

Lake Michigan to the Mississippi river,— was made in 1839, while I was in the territorial council. Capt. Thomas J. Cram, of the topographical engineers, made, under the direction of the war department, a preliminary survey of the rivers and an estimate of the cost of their improvement. In 1846, while a delegate in congress, I secured, by dint of very hard work, the passage of an act (approved August 8) making a grant of land to the state, upon its admission into the union, for the improvement of the Fox river alone, and the building of a canal across the portage between the two rivers. The grant covered every odd-numbered section within three miles of the canal, the river and the lakes, en route from the portage to the mouth. When the second constitutional convention was held, this proposition on the part of congress was endorsed, and at the first session of the state legislature, the latter body passed an act, approved August 8, 1848, appointing a board of public works, consisting of five persons, and providing for the improvement of the river. The members of the board were elected in joint session of the legislature,¹ the same day, as follows: H. L. Dousman, Curtis Reed, John A. Bingham, Albert S. Story and James B. Estes.

By the year 1850, the board had used up all the money they could raise by selling the lands. They had, in fact, anticipated the sales, and the affairs in their charge were in bad shape. On the 1st of January, 1851, they reported to the legislature² that the work would have to stop, unless some device for a more rapid sale of land could be originated. While the affair was in this condition, I made a proposition to the legislature, through Governor Dewey,³ to do the work from Green Bay to Lake Winnebago, except what the board of public works had finished or was already under contract for. The board had dug the canal at Portage, before there was any steam navigation possible on the lower Fox. One of the chief features of its misman-

¹ *Wis. Senate Jour.*, 1848, pp. 353-356.— Ed.

² *Wis. Assembly Jour.*, 1851, pp. 1003-1032.— Ed.

³ The governor's message and Judge Martin's proposition and contract are given in full in *Wis. Senate Jour.*, 1851, doc. F., appendix.— Ed.