

took it and personally carried it to many others, who good naturedly added their names, because Dr. Elder asked them to. In due time the petition was forwarded to the Council and considered by that body and the room set apart as requested. Before any steps were taken to obtain books the great fire came and the room was rented for general business purposes and everybody interested was too busy to give attention to the new proposition. But a start had at least been made and before the next decade had passed St. John had a Free Public Library—the first in Canada.

The real founder of the Free Public Library however was Colonel James Domville, who in 1879, occupied a seat in the Common Council and was the representative of Kings county in the Parliament in Canada. There were many valuable collections of books owned by private citizens and various organizations of the city, which were swept away in the great fire of 1877, and it was beyond the means of those who owned the libraries to replace them. Col. Domville, whose energy and enterprise had been displayed in many channels, thought that the best way to replace the lost books and to increase the store was by the formation of a Public Library which would be free to all citizens of St. John. Accordingly he prepared a circular letter setting forth the peculiar position occupied by St. John and asking assistance.\*

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\*Following is the text of the circular sent out by Col. Domville, which is now published for the first time :

#### DOMINION OF CANADA.

ST. JOHN, NEW BRUNSWICK.

Among the many losses sustained at the great fire in the City of St. John, in which not only nearly all the public buildings belonging to the Dominion, the Province and the City, but also those of the various Institutes and Societies, were utterly destroyed, one o