

ment of a Superintendent of Common Schools passed one branch of the Legislature, and was rejected in the other. The need of this officer had been felt in various places in the State, and petitions in favor of his appointment had been received at previous sessions. With all these changes the law was still defective in respect to the proper organization of the schools, and the providing of money for their support. The rate bill tax, or private subscription, had to be resorted to in many districts, to keep the schools in operation.

It became evident by 1846, that a strenuous effort would be made to organize a State Government. Until this was effected, the fund accruing from the sale of the school lands could not be received from the General Government, nor the income of this fund be applied toward maintaining schools. The benefit of obtaining and using this immense fund, supplied one of the main arguments for forming a State Constitution. Gov. Dodge urged this subject upon the attention of the people in his message of 1847, stating that they could then control the sale of the sixteenth section in each township, and enjoy its avails, together with the donation of 500,000 acres of land by Congress, and five per cent on the net proceeds arising from the sale of the public lands in the State. At once the expediency of establishing the free system of public instruction throughout the State, was discussed in many places, and by liberally minded men.

At Kenosha, where excellent schools had been sustained, the matter was first considered; and the first free school ever established in the State, was organized here in 1845. The leader of this movement was Col. M. Frank, of that city, to whom the State, also, is more indebted than to any other citizen, for her excellent free school system. Educated in the central portion of New York State, and moving to Kenosha in 1837, he has labored devotedly to promote popular education. In February, 1845, as a member of the Territorial Legislature, he introduced a bill authorizing the legal voters within the corporate limits of his town to vote taxes on all the assessed property, sufficient to support schools. The bill became a