

period, the Fisheries of the Magdalen Islands would vie with those of any part of the world, and the Province of Canada could not fail but participate in the general benefit, by an increased consumption of the agricultural produce.

Next in importance to this, is a Mail communication with the Province; I, myself, have labored under the want of such an arrangement, having now before me a letter of consequence received from the Committee of Lloyds, in London, that has been nearly twelve months on its way.

Having personally visited, the past summer, a portion of the District of Gaspé, I should certainly say that a line could be easily established between this and Percé, running monthly, at a cost of not more than £15 per month, commencing on the 1st May and ending of 1st on November. Indeed, should no lower offer be submitted, I would engage to place a suitable vessel on the line for the sum above mentioned, say fifteen pounds per month, free of all other charges whatsoever.

I am,

Sir,

Your obedient servant

(Signed,)

JOHN J. MANCE.

COMMITTEE ROOM, No. 4,
THURSDAY 23rd September, 1852.

Robert Christie, the Member for the County of Gaspé, was called before the Committee and examined as follows:—

Under what tenure do the inhabitants of the Magdalen Islands hold their lands?—In answer to this first question, all I can say is, that never having visited these Islands, and acquainted personally with but few of the inhabitants, I can only speak from report, by which I understand that they hold their lands, in some instances, by lease from the former proprietor, (the late Admiral Sir Isaac Coffin,) or from the present one, his nephew and residuary legatee, Captain Coffin, R. N.; in others, by mere occupancy and improvement of the ground upon which they and their forefathers, after their forced retirement from L'Acadie, the land of their nativity, located themselves at a period long antecedent to the grant of these Islands by the Crown to Sir Isaac Coffin.

What is the present condition of agriculture and trade in these Islands, the state of the Fisheries and other industrial resources, whether mines, minerals or otherwise, and what would be the most efficient means for their improvement, should such improvement be deemed necessary?—I am unable to answer satisfactorily to the second question, for the reason just given; (not having ever visited those islands). I think they are useful to this Province, and may, with attention from the Government and Legislature, be rendered of incalculable benefit to it. It would at any rate, in my opinion, be a reproach to us, it certainly would be a public misfortune to us, if we were to lose those Islands by their annexation to any of the Lower Provinces, in consequence of our neglecting their interests or indifference to their prosperity.

What would be the most efficient and at the same time the least expensive mode of establishing a postal communication between the Capital and that part of the Province?—I am of opinion that a weekly or fortnightly Mail should be exchanged between Quebec and these Islands, to pass either by way of Percé or Prince Edward Island. I presume that £150 would suffice to defray the expenses of a small vessel for this service, (which would only last during the summer months or season of navigation,) say from the first of May to first of December annually.