

was built. A system of junior high schools was inaugurated in Two Rivers in 1915 and in Manitowoc during the early 1930's. In Two Rivers the junior high school is maintained in the same building as is the senior high school, but in Manitowoc two fine junior high schools have been erected — one on each side of the river.

The county high schools, so-called, began as graded schools. Reedsville began as a graded school in 1891 and organized a four year high school course in 1916. Valders began as a graded school in 1910 and instituted the full four year high school course in 1923. Mishicot organized as a two-department school in 1881 and by 1921 had introduced complete high school departments. Kiel began with a two-room graded school in 1873 and by the 1890's had become a recognized high school.

High school attendance until about the 1920's was limited to some of the more ambitious eighth grade graduates who wished to enter business or the professions. Most of the first high school graduates entered the teaching profession from which the men especially "graduated" to the professions of medicine, law, etc. The first high school courses were primarily set up to meet college entrance requirements and to "prepare" young men and women to pass the "teachers' examinations". The course consisted then of a review of the common branches, algebra, geometry, physiology, physical geography, Latin, and German.

After 1915, organized labor began fighting the employment of children under 18 years of age in factories. Their fight brought about compulsory attendance laws which required urban children to attend some school until the age of eighteen. High school attendance became an accepted policy for the youth living in the cities. In the rural areas the acceptance of high school work for rural eighth grade graduates developed more slowly but had become a common policy among rural youth by 1948. About 90% of the county area was outside of a high school district so the towns of the county paid tuition for the township pupils attending nearby high schools. The problem of placing all of the rural area in Manitowoc county within a recognized high school district was being attacked by the County School Committee set up by legislative act in 1947.

Compulsory attendance laws in urban areas for youth up to 18 years of age brought on a demand for vocational schools. These schools were set up primarily for eighth grade graduates who did not wish to attend high school but who wished to learn a trade. Today vocational schools are for adults who wish to receive further help and training in their particular trade. The high schools have added courses in agriculture, shop, and domestic science for the high school youth interested in vocational courses.

The legislature in 1921 passed legislation which required any person over fourteen and less than eighteen years of age, and who was an eighth grade graduate, and living in a city or village to attend some public, private, or parochial school at least eight hours per week for at least eight months each year, or to attend a vocational school if he or she was not attending a high school. Since that act, the legislature has passed many measures furthering the idea of high school education for all children of school age.

## **MOVEMENTS TO EQUALIZE EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES**

When districts were first organized, most of them had about the same valuation because all were forest covered. As the forests were removed, some districts became more prosperous than others because of soil conditions, surface conditions, water power sites, and the establishment of businesses in certain strategic locations. Variations in the sizes and the valuations of Manitowoc county rural school districts increased as the years went by. The continued development of prosperous farms and of progressive villages soon made some school districts extremely rich as to assessed valuations. Other districts, less fortunate because of soil conditions or geographic locations, kept about the same valuations as they had in 1900, or due to the decline of rural industries even lost in assessed valuations. By 1948, rural school districts in the county ranged from a low of \$167,000 to a high of \$962,000. The tax rate ranged from no dollars per thousand in four county districts to a high of \$13.36 per thousand dollars of assessed valuation for operating a one-room rural school. The per pupil cost of educating children in Manitowoc county's one-room rural schools ranged from a low of \$65 per child to a high of \$902 in one district.

The state and county have given varying aids to promote better educational opportunities. In 1885, the legislature saw fit to provide a state tax of one mill on each dollar of the assessed valuation of the taxable property of the state for school purposes. This was known as the "Mill Tax Law". In 1903, this rate was to seven-tenths of one mill and stayed in effect until 1927 when the Callahan Equalization Law was passed by the state legislature.



The Callahan Equalization Law became effective on January 1, 1928. Under this law the state apportions to districts \$250 per elementary teacher. This is matched by \$250 from the county for each elementary teacher employed within the county. This section of the law has been amended several times since that date to meet the problems of maintaining small schools and of schools that were receiving other aids and consequently were raising no tax to maintain such schools.

The second feature of this bill, the equalization feature, provided that schools with equalized valuations of less than \$200,000 would be entitled to extra state aid in addition to the \$250 per elementary teacher employed. The Callahan law served its purpose when teachers' salaries were \$40 and \$50 per month, but it was wholly inadequate when salaries ranged from \$200 to \$300 per month.

Attempts were made every two years to get legislative action to reorganize school districts. The power to reorganize had been given for years to the town boards, but outside of a few minor district boundary changes, nothing in the way of suitable reorganization work had been done by those boards. In 1943, the legislature gave the state superintendent of schools sweeping powers to consolidate and reorganize low assessed school districts in the state. Manitowoc county, because it had no really "poor" districts escaped the sweeping reorganization of districts carried on so effectively in some of the "poorer" counties.

In 1947 state legislature, after wrestling with a 35 to 60 million dollar school appropriation bill, finally decided to maintain the existing aids with a few supplementary aids, and to throw this whole problem of school reorganization into the hands of a county school committee. The following were the duties of this committee:

**DUTIES OF COMMITTEE.** The county school committee shall draft a plan for school district reorganization of the school districts within the county and shall hold hearings in each proposed reorganized district or at a convenient place within a reasonable distance therefrom. After approval by a majority vote of its membership, the committee may, by order, create, alter, dissolve, or attach school districts subject to the conditions set forth in section 40.30(1). The order by the county committee shall be final except that any person aggrieved by any order of a county school committee issued and recorded pursuant to the provisions of this section or aggrieved by the refusal or neglect of a county school committee to file orders of alteration, dissolution, consolidation or creation when petitioned to do so may appeal therefrom to the circuit court of the county in which the territory described in the petition lies, within 30 days following the issuing and recording of any order, or where a board or county school committee or county school committees refuse or neglect to issue and record an order of alteration, dissolution, consolidation or creation thereof within 90 days following the filing of the petition.

**STATE SUPERINTENDENT TO ADVISE.** The state superintendent shall advise and consult with the several county school committees. Whenever in his opinion any school district or districts shall be created, altered, consolidated or dissolved, he may make his recommendations to the county school committee or committees of the county or counties within which the territory affected is situated.

**JOINT COUNTY COMMITTEE ACTION.** When any territory to be affected by a proposed school district creation, alteration, consolidation or dissolution lies in 2 or more counties the county school committees of said counties shall act as a joint committee. If the membership of a joint committee is an even number then the circuit judge of the circuit in which the greatest valuation of property to be affected lies, shall appoint an additional member to the joint committee from one of the counties affected.

The Manitowoc County School Committee composed of William Kappelman of Kossuth, Art Murphy of Eaton, Mrs. Lillian C. Schmidt of Mishicot, Floyd Evenson of Valders, Willard Sauve of Two Rivers, and John Gable of Reedsville are now studying the problem of reorganization in the county. Definite progress is being made at the close of the first century of public education in Wisconsin towards an improved educational set-up.

## **RURAL SCHOOL SUPERVISION**

Manitowoc county schools, as we have noted in the previous articles, were first "supervised" by a committee of five inspectors of the common schools of the town. That was during territorial days when the number of schools in our county was limited to schools in Manitowoc and at Manitowoc Rapids.

Ample provision was thus made, at least on paper, for supervision of the district schools as no less than five different persons were required to supervise the instruction