

REV. BROWN TO TAKE SEAT OF TOM FLEMING



REV. RUSSELL BROWN

PASTOR GIVEN COUNCIL SEAT; FLEMING OUT

Both Parties Pleased With Selection

Cleveland, Ohio, Feb. 22.—Following the conviction of City Councilman Thomas W. Fleming, Friday, which carried a sentence of two years and nine months in the penitentiary, steps were immediately taken to choose his successor.

As a result of the special caucus Monday night, Rev. Russell S. Brown, pastor of Mount Zion Congregational church, Central Ave. and E. 55th St., was selected to fill out Fleming's unexpired term. This conviction on bribe charges was the first in Cuyahoga county in 28 years. Fleming was accused of accepting \$200 from Walter Gehme (white), former city detective.

Rev. Brown was selected by unanimous vote and with little or no opposition from the opposing parties. His election was assured, however, by reason of the comfortable majority of Republicans in the council. The Democratic candidate mentioned previously was Dr. James A. Owen, 2169 E. 76th St., a former captain in the World war. The name of Fred Klawson as an Independent was also proposed. Prominent among those named as possible choices of the Republicans were Mrs. Lethie C. Fleming, wife of the former councilman; Police Prosecutor Lawrence O. Payne, who testified in Fleming's behalf during the trial; Dr. Leroy N. Bundy, Chester Gillespie and W. R. Green.

Not a Politician

Rev. Brown has never held a political office and his selection was seen as a gesture by Republican leaders to vindicate the county name by choosing one who is free from all political alliances or obligations. Commenting on Brown's selection, Majority Leader Finkle said: "I have known Dr. Brown for several years, and have a high regard for his reputation and ability. His interest in civic affairs has been valuable and unselfish." Finkle said the office had been offered "without strings."

Dr. Brown, when interviewed, said that Councilman Finkle had telephoned the news while he was busy in his study. "I would consider it an honor to represent my people and the people of Cleveland in the city council. If I am elected, I will certainly not 'choose to run' at the end of my

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Fleming's Seat Goes to Rev. Brown in Cleveland

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term in office. I am a minister and know that is my life calling. If, however, I can serve the citizens of our beloved city for a few months, I shall be happy to give my best to the task." Both Councilman Finkle and Dr. Brown denied that there had been any understanding that he should retire next November to make way for other candidates.

Hanging above his desk is a framed letter from President Coolidge, which commends the minister's research in interracial relations. He is a recognized scholar and was educated at Washburn college, Payne Theological Seminary, Xenia, Ohio, and has taken post course in several leading colleges. He has represented his race in the highest body of the Congregational church. He was born in London, Ky., moving in his early youth to Topeka, Kan. He has pastored some of the leading churches in his denomination, and since his assignment four years ago to Mt. Zion, has raised a \$50,000 fund to pay the indebtedness on the building, which is the largest of its kind in the city. His wife is a graduate of Oberlin college and they have three children. He will not only be one of the youngest members of the council at the age of 39, but the first minister to hold that seat.