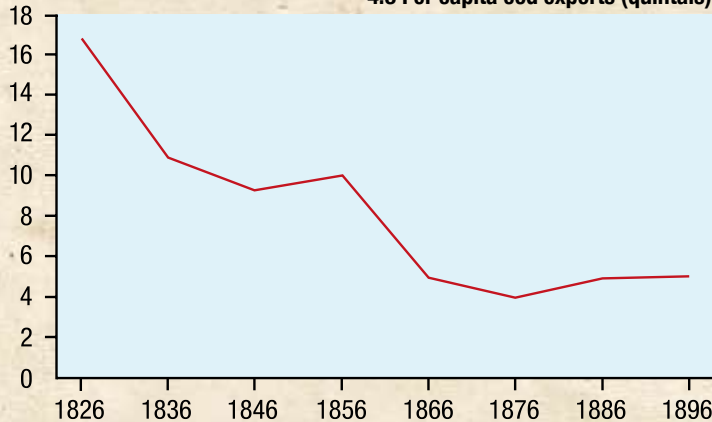
The second problem was the decrease in the cod **biomass** off Newfoundland and Labrador. One factor which contributed to this was a period of lower ocean productivity – this means the rate of cod reproduction was lower than in previous centuries. The combination of the increased rate of fish harvest with the reduced ocean productivity severely taxed the cod stocks. In fact, fisheries experts who have examined this period estimate that the cod biomass off Newfoundland and Labrador decreased by approximately 50 per cent between the late 1700s and the 1880s.

Remember, during the last half of the nineteenth century, the seal fishery also declined – thus, many people lost an additional source of income.

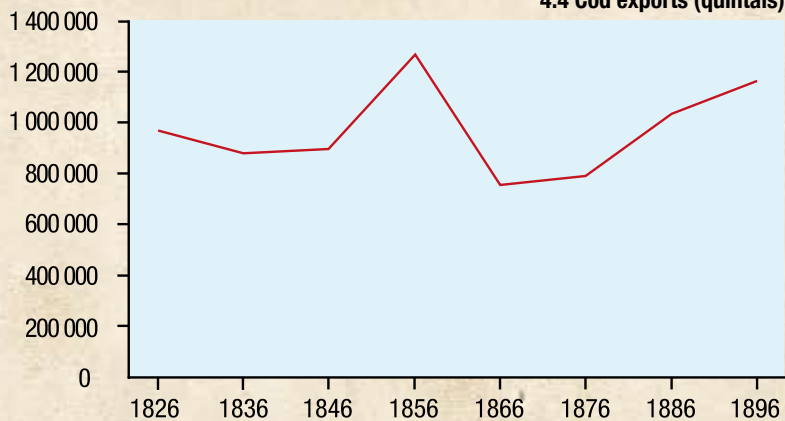
4.2 Newfoundland and Labrador population



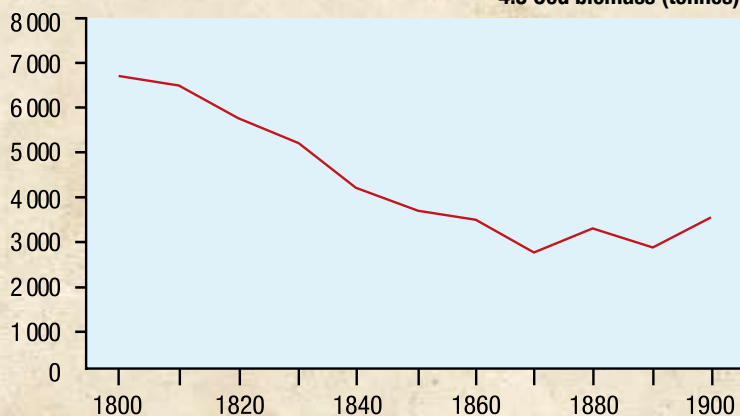
4.3 Per capita cod exports (quintals)



4.4 Cod exports (quintals)



4.5 Cod biomass (tonnes)



Source: Based on information from "Reconciling overfishing and climate change with stock dynamics of Atlantic cod over 500 years" by G.A. Rose in *Can. J. Fish. Aquat. Sci.* 61: 1153-1557 (2004)

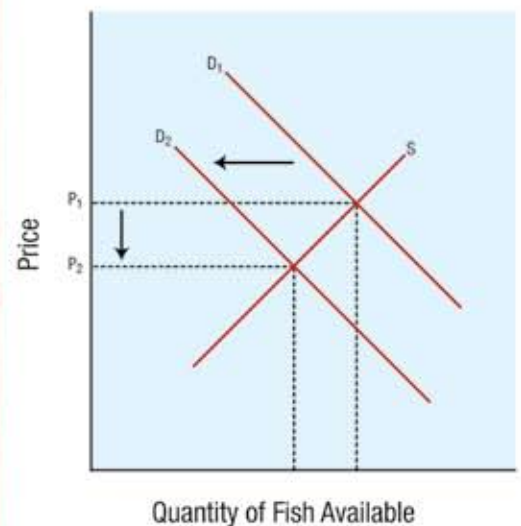
An unsustainable pattern

As noted in chapter three, the pattern of expanding settlement along the coast of the island of Newfoundland, coupled with the growth of the Labrador and bank fisheries, provided a source of new stocks. However, this pattern masked an ecological imbalance between fishers and cod: as the discovery of new fishing grounds allowed for an increase in the number of fish caught, it became less apparent that older grounds had been over-exploited. Overall, catch levels remained relatively steady. However, with an increase in the number of fishers working to catch these fish, there was a steady decrease in cod landings per resident.

CHANGING MARKETS

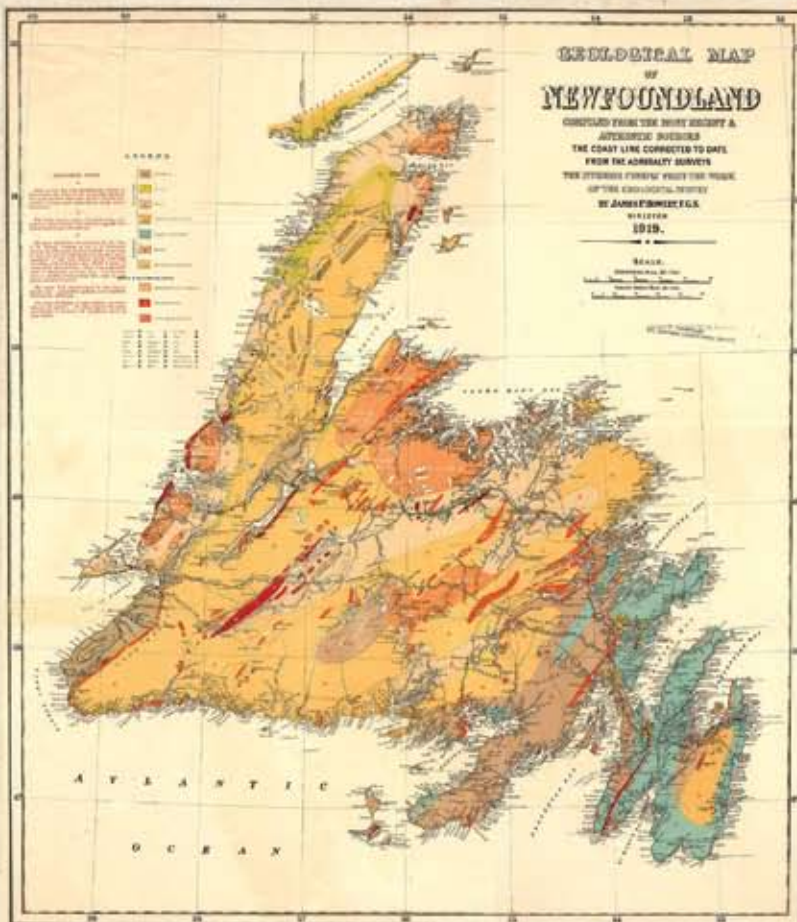
Increased foreign competition was another problem for the fishery during the last quarter of the nineteenth century. With the construction of rail lines and steamships in Europe, France and Norway could ship fish to southern Europe cheaply and reliably. As Newfoundland merchants rushed to compete, our fish was often of poorer quality, thus fetching lower prices at market. By the early twentieth century, demand for saltfish in some markets further declined as canned meats became more popular. The saltfish market was also reduced by the introduction of fresh frozen fish in the 1920s.

P_1	Price of fish at initial level
P_2	Price of fish as a result of lower demand
D	Demand
S	Supply



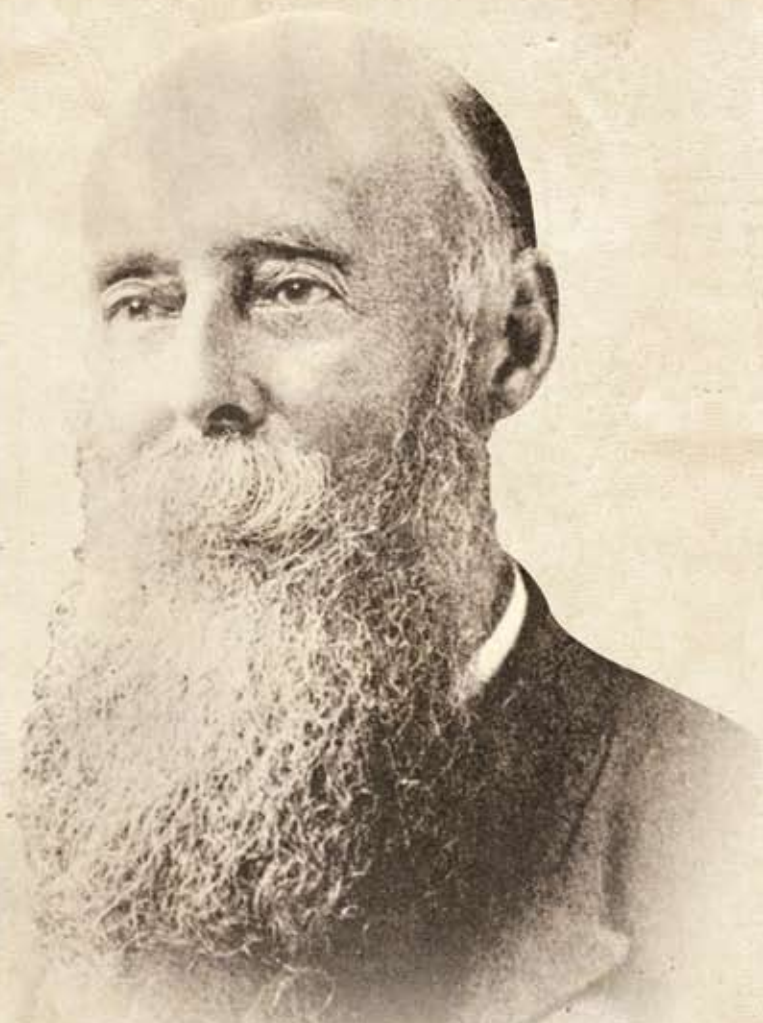
4.6 Decline in demand for saltfish

This graph shows the decline in the demand for saltfish as a result of the introduction of frozen fish. This lower demand (D_2) forced prices down (P_2).



4.7 Geological map of Newfoundland, 1919

This map was created by the Geological Survey of Newfoundland, which was formed in 1864. James P. Howley (1847-1918), who became the director in 1883, explored and mapped the northeastern and western coastlines of the island, central Newfoundland, and other parts of the interior. Much of the information in this 1919 map by Howley came from these explorations.



4.8 Frederic Newton Gisborne (1824-1892)

During the 1800s, several explorers and surveyors added greatly to the government's knowledge about resources in the island's interior. Gisborne^{*} was one of these. He journeyed across the southern interior in 1851 and kept a detailed journal and survey record. His knowledge and work helped to initiate the telegraph system on the island.

The Need to Diversify

An examination of the economic activities of this time period highlights another problem associated with over-reliance on the fishery. While subsistence activities helped Newfoundlanders and Labradorians produce many of the items they needed, some items, such as flour, tea, molasses, rum, tobacco, bulk salt, and medicines, still had to be imported. With an increasing population and a struggling fishery, the cost of imports was often greater than the value of fish exports.

In 1878, Sir William Whiteway was elected as Premier of Newfoundland on a "Policy of Progress." This involved a determined push to create employment through the development of natural resource industries – especially forestry and mining. Whiteway felt that the building of a railway across the island was the essential first step to opening up the interior and developing these industries.



4.9 William Whiteway

Whiteway served as Premier of Newfoundland from 1878-1885, 1889-1894, and 1895-1897.

**Gisborne and several other surveyors employed Mi'kmaq guides to assist them. The guides had a strong knowledge of the interior and were invaluable in helping the explorers plan travel routes and map many of the physical features of the interior.*



Newfoundlander.

Excerpt from a letter to the editor of *The Newfoundlander* who reported on a speech given by William Whiteway in Heart's Content on October 22, 1878.

... They were received most enthusiastically, and after the subsidence of the many hearty cheers which greeted them, E. Weedon, Esq., was moved to the Chair, from which he briefly in a few well-chosen words explained how he had accepted the duties of Chairman in courtesy to the Hon. W. V. Whiteway and colleagues. Silence being restored, the Hon. the Premier advanced to the front and began giving an account of his stewardship during the past four years, and also the many wise measures which his Government or party had passed for the general welfare of the country. He also touched on the vast mining enterprises now producing such

good fruit to the country in giving so much employment to hundreds of our fishermen who would otherwise be idle during the winter months. He alluded to the importance of cutting roads through the interior so as to open up the vast tracts of valuable agricultural land for settlement, also what labour the lumbering business would give, and how great a source of wealth it would be for the country. Coastal steam was next brought before the meeting, and the advantages derived from the splendid boats now on the northern and western routes, and how happy all should feel in being able to hear from their friends on the Labrador every fortnight. The future Railway across the country, telegraph extension around the Island, and several other topics of interest, were adverted to and thoroughly explained to a most admiring audience ...

Although government leaders recognized that an economy based on a single industry was problematic, very few jobs existed outside the fishery. In an effort to correct this problem, the government began looking for ways to develop other resources. Government-sponsored surveys,* completed during the second

half of the nineteenth century, confirmed the existence** of agricultural, forest, and mineral resources in the island's interior that could be developed. However, a way to access them had to be found. An 1880 government report suggested that a railway across the island could be the solution.

4.11

19th Century Newfoundland Trade

Year	Exports	Imports	Surplus/ Deficit
1826	759 319 (£)	862 453 (£)	⊖
1836	850 334	632 576	⊕
1846	759 103	802 247	⊖
1856	1 338 797	1 271 604	⊕
1866	5 694 305 (\$)	5 784 849 (\$)	⊖
1876	6 551 380	7 205 897	⊖
1886	4 862 951	6 020 035	⊖
1896	6 638 187	5 986 861	⊕

4.12

Employment by Primary Sector (as percentages of total workforce)

	1858	1869	1874	1884
Agriculture	4	4	2	2
Fishery	89	84	86	82
Forestry	1	1	1	2
Mining	-	1	-	0.5
Other	6	10	11	13.5

When fish prices were low, fishers sometimes ended up owing more for the supplies they bought than what they made from selling their fish. In these cases, local merchants often assumed the financial risk of carrying fishers through the winter.

*The government did not undertake any surveys in Labrador during this time.

**Remember, European exploration in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries was driven in part by a desire to find and exploit the wealth of the "new world." Newfoundland and Labrador was no exception.

The question of the future of our growing population has for some time engaged the earnest attention of all thoughtful men in this country ... The fisheries being our main resource, and to a large extent the only dependence of the people, those periodic partial failures ... [result in] pauperism ...

Our fisheries have no doubt increased, but not in a measure corresponding to our increase of population. And even though they were capable of being further expanded, that object would be largely neutralised by the decline in price which follows from a large catch ...

It is evident, therefore, that no material increase of means is to be looked for from our fisheries, and that we must direct our attention to other sources to meet the growing requirements of the country.

Your Committee believe that no agency would be so effective for the promotion of the objects in view as that of a railway ...

— Excerpt from *Report of Joint Committee of Legislative Council and House of Assembly*, 1880

A Golden Age

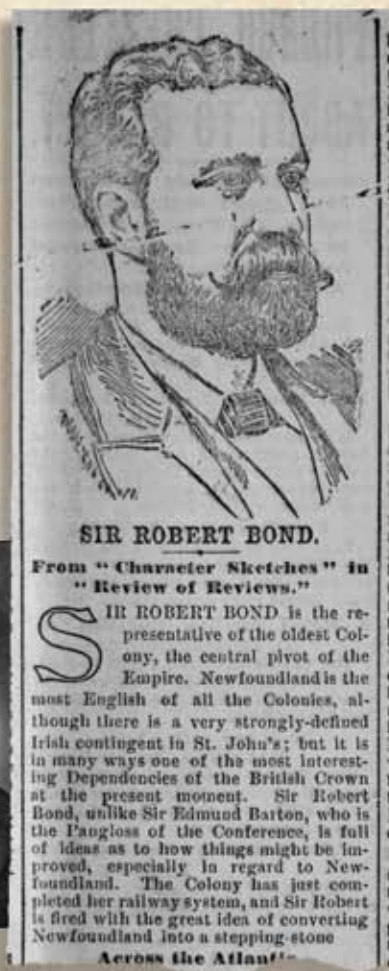
In the decades that would follow, much of Premier Whiteway's vision would be realized. In fact, the first decade of the twentieth century began with promise in the colony. The recession of the late nineteenth century was ending, the prices for fish and other exports were increasing, and the forest and mining industries were growing. This pre-war period, 1900-1914, has often been considered a "Golden Age" in the country's history.

Much of this period (1900-1909) corresponded with Sir Robert Bond's term as Premier of Newfoundland. While serving as Colonial Secretary under Premier William Whiteway, Bond had worked to protect Newfoundland's fishing industry, challenging French and American fishing rights, and maintaining the colony's independence from Canada. As premier, he renegotiated the railway contract to the benefit of the colony and finalized the entente cordiale. These successes, along with the development of the mining and forest industries, helped strengthen the colony's economy. In fact, the government recorded numerous budget surpluses under Bond's leadership.

Bond also tried on several occasions to negotiate a free trade agreement with the United States, but was blocked

4.14 Excerpt from
The Evening Telegram,
Aug. 26, 1902

4.15 Edward Morris
was prime minister
from 1909-1917



Experiencing The Arts

In this chapter you are asked to select an event or overall experience and compose a song to tell that story. There are a variety of experiences in this chapter:

- Changes in the fishery
- New industries such as the railway, forestry, and mining
- Changes in lifestyle and culture (both Aboriginal peoples and European settlers)
- The labour movement

Your task is to identify the subject for the composition of your song and to create the title for that piece. The song should focus on telling a story related to your area of interest. Remember, use this as an opportunity to explore something that interests you or is important to you. Set aside a notebook exclusively for the purpose of writing this song.

* After 1909, the leader of the colony was known as prime minister instead of premier.

by American, Canadian, and British interests. Such problems in international affairs eventually led to Bond's downfall in 1909 and his retirement from politics in 1914. Edward Morris followed Bond as prime minister.* Until the outbreak of war, Morris promoted extensive railway construction, new industry, and resource development.



4.16 Robert Bond served as premier from 1900-1909

Robert Bond was born in St. John's on February 25, 1857, the sixth of seven children born to John and Elizabeth (Parsons). His father was a successful businessman and, upon his death, Bond inherited a large fortune. Bond was educated in St. John's and in Somerset, England. Although he studied law and became a clerk for William Whiteway, he did not practise as a lawyer. Instead, he entered politics and became one of Newfoundland's best-known politicians.

Along with his political career, Bond pursued several business ventures, which included mining speculation and interior development. In 1884, he bought 20 square kilometres of land on the Avalon Peninsula near Harbour Grace Junction and renamed the community Whitbourne (after 17th century colonizer Sir Richard Whitbourne). Bond built a large estate at Whitbourne, where he retired after leaving politics. He spent the remainder of his life there, enjoying his property and bemoaning the state of politics in Newfoundland. He died at Whitbourne on March 16, 1927.

Questions:

1. In 1620 Sir Richard Whitbourne commented on the suspected wealth of the island's interior. "... *there is great abundance of Trees fit to be employed in other serviceable uses ... there might be found many other commodities of good worth. Amongst the which ... there is much probability of finding Mines, and making of Iron and Pitch.*"

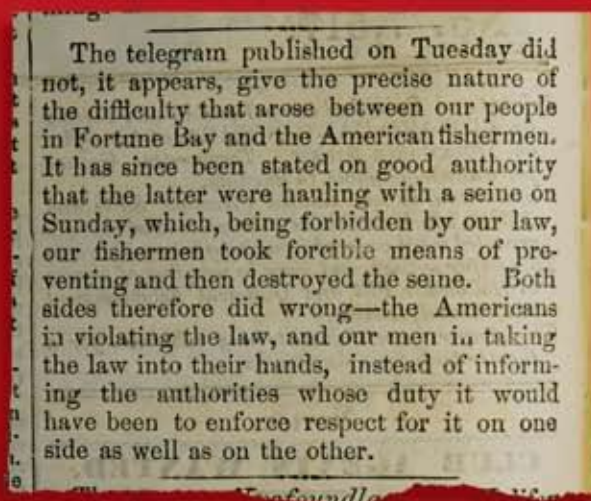
Why did it take so long for the colony's economy to diversify? Identify three factors that might account for this.

2. To what extent is the economy of your community or region economically diversified? What are the strengths and/or limitations associated with this?
3. What trends (both local and global) are affecting the economy today? Which trend might have the most significant impact on your community/region? Explain.

INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

During the mid to late 1800s, pre-existing British fisheries treaties with France and the United States were a concern for the Newfoundland government. There was considerable frustration among Newfoundland fishers with the privileges these treaties granted to French and American fishers in Newfoundland waters. Several premiers appealed to Britain to revisit these agreements. In most cases, Britain was unwilling to do so, fearful of damaging its own relationship with France and the United States.

In January 1878, a group of fishers from Newfoundland attacked Americans fishing in Fortune Bay. They forced the Americans to dump their catch and leave the area, claiming that they were violating Newfoundland fishing rights. Whiteway supported the Newfoundlanders and rejected American compensation claims. However, without consulting the colony, Britain paid £15 000 to the Americans and then expected Newfoundland to pay them back. Whiteway refused. Eventually a compromise was reached: Newfoundland would pay £3400 of the compensation and Britain promised to consult the colony in the future in cases involving payment from the colony.



4.17 Excerpt from *The Newfoundlanders*, Feb. 8, 1878

CASE STUDY

The Significance of Events

Throughout the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries there were numerous events that affected Newfoundland and Labrador. Each of these events, in its own way, was significant. However, were they all equally significant?

IT IS YOUR TASK IN THIS CASE STUDY TO EXAMINE SIX EVENTS and assess the relative significance of each. Remember that determining the degree to which an event is significant depends on three criteria:

1. How important were the consequences?
2. How many people were affected?
3. How long were the consequences felt?

Additionally, significance depends upon an individual's or group's perspective. This perspective can be affected by time, geographic location, and interests.

4.18 Use this table to help assess the significance of the events in this case study.

Assessing Significance

Criteria	Event #1	Event #2	Event #3	Event #4	Event #5	Event #6
How <u>deep</u> were the consequences?						
How <u>many</u> people were affected?						
How <u>long</u> were the consequences felt?						

**The water supply had been turned off for repairs, so pressure had not yet built up sufficiently at the top of the hill, where the fire started.*

The Great Fire, St. John's, 1892

Late in the afternoon of July 8, 1892, a small fire broke out in a St. John's stable after a lit pipe or match fell into a bundle of hay. Although containable at first, the flames quickly spread due to dry weather conditions, a disorganized fire department, and poor planning* on the part of city officials. The fire's rapid progress alarmed city residents, and by 6 p.m. many began storing their valuables in the Church of England Cathedral, Gower Street Methodist Church, and other stone or brick buildings they believed could withstand the flames. As the fire made its way downtown, however, it also gutted many of these structures; the Church of England Cathedral suffered so much damage that it took workers more than 10 years to complete its restoration.**

By 8 p.m., the fire had reached the core of the city's downtown, where it caused much panic and disorder. Looters ransacked many of the shops and businesses lining Water and Duckworth Streets, while residents in the buildings' upper levels ran from their homes with as many belongings as they could carry. Vessels in the harbour, meanwhile, sailed out of reach of the advancing flames, which quickly destroyed all of the wharves and their contents.

***Lack of financial resources probably delayed construction as well.*

The fire burned into the night and did not end until 5:30 the following morning. Many people camped out in Bannerman Park or on property surrounding the Roman Catholic Cathedral, which was one of the few buildings the fire did not destroy. As the sun rose on July 9, more than two-thirds of St. John's lay in ruins and 11 000 people were homeless; many had lost everything they owned, except the clothes they were wearing. In just 12 hours, the fire had killed three people and caused \$13 million in property damage – only \$4.8 million of which was insured.

With its capital city and commercial centre in ruins, Newfoundland and Labrador experienced a sudden economic downturn. Rebuilding efforts dominated the months following the fire, and cost the government more than \$300 000. A local Relief Committee distributed clothes, food, and other goods among the homeless, while a large influx of foreign aid also helped the city recover its losses. The fire prompted government officials to restructure the city's fire services and to provide firefighters with better training and equipment.



4.19 Rebuilding after the Great Fire

4.20 Shacks erected to shelter the poor who had been burnt out by the Great Fire

In June 1893, many who had lost their homes in the fire were still living in temporary shelters erected in Bannerman Park, St. John's.



The Bank Crash, 1894

On December 10, 1894, two of Newfoundland and Labrador's three banks, the Union Bank and Commercial Bank in St. John's, closed their doors and never opened them again. A contributing factor to their demise was a decline in the fishery that began in the mid-1880s. The downturn meant most fishing merchants were borrowing increasingly from the banks in order to continue operating. By 1894, six **mercantile** firms owed the Commercial and Union Banks a total of \$2.5 million.

In order to extend such credit to the merchants, the banks began borrowing money from British banks. However, when the British banks called in their loans to the Commercial Bank on December 8, it was unable to meet its payments. The Commercial Bank turned to the merchants for repayment, but the merchants' assets were tied up in fish that had not yet gone to market. The

Commercial Bank's credit was suspended and it was forced to close its doors.

News quickly spread about the Commercial Bank closure, and clients of the Union Bank and the Savings Bank rushed to withdraw their money. The Savings Bank barely survived the run, but the Union Bank closed permanently on the same day as the Commercial Bank. At the time, bank notes were the main source of currency in Newfoundland and Labrador. About \$1.2 million in bank notes from both the Commercial and Union banks were in circulation in 1894. These bank notes were rendered temporarily worthless with the banks' closures and savings accounts at both establishments decreased in value overnight. (The government later guaranteed all Union bank notes for 80 per cent of their value and Commercial notes for 20 per cent.)

4.21 Letter from Governor John O'Brien, Dec. 14, 1894
Fearing public disturbances after the bank crash, Governor O'Brien requested the Royal Navy send a warship to St. John's.

NEWFOUNDLAND
Miscellaneous.

Government House
St John's 14th December 1894.

Sir,

In acknowledging the receipt of your telegram of yesterday's date allow me to thank you for so promptly ordering H.M.S. Tourmaline to proceed to St John's, where matters are in a state of chaos, and where the presence of a man-of-war to inspire confidence and to aid if needed in maintaining order is most necessary.

The only two Banks in the Colony having failed their notes are of no value and as specie is to but a small extent in circulation I took the liberty of suggesting that the Tourmaline should come up supplied with sufficient cash to meet her requirements for there might be difficulties in negotiating bills and obtaining money during the next few weeks. I also added the expediency of the men being supplied with what are known

known as creepers and which are used by all the troops in Canada, i.e. spikes that are fastened to the boot to enable them to march if landed with facility, which doubtless could be obtained from the military in Halifax.

I am happy to tell you that so far matters are quiet but as quite two thirds of our principal merchants and employers of labour have closed, it is next week and the weeks after that hunger may bring on the disturbances.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your obedient servant

(Sd) J O'Brien

Gov.

His Excellency

Vice Admiral Sir John O. Hopkins K.C.B.
Commander in Chief

*Bond put up his assets for the loan to shore up the Savings Bank.



4.22 Union Bank of Newfoundland \$10 note, 1889

In the aftermath of the bank crash, three large mercantile firms went out of business, which affected approximately 19 000 people who had depended on them for employment. Other companies also suspended operations temporarily. The government was pushed to the edge of bankruptcy by this crash. Of immediate concern was interest on the public debt, which was due in London on January 1, 1895. If not paid, the country would have to default on the debt.

This bankruptcy threat was removed by Robert Bond, a senior member of government, who managed to negotiate loans* with Canadian and British banks. Canadian banks quickly began to open branches in St. John's and eventually in some outports. The Bank of Montreal became the government's banker, and Canadian currency became legal tender in the colony.

The entente cordiale, 1904

In 1904, the French Treaty Shore disappeared as a legal entity. Prior to this, it had been a long-standing source of grievance for Newfoundlanders and Labradorians and a cause of tension between the Newfoundland and British governments. The French Treaty Shore came into existence under the Treaty of Utrecht (1713), which gave France fishing rights along that part of the shore and restricted Newfoundland's economic activity in the area. With the signing of the Anglo-French Convention of 1904, part of the "entente cordiale" which clarified several colonial disputes between Britain and France, this territory was placed under the control of the Government of Newfoundland.

According to the terms of this agreement, France relinquished its fishing rights in Newfoundland in exchange for territory in Africa and financial compensation for the French fishers who would be displaced. The entente cordiale secured Newfoundland's control of the French Shore fisheries and opened the way to settlement and industrial development on the west coast. Its announcement in the House of Assembly was, for the most part, enthusiastically greeted. The next day, April 22, 1904, was declared a school holiday, and a torchlight procession was held in St. John's that evening to mark the event.

4.23 Excerpt from *The Evening Telegram*, Dec. 13, 1894

Following the bank crash, many people in Newfoundland and Labrador still needed outside help to get through the winter. In St. John's, various churches and members of the city's elite began relief committees to distribute food, clothes, money, and other goods to people across the country. Donations also arrived from England, Nova Scotia, and Boston.

NEWFOUNDLAND IS FAMISHING.

Hundreds of Homes Without Food or Fuel and with Slim Prospect of Getting Any Relief.

St. John's, N.F., Dec. 13.—Hundreds of houses are without food or fuel, and the charitable societies were bankrupted by the failures.

The poor asylum and relief offices are crowded, while the labor bureau is besieged by men seeking work.

The few stores which remain open are discharging superfluous hands. The wharves and shipping are deserted. Not a fish is being handled. Some places have a few men at work who are being paid in flour and tea.

This is literally a city to let. Society is resolved into its elementary conditions, no circulating medium exists and nobody knows what the end will be.

Two-thirds of the citizens habitually lived from hand to mouth, earning enough one week to provide next week's provisions. Hundreds are still dwelling in tents, not having had means to rebuild their houses since the great fire. Death from starvation or cold must be their fate.

Tradesmen heretofore in comfortable circumstances are hopelessly crippled. No one can pay any one else, and no credit is given.

Hundreds from other parts of the island are stranded here. Many were prosperous business men who came to buy Christmas goods and the winter's provisions or to stock their shops. They cannot get home, the railways and steamers refusing notes. Those who can do so are walking back. One began to-day a journey of 227 miles on foot.

Nearly everybody in the outlying fishery villages was indebted to Edwin Duder, who has failed. He had a fleet of 489 sail, nearly all fishing vessels, each partly owned by fishermen in some harbor around the coast. The banks' creditors will come down upon these fishermen and sweep away the savings of a life-time.

The new Government was sworn in to-day at noon. It consists of D. Joseph Greene, Premier and Attorney-General; Patrick J. Scott, Receiver General; Jabez P. Thompson, Surveyor General; William H. Horwood, Colonial Secretary; and Augustus W. Harvey, without portfolio.—*New York World*, Dec. 11.

As historian James K. Hiller has noted:

The existence of the French Treaty Shore had a significant impact on Newfoundland's history. The settlement and development of the Shore was delayed as a result of the French presence, and its inhabitants received virtually nothing in the way of government services until the 1880s, when they were finally allowed representation in the legislature, and magistrates were appointed. Land and mining rights remained insecure until 1904. The route of the Newfoundland Railway was influenced by the Shore's existence, as was the decision to build the first newsprint mill at Grand Falls, and not on the west coast. In addition, the disputes over French fishing rights became a major focus for the Newfoundland nationalism that emerged from the mid-nineteenth century.

4.24 Population of the Petit Nord* and West Coast 1857-1935

Year	Petit Nord	West Coast	Total
1857	1086	2248	3334
1869	1389	3998	5387
1874	2269	6385	8654
1884	3829	8144	11 973
1891	3688	9574	13 262
1901	4472	12 762	17 234
1911	5752	16 590	22 342
1921	6517	19 215	25 732
1935	8812	31 485	40 297

*Petit Nord is here defined as the communities from La Scie to Cape Norman



AN HISTORIC OCCASION.
THE PREMIER PRESENTS
The New Anglo-French Treaty
In an Eloquent And Convincing Speech.

... subjects of the Crown of Great Britain living upon the land which gave them birth ... could not ply their avocation in the waters that rolled in at their feet, teeming with treasure that meant food, comfort and independence, unless by the permission of the subjects of France ...

... if they went fishing and were fortunate enough to locate a shoal of fish, and the French discovered their success, they were almost certain to be driven from their moorings by the British Naval Officer at the request of the fishermen of France; and if they protested, their nets and other implements of trade were confiscated and oft times destroyed ...

... this Convention ... heralds the time when even the memory of their presence will fade like a fevered dream before the brightness of a new day.

It is for us now to encourage by every legitimate means the development and settlement of what has hitherto been known as the Treaty Shore, and thus effectively to blot out of remembrance that which has been a curse to this country and a strain upon British rule.

4.25 Excerpts from Sir Robert Bond's introduction of the "entente cordiale" in a speech to the House of Assembly April 21, 1904.



4.26 British cartoon Celebrating the entente cordiale, Punch, April 22, 1914

Sealing Disasters, 1914

On March 31, 1914, the sealing vessel *SS Southern Cross* failed to arrive in St. John's from the Gulf of St. Lawrence as scheduled. Two days later, an already anxious public learned that sealers with the *SS Newfoundland* had spent 53 hours stranded on the North Atlantic ice floes in blizzard conditions. The following day, telegraph offices were crowded with people waiting for word of the sealers and *The Evening Telegram* reported that "business was practically stagnated. Everybody seemed unable to work." On April 4, hundreds of anxious spectators lined the St. John's waterfront as the sealing vessel *Bellaventure* steamed through the Narrows carrying the bodies and the survivors of the *Newfoundland* disaster. Of the 77 men who died on the ice, rescuers found only 69 bodies. Another sealer from the disaster died in St. John's while receiving medical care.

Compounding the disaster's impact on the public was the loss of the *Southern Cross*. It soon became apparent that it had sunk, possibly off Trepassey Bay, taking with it a crew of 174. With 252 sealers now dead, the impact on Newfoundland and Labrador society was immense. Hundreds of families had lost their loved ones and their breadwinners. Small communities where the sealers lived and spent money also suffered in the short term from a damaged economy and declining morale.

The double tragedy caused widespread mourning and ultimately changed attitudes and legislation surrounding the Newfoundland and Labrador sealing industry. In 1914-1915, the government held a commission of enquiry to examine the *Newfoundland* and *Southern Cross* sealing disasters. Although no criminal charges were laid, the Commission's findings made it clear that sealers faced unnecessarily dangerous working conditions on the ice. In response to the Commission's recommendations, and with much prompting from the Fishermen's Protective Union, the Newfoundland government passed 26 articles into law in 1916 to protect future seal hunts. The new legislation made radios and flares mandatory on all sealing vessels, prohibited sealers from being on the ice after dark, and required ship owners to pay out compensation for dead or injured sealers. Doctors or pharmacists also became mandatory on many ships, as did navigating officers. In addition, based on theories that the *Southern Cross* sank because of overloading, the government made it illegal for any ship to return from the hunt with more than 35 000 pelts and established fines for any sealing ship that returned to port with its load line below the water.



4.27 Injured sealer, April 4, 1914
Medical personnel carry Ralph Moulton, a survivor of the 1914 Newfoundland sealing disaster, off the *SS Bellaventure*.

HOPE VANISHING FOR MISSING SEALER

Unless Southern Cross Is Reported To-day She Will Be Posted as Lost.

1,000 DEPENDENTS BEREFT

Whole Colony of Women and Children Robbed of Support by Disasters—Many Men Crippled for Life.

ST. JOHN'S, N. F., April 5.—Anxiety deepened to-night for the 113 men on the sealing steamer *Southern Cross*, which has been missing since Tuesday's blizzard. She was not reported either by incoming vessels of the sealing fleet or by the steamer *Kyle* sent out by the Government to search for her. If she is not heard from by sunset to-morrow she will be officially posted as lost with all on board.

Disaster to her, following so closely upon the loss of seventy-seven men of the sealer *Newfoundland*, would bring upon the colony the greatest tragedy in its history, depriving whole settlements of their bread winners and throwing 1,000 women and children upon charity. As the public learned to-day from the *Newfoundland's* survivors who were landed yesterday, the details of the two days' blizzard and the condition in which it caught the *Southern Cross*, the first hope, based on the stoutness of the ship, faded. Capt. Daniel Martin of the sealer *Erik* and Capt. William Bartlett of the *Terranova*, which arrived with full catches, were dubious regarding the safety of the missing ship. Neither had seen her within a week.

Capt. Martin said he parted company from her a week ago Thursday when the *Southern Cross* turned homeward with 1,000 seals. She was so deeply laden that all her provisions and part of her bunker coal were stored on deck, so that every available space below could be filled with her catch.

Saw Her in Tuesday's Gale. Capt. Bartlett of the *Terranova* said the last he saw of the *Southern Cross* was a week ago Friday, when she was wallowing slowly down the coast. Other ships of the fleet sighted the steamer driving before the wind last Tuesday morning. She has not been reported since. The skippers of the fleet, who came through that gale and the storm of equal severity later in the week, say every chance was against a vessel so deep in the water as the *Southern Cross*.

The disaster which overtook the Newfoundland's men was the theme of a sermon in every church to-day. Messages of sympathy from the King and from the Canadian Premier were read and were gratefully received. By noon all except five of the sixty-nine bodies of Newfoundland's hunters, brought in yesterday by the *Bellaventure*, had been identified. These were sent by special train to-night to Bonaville, where most of the victims lived.

Attendants at the Grenfell Institute, which was turned into a morgue, said that the scenes accompanying the identification of the bodies was almost beyond endurance. One woman found two bodies clasped so tightly in death that they could not be separated. They were her husband and son. The lad was wrapped in his father's arms as if the man had been trying to shield him from the pitiless cold.

The hand of another dead man was missing. One of the survivors who had seen the man die said that his comrades, unable to stand the agony of frost bite, had cut off the hand.

A gray-haired mother, supported by her two daughters, pushed down the long rows looking for her sons. Attention was suddenly drawn to them and the women fell to the floor in a faint. They had found not only the four sons and brothers but two cousins among the dead.

Many Crippled for Life. Of the thirty survivors in the hospital none is expected to die, but the majority will never be fit for active service again. Three lost both hands and both feet. Five lost both feet. Eight others lost a foot and eleven will lose a hand or thumb. The others will bear scars for life.

Some of the survivors said they sought shelter from the arctic gale behind the bodies of dead companions, but in all the delirium of the two days and nights of exposure none of the clothing was taken from the bodies of the dead. Each man of the 150 endured his lot with grim patience, and each one, the dead as well as the living, was found with his full equipment of clothes, boots, and sealing gear intact.

Special memorial services will be held on Tuesday. By that time also relief measures will be under way. If the *Southern Cross* fails to reach port the families of her 113 men must be provided for, as well as those of the Newfoundland's dead and crippled.

Rare Gameness of Survivors.

The horror of his experience on the ice failed to depress the spirits of Mike Sheehan, one of the survivors. He was considered a hard case by the *Bellaventure's* physician. His face, hands, and feet were frostbitten and the condition was aggravated by the man's restless civility.

When the rescue ship arrived here, Sheehan eluded his caretakers, slipped over the side, and met a few friends, with whom he roamed about the city for two hours, while the police and hospital orderlies searched for him. When he was found he was promptly sent to the hospital. He refused to go in an ambulance, and a cheering crowd followed him as he marched up the street, singing loudly. Sheehan said he owed his life in part to a bit of hardback which he found lying beside a dead man. He described the way in which one of his comrades, Daniel Downey, set death. Realizing that he could no longer keep moving, Downey took off his belt, scratched his name on it, tucked it about him again, and knelt down and prayed. Then he stretched himself out and waited for death.

One survivor, Michael Tobin of Periwinkle, was out for sixty hours. He was taken away from the rest by the whistle of the steamer *Stephano*, and, becoming bewildered, went astray and was not picked up until several hours after the others had been found. He will lose one leg and probably both his feet. The fingers of his hands were broken off from chewing chunks of ice to quench his thirst. He knew that he must continue walking and keep his feet dry, and despite the descending fatigue and the blinding snow he was able to avoid so many holes in the floor until the rescue of the third day, when he made out the *Stephano*. Within a mile of her he sank into a pile of ice slush which chilled him through. Arousing himself, he stumbled onward, half-blind, only to walk into a pool of water too deep. He was unable to extricate himself, but he was seen by four men from the *Stephano*, who pulled him out, upon reaching the ship's deck he collapsed and was unconscious twenty-four hours.

It was necessary to cut his clothing from his body, and both his feet were frozen. He subsisted all the time on ice and on three biscuits. One of the *Stephano's* men asked him how he felt when he thought he was dying. "Dying?" said Tobin. "I never thought of it."

Several men were drowned when one of their number mistook for a sail the back of an iceberg looming through the snow. His cry of "A sail! A sail!" impeded a group toward the spot, where all plunged into the water. Others were so chilled they survived only a short time. Some of those who came ashore were forced to strip themselves and wring out their clothes, which they put on again half dry.

Groped in Blinding Snow.

According to Thomas Dawson, a large number of men reached the *Stephano*, a steamer ship, at noon on the day the blizzard broke. After resting they decided to try to reach the Newfoundland, five hours' walk distant, and this was the cause of the appalling death list.

An hour after leaving the *Stephano*, he said, the snow blotted out all observation. They wandered aimlessly about, and came upon 200 seals they had killed during the morning. Had they remained there, said Dawson, many lives might have been saved, for the seals would have furnished food for forty-eight hours.

Seventeen of the men, including Jaro Conway, drifted away from the main floe on a large sheet of ice on Wednesday night. By Thursday morning only Conway and two others remained alive. Fully 1,500 persons lined the streets to-night when the dead were borne to the special train by relatives from the Bonaville district. Some of the bodies must be carried by dog sledges fifty miles over rough trails after leaving the railway.

The throngs hovering about the newspaper and Government offices awaiting word from the *Southern Cross* were notified at midnight that the steamer *Kyle*, after an all-day search, reported no signs of the missing steamer. The *Kyle* was then fifty miles southeast of Cape Pine, and was starting for Virgin Rocks, fifty miles east. She was in communication with the American revenue cutter *Seneca* on the Grand Banks ice patrol. The cutter promised to assist in the search. The two vessels will keep in constant touch with each other throughout to-morrow.

HOPE VANISHING

4.28 From the *New York Times*, April 6, 1914



4.29 Burying victims of the Spanish flu at North River, Labrador (12 kilometres from Cartwright), 1918



4.30 Ethel Gertrude Dickinson was a nurse who died attending to victims of the Spanish flu. A monument to her sacrifice was erected in St. John's in 1920.

Spanish Flu Outbreak, 1918-19

The Spanish influenza pandemic of 1918-19 killed between 20 and 40 million people worldwide, making it one of the largest and most destructive outbreaks of infectious disease in recorded history. In Newfoundland and Labrador it killed more than 600 people in five months. The pandemic arrived on the island of Newfoundland on September 30, 1918 when a steamer carrying three infected crewmen docked at St. John's harbour. Three more infected sailors arrived at Burin on October 4, and they travelled by rail to St. John's for treatment. A doctor diagnosed the city's first two local cases of influenza the following day and sent both people to a hospital. Within two weeks, newspapers reported that several hundred people were infected in St. John's.

By mid-October, the Medical Officer of Health had closed the city's schools, theatres, concert halls, and other public buildings to help prevent the virus from spreading. By early December, 62 people had died from Spanish influenza in St. John's, but no new cases were appearing. The situation was considerably worse in the outports, where fewer medical facilities and practitioners existed to combat the disease. Before it disappeared, the disease killed 170 people in outport Newfoundland.

The Spanish influenza was even more destructive in Labrador, which experienced a disproportionately high mortality rate; the same virus that killed less than one per

cent of Newfoundland's population killed 10 per cent of Labrador's. As on the island, the virus was spread by visiting boats with infected crew members. The virus first appeared at Cartwright after the mail boat *SS Sagona* docked there on October 20, 1918. By early 1919, the influenza had killed 69 of the area's 300 residents.

On the northern coast, another ship, the *SS Harmony*, brought the infection to Hebron on October 27, 1918. The virus quickly spread throughout the village, killing entire families and leaving dozens of children orphaned. By November 19, 86 of Hebron's 100 residents were dead and a further 74 people had died in surrounding communities.

The *SS Harmony* also brought the virus to Okak. Within hours of the ship's departure on November 8, many people in the village began showing signs of illness. By the end of December, the virus had decimated Okak, killing 204 of its 263 residents and had also spread to nearby hunting camps. As the virus disappeared from Labrador in late December and early January, survivors were faced with burying their dead. In Okak, survivors then dismantled the community entirely, burning all houses and furniture before moving to Nain, Hopedale, or Hebron. In total, the Spanish influenza killed more than 30 per cent of the Inuit population and infected many others. Many of those who did not die from the disease experienced heart and respiratory troubles for the rest of their lives.

“The flu ... That's why everybody here is related the way they are. When my grandmother died from it, my grandfather had to marry [name deleted] because her husband died of it. They needed to remarry right away with winter coming on and all because your family wouldn't make it otherwise. Back then life was hard, not like it is today. ”

– A reminiscence of the Spanish flu from a Bonne Bay resident (July 2006) from “Boats, trains, and immunity: the spread of the Spanish flu on the island of Newfoundland” in *Newfoundland and Labrador Studies*, Sept. 2007

*It measured 7.2 on the Richter scale and was recorded in locations as far west as New York and Montreal and as far east as Portugal.

The Burin Tsunami, 1929

On November 18, 1929 a tsunami struck the Burin Peninsula, triggered by an underwater earthquake* that occurred on the southern edge of the Grand Banks. Giant waves hit the coast at 40 km/hr, flooding dozens of communities and washing entire homes out to sea. The disaster killed 28 people and left hundreds more homeless or destitute. It was the most destructive earthquake-related event in Newfoundland and Labrador's history and occurred at the beginning of a worldwide depression.

In addition to the loss of human life, the tsunami lifted houses off their foundations, swept schooners and other vessels out to sea, destroyed stages and flakes, and damaged wharves, fish stores, and other structures along the coastline. Approximately 127 000 kilograms of salt cod were also washed away by the tsunami, which affected more than 40 communities on the Burin Peninsula. Government assessment later placed property damage on the Burin Peninsula at \$1 million.

It took only 30 minutes for the tsunami's three main waves to hit the Burin Peninsula and about two hours for water levels to return to normal. After that, thousands of confused and devastated survivors began to search

for the dead or injured and to salvage what they could from rubble lining the coast. To make matters worse, the Burin Peninsula had no way of communicating with the rest of the island because a weekend storm had damaged its main telegraph wire and the tsunami had destroyed all land lines linking the peninsula's coastal communities. It wasn't until the morning of November 21 that a ship making a scheduled stop in Burin was able to send a wireless message to St. John's describing the situation.

The tsunami left the people of the affected communities on the Burin Peninsula in desperate need of help. When news of the disaster finally did reach St. John's, both the government and public were quick to respond. A relief ship arrived the following day with medical equipment, food, clothes, and other supplies. Public donations poured in from across the colony, and within weeks amounted to \$250 000. Canada, the United States, and Britain also gave aid. Despite these efforts, the start of the **Great Depression** in 1929 and the collapse of the cod fishery in the early 1930s further damaged the Burin Peninsula's weakened economy. It was not until the 1940s that many communities were able to fully recover, while others could not recover at all.



4.31 House nearly submerged after 1929 Burin Tidal Wave

This house was found offshore after it was swept out to sea by the 1929 tsunami. It was later towed to shore by two men in a small "make and break" boat. This photograph was taken by Father James Anthony Miller, Roman Catholic priest at Burin, one of three delegates who travelled to St. John's via the *Daisy* to meet with the Executive Council about the emergency.

4.32 A cable informing London about the tidal wave, Nov. 23, 1929

COMMERCIAL CABLES			
IN CONNECTION WITH POSTAL TELEGRAPH			
NO.		VIA	
TIME		NO.	
DATE	November 23rd, 1929.	SIG. INSTR.	
TEL. "COMMERCIAL"		CABLEGRAM	FULL-RATE MESSAGE ORDER MARKED DELETED
DURABILITY, LONDON.			
<p>Earthquake shock occurred Monday afternoon eighteenth at 8.06 felt over whole Island stop Tidal wave followed two and half hours after with disastrous results to life and property in section Burin Peninsula from Lunenburg to Burin stop At Port au Bras seven lives lost at Kelly's Cove two lives Lord's Cove four lives Taylor's Bay four lives Point au Cap eight lives and at Lunenburg one life stop At these places and other Harbours in that section enormous destruction swelling houses fishery premises boats and gear coal and provisions stop Water first</p>			

Questions:

- For each of the events identified, determine the degree to which it is significant. Use a graphic organizer to help make your assessment. Once you have completed your assessment, identify which event was most significant.
- How might your assessment of these events change based on:
 - time? (e.g., if you lived in the 1890s/1920s)
 - location? (e.g., if you lived in St. John's/Bonavista/Okak/Montreal)
 - position? (e.g., if you were a merchant/parent/Member of the House of Assembly)
- Identify three recent events that have affected Newfoundland and Labrador. Determine the degree to which each is significant. Once you have completed your assessment, identify which event is the most significant.
- How does personal perspective influence which events from the past we remember? Why is it important to remember these events?