

which had implications for NATO.

As part of the Government's effort to find a more stable base for defence policy it was decided to integrate the Armed Forces as "the first stage toward a single unified defence force for Canada."³⁷ The bill to abolish the Chiefs of Staff was passed in July, 1964, and the second step, the re-organization of the command structure along functional lines, with Mobile Command assuming a central role, was announced in June, 1965. Command re-organization was followed on late 1966 by the bill to unify the Armed Forces which passed in April, 1967 after a bitter struggle in the House of Commons. While the effect of unification on Canadian commitments to the alliance system was not apparent from 1964-66, the relationship became a central issue in 1967. Prior to this the opposition to unification had not been focused on the strategic implications of the policy.

By late 1966, however, the implications of the policy raised three inter-related questions which became important to all parties:

- i) did unification only make sense if Canada opted out of the NATO and NORAD alliances? Or, could commitments be fulfilled within the framework of the new defence structure?
- ii) Even if the present commitments could be maintained, should Canada re-negotiate to change the NATO role?
- iii) What is the future of NATO in the light of party positions taken in response to the first two questions?

The question of commitments and unification became a serious party issue during the Defence Committee hearings on the bill to unify the services. Lt. General R.W. Moncel in his appearance before the committee on February 20, 1967, stated the problem in its clearest fashion:

In the light of the commitments that are undertaken ...in the White Paper, a unified force has no place. Now if you want to change the commitments to a commitment...which would call for a unified force then unification per se is obviously a good thing.³⁸

The Government had always rejected this contention and in both the White Paper and on moving second reading of the unification bill (December 7, 1966) stated its intention to retain the existing commitments.³⁹ During third reading Mr. Martin was of the opinion that "unification, if it is permitted to develop as planned, should in no way hinder our ability to fulfill our foreign policy commitments." In fact it should help "to fulfill present and future commitments with progressively improving efficiency."⁴⁰ The above statement, however, was not the same as saying that commitments would not be re-negotiated to fit the new defence structure even though unification per se does not necessarily mean commitments have to change.

The Liberal party rank and file seemed to opt for the later position at their October National Convention in the fall of 1966 where the resolution called "for a military role in NATO which offers to NATO the forces we develop in accordance with our national defence policy." Here one gains the impression that the party felt unification would