

Newfoundland Railway Co. Telegram

ANSWER KEY

The S.S. *Bruce* was steaming into St. John's on February 12, 1912. Everyone was excited to see the replacement for the original *Bruce* that sank the year before. Before she arrived, Robert G. Reid received the following wireless message from the new S.S. *Bruce*:

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A L L W E L L .

ANSWER KEY

Historical background

This telegram was actually received by Newfoundland Railway staff on the night of February 12, 1912. It was sent by the captain of the new S.S. *Bruce* on its way from Scotland where it was built.

The following are excerpts from *The Evening Herald* (February 12, 1912) describing the ship's crossing to Newfoundland:

A steamer has at last been constructed of sufficient strength to cope with the ice difficulties prevalent during the winter season in the Gulf. The service from Port aux Basques to North Sydney is difficult to keep open during the winter on account of the heavy ice. The distance across is about 100 miles and the work of getting a steamer to keep the service open was a task that could not easily be overcome. After the wreck of the [first] *Bruce* it behoved the Reid Co. to get another one built as quickly as possible. The firm therefore placed orders for the construction of a steamer on which no expense was to be spared...

Throughout yesterday there was much comment as to the [new] *Bruce*, for word of her was expected at any minute. She had left Grennock at 3 p.m. Monday and six days was considered sufficient for her to reach the coast. A wireless was anxiously awaited for and at five o'clock the first message was received which was as follows:

"S.S. *Bruce* 130 miles off Cape Race."

On receipt of this Mr. R.G. Reid wired to Capt. Spracklin to give location. At 6:20 the following answer was received:

"S.S. *Bruce* 120 miles E.S.E. of Cape Spear. Heavy gale of W.N.W. Wind. Slob ice. All well."

"GEO SPRACKLIN."

Within another hour the captain wired to say that he expected to dock at 10 this morning, but expectations were realized earlier by two hours, as at 8 she drew into the Reid Co.'s premises, and particulars of her trip were soon known.

Connors. 2002. *By the Next Boat*. St. John's: Johnson Family Foundation