

Canadian Citizen Identification Cards

This is, of course, also true in 1972. The article continued:

... the papers indulge in a bit of classical editorial—the present case; everybody agrees that it is no more shameful to show one's identity card than one's passport at a customs office ...

Another *La Presse* report had this to say on the resolution of the conference of judges, and I quote:

Among the other proposals accepted by the assembly, one deals with a request which will be presented at the same time to the federal government and the provincial government in order that the identity card be made compulsory. According to the assembly, that card should be related both to the judiciary and the police.

It is alleged that many will shout police state, but such a card would be very important to some industries and businesses like banks and others.

The ultimate purpose of that step would be to enable the police to fight the underworld.

The arguments in favour of compulsory identification cards have evolved over the years, from 1936 up to that meeting of judges where they started considering the matter of compulsory identification cards not only to prevent fraudulent elections but also for other purposes, namely, judicial and police purposes.

Shortly afterwards, the Chamber of Notaries announced it was in favour of an identification card, and here it might be timely to consider the arguments used by the notaries on that occasion. They can be found in the December 9, 1967 issue of the newspaper *La Presse*, in an article signed by Mr. Léopold Lizotte and entitled:

Notaries request identification cards and family booklets. Gathered together for their annual banquet, last night, in Château Champlain, the Montreal district notaries have asked the Minister of Justice of the province to establish in Quebec official and compulsory identification cards and family booklets in order to help the administration of justice and prevent countless frauds.

Addressing himself directly to Mr. Jean-Jacques Bertrand, the guest of honour at the meeting, the president of the Montreal District Notaries' Association, Mr. André Labonté, submitted that despite all precautions, and the legendary prudence of notaries, it was at the time impossible for notaries to absolutely ascertain the identity of the people appearing before them.

Since then, and especially in 1970-1971, several intermediary bodies, including the trucking industry council, have declared themselves in favour of such an identification card.

Evidently, the question gained momentum on the occasion of the October 1970 events, which proves what I was saying at the outset. At that time I was given generous publicity by the reporters; I received numerous letters and telegrams from people from all walks of life. Moreover, the Quebec judges conference sent me a letter dated November 2, 1970 signed by the chairman, Mr. Justice Marcel Marier of the Municipal Court of the city of Montreal, 775 Gosford Street, Montreal. Here it is:

Dear Mr. Leblanc:

We were informed that a notice of motion has been introduced in the House of Commons requiring all Canadian citizens to carry an identification card.

You will find enclosed a copy of a resolution that was unanimously approved by the Quebec judges in 1967. You may be sure of the support from all our group.

Yours truly,

And here is the resolution:

WHEREAS the lack of adequate identification means gives rise to

[Mr. Leblanc (Laurier).]

several obstacles in social, judiciary and commercial administration and especially as regards justice;

I will spare the House the whereases because time is running out. I will quote only the resolution.

BE IT RESOLVED THAT, following a proposal from Mr. Justice Jacques Trahan of the Court of the Sessions of the Peace, seconded by Mr. Justice Henri Masson Loranger of the Court of the Sessions of the Peace, the Quebec judges conference on the occasion of their present meeting, ask the Quebec Parliament to pass a legislation obliging the citizens to carry an identification card and be it also resolved that a copy of this resolution be sent to the federal Minister of Justice.

• (4:20 p.m.)

And right after I had filed that notice of motion, the Quebec Minister of Justice, Mr. Jérôme Choquette, found it necessary to make a statement in favour of an identity card in the province. On that occasion, discussions were held on the possibility that a province was not authorized under the constitution to make the carrying of an identity card compulsory. The federal Minister of Justice has raised doubts about the competence of the provinces to do so. I hope that this will not become an issue between Quebec and Ottawa, since Quebec has stated that it was in favour of the card after my notice of motion had been filed.

Evidently, arguments can be raised for or against. I would say that the arguments in favour deal with the concept of freedom. There would then be some constraint and it would be a source of troubles for the citizen who would be called upon quite often to show his card. We would have the establishment of a police or half-police state, which might perhaps lead to a dictatorship, and open the door to abuses of power. Freedom might be suspended.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Boulanger): Order. I regret to interrupt the hon. member, but his time has expired.

Mr. Leblanc (Laurier): Mr. Speaker, I have given the negative arguments only. I should like, however, to state arguments in favour of an identity card, if hon. members will allow me to do so.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Boulanger): Is there unanimous consent?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

Mr. Stanley Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Five minutes!

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Boulanger): Agreed.

Mr. Leblanc (Laurier): I thank the hon. members, Mr. Speaker.

As for the arguments in favour, I shall attempt to state them as quickly as possible, so as not to take too much time and allow other hon. members, who wish to do so, to speak on this matter. But it must be noted that what I am asking is that the government give priority to the consideration of an identification card.

In support of this measure, one could mention the protection it would give to the honest citizen and, as a corollary, the fact that it could be a working tool for the police forces. Such a card could ensure the protection of the