The convention lasted two days; and during its sessions the necessity, practicability, and advantages of a general drainage of the low lands of the county were thoroughly discussed. Near the close James J. Hill, president of the St. Paul, Minneapolis & Manitoba Railway (now the Great Northern) proposed that a drainage survey of the Valley be made. He further promised that if the several counties interested would pay one-half of the expenses of such a survey, the railroad company which he represented would pay the other half. An executive committee was created consisting of one member from each county interested in drainage and three members appointed by Mr. Hill. There were six counties that had declared themselves interested and the original members of the committee from these counties were: E. D. Childs, of Polk; S. A. Farnsworth, of Norman; F. J. Burnham, of Clay; D. McCauley, of Wilkin; C. W. Culbertson, of Marshall, and H. W. Donaldson, of Kittson. Mr. Hill appointed M. R. Brown, of Crookston; J. T. Fanning, of Minneapolis, and C. E. Page, then of Ada, afterwards of Fergus Falls. Upon organizing, M. R. Brown was chosen president, S. A. Farnsworth, secretary, and E. D. Childs, treasurer. Mr. Farnsworth removed to St. Paul (where he still resides), and C. E. Page was elected to succeed him.

**THE RED RIVER VALLEY DRAINAGE COMMISSION.**

Thus was constituted the organization called the Red River Valley Drainage Commission so well known in northwestern Minnesota. It was largely a Polk County organization. The headquarters of the commission were at Crookston and two of its most active members were Polk County men.

The purpose of this commission was to take charge of the work of making a complete drainage survey of the Red River Valley. Mr. Hill, on behalf of his company, agreed to and did contribute one-half the cost of the survey, besides furnishing free transportation to those engaged in doing the work. The several counties affected furnished the other half. The headquarters of this commission was in Crookston. The survey was completed and maps and reports compiled and published early in the year 1887. This survey was in charge of C. G. Elliott, of Illinois, chief engineer of the commission, who had twelve assistant engineers employed. The writer was one of the engineers employed on this work. J. T. Fanning was chosen as consulting engineer of the commission.

This survey proved very conclusively that the Red River Valley lands were not as level as generally believed to be, but had a slope of from three to six feet to the mile, and that complete and effective drainage was not only practicable, but could be secured at comparatively small cost.

**THE LEGISLATURE AIDS THE WORK.**

The members of the Legislature from Polk and other Red River Valley counties fortified with this drainage report and backed by a strong delegation from Polk County tried, for several sessions of the Legislature, to secure the passage of drainage laws and appropriations for reclaiming swamp lands, but not until the legislative session of 1893 were they successful in securing the desired legislation. At this session an act was passed creating the Red River Valley Drainage Commission, and appropriating $100,000 for drainage work; also an act which provided for a general state law for the drainage of wet lands under county management, and assessing the cost of doing the work against lands benefited thereby. The first ditch constructed under this law was County Ditch No. 1, Polk County, about six miles in length and running south and emptying into Red Lake River two miles west of Crookston. The first state ditch completed by the Red River Valley Drainage Commission was the Sand Hill River State Ditch, Polk County, extending from Beltrami along the Sand Hill and emptying into that stream nine miles west of the village.

Drainage work has progressed without interruption since 1893. There is, at the present time, approximately 800 miles of public drainage ditches in Polk County which have been constructed at a cost of a