

that Highland Regiments would be permitted to keep their traditional dress. There has been reference to the Royal 22nd Regiment retaining their identity—but there has been no document defining unification in terms of a single service with a single identity. At the time I was relieved of my command there was no such definition, so all anyone had been able to do since the White Paper of March 1964, was guess. Speculation within the armed forces on a matter as important as this will lead to unrest. But it is impossible for anyone to support something, or to be against something if he doesn't know what it's all about. For my part, from the beginning, I have made it clear, that if unification is to be carried to the rumoured extreme so that the Navy would lose its identity, there would have to be clear improvements to efficiency and economy or I'd oppose it.

The announcement by the Minister in June 1965 that the services would have a single walking out dress and a common rank structure by July 1967 struck the officers in my Command like a bombshell. The announcement caused a most serious setback in morale. Officers and men were deeply distressed by it. I was personally so concerned about its effects that I ordered an informal poll to be carried out in HMCS *Stadacona*, the barracks in Halifax, and at HMCS *Shearwater*, the naval air station. I left it to the respective Commanding Officers to conduct the poll in their own way. My purpose in doing this was to be able to report to Ottawa the true effect of the announcement. The result of the poll indicated there was precious little desire for the changes. In fact, there was considerable resentment the changes should even be considered. On the 21st June I reported, in writing, to the Chief of the Defence Staff, the results of these enquiries. My letter ended with this paragraph—I quote—"I cannot overemphasize the adverse result which will occur if the present course toward unification is continued. This being so, the choice seems either to live with a service which will have no heart for its work for years to come, or to pursue integration with all its benefits leaving the matter of identity totally intact. I most strongly urge the second alternative. It is requested the Defence Council be made aware of the foregoing observations"—end of quote.

There was no reply to this letter.

My concern did not end there. It was my practise regularly to visit the ships and shore establishments of my Command. When I did, I always spoke to the Ship's Company. I tried to keep them informed of all matters concerning them. At these sessions I always permitted the officers and men to question me on any service matter. The matter of the single service was always raised, but I never had anything to tell them, because they knew as much as I knew, even so, the question always came up and, in such a way, they tried desperately to tell me they didn't like the idea. I couldn't escape the message they gave me, that they were pinning their hopes on me to do something to save the Navy.

In the first three weeks after the announcement more than twenty officers told me this was the "last straw" and that they would try to get out, and would if they could do so without a pension penalty. It was a new experience for me to find officers demoralized in this way. I was concerned that the navy would lose key officers in the organization, officers who had years of training and experience in the realm of maritime warfare.

I decided to act, to check this deterioration of morale amongst my officers. The way I acted, and it is this that caused the Minister's "spokesman" to hint I