

A great deal of thought and much consultation among NATO allies went into the preparations for both conferences. At all stages before and after the conferences Canada was kept fully informed by the Western participants, both through diplomatic channels and through the NATO Council. Real meaning was given to the role of the NATO Council as a forum for political consultation among the allies, all of whom would have been affected, collectively and individually, had agreement been reached on German reunification and European security.

For the Germans, settling in to their new association with the West, there were naturally regrets that the reunification of their country could not be obtained on the terms of their own Government and of the Western powers. But the plain statement of the Soviet position on this question at the Foreign Ministers' Conference left them in no doubt that the only real alternative to the Western alliance was reunification on terms that would not only protect Communism in East Germany but would also pave the way for the subversion of the whole, despite the strong anti-Communist leanings of the vast majority of Germans.

3. European Integration

In these circumstances, not only the German Federal Republic but also other countries of Western Europe, notably Belgium, Italy, and the Netherlands, turned with renewed interest towards some means of strengthening the continental nucleus of the Western alliance. After the rejection of the European Defence Community in 1954, interest in European integration had shifted chiefly to the economic field. A new effort to "re-launch Europe" began in June, 1955, at the Messina conference of the six member countries forming the Coal and Steel Community (Germany, France, Italy, Belgium, the Netherlands, and Luxembourg). By the end of the year, the six were preparing to consider specific proposals for the establishment of a common market (customs union) and of common facilities for atomic research and power development.

Although much of the impetus towards economic integration derived from political objectives, little headway was made towards political integration directly. The Western European Union (the old Brussels Treaty powers, with the addition of Germany) came into existence in May; the reluctance of the United Kingdom to participate in any European organization with supranational tendencies has ensured the establishment of the new organization as an auxiliary within NATO. The Saar plebiscite in October, though it expressed a sentiment more anti-French than anti-WEU, prevented an experiment in Europeanization by rejecting the Statute which would have placed the Saar under the guidance of the Western European Union.

Canada's chief interest was to ensure that if any move was to be made towards European integration, either political or economic, *all* parts of the North Atlantic community should gain in strength and unity. Any tendencies towards the creation of a regional grouping that would increase instead of reduce economic discrimination should be avoided; but if these dangers could be avoided, there might be important political advantages for all NATO powers, particularly in the post-Geneva climate. Canada was able to make its voice heard not only through diplomatic channels