

but just that the *North-West* should assert its claim, free from all prejudice, to have this convention held within Northwestern borders."¹

This period, then, 1846-47, marks the division between the early predominance of the Mississippi route and the later importance of that through the lakes, or overland by rail. It is full of indications of the economic revolution which culminated a few years later with the beginnings of Chicago's railroad system. We have noted the great loss of trade to the cities of St. Louis and New Orleans, the continued demand for the improvement of the river navigation and the serious interruption of traffic on account of natural obstructions in the Mississippi; and lastly, we have seen the gradual appearance of a conviction among shippers that some other route must be secured,—a conviction that worked itself out concretely in the form of a complete change of trade routes for the raw produce of the West.

In 1851 the Illinois and Michigan canal was completed, thus connecting Illinois River with Lake Michigan. The importance of this canal will be dwelt upon later. During the decade 1830-40, no railroads were built in Illinois, Iowa, Missouri, Minnesota, or Wisconsin. During the following decade, 97 miles of railroad were completed; and between 1850 and 1860, over 4,606 miles, of which more than 2,700 miles were built by the close of 1855.² Such a showing, taken in connection with the problem we have

¹ *Fergus Historical Series* (Chicago, 1882), No. 18, p. 23. The *Chicago Daily Journal* of August 19, 1846, is also quoted on p. 15 as follows, concerning the president's veto of the River and Harbor Bill: "All other pretenses of objections to the Harbor Bill are idle and vain. The North can and will be no longer hoodwinked. If no measures for protection and improvement of anything North or West are to be suffered by our Southern masters, if we are to be down-trodden and all our cherished interests crushed by them, a signal revolution will inevitably ensue. The same spirit and energy that forced emancipation for the whole country from Great Britain, will throw off the Southern yoke. The North and West will look to and take care of their own interests henceforth."

² *U. S. Census*, 1880, vol. iv., pp. 354-364.