

### Brown's Policy a Copy of The Government's

Mr. Brown proposes that the provincial government shall construct telephone systems throughout the province. Section 1, chapter 89 of the government's legislation enacts as follows:—The government of Manitoba shall have power to purchase, lease, construct, extend, maintain, or operate within the province of Manitoba telephone or telegraph system or systems.

"If I understand the English language, Mr. Speaker, that means this government has power to construct not only a long distance telephone system, but telephone or telegraph systems in any number and of any description in any part of this province. Mr. Brown also states in his latest proposal, that it includes the management of the telephone system by a commission. Section 13 of chapter 89 of the government's legislation also enacts that:—

"The said government shall have power to appoint commissioners."

### Two Policies Identical

"Finally Mr. Brown intimates that there will be in his policy nothing to prevent a municipality from establishing its own system, and it is hardly necessary to remind this house that the whole object of chapter 89 is to enable municipalities to establish their own telephone service, if they so desire.

After comparing the telephone policy issued by the Liberal executive with that of the government, every far-sighted person in this house or outside of it must admit that the two are identical, and that the result of the vote on Dec. 18 forced Mr. Brown and his allies into a complete recantation of their former principles and converted or forced them into public ownership advocates.

"The said government shall have power to appoint commissioners, and when I close I will deal with an amendment to this clause proposed by the executive of the Municipal union.

Mr. Brown, speaking at Carman last time, had great stress upon the rider in the last clause of one of the two resolutions which he moved at the Brandon municipal convention, which was to the effect that "the government's telephone proposal should be upon a basis satisfactory to the municipalities."

The municipalities have endorsed the government's telephone policy.

"This government formulated its telephone policy in response to the wishes of the municipalities, voiced through

the Union of Manitoba Municipalities, and from the time it took up that question down to the present day, it has in every action given the rights of the municipalities paramount consideration.

"This policy has been amply vindicated by the support which this government has received from the municipalities. At the last convention of the Municipal Union the government's policy was endorsed by a vote of the municipal delegates of 89 to 16, and more recently the executive of that union has tendered to this government a set of resolutions thanking the government for its action, placing on record its approval of the government's policy, and expressing its appreciation of the educational value of the campaign which the government has conducted; a campaign which the supporters of Mr. Brown used every effort to render ineffectual by aiding the Bell monopoly in the circulation of misleading, and untrue statements, both as to the acts and the cost involved.

### Government Invited Amendments

"The recommendations of the Municipal Union, which are embodied in the amendments before the house today, were made in response to the invitation of this government, and while these amendments will render more effectual the carrying out of the government's proposition in detail, they in no way alter the principles embodied by the legislation passed last session.

"There are two points recommended by the Municipal union not as yet specifically dealt with by these bills, to which I will for a few minutes refer. They asked for the appointment of independent auditors to audit the accounts of the municipalities operating a system. That will be done. It is unnecessary to mention it in the act as it can be provided for under the power in the act regarding the making of rules and regulations.

"The next point suggested by the union is that the commissioners 'shall not be subject to removal except by a vote of the provincial legislature, the same as the auditor.' When this bill reaches committee I will provide that the commissioners shall only be removed by the lieutenant governor or council for cause, and so put them in an absolutely independent position and removed from party politics.

"Although the government has not had time to consider this request, I can assure them this will be carefully considered. Until we get well under way and have tried the men (commissioners) by experience to see if they are competent, it seems to me for the present inadvisable to make that provision, as it might have a bad effect and hin-