

prime fur-trade route was abandoned for the shorter, more direct, overland connection east to Milwaukee. The history of this change of commercial routes from the natural to the artificial, from water carriage and portage to prairie transportation and corduroy roads, is full of significance. With it is bound up the development of the railroad system of this State and the movement westward from Lake Michigan to Eastern and Central Wisconsin of the emigrant host of 1840-50. It is typical, also, of the process that went on elsewhere along the Mississippi, when the change was made from river transportation and Southern ports to lake transportation and Eastern ports.

It will be remembered that Lieutenant Albert M. Lea is quoted as saying that the Mississippi River ports in 1836 had control of the Western trade and were likely to keep it indefinitely.¹ He adds, however: "But there is a reasonable prospect of our soon having a more direct and speedy communication with our brethren of the east. New York is now pushing her railroad from the Hudson to Lake Erie, where it will be met by another from Pennsylvania; thence the united railroad will be continued around the southern shore of Lake Erie and cross the states of Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois to the Mississippi, near the mouth of Rock River, touching the southern end of Lake Michigan in its route and receiving the tribute of the various local works it will intersect."

In 1837 the Milwaukee *Advertiser*, in arguing for the Milwaukee and Rock River canal, divided the lead region of Wisconsin into two sections, the one east and the other west of the meridian of Mineral Point (range 2 East), and it was conceived that the former of these sections would be tributary to Eastern markets provided that communication could be secured by a canal with Lake Michigan.² It will be remembered in this connection that Chicago had in 1836, by her transportation company, already begun to

¹ See *ante*, p. 293.

² Lapham, *Documentary History of Milwaukee and Rock River Canal* (Milw., 1840), p. 19.