

R E P O R T
OF THE
SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON THE MAGDALEN ISLANDS,
&c. &c. &c.

(Translation.)

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY, COMMITTEE ROOM,
WEDNESDAY, 23rd March, 1853.

PRESENT :

Mr. C. J. FOURNIER, Chairman,
COLONEL PRINCE,
Mr. CHRISTIE of Gaspé, and
Hon. Mr. DESALES LATERRIERE.

The Special Committee appointed to make inquiry into the following matters in reference to the Magdalen Islands :

1st. Under what tenure the lands are occupied by the inhabitants of those Islands ;

2nd. What is the present condition of their agriculture, trade, fisheries, and other branches of industry, whether mines, minerals, or otherwise, and what would be the most efficient means of improving the same, should that be deemed necessary ;

3rd. Whether those Islands are generally advantageous to this Province in a commercial point of view or otherwise ; Lastly, into all matters having reference thereto ; as also to make inquiry concerning the Western part of this Province, situate above Lake Huron ; and to whom was referred the Petition of A. Painchaud, Esquire, and others, Merchants and Traders in the Magdalen Islands,—have the honor to present the following Report :

In order to proceed as nearly as possible in conformity with the views which Your Honorable House appeared to entertain in referring to them the two Resolutions and the Petition above mentioned, and in order to secure the greatest amount of evidence which they possibly could obtain, Your Committee sent circulars to various persons who were considered most qualified to afford information concerning these two extremities of the Province hitherto so little known.

With a full and deliberate consideration of their testimony, Your Committee have arrived at the conclusion that the Government being better able than they to obtain local information, they should avoid offering any suggestions, which a subject of such great importance to the future prosperity of the Province may seem to require.

Nevertheless, Your Committee do not consider it their duty to suppress their humble opinion, that the Magdalen Islands being situate at the entrance of the Gulf, between the Islands of Newfoundland and Cape Breton, and Prince Edward's Island, &c., affording, moreover, the only harbour of refuge for fishermen and coasting vessels from Labrador, Upper Canada or elsewhere, in their traffic with the Eastern Provinces, ought to be preserved, even at the cost, in a certain degree, of the revenues derived from the Customs.

The population of these Islands, according to the last census, consists of nearly 2,500 souls.