

I appeal to the minister to give further consideration to this suggestion. I do not want him to pass a snap judgment at this moment. I think the idea has merit, or I never would have proposed it. A man who exercised the right of the franchise should produce evidence of his bona fides, of his identity. What better identification could there be than the production of his registration card? In certain cities they had a system whereby, before a man could exercise the municipal ballot, he had to produce a certificate of some kind of registration with his photograph on it. What in the world is the good of a registration certificate if we do not use it in a given case where it would be applicable? I beg the minister to accept this proposal, to incorporate in the bill at this place, where it seems appropriate, a provision that every person shall produce his registration certificate. The idea is commendable and should appeal to all members of this house. I hope the minister will not lightly turn down this suggestion. If needs be, he could hold over this section.

Mr. LOCKHART: Would the minister or someone in the government inform this committee whether the registration certificate has to be produced at the time a man gets employment, or whether it is a joke, like many of the other regulations now in effect? Could we have that definite information? As I have already indicated to the committee, I know of two firms which over the weekend were in need of men; when certain men came for employment they could not produce their registration certificates, and these employers felt in duty bound not to hire them unless they could produce the certificates. Is that the law, or is it not?

Mr. McLARTY: I regret I cannot advise the hon. member as to the necessity, but I shall be glad to get him that information. Possibly that is not germane to the matter which we are now discussing—that is as to the requirement to produce a registration card for the purpose of getting employment—this being a question of voting on the plebiscite which will be held following the passage of this bill. I appreciate that the leader of the opposition raised the point some time ago, and if it were a matter of answering his remarks, my reply would appear somewhat ill-considered if I dealt with them without having the advantage of his previous suggestion, now followed by what the hon. member for Macleod has said. But the matter was discussed by the special committee, namely, the necessity of producing the registration card as a condition precedent to voting. The hon. member for Lake Centre mentioned the pro-

posal the other night, and I think it will appeal to the members of the committee that those who have to be vouched for might properly be required, in urban areas, to produce the registration certificate. I believe the general principle of this legislation will recommend itself to the committee. We do not want to stifle any voting; we want as free and frank an expression of opinion as can be obtained. I would say unhesitatingly, I agree that in the case of vouching in urban municipalities the registration card should be necessary. But the leader of the opposition says that the registration card is a condition of citizenship. The registration card is made under a particular act of this parliament, and for failure to register there are particular penalties that are imposed. Are you going to use the right of franchise as a penalty for the non-performance of a duty which an act makes mandatory that you shall do and which has its own penalties if you fail to do it? It might be that some would register who had not done so, but each act should stand on its own feet. If you pass compulsory legislation, then I doubt your right in a new act to place a penalty which the act that originally compelled a certain thing to be done does not impose.

Mr. HANSON (York-Sunbury): That is the fault of that act, then.

Mr. McLARTY: No, it is not the fault of the act. The act has its penalties. It might be the fault of some enforcement of the act, but not of the act itself.

Mr. ROSS (St. Paul's): Is there any penalty imposed upon the individual if he is unable to produce the registration certificate when required at the present time under the act?

Mr. McLARTY: Under the regulations under the act there is a definite penalty, and the act itself provides a penalty.

Mr. ROSS (St. Paul's): Is the penalty carried out? Is the act a farce, or is the penalty carried out?

Mr. McLARTY: The hon. member for St. Paul's asks whether the act is a farce, or whether the penalty is carried out. All I will say is that to the best of my knowledge it is carried out. The act is not one that falls within my particular department, but I believe it is fairly carried out; at least an endeavour is made to carry it out. But when it is suggested that the registration card is the surest means of identification, that is scarcely correct. Since the last election—I cannot say since the registration took place—there has been a movement of the general population of Canada, involving about a million people.