

the average school board has to meet is the economist on the board who pares expenditures not because any particular one is objectionable or excessive, but because in his secret heart he believes that the outlay for education is unnecessary. This is a problem peculiar to

school boards and which municipal councils do not share. In their work there is usually agreement that the bulk of the outlay is necessary. In school affairs there are always voters who will vote for any change which reduces the school tax on their half-sections.

A PROGRESSIVE SCHOOL

By W. A. McINTYRE

We hear so much of educational advance in other lands that we are in danger of overlooking the advance at home. We devote so much time to reading the suggestions of half-informed critics that we have no time left for actual observation of existing institutions. And it is true beyond telling that the only thing which is worth anything for inspiration or guidance is actual demonstration rather than book-talk or imaginative description.

It was my good fortune last Friday evening to visit the town of Stonewall when parents and pupils were gathered in the town hall for the commencement exercises. There I saw and heard things which should be known to all the people of the province. What Stonewall can do others will find possible, and have found possible. Wherever anything worthy is done it surely should be held up for emulation.

A few years ago Stonewall did not differ educationally from any other town in Manitoba. It had the ordinary school building, a high school department, a competent staff of teachers, and the students were doing well at the examinations. Yet this did not satisfy. It was felt by the chairman of the board and others that the activities of the school were too narrow in their range, and too far removed from the activities of life. It was felt that the school was laying too much emphasis on book-knowledge and too little on the development of power and initiative in the pupils. It was believed that with a little effort conditions could be changed for the better.

One of the first steps taken was that of engaging a teacher of agriculture in

the high school. With his coming there was begun a great movement in school gardening. A large block of land was rented and put under cultivation by the children. The lessons learned were applied in home gardens. Then manual training and domestic science were introduced. The playground of four acres was cleared and fitted up with all modern apparatus. It is said to be the best equipped playground in Manitoba. Once every month there is a mothers' day and scores come to see the children at play. Nor is the play haphazard. It is organized in every department.

As a proof of the interest taken in organized play the efforts of the children themselves in the matter of a skating rink is worthy of comment. They cleared a lot, flooded it, kept it in good condition all season. They also built a shack and kept it warmed all winter. They bought 15 sweaters for their hockey players, paid all expenses of flooding and caretaking, and at the end of the season came out free of debt and with a few dollars in the bank. The experiment in self-government under the leadership of the older pupils was perhaps the finest feature in connection with this movement.

Among the gains that have followed from the introduction of these reforms have been more regular school attendance, increased interest and more satisfactory progress in all departments of school work, unity of home and school, and better community spirit. One has only to visit the town to know how deeply the parents are interested in all that pertains to the school.

On Friday evening about 350 children and their parents met in the town hall.