

cial Government had undertaken the ownership and operation of the telephones in the Province in 1908; the system was the largest under Government ownership in America; the Provincial Government had been by no means modest, either in promises or in announcements of performances; political capital had been raised upon the credit of the telephones by Cabinet Ministers and by candidates at elections; the alleged success of the enterprise had been widely advertised in the organs of the Government and in those of the advocates of "public ownership." On the other hand, politicians of the party opposed to the Government and the Opposition press, while in general approving of the policy of public ownership in the abstract, attacked the management of the Government, sometimes abusing the Government for extravagance and at other times for parsimony.

For the reason that a living organism was involved it was not easy to study the Government telephone system in Manitoba in actual operation. An exhaustive investigation into the contemporary technical and financial position of the system would necessarily have the character of a post-mortem. Such an investigation could moreover be competently conducted only by an impartial tribunal appointed by extra-Provincial authority and endowed with full powers to call for witnesses and documents, to take evidence upon oath, and to employ experts to examine the accounts and to appraise the plant.