GEOLOGICAL SURVEY OF CANADA
(Museum and Office, 76 St. Gabriel Street) MONTREAL.

May 16th 1878

Dr. Dawson
McGill College
Montreal

My dear Sir,

In reply to your favor of yesterday in regard to my late brother, Dr. John Bell the following are (as nearly as I can state them at this moment) the answers to your questions.

1. His age was 33 years & a few months.

2. His early education, before coming to McGill Coll. to study in arts (which he did for one session viz. 1858-9 or 1859-60) was obtained at the "Grammar School" of Prescott County) at L'Orignal, Ontario. The reason of his going to Queen's College to finish his arts course was that the rest of the family was living there & it was more economical & better in many ways for him to be with them than boarding here.
He obtained his B.A. degree from Queen's University in 1862 & his M.A. in course from the same in 1865.

3. As to his botanical work, he collected in the country around Kingston, L'Orignal, Owen Sound, the Manitoulin Islands, ~~County~~ peninsula of Gaspé and the west coast of Newfoundland. His list of the Plants of the Manitoulin Islands was published in the Geol. Survey Report for 1866-69. In the "Canadian

Naturalist" for about 1873 or 4 there is a paper by him on the "Location of Rare Plants" and in the same Journal for 1868 there is another of his on the Plants of the West coast of Newfoundland.

4. As you are aware he had a well trained mind, and a love of science was a part of his very nature: He had a very good knowledge of Geology, Zoology and the different branches of Natural History. In Medicine he studied ~~and graduated~~ first in Queens, while waiting to come of age, ~~then~~ went for about a year, I think, to the large hospitals of the Northern Armies at Louisville, Ky, &c. I enclose you copy of testimonials in regard to his career there, which the poor fellow had printed a week before he died. He afterwards studied as a student at the Bell Med. School & graduated M.D. here in 1866 the same year as at Queens. After spending two or nearly three years in the Montreal Hospital as Apothecary, Asst. House Surgeon & House Surgeon he commenced practice in Craig Street in 1868 & in '71 moved to Bonaventure Hall.

I enclose a paragraph from the Montreal "Herald" containing some facts in regard to him, which may be useful. It would be hard to do full justice to his memory in so short a notice. His extraordinary nobility of character was only known to his family & most intimate friends, although he could not but be beloved by all who knew him. It has been remarked many times the longer they knew him the better they liked him. His keen sympathy for the poor & unfortunate was the cause of much of his overwork. In winding up his affairs we find the names of over 700 different families in his books, which would represent a population of over 4000. The number of visits he paid was enormous and mostly without any hope of reward.

His patients generally and many other friends say that in their families his death is mourned as if he had been one of their own. It is a very long time since such an outburst of genuine sorrow has been manifested for anyone in Montreal. He was a most sincere and practical Christian and an admirer of everything that is manly & noble. He was respected equally by the medical men of all parties in Montreal and they bear testimony to his unusual skill both as a physician and a surgeon. For kindness, gentleness and neatness he could not be surpassed.
But I am writing more than you require.

As to the subscriptions to the Parish monument I know he wrote a considerable number of letters asking subscriptions from ~~absent~~ non-residents of Montreal. My sister says she once looked over a list of subscribers in their own writing but think they were all paid; & there are acknowledgments in the papers of the time (which there are a good many copies such you can have.) I have searched for the above list of subscribers but so far without success but will send it to you if either of us finds it.

Very truly yours

Robt. Bell.

Abbell
Nov
18