

The 'Great Conspiracy against Liberty': American Fears of Confederation

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Abstract:

When the British North American colonies federated to become the Dominion of Canada in 1867, numerous reactions emerged across the United States. For some, Confederation was greeted with friendly congratulations; for most, indifference, as they did not realize a new nation emerged in North America; and for others still, fear. It is well documented how Americans reacted to Confederation as numerous, excellent works have addressed this. But what has been less studied and analyzed are the fears that Americans held toward the new Dominion. It seems odd that such a powerful and expanding republic like the United States would fear the creation of a small, slow growing Constitutional Monarchy, but that is exactly what occurred during the years before and after 1867. This paper explores the prevalent fears that Americans held toward Confederation across the United States and seeks to build upon the historiography of this topic. Particular attention has been placed in the reactions within American newspapers and journals, as this is the closest vantage point to the 'general population' of the American people. Official governmental reactions have also been recorded to provide a well-rounded examination of why Americans feared the new country to the north. As will be seen, some of the fears Americans held were justified, whereas others were simple cases of prejudice.

At the time of Confederation, the United States of America was well on its way to becoming a significant world power. It had just

fought a bloody Civil War which kept the Union intact, and although the destruction and national deficit were massive, the American people held a positive outlook on their future. The Republic had a new outlook on world affairs, particularly within the scope of North American developments. With a massive, battle-hardened army and a rapidly growing economy, it appeared as though the stars and stripes would float above the entire American continent. This thought was nothing new. In fact, Americans had always assumed that it was their divine right to expand across all of North America. Charles S. Campbell best articulated this sentiment when he wrote:

Americans had always regarded their country as morally superior to other countries. In an articulate way they thought of the New World as a place set apart by God until such time as people were ready to discard medieval ways and adopt a simpler, more natural form of society. The United States, in particular, was young, virtuous, progressive; and as all Americans knew, she had a mission: the sacred mission of preserving her institutions as a beacon of hope for all mankind.¹

During the nineteenth century, the United States watched with great pleasure as a majority of the European powers vacated the Western Hemisphere, leaving the Republic to expand and promote its ideals of democracy and liberty. However, one country seemed to hinder this progress.

The United Kingdom retained its hold in North America with its colonies of Canada East and Canada West, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island, Newfoundland, and British Columbia, stretching across the continent. When news emerged that some of the

¹Charles S. Campbell, *The Transformation of American Foreign Policy Relations, 1865-1900* (New York: Harper & Row, 1976) 1.

British North American colonies were preparing to federate into a single country, Americans varied in their reactions. Some Americans welcomed the new Dominion, such as one writer in the *New York Times* who argued that “North America is certainly large enough for the two families even if they should not wish to board and lodge together.”² The majority of Americans met Confederation with a non-hostile indifference. This is understandable considering that during the Confederation debates in 1864-1865, the Union States, representing the North, were pre-occupied with ending the war, whereas the southern Confederacy was barely hanging on to national existence. Confederation also brought one other reaction: fear. It seems strange that such a strong nation as the United States would fear the federation of four – and eventually more – thinly populated British colonies, but this is precisely what happened. Donald Warner summed up this sentiment when he wrote:

Some Americans had been watching, sullenly, and even fearfully, the unfolding movement for federation to the North. An old resentment reawoke. The United Colonies would be a British sword of Damocles dangling precariously over the head of the Republic. Monarchy was pushing into North America, [a] continent sacredly dedicated to republicanism. Encased between Maximilian to the south and a new British Kingdom to the north, the United States would have to resume the long-unaccustomed posture of defense. It was natural that some efforts would be made in the Republic to check the development of this menace.³

²Reginald C. Stuart, *United States Expansionism and British North America, 1775-1871* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1988) 242.

³Donald F. Warner, *The Idea of Continental Union: Agitation for the Annexation of Canada to the United States, 1849-1893* (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1960) 65.

Some fears that Americans held were justified, whereas others were products of ignorance and prejudice.

Three prominent fears were held by a portion of the American populace: that Canada would (and did) adopt a constitutional monarchy, thus rejecting republicanism; that Canada would become an Empire that would rival the United States; and finally, that the expanding Dominion would stop American expansion, preventing the culmination of Manifest Destiny. It is important to remember that many Americans believed that the British North American colonies would simply join the United States – not through a force of arms, but by peaceful annexation.

A Kingdom to the North

A common fear expressed by the American people regarding Confederation was that Canada would become a kingdom, thus rejecting republican ideals, a fact they found revolting. As can be seen with Campbell's statement, the United States was a "beacon of hope" for all people who were tired of living under the backward and unprogressive reigns of European monarchs. The fact that Britain still retained her North American colonies was an annoyance for Americans and that a new nation in the Western Hemisphere would maintain a monarchical tie and reject republicanism was simply puzzling. A number of Northern⁴ newspapers were watching the developments north of their borders and commented on the proposed Kingdom to be formed. *The Corrector*, printed in Suffolk, New York, informed its

⁴What constitutes a Northern and a Southern state is debated amongst scholars. For the purpose of this paper, a Northern State is one that did not secede from the American Union during the Civil War years (1861-1865). Thus, Southern states are any which did secede from the United States and joined the short-lived Confederate States of America.

readers that “Canada is to be made a Kingdom, the provinces consolidated under the name of the Dominion of Canada.”⁵ Though not an alarmist reaction, this statement shows that Americans were taking notice of the development of the “Kingdom” to be created on their northern border. One newspaper, however, did raise the alarmist cry. The *Brooklyn Daily Eagle* wrote on 26 February, 1867:

If we so seriously object to the planting of a monarchy in Mexico under control of foreign influence, why do we not raise our voice against the Confederation of the British Provinces into the Kingdom of Canada? The spirit of Republicanism must be on the wane, or perhaps the reconstruction question is absorbing all our attention, so that we care little for what is transpiring around us.⁶

Here one can clearly see the perceived threat to republicanism in North America as viewed by Americans. If Canada were to become a kingdom, it would combine with Mexico, which was still under French rule, to sandwich the United States between two monarchies. The *Winona* [Minnesota] *Daily Republican*, stated on 7 March, 1867, that:

Our Canadian neighbors are making progress in a certain direction. That is to say, backward. Instead of throwing off the Monarchical yoke which has weighed them down and crushed their aspirations for nationality and independence during these eighty years past, they are now engaged in welding stronger the chains that bind them to the parent country and the government of Queen Victoria.⁷

⁵*The Corrector* [Suffolk, New York] 2 March, 1867.

⁶*The Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, 26 February, 1867.

⁷*Winona Daily Republican* [Winona, Minnesota] 7 March, 1867.

According to the *Daily Republican* the monarchical tie was backward in the progressive continent of North America, a sentiment widely shared across the United States.

Negative reactions to Canada forming a kingdom were also expressed at governmental levels. The New York Assembly made it quite clear that they believed “the very idea of a Kingdom or Monarchy as a next door neighbour was a studied insult to the United States,” particularly because Confederation was seen as undemocratic and unnatural in the New World.⁸ The New York Assembly also declared in March 1867 that:

It is the imperative duty of the people of the United States of America through their proper representatives to earnestly protest against the formation of any government in North America not republican in form, and in which the people are not allowed to govern themselves and choose their own rulers; and whereas, this nation has and does assume to maintain this principle upon this continent; and whereas, any attempt on the part of the imperial government of Great Britain to establish a permanent monarchical government in North America...would be an infraction of this principle.⁹

Americans believed that the federation of the British North American colonies was undemocratic because it was being spearheaded by an elite group of politicians without consulting their constituents. The *Chicago Republican* addressed this issue on 11 December, 1866, when it commented on the “breakdown of the Confederation ‘scheme’,” and its “disgust with the Canadian government which was trying to force

⁸Stuart, 241-243.

⁹Stuart, 238.

Confederation upon an unwilling people.”¹⁰ To create a new country without the consent or desire of the population was a direct attack against liberty, an ideal that was, and is, extremely important to the psyche of the United States and its citizenry. In 1867, the Republican Governor of Maine, Joshua Chamberlain, stated in his annual address to the legislature that the union of British North America, “along with the French Empire in Mexico [is] part of a great conspiracy against liberty on this youthful continent.”¹¹ American statesmen clearly articulated the ideals of liberty and democracy during this period. The fear was that British influence would spread across the continent and inhibit the expansion of republicanism throughout North America.

The United States Congress saw its share of fear from a select few American statesmen between 1864 and 1867. One of the most outspoken critics of Confederation, General Nathaniel P. Banks, a Republican Representative from Massachusetts, spoke numerous times on the threat of a new monarchy on the northern border. Banks was the chair of the Committee on Foreign Affairs, a committee which he used to keep careful track of the developments in Canada. On 27 March, 1867, Banks stood in the House and proposed a joint resolution which declared:

That the people of the United States cannot regard the proposed Confederation of the Provinces on the northern frontier of this country without extreme solicitude; that a confederation of States on this continent, extending from ocean to ocean, established without consulting the people of the Provinces to be united, and founded upon monarchical principles cannot be considered otherwise than in contravention of the traditions and constantly

¹⁰Lester B. Shippee, *Canadian-American Relations 1849-1874* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1939) 195.

¹¹Warner, 65-66.

declared principles of this Government, endangering its most important interests, and tending to increase and perpetuate embarrassments already existing between the two Governments immediately interested.¹²

In essence, Banks was declaring his opposition to Confederation with hopes of convincing other representatives to follow suit. The resolution never went to a vote, particularly because two representatives were not convinced of the necessity of the motion and another discarded the threat of the monarchy that Banks proposed since Canada was already under monarchical control. It was determined that it was better to remain silent on this issue than antagonize Britain.

Yet Banks was not alone in his fear of a permanent monarchy in North America. Republican Representative Henry J. Raymond of New York introduced a resolution on 27 February, 1867, stating:

Whereas the establishment in immediate proximity to the Territory of the United States of a powerful monarchy under the protection and with the support of a foreign nation, cannot be regarded as otherwise hostile to the peace and menacing to the safety of this Republic.¹³

Raymond also asked President Andrew Johnson to inform the House:

whether any remonstrance has been made by this Government against the proposed consolidation of all British North American Provinces into a single Confederation under the Imperial rule of an English

¹²United States Congress, House of Representatives *Congressional Globe*, 40th Cong., 1st Sess., 392.

¹³United States Congress, House of Representatives, *Congressional Globe*, 39th Cong., 2nd Sess., 1617.

Prince, or whether the consent of the Government has been given in any way, directly or indirectly, to the consummation of this project.¹⁴

Clearly, the proposed Confederation of the British North American colonies elicited a great amount of fear for some representatives in Congress. It is interesting to note the language Raymond used. Raymond implied that Britain required permission from the United States in all matters relating to its North American colonies. These ideas demonstrate that at the end of the Civil War Americans believed that all European vestiges should vacate and that the North American continent should become “a happy fraternity of republics, closely associated with the United States, perhaps politically united with her.”¹⁵

The irony of these fearful declarations made by American politicians is that they were incorrect with regards to British foreign policy. As Stuart argued, most Americans did not realize “that Britain’s entire geo-political orientation was shifting toward Europe, the Mediterranean, and the Middle East because of the rise of India and other far Eastern possessions as the most important jewels in the imperial crown.”¹⁶ Furthermore, “by some extraordinary feat of logic,” American politicians

declared that Confederation violated the Monroe Doctrine and contradicted provincial interests and wishes, overlooking completely that the British had helped to create Canada as part of their disengagement from North America.¹⁷

¹⁴Shippee, 195.

¹⁵Campbell, 2.

¹⁶Stuart, 239.

¹⁷Stuart, 243-44.

Therefore, Great Britain was pleased with the developments for Canadian autonomy with Confederation as it gave Britain a chance to disengage from North America. There is no doubt that Britain wanted to keep ties with Canada as it was, in strategic terms, an excellent military base. But Britain did not want to continue to pay for the development of Canada. However, in 1908 a secret report by the British Foreign Office stated that the British North America Act “was not only a great act of policy but also...the sharpest check which the extreme pretensions advanced in pursuance of the Monroe Doctrine had yet received.”¹⁸ Thus, American fears that Britain was plotting to halt the expansion of the United States for its own benefit were justifiable.

Some of the fears that American statesmen were promoting did not escape ridicule in the Dominion. For example, on 13 March, 1867, the *Montreal Gazette* reported that:

One scarcely knows which is the most deserving of ridicule, the fears of the Congressmen at the danger of the United States to accrue from the consolidation of these Provinces, or the ignorance of the committee of the Maine legislature, which, as a peroration to a pretentious disquisition on British colonial history, speaks of union as about to be forced upon the people of the Provinces against their will. The alarm of these poor timorous legislators at Washington, and the philanthropic care for our interests of the lawgivers of Maine, would be very funny if we did not know that they were meant to work mischief.¹⁹

¹⁸Gordon T. Stewart, *The American Response to Canada since 1776* (East Lansing: University of Michigan Press, 1992) 103.

¹⁹Shippee, 196.

The comment regarding the Maine legislature is a direct reference to Joseph Chamberlain's conclusion that Confederation was a "great conspiracy against liberty". For some Canadians, the fears that Americans held towards Confederation were something to laugh at. Although the consolidation of the British colonies under one national government was achieved to provide more economic and political stability, it was not done to antagonize the United States.

American fears of Confederation did not end in 1867. As the Dominion continued to grow, acquiring Rupert's Land from the Hudson's Bay Company in 1870 and adding British Columbia in 1871, "the United States was now faced with a single, greater Canada of continental dimensions instead of a group of loosely connected colonies left over from the eighteenth-century empire."²⁰ Canada was a new continental nation in North America that was seen as a rival, another fear held by the people of the United States.

A Continental Rival

By 1871, Canada's territory stretched from the Atlantic to the Pacific, inhibiting a potential northward expansion of the United States. Roots of this fear date back to 1857 when Israel Andrews, Consul General for the United States in Montreal, wrote to Secretary of State Lewis Cass that the British North American colonies "cannot now be conquered; at present they are disjointed and weak; united with their collateral strength, they would be an increasing power. ...If united and supported by any European power, [Canada would be] a formidable antagonist. Such is the desire of England and is advocated by her officials in the colonies."²¹ The fear expressed here is in militaristic terms, which were common in the mindset of nineteenth-century politicians. The United States was concerned that Great Britain would

²⁰Stewart, 61.

²¹Stewart, 61-2.

wish to expand and provoke a war for territory; but with the outbreak of the Civil War, this changed slightly. Throughout the conflict relations between the Union States and Great Britain were precarious. At times, the British government openly expressed a desire to see the Confederate States win the war, thus greatly decreasing the strength of the Republic. This caused the ire of many American statesmen. Although Britain was neutral in a militaristic sense – it did not declare war on the Union States or the Confederate States – it certainly partook in actions that were questionable, such as building ships for the Confederate navy. One such ship, *Alabama*, would cause future tensions between the United States and Great Britain that seemed as though war was imminent though was barely avoided. The British North American colonies were in a difficult position throughout this period of cool Anglo-American relations.²²

At the end of the American Civil War, however, the military threat that Canada ‘posed’ was next to nil. Although Britain had a sizeable army stationed in Canada, the United States’ army was much larger and battle-hardened. Indeed, some Americans wanted to let the army loose on British North America and annex the territory by force, partly as retribution for the unfriendly actions of Britain during the war. But those who advocated this were in the vast minority. For the most part, the American people were tired of war and looked toward the future with dreams of peace. As Gordon T. Stewart summarized succinctly: “The military threat from Britain/Canada was gone,” but “there was a troubling awareness that Canada was persisting in her efforts to become a rival power on the continent.”²³ American military superiority in North America was unquestioned; but Canada’s potential economic power caused fear to spread across the United States.

²²For a brief, yet excellent, summary of the Civil War years and poor Anglo-American relations, see Edelgard E. Mahant and Graeme S. Mount’s study *An Introduction to Canadian-American Relations* (Toronto: Methuen Publicans, 1984).

²³Stewart, 74.

The Chicago Tribune articulated the idea of Canada as a rival shortly after Confederation when it reported that: “The future of the Dominion of Canada is painted in glowing colors by the friends of the government here and in England. It is to be the rival of the United States; it will attract to its well ordered territory many of the best men of the Republic, and it will in time be able [to] repel, of its own strength, any invasion from the United States.”²⁴ Although this report portrays a positive side to Canada’s existence, it cemented fears that a new rival had been born. In fact, statements like these gave credence to concerns expressed a mere year earlier. In June 1866, *The American Railroad Journal* wrote of a new rival developing along the northern border when it printed: “Confederated, the Provinces will be cemented and united, have one commercial system, one spirit, one destiny, and in their renewed force, will become an antagonist such as they have never been before.”²⁵ Along similar lines, the *U.S. Railroad & Mining Register*, published in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, sent a note to then Secretary of State William Seward in April 1867, which argued: “Disguise the fact as diplomacy at London may seek to do [sic], it is nevertheless true that an empire is in process of organization along the whole length of the northern borderline of the United States under a policy of political antagonism to the American union.”²⁶ It was the potential threat that Canada posed which worried Americans but their fears were not fully realized.

Canada’s new, united economy did not produce the immediate results expected after Confederation. In fact, by 1869 the Canadian economy slumped and looked to the United States for some sort of commercial agreement. Unfortunately for Canadians, the Republicans were in power under President Ulysses S Grant and “protectionism still dominated republican circles, and Canada seemed a serious rival

²⁴*Chicago Tribune*, 21 September, 1867.

²⁵Stuart, 245.

²⁶Stuart, 74.

engaging in unfair competition.”²⁷ Ideally, Canadian statesmen wanted to negotiate a reciprocity treaty with their American neighbours along the lines of the 1854 Reciprocity treaty. Yet in 1869, just as in 1866 when the 1854 reciprocity treaty officially expired due to American abrogation, the United States was not interested in assisting a country that was a commercial competitor. American statesmen believed that Canada had unfairly benefitted from free trade and would not enter into a new agreement.

In 1885, Canada completed its first transcontinental railroad, which Americans saw as an “iron band ... hemming them in.”²⁸ The Canadian Pacific Railroad (CPR) was seen as a threat to the American Union for two important reasons. The first, and most significant, was that the Canadian railroad would divert transcontinental trade from American port cities to Montreal and the St. Lawrence Seaway. The second was that Canada’s importance within the British Empire would increase yet again. With a transcontinental railroad, however, the British could transport supplies and soldiers across the continent while remaining on British territory. Stewart summarized that “it was this Imperial dimension to the Confederation of Canada that some Americans had foreseen and feared.”²⁹ It is clear that American fears of Confederation went beyond those perceived in 1867 and that some fears were legitimate as Britain did recognize the usefulness of the CPR, as did Canadian merchants and farmers. Although Canada had expanded across the continent to British Columbia, the United States was keen to ensure that this expansion stopped there. This was part of the third, and final, fear of Confederation: the halting of American expansion.

Manifest Destiny Challenged

²⁷Stuart, 245.

²⁸Campbell, 5.

²⁹Stewart, 76.

President James Monroe issued one of the most famous policies of the United States government during the nineteenth century: the Monroe Doctrine. Essentially, the Monroe Doctrine stated that European powers should vacate the Western Hemisphere and the United States would not interfere in European affairs. One analysis of the doctrine summarized it as this: “La doctrine de Monroe à cette époque comme au temps où elle fut énoncée, est l’expression de la volonté américaine de dominer, en droit et en fait, le continent américain en general, et le Canada en particulier.”³⁰ As demonstrated previously, American ideas of republicanism and liberty were particularly strong in the nineteenth century and American statesmen believed that the Western Hemisphere was an American hemisphere where European powers were not welcomed. Between 1800 and 1867, the European presence in North America was significantly reduced leaving only a few European monarchs, including Great Britain, with North American territories. The United States was eager to see the last vestiges of monarchy leave North American soil and in many cases Americans helped in this process. The United States government purchased the Louisiana Territory from France in 1803; the Republic of Texas was annexed in 1846 which led to the Mexican-American War (1846-1848); and finally, in 1867, the United States made a final purchase to expand its growing republic: Alaska.

The creation of Canada had become official in March 1867 upon Royal Assent by Queen Victoria. For the United States, this meant the official birth of a rival nation with plans to extend coast-to-coast-to-coast. Many American statesmen sought to acquire more territory because they feared Canada’s expansion. The *Winona Daily Republican* asked on 7 March, 1867, “Is it not now a fitting time to bring in the Monroe Doctrine to bear upon the incipient monarchy on our

³⁰Pierre Sébilleau, *Le Canada et la Doctrine de Monroe* (Paris: Librairie du Recueil Sirey, 1937) 91.

northern border?”³¹ The Monroe Doctrine was once again called into place to resist monarchical expansion and it was believed that the purchase of Alaska would do just that.

In 1848, the Oregon boundary was established between Great Britain and the United States along the 49th Parallel (which remains the international boundary between Canada and the United States), effectively stopping American expansion. Eager to expand beyond this boundary, the United States sought Alaska. The Russian Empire was looking to sell its North American territory in order to remove the responsibility of the thinly populated outpost and acquire much-needed cash – Russia was still in trouble financially from its loss during the Crimean War a decade earlier. Secretary of State William Seward was the architect behind the purchase, which, he admitted shortly after, was done to stop Britain’s possible expansion along the Pacific Coast and hasten the political union of Canada and the United States.³² Alaska was purchased to “outflank the Canadians on the Pacific rim,”³³ and was another step toward continental domination.³⁴ In Congress, Ohio Republican Representative Rufus Spalding, spoke about the purchase of Alaska when he declared:

Sir, as an American citizen, and a republican at that, I deny that any territory upon this western continent be deemed foreign to the Government of the United States when it seeks to extend its limits. I believe that if anything under the heavens be fated, it is that the American flag shall wave over every foot of this American continent in the course of time. This proud Republic will not

³¹*Winona Daily Republican*, 7 March, 1867.

³²James Morton Callahan, *American Foreign Policy in Canadian Relations* (New York: Cooper Square Publishers, Inc., 1967) 307.

³³Stewart, 76-77.

³⁴Callahan, 308.

culminate until she rules the whole American continent,
and all the isles contiguous thereupon.³⁵

Spalding was angry that the boundary with British Columbia had been established along the 49th Parallel instead of at 54°40' Parallel, the southern tip of the Alaskan peninsula, which inhibited America expansion. Spalding's comments outline another ideal of Americans during the nineteenth century: Manifest Destiny.

Manifest Destiny – the belief that it was divinely ordained that the whole territory of North America would be under the jurisdiction of the United States government – was an important doctrine expounded by numerous American politicians throughout this period, including expansionist President Ulysses S Grant, Senator Charles Sumner, Senator Rufus Spalding, and Secretary of State William Seward. As early as December 1867, there was talk in the United States Senate that Britain should cede all its territory west of 90° longitude³⁶ – which is all land west of Lake Superior. The United States House of Representatives, as Stewart offered, “protested against the Confederation of Canada on the grounds that this strengthening of a British Colony violated the Monroe Doctrine.”³⁷

In 1869, nearing the end of his troubled administration, President Andrew Johnson urged in a speech, presumably written by Seward, for “the acquisition and incorporation into our federal union of the several adjacent continental and insular communities as can be done peacefully, lawfully, and without any violation of national justice, faith, or honor.”³⁸ Johnson's speech was made at a time when Anglo-American relations were extremely poor as both nations looked to

³⁵United States Congress, House of Representatives, *Congressional Globe*, 40th Cong., 2nd Sess., 3809-3810.

³⁶Callahan, 310.

³⁷Stewart, 178.

³⁸Campbell, 2-3.

resolve their longstanding tensions from the Civil War, with Canada's annexation a proposed means to that end. Charles Sumner, a Republican Senator from Massachusetts, expressed this sentiment when he argued that Britain should cede Canada to the United States as its first step towards withdrawing from the Western Hemisphere in accordance with the Monroe Doctrine.³⁹ Sumner personally saw the purchase of Alaska as "the manifestly destined spread of republicanism, the inevitable doom of monarchy, Canada's destiny to join the United States."⁴⁰ Some even argued that the annexation of Canada would eliminate the threat of war between the United States and Great Britain. As Callahan argued, the peaceful surrender of Canada by Britain was "a national necessity."⁴¹ A desire to see Canada as part of the American Republic was strong in 1867 and this sentiment did not die as time progressed.

Despite this, the most prominent expression toward Confederation throughout the United States was indifference. This was expressed in numerous ways. From the belief in the superiority of republican ideals to the lack of reporting in American newspapers, the people of the United States did not think much of the new Dominion. Stuart best summarized this point by arguing that "many Americans simply refused to believe that Canada was either politically or economically viable as a nation."⁴² As outlined above, Americans truly believed – and still believe – in the superiority of their republican government over any other form, particularly monarchical governments. By rejecting republicanism and maintaining its monarchical ties, Canadians were subjecting themselves to the old habits of an outdated and backward European system. Canadians would eventually realize their mistake and request peaceful admittance into the

³⁹Callahan, 311.

⁴⁰Campbell, 20.

⁴¹Callahan, 311.

⁴²Stuart, 241.

great American republic and join the brotherhood of states. The *Brooklyn Daily Eagle* reported exactly this when it wrote on 5 March, 1867 that “the Confederation scheme will be tried and will probably last at all events until the four millions sterling which England is to find for the Intercolonial Railway have been expended.”⁴³ The *Rolla Press* from Missouri did not believe that Canada could survive as a constitutional monarchy as it reported on 25 January, 1873, that “when the Dominion of Canada becomes a republic, as in proper time it surely will.” In a more bizarre reason for annexation, the *Rolla Press* also argued that Canada should be annexed out of fear that the falls at Niagara on the American side will dry up leaving all the water in Canada.⁴⁴ Differing opinions on the reasons for annexation clearly existed; some are understandable whereas others were prejudicial fears.

Conclusion

What becomes apparent is that the people of the United States were divided upon what the creation of Canada meant: some believed that the Dominion would fail and join the Republic in due time whereas others fearfully watched the creation of a potential monarchical rival in North America. The nineteenth century was a turbulent time for the United States as it secured its power internally and internationally and therefore it is understandable that the American people would watch the creation of Canada with a slight air of suspicion, especially if Great Britain was planning on continuing its expansion in North America to counteract the Republic’s strong development. By the end of the Civil War, the American people were not overly concerned about a possible British invasion considering the massive army that had been mobilized, despite the fact that it was slowly demobilizing. The main concern, then, was the spread of monarchical institutions and the retention of

⁴³*Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, 5 March, 1867.

⁴⁴*Rolla Press*, Missouri, 14 June, 1873.

territory by European monarchs in North America. The majority of European powers were relinquishing their North American land claims, some begrudgingly, and the United States was doing its part to speed up this process. As in seen in Congressional debates, the threat that monarchies posed to republicanism was a fear held by many prominent men of the era. This fear proved justified as Canada continued – and continues – to develop along-side the United States without abandoning the monarchical tie.

The other fear of a continental rival, however, has proven to be unwarranted. Indeed, Canada's economy and population have not reached levels where it can be a strong competitor to the United States. With a population roughly thirteen times the size, the United States had the human element to develop and expand the industries that Canadians were merely trying to begin. Without the connection to the Empire, it is likely that Canada's economy would have stalled because it could not be self-sustaining. Over time, Canada and the United States have drifted closer together with regards to economics and defence, but it was not a guarantee that this would happen following Confederation. Politicians on both sides of the border sought to distinguish their nation from the other, breeding negative sentiments that hindered potential friendly relations.

Finally, the closing of the continent was another fear that held some justification. Canadian politicians, particularly Sir John A. Macdonald, aspired to see the Dominion of Canada stretch from coast-to-coast. This Canadian expansion would clearly inhibit the expansion of the United States. American politicians argued that the creation – and further territorial acquisitions – of Canada was in violation of the Monroe Doctrine and Manifest Destiny. Unfortunately for American statesmen, Canada did eventually extend coast-to-coast-to-coast, occupying all lands in between the 49th Parallel and the Arctic Circle, save for Alaska. Seward's attempt to hem in Canada worked to an extent as Alaska remains American soil; but it did not bring the

annexation of Canada which he believed would follow. Both the Monroe Doctrine and Manifest Destiny were American attempts to dominate the North American continent without regard for the aspirations of neighbouring states. American fears were not clandestine but well known and widespread across the country and in the British North American colonies. Although some of the fears expressed came to fruition, they were based on prejudicial fear that hindered the development of peaceful relations between the two countries beyond the already tumultuous and often icy relations between the United States and the mother country.