

performed in 1887. It also made possible all kinds of social and sporting events. It was even big enough for the recruits to play baseball in during the winter. Unfortunately, it accidentally burned to the ground in November 1887 when the fire hoses froze in the sub-zero weather. It was replaced, however, by an almost identical building in 1889, which lasted until it too was consumed by fire in 1920.

There were several more buildings added to Depot in 1887. A commodious new twelve-room house was built for Commissioner Herchmer's large family on the northwest corner of the barrack square. The Herchmers had been very uncomfortable in the small residence used by Irvine, who was a bachelor. Irvine's house became the new home of the Officers' Mess, just organized at that time. A two-storey hospital was also constructed that year. It had three spacious wards, but the surgeon complained of the earth closets* and the closeness of the hospital to the polluted Wascana Creek, which flooded every spring.

The biggest additions of 1887, however, were the two, two-storey barrack buildings constructed on the west side of the square. They replaced the portable huts that had been erected in 1882. One of the portable huts was pulled to one side and became the Herchmer District Public School. A Miss O'Flynn was engaged as teacher, and in a short time she was busily employed trying to pass the rudiments of education to a handful of barracks' children. The two new barracks came to be known affectionately as "A" and "B" Blocks. They were built with basements and were the first buildings in Regina to have central heating — coal

fired furnaces connected to a system of pipes — but there was no plumbing or sewage system. Anyone who felt the call of nature on a winter's night faced a very cold walk to the unheated latrines beyond the square. A buffalo coat could be very handy on these occasions! Electric lights were installed throughout Depot in 1896, but it was not until 1907 that flush toilets were placed in "A" and "B" Blocks. They were connected to a sewage system that ran into a septic tank in the Wascana.⁴

Water — Creek, Well, and City

An adequate and suitable water supply was a serious problem from the time headquarters was moved to Regina in 1882. The first supplies were hauled by cart from the creek. It became polluted by human and animal waste quite early. This had something to do with the recurring outbreaks of typhoid and other diseases at Depot. When these epidemics occurred houses and barracks with their sick occupants were placed in quarantine. Sadly enough, there were often fatalities, not only among the members, but their wives and children also. Their bodies began to fill the cemetery which had been laid out close by.

After several unsuccessful attempts a well was finally drilled on the square. Although this well brought an adequate supply of safe drinking water to Depot, its water was very hard and its alkali content had an upsetting effect on the stomachs and bowels of recruits until they became accustomed to it.

The inadequacy of the water supply had contributed to the damage done by numerous fires at Depot. To rectify this a 20-metre water tower was built in 1890, complete with pumps and an en-

* Earth closets: indoor latrines consisting of a bucket holding earth or straw, placed in a closet on each ward for the "comfort" and convenience of the infirm.

⁴ *Annual Report, NWMP, 1907*, p. 55.