

A Pitch for National Identity Card

Washington

Every American citizen eventually should be required to carry a government identity card — complete with fingerprints — to cut down on fraud and other related crimes, Frances G. Knight, director of the State Department's passport office, said yesterday.

"It is my considered opinion that the U.S. Government owes every American citizen a true, recorded national identity to protect him from criminal impersonations," Knight said.

In an interview with U.S. News & World Report, Mrs. Knight admitted her proposal is "loaded with political dynamite" because it "touches on the sensitive issues of personal privacy and a free society."

But she said such a sys-

tem would "be a notable deterrent to fraud, a valuable tool in crime detection, and an acceptably secure method of guaranteeing a citizen's personal identity."

Mrs. Knight said she believes that "an insignificant number of our citizens would be opposed to national registration and being issued a national identity card."

"I predict that national registration eventually will come to this country because it will be demanded by citizens who are sick and tired of supporting nontax-paying criminals and illegal aliens," she said.

Mrs. Knight called the use of false identification papers "a very serious problem" which costs the government up to \$3 billion a year.

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