

MAGDALEN ISLANDS,  
21st October, 1852.

To the Gentlemen of the Committee appointed to take into consideration the state of affairs in the Magdalen Islands, &c., &c.

GENTLEMEN,—The subscribed answers to the questions submitted to me by you taken numerically, are responded to after due deliberation (to the best of my judgment) on the subject.

*Question 1st.*—Leases, and Location Tickets, and some are Squatters.

*Question 2nd.*—Agriculture is in a very backward state; in fact, the people here do little or nothing towards the furtherance of that branch of science which forms a country's pride, save on Entry Island, where there are a hundred souls, who live altogether by the produce of their farms. The remainder of the inhabitants, generally, are wholly dependent upon the contingencies of the Fisheries. Commerce is rather in a flourishing state. The Islands abound with fish of different kinds, such as Cod, Mackarel, Herring, Seals, &c., &c. The only thing which has as yet been discovered under the head of minerals are Plaster of Paris and Ochre; these we have in abundance.

*Question 3rd.*—I think they are, or might be rendered useful, not only in a commercial point of view, but also, from their situation, they form the only protection which we have for the Gulf. They are at present a regular rendezvous for schooners from all parts of the Country.

*Question 4th.*—During seven or eight months in the year, *i. e.* from the first of May till the last of November or middle of December, a vessel could ply between this and Pictou and this and Gaspé, thus establishing a Postal communication between Gaspé and Pictou, this and Gaspé, and this and Pictou. A vessel could be obtained (which would perform the route monthly) for about a hundred pounds yearly.

We are quite destitute of roads here, and of laws to protect the inhabitants; or rather, if the laws be sufficient we have no means of putting them in force.

Believe me to remain,  
Gentlemen,  
Your obedient and humble servant,

FELIX BOYLE.

(Translation.)

MAGDALEN ISLANDS,  
12th October, 1852.

HONORABLE GENTLEMEN,—As you have done me the distinguished honor of condescending to take my advice relative to the different subjects of inquiry which you have addressed to me on the subject of the Magdalen Islands, I shall state to you frankly all my knowledge on those different points.

1. Under what tenure are the lands occupied by the inhabitants?—This is a question which appears to me rather difficult to solve. A certain number of these lands have been occupied ten, twenty, thirty, forty years, without any tenure at all, the inhabitants having hitherto refused to acknowledge any Seigneur; others hold their lands by paying to Captain Isaac Coffin, or his agents, an exorbitant rent, especially for that land which is indispensably necessary to them for the purpose of drying their fish, for a few feet of beach often overflowed by the sea, for sand-banks (*des dunes*) which I should compare to the moving sands of Arabia, and which are scattered and dispersed by the smallest gale of wind, without having hitherto been able to obtain a lease in due and proper form; for