

for such an institution. It was rather brought into being before its time and was really the evolution of an idea in the minds of a few persons, that a Free Public Library was really necessary for the adult population of a city which had declared in favor of the free education of the masses. In 1872 the present system of free schools was inaugurated in New Brunswick. Two years later the Common Council decided to construct the present market building. While the plans for this building, which was the most expensive ever constructed by the city corporation, were under discussion, it was suggested that provision be made in the building for a great public hall, where important gatherings could be held—with seating accommodation for 6000 people. There was at the time no building within the city limits that would seat one third of this number. The Council did not see a way clear for altering their plans, and the market was completed as originally intended, but the disposition of the space at the Germain street end of the building,—two small for the hall however—was left an open question, and in 1875, Dr. James Hannay, then an editorial writer on the Telegraph prepared a petition asking the Council to set apart this room for the use of a Free Public Library, when established. This petition Mr. Hannay carried to leading citizens and succeeded in getting many signatures, although it may be stated, thirty years afterwards, when the Library is an assured fact and of full age, that few of those who put their names to the petition had much faith in the future of the project. There was one man however, who was most enthusiastic, and that was the late Dr. Elder, editor and proprietor of the Telegraph. When his associate, Mr. Hannay, had got all the signatures he could to the petition, Dr. Elder