

with cord wood stacked against it; and the two essential outhouses, well stocked with catalogues.

Inside, the classroom boasted a raised platform at the front on which stood the teacher's desk and chair, flanked on one side by a globe and on the other by a Webster's Dictionary located on a metal or wooden stand. On the front wall a blackboard was featured, with a picture of the reigning monarch hanging above it.

There were six rows of desks, each with a seat attached to the front on it. On the desks were a pencil groove and a sunken ink-well and, before many years, well carved initials of its changing occupants.

At the back of the room stood the heating system — a monstrous black, pot-bellied stove that roasted the pupils near it but never threw enough heat to warm those in the front of the classroom. This monster, with its ravenous appetite, consumed a meal of wood every hour on the hour throughout the school day.

A water pail on a chair accompanied by one enamel cup, completed the picture.

The school years in those early days of the 1870s began on the first day of May and ended the last day of October. Grades 1-8 were taught by one teacher whose salary was the princely sum of \$150 for the six-month period. Not only was this teacher called upon to teach the Three R's but was also responsible for playground supervision during the noonhour period, for none of the students went home for lunch.

The Little Red School House was also used as a community centre, being transformed from a classroom Friday into a dance hall for Saturday, then converted into a church for Sunday services whenever a minister visited the district.

Many of the names chosen for these schools reflect the memories of the pioneers of the homes they left behind — Oakville, for instance. Others were named for events of historical significance in the taming of the Prairies. One in particular points out the hardships of the day. A Mr. Maulatt was asked what he would name his farm. His reply: "Prospect . . . prospects are we'll all starve to death. . . ." And Prospect the district has been called since.

Now with consolidation, unification and escalation, we once more enter a pioneer era of education, but in the transition, we may be losing the togetherness that marked the spirit of the Little Red School House.