

law; and by one of its provisions, it was required to be submitted to the people before taking effect. The opposition to this law was very strong, and there was evidently, at first, a majority against it. The idea of taxing large property holders, who had no children to be educated, was denounced as arbitrary and unjust. Frequent public meetings were held for discussion and lectures, with the view of enlightening the public mind on the great duty to educate at the public expense. After several unsuccessful trials to procure the adoption of the act, it was at length accomplished by a small majority in the fall of 1845. This transaction had its due influence on other portions of the State.

In the winter before the first Constitutional Convention met, a Common School Convention was held at Madison, on three successive evenings, with the design of preparing the public mind for the establishment of a system of free schools, similar to that of Massachusetts, at the earliest practicable period. It was largely attended by the members of the Legislature then in session, and Col. Frank was elected chairman. The principal features to be adopted in the school laws of the State, were considered; and the deficiencies and the evils of the old law were pointed out. They recommended the Legislature to appoint a general agent to travel through the State, lecture on education, collect statistics, examine the condition of schools, and organize Teachers' Associations. A select committee, consisting of Rev. Lewis H. Loss,* Levi Hubbell, M. Frank, Caleb Crosswell, C. M. Baker and H. M. Billings, were appointed to lay the subject, discussed by the Convention, before the Legislature. They state in their report, that "the committee regard it among the highest and most important of the duties of Legislatures to provide, as far as may be, by suitable legislation, for the education of the whole people."

* Rev. L. H. Loss, a Congregational clergyman, was formerly settled at York Mills, N. Y., and at Elyria, Ohio. He came to Wisconsin, and was for some considerable time Principal of Beloit Seminary; and, in August, 1846, accepted a pastoral call to Rockford, Ill., and subsequently to Chicago. His early educational labors in Wisconsin deserve grateful remembrance.

Caleb Crosswell, an associate of Mr. Loss and others, in their early efforts to fix public attention upon the necessity of establishing a wise and liberal free school system for Wisconsin, was a brother of Edwin Crosswell, a noted editor of Albany, N. Y., and was a member of the Board of Public Works of Wisconsin in the Improvement of Fox River; represented Sauk County in the Legislature, in 1850; and was subsequently Consul at St. Petersburg. L. C. D.