

questions: I suppose you know that when you come here proposing that we should adopt proportional representation you are striking at one of the fundamentals of our Government?

The CHAIRMAN: This gentleman has not come here of his own accord; he has been subpoenaed.

The CLERK OF THE COMMITTEE: He has been invited to come, and explain the system.

Mr. CURRIE: That is all right. I am entitled to examine him. You are striking at one of the fundamentals of our system of government are you not?

Mr. HOOPER: I do not admit that.

Mr. CURRIE: Every one else who discusses this subject from your point of view does. What would the adoption of proportional representation mean?

Mr. HOOPER: It would mean that parliament would be as nearly as possible a reflection of the opinions of the people, which is the principle of democracy.

Mr. CURRIE: Are we not representatives? Are we not a representative body?

The CHAIRMAN: We are not likely to get anywhere if we proceed this way.

Mr. CURRIE: Mr. Hooper is not going to be allowed to lecture this committee.

The CHAIRMAN: Mr. Hooper was invited here for a definite purpose, and I think the committee has a right to say that Mr. Hooper shall be permitted to proceed with his statement.

Mr. CURRIE: I am entitled to question him. How many forms of proportional representation have been tried?

Mr. HOOPER: Only two. The British Commission on Electoral Systems which sat in Great Britain in 1909 made a general statement that there were probably some 300 systems, but that in reality there were only two systems to be considered, one used in continental Europe and one used in the British Empire, so for all practical purposes we can adopt the report of the Royal Commission in England which studied the question for several months and on which were representatives of all the parties in Great Britain. So there are two systems the List System and the Single Transferable Vote.

Hon. Mr. CALDER: What is the List System?

Mr. HOOPER: In Belgium the government of the day wanted to introduce proportional representation in that country in order to avoid a revolution. The electoral system in Belgium was based on the scrutin de liste, that is the "Block Vote," system. The results under that system were grossly unfair to the minorities in Flanders and Wallony. They therefore adopted the List System, which was the easiest to superimpose upon their electoral machinery. The people had been very much in the habit of voting a party ticket, so each devised a list of candidates and the party voter was asked to cast his vote at the top of the ballot for his particular party and leave it to the party to use the vote as it pleased. Of course the ballot might be used for a candidate that the voter himself would not have supported. The British Royal Commission studied the system and were opposed to it as being in conflict with the democratic ideas that prevailed in Great Britain, that a voter should control his own vote, and they rejected this system and endorsed the single transferable vote as being more in accordance with British democracy.

*By Mr. Currie:*

Q. Representation originally in this country and in the United States was founded on the town meeting. You have been a close student of those things have you not?

—A. I try to study such matters.

[Mr. Ronald H. Hooper.]