

would take away from the municipalities the right to build and operate their own systems; a policy which the Union of Municipalities has always contended for, and a policy which this government in its legislation has respected and will continue to respect in any further telephone legislation which it may enact. Mr. Brown himself stated in May last that the profit derivable from municipal enterprises should go to the people to whom it belongs, while today he proposes to take away that profit from the municipalities and divert it to the province.

Profit of the Business

"If the telephone business is profitable when operated by the provincial government, it will be still more profitable when operated by a municipality, and inasmuch as 98 per cent. of the service provided in a telephone exchange is local service, I contend that the municipality is the proper authority to control that service, if it so desires.

"Moreover I challenge Mr. Brown to produce one single instance where the municipalities as a body have expressed a desire for either provincial or federal ownership of the local telephone exchanges. Only the other day the municipalities of Alberta and Saskatchewan passed their opinion on this matter reported in the press as follows:

"The convention re-affirmed the telephone resolution of last year, that present rates were exorbitant, that the government should own the long distance lines, and the municipalities the local systems.

The mayor of Edmonton also said on the same occasion that Edmonton, at the end of 1905, had a surplus of over \$4,000 in the operation of their telephone system, after wiping off a 20 per cent debt amounting to \$3,100.

Brown an Opportunist

"If Mr. Brown is a sincere politician instead of an opportunist, why did he not make his latest statement when he was asked for his views at the convention of the Union of Manitoba Municipalities in November last, and why did he refuse to act upon the committee appointed by that convention to deal with the telephone question and consider the practical suggestions of its members for the improvement of the government's legislation.

"The truth is that this outside leader of the Liberal party was hoping against hope that the result of the combined efforts of his followers and the 'Bell' monopoly would have secured an emphatic defeat of the government and municipal legislation, and allowed him and his party to

have crawled in under the policy of the Dominion government, and enabled him to employ the amendments to the Railway act regarding telephones as a subterfuge for perpetuating the 'Bell' monopoly in Manitoba.

Brown a Quick-Change Artist

"Immediately, however, he discovered that the people of Manitoba had declared against the principles which he had been supporting, with the rapidity of a quick-change artist, he throws on one side the attire of a private telephone monopolist and appears before the public in the garb of a champion of public ownership of telephones.

"In his haste, however, to avoid the impression that his new policy too closely resembled that of the government he declares for complete provincial ownership, thereby proposing to entirely override the rights of the municipalities to own and operate their own systems, and thus force upon every municipality a telephone service under the absolute control of the provincial government without regard to the wishes of the community.

Brown's Latest Policy Hurdled Amended

"Apparently realising that his hurried pronouncement in favor of complete provincial ownership would offend the municipalities, this changeable gentleman adds the following rider:—of course there would be nothing in the proposed legislation to prohibit any municipality from establishing its own system if it preferred doing so.

"If Mr. Brown can carry out a policy of a complete provincially owned system of telephones in Manitoba, and at the same time permit the municipalities to build and operate local exchanges, he must be endowed with some supernatural power, which may probably at some later date enable him to cause darkness and light; winter and summer, to prevail in this province at one and the same time, for if I understand the English language correctly, a telephone system, one part of which is owned by the province and other parts by different municipalities, would be provincial ownership in part only, whereas complete provincial ownership means ownership of all telephone business within the province.

"There is no doubt whatever that Mr. Brown stands before the people today as a self-confessed opportunist, and that being himself conscious that he has copied the telephone policy of this government, he endeavored to confuse the public by using this incongruous language; a further evidence of his insincerity.