

favourite theme for Liberal orators and newspapers to dilate on. If surpluses in the past have been evils, as these gentlemen used to say, there is no department to which this can be better applied than the Post Office Department. That is a department which should not be run for surplus purposes, and if the Postmaster General will take my advice, after returning from paying his respects to the Emperor of Japan, he will follow the example of the leader of the opposition (Mr. R. L. Borden) and go to the west—and he will find many avenues where he can spend the surplus to the advantage of the settlers who are crying to-day for much-needed improvements in their postal facilities. If he cannot accept this invitation, let him read the press and he will find sufficient grounds of complaint, sufficient hardships endured and grievances requiring remedy, to keep him busy for some time, and if, instead of gloating over surpluses he endeavours to make the lot of the settler in the west more easy, by giving him much needed postal facilities, he will be making some proper return for the increased taxation levied on the people of this country by this government.

The government also propose to place telephones and telegraphs under a certain amount of government control by means of the Railway Commission. The only member of the Liberal cabinet as originally constituted, who was really sincere in his advocacy of state-owned telephones was frozen out of the cabinet by reason of his espousal of such a policy. However, owing to the growing sentiment throughout the country in favour of government ownership of such utilities, and especially owing to the stand taken by the leader of the opposition (Mr. R. L. Borden), the government's hand has been forced in a measure, and so they have had to meet the demands of the people at least to a certain extent, and, while the Bill proposed does not go as far as government ownership, but merely places the services under a certain amount of control by the Railway Commission, that measure will be welcomed by the people, although it will not satisfy them. Evidently the government have not had the courage to follow in the footsteps of the Manitoba government and inaugurate a state-owned system, a policy which I am pleased to say has been adopted and followed in Alberta and Saskatchewan. This is only another exemplification of the progressiveness of the Roblin government in Manitoba, and it is likely to redound to the benefit of the people of that province. I am, Sir, greatly surprised to read the remarks of a fellow member from Manitoba on this question of government ownership. If there is one place in Canada where government ownership of public utilities is popular, it is in Western Canada, and especially in Manitoba, and I

Mr. W. J. ROCHF

marvel at the hardihood, as I might almost call it, of my hon. friend from Portage la Prairie in getting up and voicing such expressions as the following:—

In the town from which I come we have a certain amount of municipal ownership and operation, but I have never seen yet where the people were making any great profit out of their municipal undertakings.

Mr. Speaker, who is desirous of running our municipal 'phone system for the purpose of making any very great profit? Are not the people reaping the advantage by low rates? Do they not own their own plant? Have they not absolute control of it in every respect? The best evidence of this is to be seen in the hon. gentleman's own town of Neepawa, where the municipal ownership of telephones and electric light plant has been in operation for years and the citizens would not part with it on any account. That municipality is giving a cheaper service than is given anywhere else, and yet the hon. member (Mr. Crawford) says it is worthless, and he does not favour it. A compliment was paid to the hon. gentleman's town by Mr. Roblin in calling his fellow townsman, the Mayor of Neepawa, Mr. J. H. Howden, into his cabinet to take charge of the newly-created Department of Telephones and Telegraphs, where his vast experience of the municipal ownership system will be of service to the entire people of Manitoba.

The hon. member for Portage la Prairie (Mr. Crawford) went on:

Under the conditions that exist in this country at the present time I do not think that the question of the government ownership and operation of railways, and possibly I might say also telegraphs and telephones, is worthy of consideration. I believe that a better system can be worked out. If we can couple private enterprise with government control, I am satisfied that the results will be much more satisfactory and profitable to the people of this country than any other system.

When did the hon. gentleman make up his mind to that fact? Not twenty-five years ago. I am not holding him to a declaration dating as far back as that, as the Finance Minister (Mr. Fielding) refused to be bound by a statement as old as that. Is it one year ago? The hon. member for Macdonald (Mr. Staples) rightly exposed him in the House the other day. The leader of the opposition in the province of Manitoba, Mr. Brown, in the provincial campaign last March, declared repeatedly that he had a certain policy which would meet the requirements of the people of our province much better than the policy of the Roblin government, that whereas Mr. Roblin's policy embraced merely the government ownership of long distance 'phones, leaving the local exchanges to municipal ownership, he would go one better and provide for government ownership in its entirety. My hon. friend from Portage la