

result in changed commitments. If the Liberal rank and file were unsure of the ultimate effect of unification on foreign and defence policy, the NDP MP's were not in any better a position.

The NDP had, until the end of 1966, been consistent supporters of unification. The major reason for this was that the party saw the Armed Services being restructured along lines which would enable them to perform the task of a self-contained mobile force concentrating on the peace-keeping role. However, both Mr. Brewin and Mr. Winch, the NDP members of the Defence Committee, came to the conclusion unification only made sense if NATO and NORAD roles were either scrapped or substantially changed.⁴¹ When the bill cleared the Defence Committee the two NDP members, in a press release, threatened to withdraw their support unless the Government decided to drastically alter the NATO and NORAD commitments. Mr. Brewin's position was made quite clear when he said that "unification makes sense if some of our present commitments are to be abandoned but that we cannot maintain all our present commitments and concentrate on the mobile role."⁴² As a result of this issue the NDP party split over unification on the final vote.

While the Conservative party did not split over the issue, they did not base their main arguments on the commitment issue, but concentrated more on the problems of morale, tradition, loss of personnel, uniforms, etc.⁴³ It was pointed out on occasion, however, that it would not be possible for the Navy to continue operating at its pre-unification level, and this amounted to a unilateral reduction of the NATO force level commitment.⁴⁴ This argument was never employed to its full potential, and while the NDP made the commitment question central to its doubts about unification the Conservatives made no such attempt. By the time the Conservative's Montmorency Conference took place in August 1967 it was agreed that unification was a dead issue.⁴⁵ (Table No. 3 shows the basic party relationships on this question.)

In turning to the question of maintaining our present NATO role the Government (Liberal party supported) made it fairly explicit in the White Paper and throughout the unification debate, that the role was "to maintain troops in Europe for the foreseeable future."⁴⁶ The Minister of External Affairs made it clear, however, that this position was not immutable.

I do not exclude the possibility that in the future it may become feasible to withdraw our forces in Europe and to make our entire contribution from bases in Canada. But such a course of action is neither feasible nor desirable at the present time.⁴⁷

But this does not mean the Government was not advocating change - in fact just the opposite. According to Mr. Hellyer the White Paper policy involved two things on this point: "First, a change in role, ultimately: and secondly, a modest reduction in the over-all Canadian participation of the continent of Europe."⁴⁸