

Numerous petitions for the change had been presented to the legislature, chiefly from citizens of the eastern counties, while petitions on the other side came from the lead region. Newspaper editorials denounced the existing system as "anti-democratic," and as causing "heavy taxes and unequal and improper assessments." "Each town," said *The Milwaukee Sentinel* of September 8, 1840, "is most competent to judge of its own wants and regulate its own affairs, and if left to itself would better secure the interests of its inhabitants than a more remote, expensive, and to them, in a measure, irresponsible body." These extracts sum up the chief grounds on which the county-commissioner plan was opposed. In some localities also, as in Washington county, the requirements of the increasing population burdened the three commissioners with an excessive amount of work in regard to roads, schools, valuation, and levy of taxes. A larger body became necessary to cope with the growth of local business. The continued attachment of the people of the lead region to the existing system was doubtless due solely to their Southern proclivities.

The new law provided that the people of each county might vote "for" or "against" county government. The vote was taken at the general election in 1841; and the returns, as reported to the legislature on February 3, 1842, show that the eastern counties, settled by Northern people, voted by large majorities against county government, while Green, Crawford and Iowa counties voted for the old system.<sup>1</sup> In the spring of 1842, the change was thus effected in the counties of Jefferson, Milwaukee, Walworth, Racine, Fond du Lac, Rock and Brown. Others made the change in succeeding years, so that when Wisconsin was admitted as a state, in 1848, all had adopted the town organization except the southwestern counties, — Grant, Green, La Fayette, Iowa and Sauk. In these the Southern influence still prevailed.

By the new state constitution, the legislature was required to establish "but one system of town and county government, which shall be as uniform as practicable."<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *House Jour., Wis. Terr. Legis.*, 1841, p. 224.

<sup>2</sup> *Const. of Wis.*, art. iv., sec. 23.