

to be changed each year, made the care of the school cumbersome and uncertain. No real uniformity or permanency in any plan which the district might adopt, could be assured. The utility of electing a Town Superintendent in the place of Town Commissioners, was considered. It was held that one person, with all the responsibility upon him, would be more efficient than three, and give greater unity to the work. As early as 1841 a petition from Racine county was received by the Legislature asking for the creation of the office of State Superintendent. In 1846 a bill passed one branch of the Legislature, providing for the appointment of this officer, but was lost in the other. Educational conventions were held at Madison, Mineral Point and Milwaukee; and the need of an official head in the Department of Education was strongly insisted upon. Committees in the Legislature submitted reports upon the subject. In both Constitutional Conventions two parties appeared; one favoring the establishment of the office, and the other the conferring of the duties of the position upon the Secretary of State. Hon. Henry Barnard addressed the members of the first Convention in regard to the advantages of the office of a State Superintendent, and presented the outlines of a system of schools supervised by such an officer, which, it is believed, was adopted by the Convention, and was subsequently embodied in the State Constitution. It was found that but little harmony existed in the operation of the school laws. Different systems of instruction and government prevailed in different counties. There was no general and efficient method for collecting school statistics. There was no ultimate authority to determine all matters of difficulty or dispute, and to enforce the school laws. There were no means by which any information in regard to the condition and the wants of the schools, and the opinions and efforts of educators, could be published and disseminated throughout the State. It was argued that some prominent officer should travel through all the organized counties, visiting schools, encouraging and counseling teachers, organizing educational associations, and correcting, as far as