



Depot about 1900. "A" Block and the Chapel are in the foreground. Across the square is the large house built in 1887 for Commissioner Herchmer. The water tower was demolished in 1910 and the lumber used to build a new bridge over the Wascana.

The raw material

In the late 1880s and early '90s the Force's attrition rate averaged 15-20 percent. With an establishment of 1000 it needed to recruit 150-200 men every year. The typical recruit of the time was a native Canadian from the farms of Ontario, Quebec and the Maritimes. He had some public school education (a few were illiterate), was between 18-25 years of age, and was 5 feet 9 inches (the minimum was 5 feet 8 inches). He may have had some experience in a trade or semi-skilled work. With his rural background he was used to hard manual labour and long hours of work; he could handle an axe, knew how to

hunt and fish, and understood the care of domestic animals. This was exactly what the commissioner of the time was looking for. Herchmer regarded "Townies" as soft, easily discontented and not likely to be satisfied with the pay of 50 cents a day. Recruiting officers were warned before leaving for the East to recruit men, to look closely at the hands of applicants.

Training in the early years of Depot was little different from that given in a military regiment. It was deemed to have two general purposes. The first was to instill self-discipline, the by-product of which was obedience. It was widely accepted in military circles