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THE PURCHASE OF RUSSIAN AMERICA:

REASONS AND REACTIONS

by

RICHARD EMERSON NEUNHERZ

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment

of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

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Approved by Norman Graebner

Department History

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We have carefully read the dissertation entitled The Purchase of Russian America: Reasons and Reactions

submitted by

Richard Emerson Neunherz in partial fulfillment of

the requirements of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

and recommend its acceptance. In support of this recommendation we present the following joint statement of evaluation to be filed with the dissertation.

This dissertation examines the reasons for the Russian sale and the U.S. purchase of Alaska in 1867, and the reactions to that event in the United States, British North America and Great Britain. Although this study is concerned with Russian motives for selling and with the negotiations between Secretary of State Seward and the Russian Ministers Stoeckl, a major focus of the study is the response to the purchase in the U.S. Congress, in the American press, and in Great Britain and her North American colonies.

Mr. Neunherz traces the story through the Foreign Relations Committee and the U.S. Senate, and presents in detail an account of the lobbying by Seward to win approval of the treaty. He also examined a very large number of newspapers and found that only a plurality of the newspaper community of the U.S. approved the purchase; a bare majority either opposed or ignored it. In British Columbia the press and many persons who wrote about the matter viewed the cession with alarm. Some expected the United States to annex British Columbia. In the other colonies of British North America, four of which would soon join to form the Dominion of Canada, there was widespread concern over this evidence of the United States' expansion to the north. Many saw the purchase of Alaska as an attempt by the American government to acquire British Columbia. Although the Government of Great Britain and much of the English press exhibited outward indifference, official and private correspondence shows that many government officials, especially those in the Colonial Office, saw the event as an American effort to push England out of British Columbia. This study also documents Seward's lively interest in the possibility of adding British Columbia to the United States. Finally, Mr. Neunherz examines in detail the debates in the House of Representatives over the appropriation for the purchase. Much was said in the debates about the opportunity the purchase would give the United States to acquire British Columbia. The study also shows that Russian officials were well aware of this possibility and not displeased with the prospect.

DISSERTATION READING COMMITTEE:

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The study is based on very extensive examination of the private papers of Senators and Representatives and other officials who participated in these events, on all relevant United States government documents, and on the study of a very substantial number of newspapers published in the United States, British North America, and in England. Official documents of the English government and the Russian government relating to the purchase of Alaska and the immediate consequences were also used.

DISSERTATION READING COMMITTEE: Norman A. Graebner

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Doctoral Dissertation

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Signature Richard Emerson Kennedy

Date August 8, 1975

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AHR	American Historical Review
BCHQ	British Columbia Historical Quarterly
Berkh	Vasillii Berkh, The Chronological History of the Discovery of the Aleutian Islands
DHM	David Hunter Miller
HR 177	U.S. House of Representatives, Ex. Doc. 177, 40th Cong, 2nd Sess.
NA, RG 23 ROAC	National Archives, Record Group 23, United States Coast Survey, Records of the Office of the Assistant in Charge.
NA, RG 59	National Archives, Record Group 59, General Records of the Department of State.
NA, RG 107	National Archives, Record Group 107, Records of the Office of the Secretary of War.
PRCA	Papers Relating to the Cession of America
PRO, C.O. 60	Public Record Office, London, Colonial Office 60
PRO, F.O. 115	Public Record Office, London, Foreign Office 115
PHR	Pacific Historical Review
PNQ	Pacific Northwest Quarterly
Tikhmenev	Pyotr Tikhmenev, The Historical Review of the Formation of the Russian-American Company
WHQ	Washington Historical Quarterly

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The assistance and encouragement of numerous people during many years have made this dissertation possible, and I take this opportunity to extend them my deep appreciation. Colleagues and friends have been unfailing in their confidence in me and in advising me to complete this task. Librarians and archivists across the country, too numerous to name here, have suffered patiently my quests for still more material. Especially I wish to thank Professor Vernon Carstensen, my durable advisor, whose encouragement, wise counsel and example have eased my path and enriched this experience. To my wife Diane, who has endured all, and to Ricky and Kimberly, who have done the same without understanding why, I am grateful beyond the power of words. Finally, special thanks are due my parents, whose faith in me and whose financial support have exceeded anything I had any right to expect.

R. E. N.

PREFACE

Preparation for this dissertation began in 1959, when as an undergraduate at Princeton University I chose the purchase of Alaska as a topic for a junior research paper. With the encouragement of Professor William B. Catton, that initial effort was expanded into a senior thesis. Later, with the approval of Professor Vernon Carstensen, a portion of the subject became a master's thesis at the University of Washington. On each occasion the preparatory research exceeded substantially the material actually used, and at each stage I have felt the necessity of continuing to attempt a complete account of the purchase. However, as my fascination with this story has grown since my undergraduate years, so also has my appreciation of the complexities involved in this final continental and first major non-continguous expansion of the United States.

Since 1959, numerous articles and a few books have been published which have examined one or more aspects of the acquisition of Russian America. They have added significantly to the body of knowledge available on this subject, but none have dealt comprehensively with the topic. The newest study, Ronald J. Jensen's The Alaska Purchase and Russian-American Relations (1975) is no exception. Perhaps the difficulty lies with the failure of scholars to appreciate that the acquisition of Alaska was not merely a story of diplomacy, internal American politics and formal transfer. This particular act of American expansion influenced British Columbia, the other British North American colonies soon to become the Dominion of Canada, and England. Further, the larger subject includes the occupation of Alaska, not only the formal transfer, but the movement of various individuals to the new frontier searching for the "main chance", the establishment of military control, and the beginnings of American commercial

exploitation of the region. These episodes are especially important in the acquisition of Alaska, because they all occured before completion of the final act of the purchase, the payment to Russia. No published work has attempted to examine all of these aspects of the purchase of Russian America while discussing the more standard elements of the story. Alas, despite my original intentions, neither does this dissertation. The limitations of time have made such a treatment in this present form impractical. The complete study of the purchase of Alaska remains to be done.

This dissertation focuses generally on three important, but previously neglected or misinterpreted aspects of the acquisition of Russian America: the treaty in the United States Senate; the reaction of the American press to the purchase, and the attitudes towards the cession in British Columbia, the English colonies of the emerging Dominion of Canada, and Great Britain. The first topic is one about which little has been known until recently, when David Donald's research for his book, Charles Sumner and the Rights of Man, uncovered an invaluable set of notes recording the meetings of the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations. These notes, supplemented by information from newspapers and the papers of various individuals involved in these events, give us a more complete look at the Senate's actions and Seward's lobbying on behalf of the treaty than has been hitherto possible. Secondly, previous interpretations of American press reactions have proven inadequate and misleading, because they were based on an examination of too few newspapers representing too limited a portion of the country. This dissertation provides a more balanced analysis of the American press response to the purchase by using a larger sample drawn from all portions of the United States. The third and final major focus of this work has

been largely neglected by other scholars. Although many have mentioned British Columbia in their discussions of the treaty, this dissertation attempts the first detailed examination of the reactions of the press and governments in the foreign lands most directly affected by the cession. It explores the response in British Columbia to being suddenly caught between two portions of American territory. Further, it studies the extent to which the nascent Dominion of Canada interpreted the American annexation of Alaska as hostile to its interests. Finally, the attitude of Great Britain is assessed, for the English Government would be crucial to the future of British Columbia should the United States Government decide to exploit the new opportunity for expansion created by its purchase of Russian America.

The sources used in this dissertation have been extensive. They include American, British North American and some British newspapers, translated Russian documents, the files of various departments and agencies of the United States Government held in the National Archives, and the extant papers of a large majority of the Senators and Representatives who served in Congress in 1867 and 1868, as well as those of others employed at various levels of the bureaucracy.

Chapter I

A S I T W A S A T T H E E N D

The Background and Condition of Russian America at the Time of its Sale

> The Russian colonies in America "are at a perfect standstill as regards colonization, hunting, trade, and civic development . . . ."
>
> Report of the Committee investigating the colonies, May, 1863.

It may be that distance and transport are revealing mirrors through which to see the rise of a satelite land in the new world, because they keep that land's vital relationship with the old world in the forefront. In contrast many studies of a new land which ignore that relationship unwittingly isolate the land from the outside world which suckled and shaped it.

Geoffrey Blainey, The Tyranny of Distance

The sale of Russian America to the United States, in 1867, marked a major departure for Alexander II from the policy of imperial expansion which his predecessors, the princes of Moscow and the czars of Russia, had pursued more or less relentlessly and successfully since the fifteenth century. Naturally, occasional military reverses and diplomatic defeats had forced temporary setbacks or delays in this accretion. Nevertheless, the general trend over several centuries had been for the rulers of Russia to add steadily to their dominions, to hold stubbornly to the lands already won, and to labor patiently to recover those regions formerly lost. Viewed from this perspective, the withdrawal from Russian America constituted a significant deviation from the normal growth pattern of the Russian Empire; from several aspects it was an unusual course for a great power.

First, the cession occured peacefully, in an atmosphere free of coercion, with no war or impending conflict to compel the Russian Government to act. Second, the impetus for the sale came largely from Russia and the Czar, a voluntary approach, involving no pressure from the American Government, direct or implied. Third, Russia held undisputed title to the area encompassing its North American possessions in 1867, recognized officially in conventions signed in 1824 with the United States and in 1925 with Great Britain, the only potential rivals whose proximity to the Russian colonies[1] could pose a threat or could call into question the validity of the Russian Claim. Fourth, once occupied by the United States, with Russia nenceforth excluded from the continent, there could be no realistic expectation that the abandoned lands could ever be recovered, nor did any influential Russian leader entertain such an idea. Fifth, the Imperial Government expected to reap no important diplomatic advantage, such as an alliance with the American Government or political support on

on European questions, to justify the loss of Russian America. Finally, the Czar received as compensation for his American territory no equivalent or valuable lands in exchange, but only the modest sum of $7,200,000 in gold. Translated into Russian currency, this amounted to approximately 11,000,000 silver roubles, not three-quarters of the budget of the Imperial Navy Ministry for 1867.[2]

Thus, the permanent and inadequately compensated alienation of a portion of the Empire as vast as Russian America should be interpreted as an extraordinary measure for a Russian emperor to undertake, not one to be made lightly or hastily. The decision of Czar Alexander II to sell these colonies evolved from lengthy studies of their condition and prospects by Government officials, from intermittent discussions with various of his advisors, and much reflection on the subject extending over many years. The reasons for the sale of Russian America and for its purchase by the United States will be examined in some detail later in this work, but one conclusion is suggested immediately. Regardless of the specific motives for the Czar's actions, it seems clear that he did not think Russian America desirable enough to retain. On the other hand, this same territory, when considered by the American Government, was believed to be valuable enough to buy.

This paradox raises several fundamental questions concerning the cession of Russian America. Were the Russian colonies both worthless to the Czar and valuable to the United States at the same time, or had one or both governments miscalculated the desirability of that giant land? What were the conditions existing in Russian America before the sale? Had those colonies been drained of their riches, as some contended, or had the potential resources merely been lightly touched?

The Czar presumably made his decision based on the best information available. Although large areas of the interior remained virtually unknown, the data possessed by the Russian authorities exceeded in volume and accuracy anything available to the Government of the United States. While the Russians had a reasonable idea of what they were selling, the Americans had only the vaguest notion of what they were buying. Therefore, some knowledge of the state of the Russian possessions in the years preceding the cession is necessary: first, for a better understanding of the Czar's decision to sell, and second, to comprehend more fully what the United States thought it was acquiring. Finally, an appreciation of the condition of the colonies is also vital to an understanding of the difficulties which would be encountered by the American Government and the American people in occupying, exploiting and administering their new possession, thereafter to be known as Alaska.[3]

I

Russian entry into the North American area began in the middle of the eighteenth century, as promyshlenniki,[4] in the pay of Siberian merchants, pushed their relentless search for new fur sources, especially the quest for sea otters, across the Kurile and Aleutian Island chains to the shores of a new continent. The first half century of Russian activity in the New World and its approaches was characterized by violent and wasteful competition between free traders and various Siberian based companies, whose employees slaughtered animals, natives and each other in their insatiable pursuit of fortune and dominance in the fur trade. Their excesses with the Indians, the brutality, butchery, debauchery and greed, left a heritage of ill will to plague relations with the natives for decades to come and made the Russians henceforth wary of neighboring tribes, who occasionally

struck back in bloody reprisals for the deeds perpetrated against them by the fur hunters. How many of the indigenous people succumbed in this onslaught of the promyshlenniki or fell victim to the diseases they carried will never be known, but the back and spirit of the whole Indian nation, the Aleuts, were broken and dulled in the process.[5] The number of pelts taken during these years is not known exactly, but the quantity probably exceeded a million skins, many of which were lost in maritime disasters or ruined by improper handling.[6] The abuses of this period could not be tolerated indefinately by the Russian Government, as a considerable loss in potential revenue to the Crown must have been a result. Thus, at the close of the century, the Imperial Government compelled several of the competing concerns to merge and form a new commercial organization, the Russian American Company, founded in 1798 and chartered under the protection of Czar Paul in 1799.

During the remainder of the Russian era in North America, the Imperial possessions were administered and exploited exclusively by this new trading firm. In time, the Russian American Company established a number of isolated fur posts among the Kurile and Aleutian archipelagoes and on the offshore islands and the mainland of the Northwest American coast. These stations, with the exceptions of the colonial capital, New Archangel (Sitka), and the settlements at Kodiak and Unalaska, never grew beyond the stage of rude and sparsely populated outposts clinging tenaciously but precariously to forbidding isles and shores.

In addition to these establishments, the Russian American Company also attempted two other colonial adventures, the settlement of Fort Ross in Spanish California, north of San Francisco Bay, founded in 1812, and several plantations in the Sandwich Islands, begun in 1816. Both sites had been envisioned as granaries for the Russian colonies on the northwest

coast,[7] as trading posts, and by some as extensions of Russia's imperial pretentions in the North Pacific. Both enterprises ultimately were abandoned, partially, at least, from a lack of aggressive support from the Russian Government. These difficulties increased the problems of obtaining food and trade goods for the stations and settlements in Russian America, which consequently may have doomed those colonies to a slow strangulation of their commercial activities and led to their eventual demise.

II

The Russian American Company, under the authority granted by its charter, provided all the functions of government in the colonies and enjoyed a commercial monopoly in the region as well. This dual role, the exercising of both political and economic authority by an essentially private business organization, confronted the directors of the Company and the administrators of the colonies with a number of problems unusual to merchants. The vesting of such powers in a company based on private capital certainly was not unique with Czarist Russia, for Great Britain had used this method of colonization and control with some success but considerable failure in North America and India. Ultimately, the English Government abandoned all of these ventures as being inadequate to the demands of both political administration and commercial development. If the British, with their superior financial resources, extensive transportation and communication facilities, and a political and cultural tradition which encouraged the type of individual initiative which seemed to be required in developing colonies, could not make the private company serve successfully in both roles, it should not be surprising that the Russian American Company also could not perform these tasks well.

The charter which bestowed these broad powers on the Russian American Company had an original life of twenty years and was twice renewed for similar periods. Therefore, as each appointed time span neared an end, the Board of the Directors had to seek an extension of these privileges. Such applications consistantly led to various changes in the current charter, alterations which always left the civilian and merchant element who founded the Company less in control than previously. During the years of the first charter,[8] the colonies generally prospered under the influence of the coarse, carousing, courageous promyshlenniki, who gave color and vitality to the enterprise, even if they did not provide much order. These adventurers exploited the abundant fur resources and the natives with wild abandon, much as in the days before the organization of the Company. Occasionally, they paid a gory price for their excesses, such as in the massacre of the Sitka post by the Kolosh (Tlingit) in 1802.[9] The direction of the shrewd, mercurial, tireless Alexander Baranov, first governor of Russian America, held the colonies together in those wild, nascent years.[10]

The second charter, approved in 1821, brought an end to the promyshlenniki period, and the Imperial Government began removing such individuals from colonial leadership, filling their positions with naval officers and government beaurocrats. After the replacement of Baranov in 1818, all subsequent governors of the colonies came from the ranks of the naval staff officers. The Board of the Directors of the Russian American Company selected these administrators from a list submitted by the Ministry of Marine. Regulation of the Company fell under the control of the Ministry of Finance, which exercised a thorough surveilance of its affairs.[11] In time, government influence extended into the membership of the Board of Directors. Four Siberian merchants had comprised that body in 1799, but by 1846, the expanded five man Board consisted of two naval officers,

two army officers and one privy councilor. In a similar manner, the Advisory Council, created in 1814 to assist the Board on political and business matters, had become totally composed of government servants and military retainers by 1844.[12] The reasons for this gradual penetration of an ostensibly private, civilian organization, by members of the Imperial establishment, were probably political. By the time of the second charter, the North American colonies and the business of the Company had involved Russia in diplomatic disputes with the United States, Great Britain and Spain. Thus, while still commercial in intent and basic operations, the Russian American Company and its posts had become pawns of czarist foreign policy as well. Under those circumstances, it is understandable that the Russian Government would want its influence felt strongly in the membership of the general administration of the Company.

Interference in the affairs of the Company and the administration of Russian America by the Government, however, did not bring increased protection of the political interests of the colonies. Repeatedly, the Imperial Government sacrificed the welfare of its American possessions in seeking to win advantages for the Empire in some other corner of the world. Thus, fearing the reaction of Great Britain, Czar Alexander I, in 1818, rejected the request of a Sandwich Island King, Tomari, for protection. By this refusal, the Russian American Company lost its only opportunity to establish a trading base and granary in those lush and strategic islands.[13]

In 1821, hoping to protect his colonies from damaging competition from American ship captains and traders on the northwest coast, Alexander issued an imperial ukase extending the boundaries of his possessions south to the line 51°N latitude, approximately parallel to the northern tip of Vancouver Island, and banning all foreign traders from that region and foreign vessels from colonial waters within one hundred Italian miles of

the shores.[14] Strong protests from Great Britain and the United States, both of whom had territorial interests in that region, induced the Czar to retreat from this advanced position. In 1824 and 1825, in separate treaties, first with the American and then the British governments, the Emperor agreed to a southern boundary at the line 54°40'N, recognized an open seas policy in colonial waters for ten years, and approved the concept of free and reciprocal access to the coastal lands of the signatory nations south of the 60°N line of latitude, except where posts or settlements already existed. In addition, Russia abandoned to Great Britain all rights to the vast interior south of that point, save for a narrow coastal strip, later known as the panhandle, and granted the British full rights to trade at Sitka.[15] In effect, the access provision constituted a surrender by the Imperial Government to the United States and England, who alone possessed the shipping to trade at will along the shores of the Pacific Northwest.[16] Understandably, the Russian American Company vehemently attacked the terms of these agreements, but to no avail. The motives for this shift in czarist policy lay in the Near East, an area of critical concern to the Russian Empire.[17]

The Russian colony at Fort Ross also suffered from a lack of Government diplomatic support. To survive, the small agricultural settlement required additional land for cultivation, which could be procured only through an agreement with the revolutionary government of Mexico. But Czar Nicholas I adamantly refused to purchase the necessary acreage at the required "price", formal or de facto recognition of the Mexican regime.[18] To have granted such legitimacy would have jeopardized his European leadership of the reactionary Holy Alliance.

The lease of the "panhandle" region of Russian America to the Hudson's Bay Company in 1839 marked yet another retreat for the Russian American

Company. In return for an annual rental payment of 2,000 land otter skins, valued at £ 2,300, a promise of regular delivery of supplies to New Archangel at established prices, and a release from liability in the vexatious "Dryad" incident, the Russian American Company virtually surrendered one of the richest portions of its holdings to its British rival for a term of ten years.[19] By this monopoly, the Hudson's Bay Company effectively excluded the Russians from all trade with the interior and coastal tribes between the latitudes 54°40'N and 60°N, land still nominally under the sovereignty of the czars, but now practically forbidden to their subjects.

The lease was a pragmatic bargain for the Russian American Company, the best that could be salvaged from a difficult situation. Lacking firm diplomatic support or provisioning assistance from the Imperial Governments and already compromised by concessions made in the Anglo-Russian Convention of 1825, the Russian Company had to deal with the Hudson's Bay Company from weakness. Confronted with the "Dryad" claims, worth £22,150. 10s. 11d.,[20] increasing competition from American and Hudson's Bay traders, and a growing supply crisis, the Board of the Directors chose a course calculated to solve these problems with the least damage to the Company.

Thereafter, relations between the Russian and English companies remained cordial and largely non-competitive, and British control of the coast did drive the Americans from the area, as their right to access had not been renewed. That the agreement proved mutually satisfactory can be seen from the six extensions made before the cession of the territory to the United States. However, the Russian American Company had little choice but to continue the arrangement. Once abandoned to the British, command of the coastal fur trade, so dependent upon gaining native loyalties, would have been extremely difficult to reestablish, and soon the declining

fortunes of the Russian firm left it without the will or means to attempt such a venture. Furthermore, the annual rental, converted into a cash payment of £1,500 sterling in 1856, became a reassuring element in the income of a weakened business.

For a decade following the commencement of the lease, the Hudson's Bay Company fulfilled its pledge to supply food to the Russian colonies: wheat, wheat flour, peas, salt meat, butter and ham, items which the Russian American Company could not import from the homeland at a competitive price.[21] This, in turn, allowed the Russian American Company to abandon its post at Fort Ross, which had become financially burdensome and had failed to provide the colonies in the Northwest with sufficient food to justify its continued existence. In 1841, in an economy move, the Government sold the Ross holdings to John A. Sutter for a sum equal to $30,000.[22] However, the relief in the food supply problems of Russian America, achieved through the lease arrangement, proved temporary. A new protocol, signed in 1849, eliminated all mention of the Hudson's Bay Company obligation. The changed political situation in the Oregon country had made the task nearly impossible to fulfill.[23] Thereafter, supplies for the posts and redoubts were either brought from California, when available, carried half-way around the world by vessel from England or Russia, or shipped across the North Pacific from Siberia. After that date, the only benefits from the lease remaining to the Russians were harmonious relations with the British Company, which made possible the use of their vessels for freight, and a paltry but welcome rental fee, so little for so much.

In retrospect, the decisions of the Imperial Government and the Russian American Company regarding the various portions of the North American possessions reflected a certain degree of logic and perhaps inevitability.

Meddling in the Sandwich Islands and the colony at Ross were probably

doomed from the outset, and the boundary conventions in 1824 and 1825 merely recognized the extent of actual Russian influence on the northwest coast. Even the lease held some advantages for the Russian Company. But despite these factors, it seems clear that these tactical withdrawals diminished the strength of the Russian Empire in North America, constricted the further development of the remaining colonies, and made their survival increasingly unlikely.

Participation in the colonial administration by the Navy did not lead to a full and open assumption of authority by the Government. The fiction of continuing Company control proved useful when complaints arose regarding its operations. Furthermore, the robe of a private commercial organization served as a convenient cloak for more devious Russian activities. Imperial officials long had eyed the Amur River Valley, nominally occupied by China, as a desirable area for Russian expansion. In the 1850's, Russia began to move stealthily into the area. Company personnel did much to accomplish the seizure of the territory which the Treaty of Aigun legalized in 1858. An 1859 report of the Governor-General of Siberia, Nikolai Nikolayevich Murav'ev, made this fact clear.

> . . . the part played by the Russian American Company at the very beginning of the Amur undertaking was the more important as it laid the foundation for an enterprise that was to have important consequences. It is well known that the first decisive steps we took on the Amur in 1850, when the government considered it necessary to keep them in secret were achieved under the auspices of the Company. Thus were founded our first trading posts at the mouth of the Amur.[24]

The Company continued to function as a separate entity, therefore, but neither as a totally government-controled monopoly nor as an independent commercial venture. An 1842 note from the Department of Economics recognized this duality. "The Company is not only a commercial corporation, but, also, to a certain extent, a government institution, . . ."[25]

Confusion in direction and emphasis was the result of this situation, neglect and perhaps stagnation its offspring. It may have been that the potpourri of often contradictory roles assigned to the Company - political administration, commercial exploitation, foreign policy agency and private business - none of which could be pursued exclusively and successfully because of the moderating and compromising influence of the other functions, may have contributed significantly to the failure of the Russian colonial effort in North America.

III

The population of Russian America consisted mainly of natives and creoles,[26] with Russians never accounting for more than a fraction of the total inhabitants. The dual systems of serfdom and aristocracy in the motherland prevented any significant immigration of peasants and craftsmen from Russia, and there was little to entice them to come to North America in any case. The climate, the soil and the prospect of life under Company rule had little to offer. Furthermore, farmers occupy and subdue the land, and Company regulations consistantly indicated that exploitation of the natural fur resources, not permanent settlement, was the goal of its activities. Imperial law and Company edict forbade any Russian below the rank of an officer to remain in the colonies longer than twelve years, and not even these privileged individuals could reside there for life.[27] Governors after Baranov served a maximum of five year. Actually, some Russians did stay far beyond the limits established. Government leniency in enforcing the decree, indifference, and the difficulty of finding suitable replacements made this possible and often necessary.[28] By the final charter period, these procedures had been relaxed sufficiently to permit retirement in Russian America on pension if terms of service from fifteen to

twenty years had been completed. Those cases were apparently not numerous, and the Company encouraged re-settlement in Siberia rather than retirement in North America.[29] How many pensioners lived in the colonies at the time of the cession is not known, but their presence and the choice of some to remain beyond the transfer of the territory to the United States would lead to disputes for the American Government over their personal property. Imperial regulations also prohibited the residence of non-Russian Caucasians within the colonies. Although exceptions to this rule occured from time to time, the number of Americans, Englishmen and others of European stock who could add their talents to the strengthening of the colonial establishment remained extremely small.

Lacking sufficient skilled Russians, the Company had to train the native Aleuts and the creoles to perform the tasks necessary to the existence of the tiny settlements and redoubts. Eventually, these individuals became proficient enough to pursue much of the work of the Company without direct Russian supervision - organizing and operating long hunts for furs, opening new country to exploitation, and carrying on important trade services. Some became bookkeepers or navigators, while others trained for the priesthood in a seminary in New Archangel. The clergy produced by that small institution conducted the major portion of the missionary activity in the colonies for their adopted faith, Russian Orthodoxy. That the scattered settlements survived at all testifies as much to the courage, ingenuity and dedication of the colonial people, the creole and native employees, as to the energies exerted by the Company, the Imperial Government or the resident Russians.

Except for the creole community, the population of Russian America grew very little during the governance of the Company. Statistics for the early period are sketchy at best, and are never more than rough estimates

for the number of natives living in the possessions. Tikhmenev notes that in 1805, an early reckoning, 475 employees, the majority presumably white, came to the colonies from Russia and Siberia. Near the close of the first charter period, in 1819, the number of Russians stood at 391, of which only 13 were women. Not surprisingly, the new and growing creole group had reached 244. Dependent natives, those directly under Company authority, were estimated to be about 8,000.[30] The latter, however, exposed to diseases for which they had no immunity, declined severely in the years of the second charter period. Estimated to be about 10,000 in 1837, a smallpox epidemic reduced the dependent natives to a weakened population of 6,800 by 1842. A measles outbreak late in that decade also took a toll.[31] In the meantime, the Russian community had grown to 627 (including 64 women) by 1833.[32] Remaining near that level for a number of years, 633 were counted in 1845, the high water mark of 658 was reached in 1856, after which the white population slowly declined to 559 souls in 1864, the last year for which accounts are available. As for the creoles, their number increased to 991 in 1833, reached 1,483 by 1845, expanded to 1,902 by 1856, but were only 1,911 by 1864. The dependent natives, mainly the Aleuts, never entirely recovered from the ravages of disease during the Russian period, despite the ambitious programs of innoculation pressed by the Company. Near the close of the Russian era, their group counted only 7,385 people.[33] As for the independent natives, the Russian American

Company had only limited contact with most, and officials had only the roughest idea as to their numbers, which authorities repeatedly placed at about 40,000. This unchanging number suggests an estimate commonly agreed upon for lack of a more accurate figure.[34]

Clearly, these people held little importance for the Russian American Company and even less for the Imperial Government. During their tenure in North America, the Russians made little concerted effort to penetrate the vast, uncharted interior of their possessions either to tap the resources or open trade with the natives. In fact, despite the many services performed for their adopted country by the creoles and dependent natives, the Company and the Russian Government, until the third charter period, seldom demonstrated much concern for them beyond their potential use in the fur trade. The composition of the population of Russian America definately reflects the essential exploitive nature of the entire colonial effort there. The tiny, white Russian segment obviously coincided with this intent, for they resided there largely for the purposes of government administration, commercial direction and control. Few if any went to Russian America with the intent of staying for life. In fact, the law forbid this. Consequently, Russian America never developed a Russian population large enough to serve as a persuasive force for the retention of those possessions within the Empire, and the creole and dependent natives were not valued sufficiently to be a factor in the decision to sell. Without a large Russian population, the colonies remained merely a remote mine, a source of wealth to be tapped as long as the operation proved profitable and feasible. Such mining camps have a transitory nature in most cases, and loyalties to such locales seldom grow strong, especially not in the minds of distant owners of the property. Thus, Russian America

did not become fixed in the minds of Russia's rulers as a part of the soil of "Holy Mother Russia", and the decision to sell the colonies, as a consequence, was not one which would violate national pride unduly.

IV

The economy of the colonies rested on a single staple, furs. In the imperial charter that established the Russian American Company, Czar Paul granted the new corporation the right "To use and profit by everything which has been or shall be discovered in those localities, on the surface and in the interior of the earth without competition from others."[35] Subsequent charters confirmed this monopoly. In theory, the Company possessed the privileges of exploiting the known mineral resources, the vast stands of timber, the whales and the fish which abounded in colonial waters. In practice, the Company pursued only the fur trade vigorously, in which occupation it carried on commerce with the dependent native population.

The Russian American Company derived its income from several sources, all of which stemmed from peltry. The most prized object of the extensive hunts was the sea otter. Fur seals ranked first in the quantity harvested, but yielded only a fraction of the profits realized from sea otters. Skins of the beaver, land otter, and the brown-black fox also possessed considerable value on the Chinese and Russian fur markets.[36] The Company shipped the bulk of its colonial furs to China, via Okhotsk and the frontier post of Kiahkta, where mandarin agents paid well for the soft trimmings for their robes. In exchange for the processed furs, the Company received tea which it sold in Russia at a substantial profit. The tea trade, in fact, yielded a larger income than the direct sale of furs in the homeland. During the period of the third charter, 1842-1862, receipts from pelts sold in Russia

exceeded the return from tea in only three years.[37] A portion of the finest skins went to the domestic markets at St. Petersburg, Moscow, and the Nijni-Novgorod fair. In the closing years of Company rule, New York also became a lucrative sales area, with as many as 30,000 seal skins sent there in 1862 and 25,556 in 1863.[38] The Company purchased its skins in the colonies from Russian and native hunters, usually Aleuts, who obtained either goods or scrip in return. Others, employed by the Company, received an annual or monthly salary for their hunting and used Company equipment. The markup on the merchandise traded to these individuals, averaging seventy-seven percent on all but basic food and clothing items, added to the overall Company earnings, as did the increased valuation placed on the furs bartered to the Chinese.[39]

In the eighteenth century and the opening years of the nineteenth, fur-bearing animals abounded on the shores and in the coastal waters of Russian America. The fur seal gathered in vast herds and numbered several millions. The sea otter existed in much smaller quantities, but hunters still managed to kill many thousands of these prized creatures. Surrounded by such a limitless resource, no caution stayed the avarice of the promyshlenniki. They and their Aleut partners recklessly butchered mothers and pups, as well as the more expendable males. Such indescriminate slaughter soon produced its inevitable result. By the early years of the second charter period, the "inexhaustable" herds had shrunk alarmingly and the extinction of various species became a distinct possibility. Extended hunts which once had returned with thousands of skins now yielded but a few hundred, and the major killing sessions on the islands of St. Paul and St. George fell below their quotas by several thousands of skins.[40]

Faced with imminent financial disaster, the Company, under orders from the Imperial Government, belatedly attempted a program of conservation, which finally became effective during the third charter years. The idea

of preserving the fur seal herds and the danger of ignoring such measures, however, received attention at least as early as 1820 and 1821, at the beginning of the naval regime. Following suggestions made by Governor Semyon Ivanovich Yanovski, the Board of Directors of the Russian American Company, in 1821, instructed his successor, Governor and Naval Captain Matvei Ivanovich Murav'ev, to observe occasional one year moratoriums on killing at some fur seal islands, but to press the search for undiscovered seal rookeries on new islands so as not to diminish the total yield. Such an approach was doomed to failure and indicated that the Company little understood the principles of conservation.[41] By 1830, the alarming decline in fur returns indicated that these measures had not sufficed. In 1844, in the newly issued third charter, the Imperial Government charged the Board of the Company, with the aid of statistical data provided by the Colonial Governor, to supervise "not only the conducting of trade but the conservation and development of the sources of this trade as well."[42] However, the Company had already begun to realize some success in this matter and had sophisticated its concept of conservation. In an 1842 letter to Governor Arvid Adolf Etolin, the Board expressed its satisfaction with the methods already taken by him and the signs of an increase in the seal herds on St. Paul Island. Captain Etolin was instructed not to exceed, in future hunts, the results of the natural propagation on that island and to declare a closed season on the Island of St. George as soon as possible. In 1843, those advices were ammended to provide that it be a "permanent rule to conduct the annual catch in such a manner that not only the rookeries are not depleted but that they are allowed to increase, . . ."[43] By the following decade, the seal herds had recovered sufficiently for the Company once more to push the killings of those animals vigorously. However, letters from the Board to the Governor, Captain Nikolai Il'ich

Rudakov, in 1853 and 1854, suggest that this renewed emphasis on hunting was not to occur at the cost of again depleting the herds.[44]

The heyday of the fur trade had passed, however, the successes with conservation notwithstanding, and such times would not return during the Russian era. Never again did the Company harvest the huge number of pelts taken in that period of the first charter.[45] To add to the mounting difficulties pressing the Russian firm, the Chinese fur market became less lucrative as that country declined in wealth and power in the mid-nineteenth century.[46]

As revenues from the fur seal and sea otter declined, the Company sought additional means of income through the exploitation of other resources included in its monopoly. Company records indicate that an increase in the pursuit of other fur animals was tried first, suggested by a sharp rise in the number of beaver, river otter and various types of foxes shipped from the colonies after 1821.[47] But the financial return from such activities could not balance the losses from the waning trade in seals and sea otters.

The decade of the 1840's proved especially difficult for the Russian American Company, beginning with the three year delay in granting a new charter, not promulgated until 1844. In addition to this uncertainty, prospects were dimmed by the alarming reduction in the fur yields, partially the result no doubt of the new conservation measures. In the six years preceding 1850, the average number of sea otters shipped from the colonies fell to only 525, the seal skin count hit a low of 7,450, while the total furs exported averaged 23,882. Beginning in 1850, however, with conservation having proved somewhat successful, the Company once more aggressively pushed the fur trade. In the next ten years, 1850-1859, the sea otters shipped averaged 1,417, the seal skins 15,863, and the total furs hit an encouraging mean of 45,638.[48]

That decade, commencing in 1850, also witnessed a new surge of determination to diversify the Company's activities. One scheme focused on the whaling industry in the North Pacific. American whalers had long been frequenting those hunting grounds, then probably the richest in the world; and while filling their holds with oil and bone, American sailors had traded illegally with natives in the Russian possessions, disturbed seal rookeries, taken furs, and stolen from the Company and the natives.[49] For years, Directors of the Russian American Company had considered entering the trade, not only for the anticipated profits, but also to watch the Americans and to forestall their depredations. In 1850, the Company formed a partnership with some Finnish whaling interests, calling the new concern the Russo-Finnish Whaling Company, financed at 200,000 roubles.[50] Three vessels were eventually bought or built for whaling, and six voyages undertaken over a span of eight years before the partnership dissolved. Although the first cruise, that of the 550 ton Suomi, returned with 1,500 barrels of oil and 21,400 pounds of whalebone, the Company experienced difficulties thereafter. The Crimean War, 1854-1856, involving Russia and Great Britain as antagonists, seriously interrupted the whaling company's efforts, and the enterprise collapsed late in the decade. Lt. Gen. Politovsky, presiding member of the Board of the Russian American Company, blamed the failure on several factors.

> The great expenditure required fitting out vessels and hiring the necessary crew and commanders, as well as losses incurred during the war and the three years required for collecting the disposing of a cargo, were the principal reasons for the gradual dissolution of the Company.[51]

A more curious venture was the sale of ice to the thirsty miners in California. In 1852, the Russian American Company contracted with a new American firm, the American Russian Commercial Company of San Francisco, to supply 1,000 tons of ice annually at the price of thirty-five dollars

a ton.[52] The following year, this agreement was enlarged to cover a period of twenty years and to include trade in coal, timber and fish, as well as ice.[53] Difficulties ensued, however, for the American corporation proved to be insufficiently financed to carry on trade of the extent envisioned in this contract. Furthermore, according to J. Mora Moss, president of the San Francisco Company, competition with ice bought on the Asian coast of Russia and sold in California had cut into that portion of the business.[54] Because of such difficulties the American Company could not fulfill its share of the agreement, and a new short-term arrangement was drawn up in 1860, specifying the delivery of 3,000 tons of ice a year at seven dollars a ton. No provision was made for the sale of other colonial products and the Russian Company pledged itself not to sell ice to any other customer on the California, Oregon or Mexican coast for under twenty-five dollars per ton. The new contract proved more profitable for the Russian American Company, which occasionally added to its ice income by shipping this commodity in its own vessels at the rate of eight dollars a ton. Despite the success of the second contract, the ice business did not return significant revenues. In the first ten years of the ice trade, 1852-July 1, 1862, the Russian American Company earned only $250,000 in this enterprise.[55]

Partially as a result of the original contract with the American Russian Company and its ambitious plans to merchadise colonial products, the Russian firm began coal mining on the Kenai Peninsula in 1855, with machinery purchased in San Francisco. Both companies shared the early expenses, but after July, 1857, the American concern withdrew its support and the Russian American Company continued the venture along. Production from the mine was intended for use in Company steamers and for sale in the United States. However, because of the inferior grade of coal in the

Kenai mine, inexperience of the miners, and the poor quality of the machinery used, the enterprise never became profitable. Furthermore, the British-run mines at Nanaimo, on Vancouver Island, which opened in 1852, contained a better grade of coal and enjoyed the distinct advantage of closer proximity to the major markets on the West Coast. During the three years of operations at Kenai, the mine yielded only 2,760 tons of coal, valued in the colonies at 45,800 roubles paper ($9,760), produced at an annual average cost of 38,480 roubles paper ($7,696).[56] Sold in San Francisco at $1.75 per ton, the Kenai coal, mined at the cost of $15 per ton, could not compete with the better grades sold locally at lower prices.[57] In 1860, a fire mercifully terminated the experiment, and the Company wisely chose not to renew it.

The Russian American Company chose not to exploit the other mineral resources which the colony possessed, although the existence of copper and gold was well known to Company officials.[58] Some timber was cut and several saw mills existed in the colonies for that purpose, but its use rarely extended beyond the Russian territories. Fishing added to the food supplies of the colonial residents, being a staple of their diet much of the time, but plans to utilize this resource in foreign trade never developed beyond the earliest stages. For a few years, commencing in 1846, trade was developed with the Sandwich Islands, in which Russian fish and timber were exchanged for salt, sugar, syrup and coffee. Potentially profitable, this commerce ended in 1849 as attention was focused on the burgeoning population and business of California.[59] The Company even tried gold mining in that new United States possession, but that failed after three months because the employees could not be prevented from running away.[60] Attempts at farming and cattle breeding did not produce even enough to satisfy the basic requirements of Russian America,

necessitating the costly importation of foodstuffs. This added to the expenses of maintaining the colonies. In short, none of the excursions into economic diversification succeeded in relieving the financial distress caused by the decline in peltry. By the close of the third charter period, the Company still relied upon the fur trade, commerce with the natives, and the tea traffic for the bulk of its income.

V

One of the reasons for the sale of Russian America which will be discussed in the following chapter was the belief of some officials in the Imperial Government that the colonies had become unprofitable and that the Russian American Company was on the brink of financial collapse. This viewpoint was urged on Czar Alexander II by various advisors and it seemed to be supported by several reports prepared by special committees charged with investigating the condition of the Company and the possessions in North America preparatory to the possible issuance of a fourth charter. In an opinion written in 1862, for instance, the Minister of State Property stated that:

> The main pursuit of the colonies - the hunting of sea otters - has been continually on the decline . . . the fur business has begun to yield first place to Canada and Great Britain . . . Whaling in the colonies has passed into the hands of the Americans. Fishing has been done on a scale which barely meets the needs of the colonies themselves, . . . Nothing has been done with respect to farming and cattle breeding. The mineral resources of the region have hardly been tapped. All the commercial relations that the Company has maintained have been seriously impared and are falling into decay.[61]

Historians who have written on the Russian American Company and the sale of the colonies have tended to agree with this negative assessment of the situation which existed on the eve of the treaty.[62] None of these authors, however, has presented convincing evidence that the Company and the

colonies were facing a serious financial crisis. Most writers seem to have accepted as accurate the Imperial Government's reports on those final years before the cession, although that material usually described gloomier circumstances and prospects than suggested by the records of the Russian American Company. The data used by most scholars, furthermore, has been too fragmentary to accomplish anything except to confuse the picture and raise the question as to the real financial position of the Company in the early 1860's. It is not the intent of this author to attempt a solution of that problem, but only to present sufficient evidence to indicate that previous examinations of the final years of the Company's activities in Russian America have been inadequate and to suggest that further research on this matter is needed.

A variety of information on the Company's business operations is available. In addition to the Government reports, some of which have been translated and were accessible to the author, the financial statements of the Company for the years 1845-1863 have also been available in English. There are problems in using these documents, however. The Government investigations may not have been objective, and the Company reports may not be entirely reliable. We do not know how thoroughly the Ministry of Finance supervised the Company's financial records or how sophisticated the bookkeeping methods were in Russia in 1867. Furthermore, no business statements have been accessible to the author for 1864 or 1865, and only the sketchiest details for 1866 have been at hand. Nevertheless, if one assumes that the Company's records are reasonably reliable, it would seem that there were at least four positive factors in the firm's financial accounts of the last decade before the sale of the colonies: income, product volume, assets and inventory.[63]

One encouraging sign in the Russian American Company's operating

statistics at the end of the third charter period was its income record. From 1845-1861, the Company averaged revenues of 869,600 silver roubles, but this figure was on an upward trend at the close of the 1850's. In the six lean years, 1850-1855, when the Company's fortunes were effected by the Cimean War and the fur conservation program, the annual receipts averaged 776,700 roubles, but in the final six years of the third charter, 1856-1860, the mean rose to 955,500 roubles. In three of those years, 1858-1860, the income exceeded one million annually, with a peak of 1,077,200 being reached in 1858. Although the Company's revenues declined after 1860, its receipts during the years 1861-1863 were close to the mean income for the entire third charter.

The increase in Company revenues was matched by parallel improvements in the volume of furs shipped from the colonies. The average number of pelts exported from Russian America rose steadily over the course of the third charter. In the years 1844-1849, the annual shipments averaged 23,800 skins of all types. During the next six years, the figure climbed to 38,296; and in the final portion of the period, 1856-1861, the mean was 52,831 furs. In general, the higher yield of fur seals during these years made such increases possible. The Company averaged exports of 7,300 seal skins from 1844-1849; and from 1850-1855, the number rose to 17,800, a growth in product volume of over 100%. In the last six years of the period, the mean jumped to 35,100, with approximately 70,000 being shipped in 1859. The trend continued after 1861. The Company exported 68,300 skins in 1862, and followed this with 79,920 in 1863. These increases may be the result of reckless exploitation, an abandonment by the Company of its conservation program, but there is no firm evidence to that effect.

Another possible indication of business vitality was the growth of

the Company's assets over the term of the third charter. Its holdings had risen from 2,907,600 roubles in 1845 to 5,824,300 roubles on January 1, 1862, an increase of approximately one hundred percent. Although the balance sheets do show a sharp decrease for 1862, the assets of the Company were again listed at over five million roubles at the beginning of 1864.

Inventories had also grown during the third charter period, as would be consistent with a business whose assets had increased. The Company's merchandise included furs and chests of tea held in Russia for domestic markets, goods intended for shipment to the colonies, and stores in Russian America for sale to the inhabitants. In January, 1845, the inventory of such products was listed at 1,231,200 roubles. This figure climbed steadily during the period and reached 2,441,400 at the end of 1861, and on January 1, 1864, the merchandise owned by the Company was carried on the books at 2,727,700 roubles, up by 120% since 1845.

Rising income, increasing product volume, expanding assets, and a growing inventory all seem to have been part of the financial picture of the Russian American Company in the early 1860's. Under normal conditions, these trends could be interpreted as signs of a prospering business, certainly not one on the verge of collapse. However, as a protected state monopoly and the administrator of distant imperial colonies as well, the Company did not function in a normal commerical situation. Its existence depended more on the pleasure of the Czar than on its profit and loss record, and the denial of his favor could doom the Company even if it was a sound business. Why Alexander II withdrew his support from the Russian American Company is not known, nor do we know to what extent his attitude towards the Company influenced his decision to sell the colonies. It is possible that he chose his course without reference to the Company's financial strengths and weaknesses. But if he did consider its commercial

prospects, there were some aspects of the financial statements, discussed below, which might be interpreted pessimistically and might seem to suggest approaching business failure. In that case, the Emperor could have been persuaded to rid himself of a potential liability before its cost to the Government ran too high.

One factor in the Company's position in the early 1860's which might have seemed questionable was its notes receivable and liabilities situation. In 1845, the Company had held notes worth 904,500 roubles, with the bulk of those obligations being in Russia. This total fluctuated by a few hundred thousand annually during the next ten years, but after 1854, the amount rose rapidly to a high of 2,565,500 roubles in 1860, also the peak year for assets and short term liabilities. Debts owed in that year by the Company equaled 2,978,100 roubles, up steadily from an 1845 figure of 530,400. These statistics might seem but another mark of an expanding business. However, the financial history of the next few years may suggest trouble for the Company.

In a normal business situation there is not necessarily a close relationship between notes receivable and short term liabilities, but in the case of the Russian American Company during the third charter period there seems to have been more than a casual correspondence between these two factors. From 1850-1861, short term debts exceeded notes receivable consistently, and the two items rose and fell more or less together. The average gap during those years was 377,100 roubles, and the median difference was approximately 371,000 roubles. However, after 1861, the interval widened. By 1864, the notes receivable had fallen to 1,101,300 roubles, a drop of 57% since 1860, while the short term liabilities were 2,897,900 roubles. Part of this reduction in notes receivable coincided with a temporary decrease in liabilities after 1860. But, while the debts had

risen again by over eight hundred thousand in 1863, the obligations to the Company had continued to decline, except in Russian America, where notes receivable reached a peak for the period of 556,500 roubles and exceeded those held in Russia. It is not clear what these figures mean, but it is certain that the Company's debts were rising by 1864, and now were greatly in excess of the value of the notes receivable for the first time since before the third charter commenced. If the Company had been accustomed to calling in notes receivable to pay liabilities, thereby maintaining a reasonable balance between the two, a practice which the above statistics seem to suggest, then this system of operation was suddenly very much out of control by 1864. Furthermore, it is possible that those obligations owed to the Company in Russia America, probably by natives and creoles, may have climbed steadily because some were not collectible, but were still carried on the books, which would make the notes receivable position even worse by 1864.

The inventory picture by 1864 may also have been discouraging. As that year began, the Company held 24,711 furs in Russia, the surplus from the markets of 1863, and 10,841 boxes of tea. This number of pelts was nothing unusual and could probably be sold during the coming year. However, the amount of surplus tea exceeded by over 300% the remainder of any previous year. Only 1,256 boxes had been sold in 1863, and the average sales for the years 1860-1864 had been only 5,454. To further complicate the situation, the Company's increasing fur productivity was resulting in larger tea purchases at Kiakhta and Shanghai, where the average over the same four years had been 7,900 boxes. Whether this imbalance between tea supplies and sales was only temporary can not be determined, but the Company may have been facing the prospect of a growing surplus of products that could not be readily marketed in Russia.

Another element that may have disturbed Government officials was the dividend pattern of the Company in its final years. Since the beginning of the third charter, the Company had paid dividends annually, rather than every two years as had been the practice earlier. From 1842-1850, the rate was fifteen roubles per share, on stock valued at one hundred and fifty roubles par. The dividend was increased to eighteen roubles in 1851, a 20% rise, and to twenty roubles in 1858, a growth of $33\frac{1}{3}\%$ since 1842. However, in 1861, perhaps as a result of business difficulties, the directors of the Company dropped the dividend to sixteen roubles a share, and none was declared in 1862 or 1863, the first years since 1822-1823 that stockholders had received nothing on their investment.[64]

A further indication of difficulty may be found in the handling of the Company's reserve capital in 1863. In 1843, the Company had created a Reserve Fund of 98,000 roubles. The purpose was to "insure the Company's credit, . . . insure the capital stock . . . (and be) useful in case of an emergency."[65] Through interest and annual additions, this reserve grew gradually after 1845, until it reached 477,700 roubles on January 1, 1863. However, during the course of that year, presumably because of poor tea sales, the Company decreased the reserve by 377,700 roubles to balance the books. The revenues for 1863 are listed at 885,800 roubles, including the sum withdrawn from the reserve. Consequently, the real income for 1863 was only 508,100 roubles, making this the worst year since the third charter period began. This was the first time the directors had turned to the reserve for such a purpose, and it appears to be another sign of serious trouble.

By 1866, on the eve of the cession of Russian America, the problems of the Company seem to have worsened. In a letter written in December, 1865, the Russian firm asked the Hudson's Bay Company for an advance on the rent

for their coastal lease, not normally due until June, 1866.[66] Presumably, this request was made because the Russian Company needed immediate cash, yet the Hudson's Bay rent would only bring 12,166 roubles.[67] The income of the Russian American Company for 1866 was only 706,200 roubles, of which 200,000 were apparently a direct subsidy from the Imperial Treasury, according to Semen B. Okun, who also states that the Company owed the Government 725,000 roubles in uncollected tea tariffs which had been waived for several years, constituting an indirect subsidy to the Russian firm.[68] Furthermore, the proposed new charter then under consideration called for a permanent annual assistance of 200,000 roubles for the Company.[69] The dividends for 1866 were only 1.45 roubles per share, and the stock was selling on the St. Petersburg exchange for 80 roubles.[70] Finally, the Company was attempting to arrange loans to continue its operations, but investor fears for the future of the firm apparently prevented success in this quest in 1866.[71] The Imperial Bank finally came to the rescue with a loan of one million roubles in April, 1867.[72] But it was too late, obviously, for the grant coincided with the announcement of the sale of Russian America to the United States.

In view of the apparent situation in 1866, it would be tempting to conclude that the Russian American Company was indeed on the edge of bankruptcy. Certainly, income was down, cash demands seem to have been extreme, debts may have been high, and stockholder confidence seems to have been low. Nevertheless, we do not know enough about the final years before the sale to determine whether these symptoms were acute or chronic, whether the business was suffering from short term disorders or was fatally diseased. Furthermore, if the Company was in fact confronted with imminent collapse, the question remains as to how this had occured so quickly. In 1860, its business prospects had seemed encouraging, with rising income,

product volume, assets and inventory, yet by 1866 the reverse may have been true.

Although it is not the intent of this review of the Company to find the answers to these questions, but only to describe the situation which the United States would inherit, it does seem appropriate to hazard one observation. The year 1860 may have been the critical one, if the Company was in fact in financial trouble. In terms of income, assets, notes receivable, and dividends, that year was the high point, and sales of tea and the production of fur was excellent. But this was also the year that the first major effort to sell Russian America to the United States failed because of the political crisis in North America. It seems very likely that in time this Government attempt to abandon its colonies would have become known in financial circles in Russia. Combined with the investigations of the Company and the possessions in 1861, ostensibly to determine new terms for a fourth charter, these events may have undermined investor and business confidence in the Russian American Company, for they could have been interpreted as a sign that the Czar no longer favored his North American colonies or the Company which governed and exploited them. No Company could be hurt more by the loss of such royal patronage than a State protected monopoly. Consequently, the possibility exists that the Czar, by attempting to sell Russian America, took a Company which was prospering in 1860 and changed it into a faltering, failing enterprise by 1866, thus justifying unwittingly one of the major charges made against that business by its enemies.

Chapter I

FOOTNOTES

[1]The word "colonies" might seem inappropriate to apply to the region known as Russian America, but the Russian territory actually Consisted of widely scattered posts and settlements, each of which the Imperial Government considered a separate colony, despite the fact that all were administered from one location, the capital at New Archangel. Therefore, the Russian Government consistantly referred to them as "colonies", not as a single "colony".

[2]Semen B. Okun, The Russian-American Company, edited by B. O. Grekov and translated by Carl Ginsberg, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1951), p. 266. Although Mr. Okun admittedly wrote from a Russian Marxist viewpoint, and published his work in 1939, during a period of intense literary supervision, his study possesses great merit. Having access to archives and documents not available to Western scholars, Okun included quotations from many records hitherto unknown to researchers outside the Soviet Union. These documents appear to be genuine. Mr. Okun did not write his history of the Russian American Company for Western readers, and those records which are extant outside Russia compare well with the identical documents used by this Soviet historian. One word of caution, however, is in order. When relating events which occured in the United States, his work contains a number of minor errors in dating. One possible error involves the figure of 11,000,000 silver roubles. According to the official U.S. dollar/rouble exchanges rate of 1867, the $7,200,000 should have brought in 9,000,000 silver roubles. See footnote below.

[3]The author previously has examined in detail most of the material which will be discussed in the first two chapters of this dissertation in his Master's Thesis. Heavy reliance will be placed on the information and ideas expressed in that work, and in a number of instances the wording and documentation may be identical. No special note of that fact will be made when it occurs. The major portion of this chapter will be similar to Chapter 1 of the Master's Thesis.

Richard E. Neunherz, "The Cession of Russian America," an unpublished Master's Thesis, University of Washington, 1969.

[4]A Russian term defined by Professor Tompkins as "the hard-living, hard-drinking but robust sons of the forest, whose calling was the pursuit of the peltries . . . for the markets of China and Europe." Stuart Ramsay Tompkins, Alaska, Promyslennik and Sourdough, (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1945), p. 46.

Tompkins compares them to the "coureurs du bois" of the French frontier in Canada, but they seem more importantly to have been typical of many individuals found on rapidly expanding resource frontiers. They certainly bear some similarity to the "mountain men" of the American Rocky Mountains West and also to the "bandeirantes" of the Brazilian frontier of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The promyshlenniki, in the same period, advanced the eastern frontiers of

Russia across Siberia to the Pacific Ocean, pursuing fur-bearing animals, subduing the native peoples, and winning control of an empire for the Czars.

[5]For an account of the promyshlenniki treatment of the natives see: Clarence L. Andrews, The Story of Alaska, (Caldwell, Idaho: The Caxton Printers, 1953), 8th edition, pp. 30-39. Originally published in 1938, this study remains a good introduction to the history of the 49th State and to the Russian period of occupation.

[6]Vasillii Berkh, The Chronological History of the Discovery of the Aleutian Islands, with the Supplement of Historical Data on Fur Trade, (St. Petersburg: Typography of N. Grech, 1823), translated by Dimitri Krenov, 1938, Works Progress Administration, Project No. 5668, Seattle Washington, typescript, the appendix. Hereafter referred to as Berkh.

[7]Dr. Georg Anton Schaffer, the principal advocate of Russian expansion into Hawaii and a servant of the Company, hoped to see the Russian plantations provide supplies for the northern colonies and products for sale elsewhere through the cultivation of taro, maize, sugar cane, oil nuts, fruits and grape wines. As cash crops he envisioned cotton, tobacco and sandalwood, the first of which he believed would create more revenue than that derived from all the furs of Russian America. Richard A. Pierce, "Georg Anton Schaffer, Russia's Man In Hawaii," Pacific Historical Review, XXXII (November, 1963), pp. 401-402. This journal hereafter cited as PHR. See also: Pierce, Russia's Hawaiian Adventure, (Berkley: University of California Press, 1965).

The Ross colony had two purposes originally: as a base for hunting sea otters and fur seals on the California coast and the Farallones, and as a source of food for Russian America. The fur business receded to insignificance after 1818 due to the near extinction of those animals in that area. The colony did provide varying amounts of wheat, barley, butter and salt meat (mainly beef, but originally also pork and lamb). Edward Oliver Essig, "The Russian Settlement at Ross", California Historical Quarterly, XII (September, 1933), pp. 191-209. Clarence John Du Four, "The Russian Withdrawal from California," California Historical Quarterly, XII (September, 1933), pp. 240-249.

[8]The first charter, granted in 1799, expired in 1819, but a new agreement was not approved until 1821. The second charter period, commencing in 1821, continued until 1841, but again a new charter was not authorized immediately. In 1844, the Company and the Imperial Government finally concurred on terms for a third charter, which was made retroactive to 1841. This third agreement ended on January 1, 1862 (O.S.). Thereafter, the Board of the Directors and the Government could not resolve their differences on the proposed conditions for a fourth charter, and it was never granted. The Company continued to operate under a temporary authority from January 1, 1862 until the sale.

The term (O.S.) refers to "Old Style", and denotes the fact that the date in question corresponds to the Julian, or pre-Gregorian calendar in use in Russia until 1917. Twelve days separated the Julian and Gregorian systems of dating in the nineteenth century. If not otherwise noted in the text, all dates used in this work refer to

the present or Gregorian method of dating. If the date mentioned is specified as, for instance, January 1/13, the first of the two numbers indicates the date in Russia, while the second corresponds to the date in the United States and other areas of the world using the revised calendar. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Imperial Government, Russian diplomats and Government Departments which carried on correspondence with foreign nations usually employed the dual system, such as January 1/13.

[9]Following the recapture of this redoubt in 1804, the name was changed to New Archangel and Baranov made it his headquarters and the center of administration for the Company's operations in America, the Aleutians and the Kuriles.

[10]Baranov and his successors to the top post in Russian America actually held the title of Chief Manager, but this came to be equivalent to that of Governor. In this paper, for the purpose of clarity, the title Governor will be used.

[11]John S. Galbraith, The Hudson's Bay Company as an Imperial Factor, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1957), p. 115. Galbraith's study, while concentrating on the Hudson's Bay Company, is valuable to an examination of the history of Russian America, for he presents material found only in the archives of the British Company, information which casts an important and often different perspective on the Russian Company's story.

Assignment to the post of Governor of the colonies apparently was not undesirable from a career standpoint. Of the thirteen men who served at that post from 1818-1867, seven later rose to one of the admiral ranks, three became members of the five man Board of the Directors of the Company and also later Director or Chairman of that body, and two achieved Cabinet rank in the Imperial Government. For information on the careers and work of these men, see the valuable series of articles on the Governors of Russian America by Richard A. Pierce, published in the Alaska Journal, I: 3 & 4, II: 1-4, III: 1.

[12]Pyotr Tikhmenev, The Historical Review of the Formation of the Russian-American Company, (St. Petersburg: Printing establishment of Edward Veimar, 1861 and 1863), 2 vols., (translated by Dimitri Krenov, Works Progress Administration, Seattle Washington, 1939, typescript), vol. I, pp. 79-80, 88-89, 274, and 448; and vol. II, pp. 330-331. Hereafter referred to as Tikhmenev. Tikhmenev, a stockholder of the Company, wrote this study under authority from the Russian American Company. The text, therefore, reads favorably for that concern. Nevertheless, this work is indispensable to a study of Russian America, for it contains many documents which no longer exist elsewhere.

The Council, which began in 1814 with a three man, apparently merchant membership, had its first government representatives by at least 1822, but perhaps earlier. Tikhmenev is not clear on this point. In 1844, the five man council was made up of three privy councillors and two army officers.

[13]Anatole G. Mazour, "Doctor Yegor Scheffer: Dreamer of a Russian Empire in the Pacific", PHR, VI (March, 1937), pp. 17 and 20. See also: Richard A. Pierce, Russia's Hawaiian Adventure, pp. 26-33; and Semen B. Okun, The Russian-American Company, pp. 161-165.

[14]Alaskan Boundary Tribunal, The Case of the United States, (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1903), p. 25. The term "Italian miles" apparently refers to the original Roman version of that measurement, approximately 1,618 yards, making the proscribed distance about 92 English miles. The original southern limit of the Russian possessions, as claimed in the 1799 charter of the Company, had been the line 55°N. Thus, the new boundary would have thrust the Russian possessions nearly 276 miles further to the south.

[15]Ibid., pp. 10-12

[16]Semen B. Okun, The Russian-American Company, p. 86.

[17]Ibid. Also: Anatole G. Mazour, "The Russian-American and Anglo-Russian Conventions, 1824-1825: An Interpretation," PHR, XIV (September, 1945), p. 310. John S. Galbraith, The Hudson's Bay Company as an Imperial Factor, pp. 132-134.

[18]Clarence John Du Four, "The Russian Withdrawal from California," p. 243.

[19]Donald C. Davidson, "Relations of the Hudson's Bay Company with the Russian American Company on the Northwest Coast, 1829-67", British Columbia Historical Quarterly, V (October, 1941), p. 46. Also: John C. Galbraith, The Hudson's Bay Company as an Imperial Factor, pp. 154 and 157.

[20]Ibid., p. 147.

[21]Tikhmenev, vol. I, pp. 411-412, and 436-437. The cost of freight from Russia to the colonies was excessive, giving a distinct advantage to the Hudson's Bay Company. The British charged a rate of 50 to 78 roubles a ton for goods delivered to New Archangel. Freight transported across Siberia from European Russia, the last 667 miles by pack train, cost from 540 to 630 roubles per ton, and goods brought from Kronstadt on Company ships cost from 194 to 253 roubles per ton. Similar freight carried on Russian warships cost only 180 roubles for each ton.

The Russian rouble, as referred to in this study, unless otherwise specified, is the silver rouble, divided into one hundred kopecks. However, employees of the Company in Russian America usually received their pay in scrip or paper roubles (probably government issue in the early period, but "leather" or parchment money in the latter years). The following are the valuations for the rouble and the British pound in terms of the U.S. dollar in various years of the nineteenth century.

Values in U.S. Currency (Dollars)

	1811	1821	1829	1835	1858	1867/8
1 rouble (sil.)	0.56	0.69	0.74½	0.69	0.78.4	0.79.4
1 pound (gold)	4.45	4.45	4.56	4.45	4.83	4.83

These may have been just the official exchange rates, for a quote of 75 cents per rouble was published in an American newspaper for September 2, 1867, perhaps the open market value. San Francisco, Daily Alta California, September 3, 1867.

Equivalency rates for paper vs. silver roubles over various years:

Values in paper roubles

	1810	1821	1827	1829	1835
1 rouble (sil.)	4.00	3.74	3.60	3.50	3.74

Government paper roubles, probably those used by the Company, were phased out after 1835 in Russia and replaced with a new paper issue valued at approximately par with the silver rouble. However, the information in Tikhmenev would suggest that the Company may have continued to use paper roubles (now made of leather) at approximately the old values.

Values for 1811, 1821, and 1835: Patrick Kelly, The Universal Cambrist and Commercial Instructor, (London: Lackington, Allen & Company, 1811, 1821, 1835). Estimate for 1829: U.S. Senate, 45th Cong., 3rd Sess., Ex. Doc. No. 58, International Monetary Conference, U.S. Bank Report of November 16, 1829, (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1879), pp. 632-633. Figures for 1858: U.S. House of Representatives, 35th Cong., 2nd Sess., Ex. Doc. No. 3, serial 996, (Washington: James B. Steedman, Printers, 1859), pp. 65-66. Report of the U.S. Mint, Philadelphia, November 9, 1858, included in a report of the Secretary of the Treasury. Statements for 1867 and 1868: U.S. House of Representatives, 40th Cong., 2nd Sess., Ex. Doc. No. 2, serial 1328, (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1868), pp. 347-348; and U.S. House of Representatives, 40th Cong., 3rd Sess., Ex. Doc. No. 2, serial 1370, (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1869), pp. 446-447. Both are reports of the Director of the Mint, included in reports of the Secretary of the Treasury. For paper rouble valuations for 1810, 1827, and 1829: Edward R. A. Seligman, Currency Inflation and Public Debts: an Historical Sketch, (New York: The Equitable Trust Company, 1921), pp. 32 and 78. Values for other years are from Kelly, noted above.

[22]Clarence John Du Four, "The Russian Withdrawal from California", pp. 240-249. The previous year, 1840, the Russian American Company had offered to sell the properties in California to the Hudson's Bay Company for the same amount, but the suggestion was ignored.

An 1834 report on the Ross settlement by Baron Ferdinand F. Wrangell, Governor of Russian America and later Chairman of the Board of the Directors

of the Company, stated that the California post had operated at a loss of 7,599 roubles in 1832. James R. Gibson, "Russia in California: Report of Governor Wrangell", Pacific Northwest Quarterly, LX (October, 1969), p. 212. This article is a translation of the complete report. This journal hereafter designated as the PNQ.

Tikhmenev, discussing the situation existing a few years hence, declared that by 1837, the average loss was 44,000 roubles (paper). Tikhmenev, vol. I p. 422.

[23]John S. Galbraith, The Hudson's Bay Company as an Imperial Factor, p. 162.

[24]Semen B. Okun, The Russian-American Company, pp. 221-224.

[25]Ibid., p. 220.

[26]The word creole, generally associated with the mixed-bloods of Louisiana-New Orleans or the white, but native-born Spanish in Colonial Mexico, also can be applied appropriately to the mixed Russian-Indian (Aleut) inhabitants of Russian America. The Company and the Imperial Government consistantly referred to them in this manner.

[27]Prince Dimitri D. Maksutov, "Iz prshlago Rossiisko-Amerikanskikh kolonii", (Out of the past of the Russian American colonies), S beregov Ameriki (The Shores of America), edited by S. V. Gladkii and Iu. K. Dvorzhitskii, (New York: Association of Former Russian Naval Officers in America, 1939), pp. 234-39. This article includes the instructions given to Prince Dimitri P. Maksoutov, last Governor of Russian America (1864-1867), by the Company in 1864. At that date the Board was still attempting to enforce the residency regulations. "The rule that even the most useful worker not remain in the service of the Company in the Colonies longer than 12 years should be observed almost without exception. Exceptions should be rare and then only for sea captains and administrators of certain islands and isolated spots." Translated for the author by Robert Nichols, University of Washinton, 1966.

[28]Hector Chevigny, Russian America: The Great Alaskan Venture, 1741-1867, (New York: The Viking Press, 1965), p. 195. This book must be used with great care. The work contains few footnotes, and its presentation suffers as a result. Thus, any material included in Chevigny's study which conflicts with previous historical judgements or evidence probably should be rejected as unreliable. For example, Chevigny states that the limit on service in the colonies was fourteen years, while the instructions to Maksoutov state twelve.

[29]Tikhmenev, vol. II, p. 219.

[30]Ibid, vol. I, pp. 145-146 and 305-306.

[31]Ibid., vol. II, pp. 451-453.

[32]James R. Gibson, "Russian America in 1833: The Survey of Kirill Khlebnikov", PNQ, LXIII (January, 1972), p. 8. This article, with a brief introduction, includes a complete translation of that report with the accompanying tables of population, ship sailings, cargoes, etc.

[33]Ibid., also Alaska Historical Research Project, "Alaska History Documents", 15 volumes, typescript and microfilm. (Translations from the Records of the Russian American Company Papers and other Documents in the National Archives, Washington, translated and compiled by Tikhon Lavischeff, 1936-37, located in the Library of Congress and on microfilm in Suzello Library, University of Washington). Hereafter referred to as AHRP. The above data, not including those for 1833, were taken from "Russian-American Company: Reports for Governors", vol. 4, pp. 61-77, reel 2.

Most of the Russians lived in New Archangel throughout the Russian occupation:

1833	1845	1856	1864
379 of 627	482 of 633	495 of 658	428 of 559

The total population in 1864, excluding independent natives was placed at about 9,800 souls.

[34]Estimates for the independent native population in 1833, 1839, and 1861 all set the number at 40,000.

James R. Gibson, editor and translator, "Russian America in 1833: . . .", pp. 5 and 8. Robert Nichols and Robert Croskey, editors and translators, "The Condition of the Orthodox Church in Russian America: Innokentii Veniaminov's History of the Russian Church in Alaska", PNQ LXIII (April, 1972), p. 54. This is an excellent source on the state of the colonies in 1839-40, written by a priest who would become Bishop of Alaska and later Metropolitan of Moscow, head of the Russian Orthodox Church. Veniaminov quotes, but repudiates, an 1834 statement of the Academy Mesiatseslov (Almanac) that the population of Russian America was 400,000. Politovsky, N. (Lt. Gen.) "Short Historical Review of the Establishment and Operations of the Russian American Company from its Beginnings to Present Time", (St. Petersburg, 1861), translated by Ivan Petrov, Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkley, typescript, p. 95. Politovsky was at the time the presiding member of the Board of the Directors of the Russian American Company, and had written this review of the Company in preparation for the request for a new charter.

The author is aware of the negative repute in which the translations of Mr. Petrov are held by scholars. However, this may be an example of "throwing the baby out with the dirty bath water". There seems no reason

to reject all of his work when parts of the documents can be verified by comparison with material from entirely independent sources, as is the case with the above.

[35]Alaskan Boundary Tribunal, The Case of the United States, p. 23.

[36]The figures for the quantity of pelts taken during the entire period of Company control, from 1798 to 1867, are approximate because of inaccurate bookkeeping, the loss of thousands of skins destroyed in the drying process or in ship sinkings, and the lack of records for the final four years. A conservative estimate would be a figure based on the Company export statistics with slight adjustments: c. 145,000 sea otters; c. 3,000,000 fur seals; and a total of perhaps 4,000,000 skins of all types. See: Berkh, the supplement; Tikhmenev, vol. I, pp. 289-290 and 383, and vol. II, p. 255; AHRP, vol. 4, pp. 78-119.

A good indication of the relative values of the various furs is the price which the Company paid to the native hunters for the several species vs. the value of these furs in Russian and Chinese markets.

Furs	1804	1836	1850
sea otters (best)	10 r.	30 r.	50 r.
fur seals "	0.20 c. (copecks)	0.75 c.	0.75 c.
beavers "	1.20 r.	4 r.	4 r.
land otters "	1.60 r.	4.60 r.	6 r.
black brown fox	2 r.	6 r.	9 r.

These prices were in paper roubles or scrip. Tikhmenev, vol. I, pp. 347-377. The value of these furs in 1823 in Russia were approximately: (paper roubles)

sea otter	300 roubles per skin
fur seal	25 " " "
land otters	30 " " "
cross foxes	50 " " "

Berkh, pp. 69-70.

[37]AHRP, vol. 4, pp. 2-23. In the years 1853 and 1856, the income from the sale of tea surpassed that derived from fur by approximately ten to one. In 1850, 1857 and 1861, the income from fur sales exceeded the revenues from tea.

[38]Ibid., pp. 115-117.

[39]During the last five years of the third charter, 1857-1861, the Company averaged an income of ca. 309,000 roubles annually from the markup on goods and furs in the colonies, according to the income statements. This constituted about thirty percent of the gross. Ibid., vol. 4, pp. 14-21.

In 1827, a native hunter received 20 roubles paper for a prime sea otter pelt. Just before 1821, such a fur brought 110 to 124 roubles paper in barter for tea with the Chinese. Tikhmenev, vol. I, pp. 308 and 374. For information on the prices of goods sold to natives and employees about 1860 and verification of the markup process, see vol. II, pp. 265-266.

[40]AHRP, vol. 4, p. 347, report of Governor Chistiakov, October 5, 1830 (O.S.), to the Board of the Directors.

[41]Ibid., vol. 4, pp. 245-246, letter to Governor Murav'ev, March 15, 1821 (O.S.) from the Board of the Directors; and the Chistiakov letter mentioned in the preceding footnote.

[42]Tikhmenev, vol. II, supplement, p. 49, paragraph 102 of the charter of October 10, 1844 (O.S.).

[43]AHRP, vol. 4, pp. 357 and 360. Letters from the Board of the Directors to Captain Etolin, April 3-15, 1842 and March 8-20, 1843.

[44]Ibid., vol. 4, pp. 384 and 391, letters from the Board of the Directors to Governor Rudakov, April 22 (May 4), 1853 and April 24 (May 6), 1854. For evidence of increased hunts see below.

[45]The following table bears eloquent testimony to the devastations of the early years of the fur trade in Russian America.

Furs Exported from Russian America

Furs	1797-1821	1821-1842	1842-1862
sea otters	86,644	25,416	25,899
fur seals	1,767,340	458,502	372,894

For the first period, see Berkh, the supplement. For the last periods, see Tikhmenev, vol. I, p. 383; vol II, p. 255.

The total of these two furs exported during the entire Russian period, 1743-1867, presents an even starker picture. Shipped by various private companies and free traders, from 1745-1798: 96,047 sea otters; 417,758 seals. Exported by the Shelekhov and Golikov Company, forerunner of the Russian American Company, from 1786-1797: 15,647 sea otters; 139,266 seals. This suggests a total of more than 250,000 sea otters; more than 3,500,000 fur seals; and a total of all furs that reaches nearly 5,000,000 skins. This is clearly a conservative estimate. To magnify the extent of the slaughter, one might add some idea of the number of sea otters taken by English and American sea captains and traders whose competition severely cut into the Russian American Company's business. One French observor, between the years 1804 and 1819, listed the number sold at Canton alone by such men at 129,935. Berkh, p.122.

[46]Semen B. Okun, The Russian-American Company, p.226.

[47]

Furs	1798-1821	1821-1842	1842-1862
beaver	34,546	162,034	157,484
Black-brown fox	13,702	17,913	(*)
blue fox	36,362	55,714	77,847
white fox	4,234	13,638	54,134
river otter	14,969	(*)	70,474

Tikhmenev, vol. I, pp. 289-290 and 383; vol. II, p. 255. The (*) symbol indicates that Tikhmenev did not provide figures for these years.

[48]AHRP, vol. 4, pp. 78-111, records of the annual trade operations in fur and tea.

[49]N. Politovsky, "Short Historical Review . . ." p. 134.

[50]Ibid., p. 138

[51]Ibid,, p. 138. See also: Clarence L. Andrews, The Story of Alaska, p. 114. Richard A. Pierce, "Alaska's Russian Governors: Rosenburg, Rudakov, Voevodskii," Alaska Journal, III (Summer, 1972) p. 41.

[52]Edward L. Keitholin, "Alaska Ice Inc.", PNQ, XXXVI (April, 1945), p. 121.

[53]N. Politovsky, "Short Historical Review . . .", pp. 125-132.

[54]National Archives, RG 261, Records of Former Russian Agencies, Records of the Russian-American Company, 1802-1867, Microcopy M-11, Reel 22, p. 496. Letter of J. Mora Moss to Peter S. Kostromitinoff, Agent of the Russian American Company in San Francisco and Vice-Consul of the Russian Empire, April 2, 1859.

[55]Tikhmenev, vol. II, pp. 197-198; and N. Politovsky, "Short Historical Review . . .", pp. 125-132.

[56]N. Politovsky, "Short Historical Review . . .", pp. 132-134. Sergei Kostlivtzoff, Actual State Councillor, "Tabular Statement of the Present Condition of the Russian American Colonies", 1860, translated by Ivan Petrov, Bancroft Library, University of California at Berkeley, pp. 29-30.

[57]Frank A. Golder, "Mining in Alaska Before 1867", Washington Historical Quarterly, VII (July, 1916), pp. 236-237.

[58]Ibid.

[59]N. Politovsky, "Short Historical Review . . .", p. 123.

[60]Ibid, p. 124.

[61]Semen B. Okun, The Russian-American Company, p. 233.

[62]Not all authors who have written on the purchase of Russian America have commented on the financial situation of the Russian American Company, but of those who have directly or indirectly mentioned the question, the following have viewed the position of the Company as ranging from difficult to desperate: Semen B. Oken, The Russian American Company, pp. 225 ff; Anatole G. Mazour,"The Prelude to Russia's Departure from America," PHR, X (September, 1941), p. 316; Frank A. Golder, "The Purchase of Alaska," American Historical Review, XXV (April, 1920), pp. 417 and 425; and C. Ian Jackson, "The Stikine Territory Lease and Its Relevance to the Alaska Purchase," PHR, XXXVI (August, 1967), pp. 292 and 304. The only major author on the subject to question the validity of the Russian Government's view on the question has been Hector Chevigny, who believed that the Company was experiencing basic prosperity and could look towards an encouraging future in the early 1860's. Chevigny, Russian America: The Great Alaska Venture, 1741-1867, p. 236.

[63]Except where otherwise noted, the statistics quoted here are taken from: AHRP, "Russian-American Company: Reports of Governors", vol. 4, pp. 1-120, Reel 2. For ease of reading, most large numbers will be rounded to the nearest hundred.

[64]Ibid., and Tikhmenev, vol. I, pp. 438-440.

[65]Tikhmenev, vol. II, pp. 323-324. Parenthesized words inserted by the author for clarity. This fund was to be invested at 6% and increased annually by an amount equal to 10% of the total dividend payments.

[66]C. Ian Jackson, "The Stikine Territory Lease and Its Relevancy to the Alaska Purchase", p. 304.

[67]The rental fee was 2,000 British pounds (gold), which would bring approximately 12,166 roubles according to the conversion rates outlined in footnote 21 above.

[68]Semen B. Okun, The Russian-American Company, pp. 250-251.

[69]The London Times, England, April 20, 1867, p. 10, col. 3, under the title "From the Berlin Correspondent", April 15, 1867.

[70]Ibid; and NA, RG 59, "Despatches from U.S. Consuls in Moscow", Eugene Schuyler to Seward, April 3, 1868, no. 19, microfilm, T97, R.1.

[71]Semen B. Okun, The Russian-American Company, pp. 251-252.

[72]The London Times, England, April 20, 1867, p. 10, col. 3.

Chapter II

ON FAVORABLE TERMS:

The Sale and Purchase of Russian America

"It has been impossible for me not to see that the efforts of the company were fruitless, that the future of this country was sterile and that, menaced by the proximity of the Americans our possessions would embroil us in serious disputes with the federal government and end by becoming the prize of the Americans."

Edouard de Stoeckl

(Dispatch to Prince Gorchakov, July 12/24, 1867)

"Probably this treaty stands alone in the history of diplomacy, as an important treaty conceived, initiated, prosecuted and completed, without being preceded or attended by protocols or dispatches."

William H. Seward

(House Ex. Doc. No. 177, 40th Cong., 2nd Sess.)

The purchase of Russian America by the United States in April, 1867, developed from the decision of Czar Alexander II to offer his North American colonies for sale to the American Government. The Emperor chose this course deliberately, following consultations with five principal advisors, at a meeting held on Friday afternoon, December 16, 1866 (O.S.), in St. Petersburg.[1] To implement this policy, the Czar directed Edouard de Stoeckl, his Minister to the United States, to return to Washington to negotiate with Secretary of State William H. Seward. The treaty ceding Russian America to the United States for $7,200,000 was the result.

The decision to sell the colonies in North America was not made in haste. Official consideration of such a cession had commenced more than a decade before the actual sale of those possessions to the United States. On at least three previous occasions, in 1853-54, 1857, and 1859-60, the possibility of such a transaction had been studied and discussed by one or both Governments concerned.[2] In each instance, various circumstances prevented the fulfilment of the proposal. However, during the course of these repeated examinations of the question, Russian leaders became convinced that the North American territories had to be abandoned. The Czar and his advisors so thoroughly developed their justifications for the anticipated sale during these early, fruitless studies of the project, that they probably employed a few new arguments in December, 1866, when the final attempt to reach an agreement with the American Government commenced. The desire to sell Russian America apparently had existed for several years; its fruition had awaited an American willingness to buy.

In making his decision, Alexander presumably considered various

factors, such as the current financial state and future prospects of his colonies, the problems of defending them against foreign attack, and the possible political ramifications of the anticipated cession. It would be helpful, therefore, to review briefly the Russian reasons for ceding their North American possessions, for an appreciation of those facts would assist in understanding the purchase and occupation of Russian America by the United States. The American press and the Congress speculated at length on the Czar's probable motives and on the value of the new acquisition. In the absence of much knowledge on those matters, writers and legislators invented their own explanations that made more for vivid reading than truth.

It also would be useful to sketch the course of the negotiations which produced the treaty. Held in great secrecy, these talks would become the subject for considerable discussion in American journals and among Congressmen, with a number of misconceptions arising as to their nature and content.

Finally, an assessment of the motives of Secretary of State Seward should be attempted. He arranged and signed the treaty on behalf of the United States with obvious enthusiasm and unusual dispatch, yet he clearly had little idea of the real value or extent of the land he hoped the Senate and House would agree to buy. Seward was the initiator, the negotiator, and the principal advocate; without him there would have been no treaty.

I

In analyzing the major motives for the sale of Russian America to the United States, several preliminary qualifications must be noted.

First, the crucial considerations which convinced the St. Petersburg Government to adopt this policy remain unknown, regardless of contrary statements by scholars of the subject.[3] The burden for the 1866 decision fell ultimately upon Czar Alexander II. Although liberal reforms had marked the early years of his regime, Russia remained an autocracy in which only the Emperor could decree so drastic a course as the alienation of a portion of the Empire. This fundamental fact of Russian politics compelled the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Prince Alexander Gorchakov, to arrange the December conference which decided the fate of Russian America. Despite the volume of advice hostile to retention of the colonies, the Czar could have preserved the Russian possession had he so chosen. Thus, to know the decisive reasons for the verdict to sell, one would require certain knowledge of Alexander's thinking on this question. Lacking such information, all discussion of the motives for the Russian actions remains conjecture.[4]

Second, although an examination of the causes for the sale consists largely of speculation, it seems possible to arrive at some tentative conclusions, for the Emperor reached his decision only after listening to the counsel of various individuals. From the opinions expressed by those men who advocated the sale and enjoyed the confidence of the Czar, one can reconstruct the arguments which probably proved persuasive in the mind of Alexander. But, at the very most, such a summation can only approximate the Emperor's own analysis of the problem.

Third, it is important to emphasize that the various statements made by men who supported the sale of the colonies, concerning the conditions of those possessions, did not necessarily correspond accurately to the situation in Russian America. For instance, the financial position

of the colonies may or may not have been as gloomy as depicted by Alexander's associated. However, the Czar had to depend on certain people for information and counsel, and they advised him on the basis of what they believed to be a reasonable description of the colonies, the Russian American Company and future prospects. Thus, the truth or error of their opinions is relatively unimportant. Their attitudes and ideas, accurate or not, alone are significant, for the Czar presumably made his decision to abandon Russian America based on that advice.

II

The Crimean War provided the setting for the first documented discussion of a cession of the Czar's possessions in North America. As Russia edged closer to hostilities with England and France in the Near East, the position of Russian America became increasingly precarious. Each of the major posts had some defensive capability, designed primarily to overawe the natives, but none could expect to withstand an assault by an enemy squadron. Few in the Russian American Company could have believed that the colonies would long survive an English attack. Consequently, various schemes were proposed to avoid such a disaster, including the suggestion that a spurious sale of the colonies be arranged with the American Russian Commercial Company. Such plots proved unnecessary, however, when the Russian American Company reached an agreement with the British Hudson's Bay Company, in March, 1854, providing for the neutrality of their respective holdings in North America. The crisis had passed, but the danger had been real enough, and it had indicated a fundamental weakness in Russian America. The colonies could not be defended in time of war. As rumors of the bogus sale spread in the

United States, several American leaders even approached Stoeckl to learn if the Russian Government in fact did want to see the colonies, but the Russian envoy assured them that the Emperor entertained no such idea. However, the entire episode had planted in the minds of some Americans and several Russian officials the idea that a cession might someday be advisable.

During the troubled years of its three charters, the Russian American Company made numerous and vehement political and financial enemies. Until the last years of its operations, however, the Company weathered the seasonal squalls churned up by its domestic foes. But in 1857, a new opponent, the Grand Duke Constantine Nikolaevitch, younger brother of the Czar, launched his attack on the Company and its commercial and governmental monopoly. A persistent and powerful protagonist, he became the leading spokesman for the final wave of opposition which undermined the economic strength of the Company, eroded its support in the Imperial Government and led to the sale of the colonies.

In the spring of 1857, Constantine wrote to Prince Gorchakov, the new Minister of Foreign Affairs, urging the sale of Russian America to the United States. The Navy, he explained, faced the problem of reducing its annual expenditures. Economy alone would not solve the difficulty.

> Therefore, in order to get out of the difficult situation . . . I think we would do well to take advantage of the excess of money at the present time in the Treasury of the United States of America and to sell them our North American colonies. This transaction would be very timely, as we must not deceive ourselves and must foresee that the United States . . . will take the aforementioned colonies from us and we shall not be able to regain them. At the same time these colonies bring us a very small profit and their loss to us would not be greatly felt.[5]

This letter could not be ignored, and it initiated an investigation of the desirability of a cession of Russian America which continued through-

out the remainder of 1857. The ever cautious Gorchakov, however, opposed any precipitous action. Eventually, he prevailed with the Emperor by suggesting that a final decision be postponed until a thorough investigation of the colonies and the Company could be conducted a few years hence, at the close of the third charter period, in 1862. In the meantime, the Foreign Minister suggested that Edouard de Stoeckl "should carefully advance to the Washington cabinet the idea of the possibility of inducing Russia to cede the colonies on favorable terms . . . ." This procedure was necessary, he continued, for "it is desirable that the sale, if it should take place, should be the result of a proposal of the United States and not of our Government."[6]

William McKendree Gwin, United States Senator from California, began the next phase of discussions concerning a sale of the colonies in the closing days of 1859. During an interview with Stoeckl, Gwin asked "if the Imperial Government would be disposed to cede (its) American possessions.. . ."[7] Satisfying himself that the approach was genuine and known to President Buchanan, the Russian Minister dispatched the news to St. Petersburg, where a new round of cession talks commenced. The Americans tentatively had offered five millions of dollars, but they had indicated that more might be obtained. Stoeckl believed that such an amount was generous, and more than the colonies were worth.[8] Once more, Gorchakov proved reluctant to move swiftly. The third charter had not expired, investigations of the colonies would have to be undertaken, and the American tender seemed to him to be too low.[9]

Instructed to postpone further conversations with the United States, Stoeckl advised his Government that the political turmoil in America and the approaching crucial elections would make a treaty at that time impossible. "It will be necessary to await the new administration and

the new Congress which will not meet until December 1861."[10] The American Civil War intervened, however, before further talks with American leaders could be undertaken, and the project of a cession of Russian America to the United States had to be abandoned once more.

As month after month the Civil War consumed the energies of the United States, the possibility faded that the Imperial Government could resolve the question of the future of its North American possessions by selling them to the Washington Government. Stoeckl's dispatches repeatedly predicted the failure of the Union cause and the permanent fragmentation of the Federal Republic.[11] Regardless of the outcome, it must have seemed clear that the United States would be in no position to buy the colonies for some time. Consequently, the Russian Government reluctantly began to make different plans for the future of its American territories.

After the expiration of the third charter, on January 1, 1862 (O.S.), the Russian American Company had received permission to continue its operations until such time as a new charter could be studied and arranged or other contingencies devised. By 1865, the Emperor had approved the basic principles for a new charter, and nearly a year later he agreed upon the final conditions to be offered to the Company. Plans seemed to be underway to extend the life of the Company and the colonies for an additional twenty years.

In the late fall of 1866, however, the Imperial Government suddenly reversed its position and reopened the question of the cession, weeks after the subject presumably had been closed by the promise of a new charter, which Alexander had extended to the Russian American Company on April 2, 1866 (O.S.).[12] Several factors may have led to this abrupt shift in plans. First, the Russian American Company balked at the terms of the new charter, hoping perhaps for some final favorable revisions.

Especially did they disapprove the provisions freeing the natives from mandatory service to the Company. Such intransigence, however, would tend naturally to exasperate the Czar and his advisors, who harbored no affection for the Company anyway. Second, Edouard de Stoeckl returned to St. Petersburg in mid-November, 1866, on leave from his Washington post, home to discuss a new appointment to the Hague. He had intimate knowledge of the current political and financial climate in America, and presumably he would know if a chance to sell the colonies still existed. Both Constantine and Mikhail de Reutern, Minister of Finance, sought him out and questioned him on the subject. His response must have been encouraging, for they went directly to the Czar with their appeal.[13] Third, and perhaps most important, in November, a group of American merchants, organized as the California Fur Company, submitted an offer to assume the current Hudson's Bay Company lease of the Alaskan panhandle for a period of twenty-five years, promising in return to pay five percent of the gross proceeds of their commercial activities in that area as rent and to assist in ameliorating the conditions of the natives. Here was clear evidence that Americans still had an interest in Russian America. If a group of business men would lease part of the colonies, perhaps the United States Government would purchase the entire Russian holding. These seemingly disparate circumstances apparently combined to force a re-appraisal of the question of a cession of the colonies, for approximately one month later, on December 16, 1866 (O.S.), the conference was held that sealed the fate of Russian America and sent Stoeckl back to Washington to deal with William Seward.[14]

III

Among the several factors which convinced Alexander II to sell Russian

America, financial problems perhaps proved most persuasive. Whatever other hopes the Imperial Government once may have entertained for those distant possessions, czarist officials had expected them to be profitable. In this, according to the advice given to the Czar, the colonies had failed. They were "at a perfect standstill as regards colonization, hunting, trade and civic development . . . ."[15] The Company, it was alleged, had "far from justified the expectations which the Government had placed in it".[16] Its administration had been "unfortunate or inept".[17] The Company, it was charged, had exhausted the fur resources of the colonial area, and it had failed to develop adequately other potential sources of income.[18] It was accused of inefficiency, mismanagement, corruption, waste, "market-place trickery" and operating "only for the advantage of the shareholders without any advantage to the homeland and with an obvious harm to humanity in general".[19] The very principle of monopolies, under which the Company existed, came under attack for destroying "every opportunity of competition and (taking) away the incentive to vigorous action . . . ."[20] "Monopolies are not of our century," Stoeckl argued, "and in the Pacific they are no more possible than anywhere else."[21] The Company, it had been asserted, should not be permitted to govern the native people and conduct commerce simultaneously. "Such a combination is very harmful to the peoples subjected to the Company," it was stated, and they "suffer from second hand agents . . . ."[22] The Company, "Being guided, properly speaking, by principles of serfdom, has regarded, and still regards, . . . the natives as its slaves."[23] Such a charge, to a government then in the throes of a program aimed at emancipating the millions of serfs in Russia, was especially damaging. If the natives and creoles in the Russian colonies did work like serfs and were treated as slaves, then such anachronistic

practises could not be tolerated longer. The administration of the Company had brought no benefits at all to the primitive people under its jurisdiction. Stoeckl explained that "The situation of the Indians of the islands . . . has not been ameliorated either in a physical or moral sense, and the tribes of the mainland continue to be as savage and as hostile as they were at the time of discovery."[24] "It is sufficient to point out," one critic wrote, "the astounding fact that the population of the colonies remains without increase . . . ."[25]

Continuation of Company rule seemed unthinkable to the czarist officials; the organization was not able to govern properly. Furthermore, the Company would require substantial monetary assistance merely to sustain its present commercial and civic operations. One report in 1866 stated "in all frankness that without money to pay its debts, nothing can save the enterprise from having to suspend its operations altogether".[26] In order to expand its business and administrative ventures, large sums would be necessary in addition to the large subsidy already in effect through the waiver of import duties on teas sold in Russia. Nor could the Imperial Government effectively assume the governmental tasks of the Company, as some advised and the proposed fourth charter provided.[27] To strengthen the economy of the colonies, huge expenditures of money would have to be made by the state. Numerous officials would have to be ordered to Russian America to administer the territories. Immigrants would be required to increase the white population and broaden the economic base of the colonies. That might be impossible to arrange, in view of the immigration requirements of the Russian provinces on the Pacific coast of Asia. Furthermore, Stoeckl insisted, Russian America was "situated too far to the North to send emigrants there to form a commercial and industrial colony".[28] Large

sums and exhaustive efforts would be needed in any case, and the Imperial Government could not afford to undertake such burdens.[29] The Russian Government faced serious monetary problems at home; loans were being sought for domestic requirements. Nothing could be wasted on so distant a province of the Empire as Russian America. Rather, Stoeckl explained:

> It is in the country of the Amour and especially in the provinces to the south of this river that we ought to concentrate our means and our energy. These countries are fertile and will easily attract immigration. They have magnificent ports and the proximity of Japan and China assures them an advantageous commerce. It is there that our power in the Pacific ought to be founded.[30]

Constantine also argued that the nation's energies should be concentrated in the main areas of the Empire.

> Russia must endeavor as far as possible to become stronger in her center, in those fundamental Russian regions which constitute her main power in population and in faith, and Russia must develop the strength of this center in order to be able to hold these extremities which bring her real benefit.[31]

Finally, if the colonies could be sold, at least some funds could be obtained in return, which would bring some monetary relief to the Russian Government, minor though it might be.

A second area of concern for the counsellors of the Czar centered on defensive calculations in regard to Russian America. Even if the colonies had been considered valuable enough to retain within the Empire, Alexander's advisors testified, the territories could not be defended against a hostile power. The Russian Navy could not provide protection to possessions scattered along hundreds of miles of treacherous coast lines and sea lanes.[32] "In the event of war with a naval power," Constantine had complained in 1857 to Minister of Finance Knyazhevich, "we are not in a position to defend our colonies."[33] Stoeckl believed that "Any maritime power with which we might be at war could take them

from us".[34] If the colonies had been spared seizure during the Crimean War by the fortuitous circumstance of a neutrality agreement, the Imperial Government obviously could not plan on a repetition of that arrangement. Russian America, the czarist leaders concluded, lay at the mercy of the British naval power in the North Pacific.

In addition to the menace of Great Britain, counsellors of the Emperor counted the United States as a dangerous, potential threat to Russian America. Small quantities of gold already had been discovered in the colonies, and the Imperial Government and the management of the Russian American Company fully understood the probable results of a rich strike. The lesson provided by the California gold rush could hardly be misunderstood. Hoards of American prospectors probably would descend on Russian territory, much as they had fallen on British Columbia during the 1858 Fraser River strike, and the Imperial Government would not possess sufficient military power in the area either to forbid their entry or to control them once there.[35] As it was, the Russian administration of the colonies was powerless to prohibit the current incursions of the Americans who carried on illicit trade in furs and alcohol with the natives. Protests to the United States Government had been to no avail. Stoeckl recalled:

> It was to be hoped that the lack of resources in our colonies would shelter them from the rapacity of these adventurers, but it has been other than this. The fishing, the furs and some other products, comparatively insignificant in our possessions, are certainly not equal to the auriferous plains of California, and yet they have not escaped the covetousness of the Americans.[36]

The history of United States expansion offered object lessons for what could be expected if the Americans became deeply interested in Russian America. Some czarist officials were impressed with the magic

appeal of the terms "manifest destiny" and "Monroe Doctrine" as a motive force in the American conscience.[37] In 1857, Constantine had stated that:

> The United States, following the natural order of things, is bound to aim at the possession of the whole of North America and therefore there will be a time when we shall meet there. No doubt they will even take possession of our colonies without much effort and we shall never be in a position to regain them.[38]

If the United States decided to seize the colonies, for whatever reason, the Emperor's advisors argued, the Imperial Government could do nothing to prevent it. Thus, it seemed wiser to cede the North American possessions, and obtain something from their sale, rather than to hold on to territory that seemed destined to be lost sooner or later either to Great Britain or to the United States. "It is manifestly impossible to defend them," wrote a naval officer, "and what cannot be held had better be ceded in good time and voluntarily."[39]

The third category of justifications for the sale of Russian America involved political considerations. To the Imperial Government, retention of the colonies appeared to be both embarrassing and unnecessary. The commercial activities of the Russian American Company once had been used to hide the true intentions of the Russian Government in the Amur River Valley in Chinese territory. But in 1857, by the Treaty of Aigun, this land had been ceded to the Russian Empire. Thus, the Company had outlived its usefulness in Asia. In North America, on the other hand, the monopoly had caused disputes with the United States Government.[40] The Company directors insisted upon the exclusion of all foreign trade from Russian America, while the Washington Government continued to see limited trading privileges in the Russian possessions for American citizens. The activities of the American traders who ignored the ban further irritated relations between the two nations. The continuation of the Russian presence in North America seemed destined to lead to an eventual

deterioration of the long-term friendship with the United States.[42]

If the colonies did not possess sufficient value to justify their retention, if the territories could not be defenced, if dominion in North America proved embarrassing, then perhaps some political advantages might be gained from the cessions of the area to the United States. This possibility received due considerations by Alexander's counsellors. The sale of Russian America to the United States seemed "especially desirable politically" to Minister of Finance, Mikhail de Reutern.[43] It would strengthen relations between the two powers, especially if the terms of the transfer could be amicably and fairly arranged. Furthermore, the cession might produce difficulties between the United States and Great Britain, a possibility profoundly to be desired. English power in the North Pacific depended on the naval base at Esquimalt on Vancouver Island in the colony of British Columbia. British warships had used that station as a repair and respite haven after the Allied debacle at Petropavlovsk, in 1854, in the Crimean War. Thereafter, it had become the principal post from which England suspiciously observed Russian activities on the Asian shores and in North America.[44] Reutern pointed out that by purchasing Russian America, the United States:

> would become a neighbor of the English colonies not only to the south but to the northwest as well . . . such a development cannot but result in strengthening of our friendly relations with the United States and in increasing the chances for a disagreement between the States and England.[45]

"If the United States should become the owner of our possessions," Stoeckl believed, "British Oregon would be crowded on the northern side and on the southern side by the Americans and would escape with difficulty from the agressions of the latter."[46] If such an absorption of British Columbia by the Americans did occur, the British would be expelled from the North

Pacific and their major base in that huge ocean. Such an eventuality would certainly be welcomed by Imperial Russia. In fact, Gorchakov suggested that "This consideration is perhaps a motive for us to cede our colonies to the United States. It is certainly a motive for the Americans to acquire them."[47]

Finally, the same problems of distance which had frustrated the growth of Russian America also must have influenced significantly the Emperor's decision to sell the North American possessions. Continued survival of the colonies after 1867 probably would have required increasing Government participation in the economy and control of the administration. The great distances separating Russian America from St. Petersburg made that prospect too expensive and too difficult to consider seriously. "In fact," Stoeckl had written, "a committee composed of persons residing in St. Petersburg and strangers to the trade, (would) never be able to direct with success the purely mercantile operations, the seat of which is located at the other extreme of the globe."[48] Furthermore, the colonies clearly could not be defended due to the difficulties created by distance. Imperial Russia simply did not have the naval capability to protect a province of the Empire which was located so many thousands of miles from the bases upon which squadrons of war ships would have to depend, and any attempt to defend them would ultimately weaken the nation and its military power. As one naval authority explained, "Our naval forces on the Pacific Ocean (would) be extremely formidable if the necessity of defending detached colonies (did) not confine them to weak and vulnerable points."[49] Fundamentally, Russia had never possessed sufficient resources successfully to support and defend the remote North American colonies. Russian America was too far away; and the Imperial Government was too weak for the task.

The officials who advised the Emperor employed financial, defensive, political and geographic arguments to persuade Alexander that Russian America had to be ceded to the United States. It is impossible, however, to determine which of these factors proved decisive. Perhaps none of these justifications convinced the Emperor. If men always made decisions on the basis of the "facts", or what pretended to be the truth, then some or all of these points would have persuaded Alexander to sell the colonies. But men obviously do not always behave in so reasonable a manner. Thus, the possibility exists that Alexander abandoned Russian America merely because he had become tired of the whole affair. However, regardless of why he sold the colonies, he cannot be faulted for his choice. No other viable option was open to him. From various standpoints, an indefinate retention of Russian America had become untenable.

IV

The man charged by Czar Alexander II with the task of peddling Russian America to the United States was a diplomat of long experience in the American capital. Edouard de Stoeckl had served his government in Washington for twenty-five years. Appointed Secretary of the Legation in 1841, he rose to the rank of Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary in 1857. Recipient of several special awards and titles and a secret salary increase of 5,000 roubles per year, Stoeckl enjoyed the favor of the Czar. The Russian envoy had married an American woman in 1856, and when that union produced a son in 1861, the Emperor named himself a Godfather. This Imperial trust and his long residence in the United States, bringing a natural familiarity with American politics, made Stoeckl ideally suited to undertake the sensitive negotiations for the sale of Russian America.[50]

Reassignment to Washington must have been a bitter blow to the Russian Minister, for in recrossing the Atlantic he presumably would lose his chance at the vacant post at the Hague, to which he had looked forward as a haven for his final years in the diplomatic service. Furthermore, Stoeckl had never relished his American post, for he disdained the muddy street, crude society and lack of cultural refinement in Washington. "To him, the members of Congress were a noisy, fanatic, intriguing and dishonest lot. The men higher up in government were mediocre, inefficient, and ignorant of the fundamental principles of real statesmanship."[51] Nevertheless, he believed that he understood how to bargain with men of this type and how to accomplish his task in such surroundings. As he explained to Gorchakov:

> One must first treat with the administration, then with the Senate, whose confirmation is indispensable for every convention, then with the House of Representatives when there is a question, as in the present case, of pecuniary appropriations. It is necessary to confer with some hundreds of individuals, to know almost all of them, to give on one side and another explanations and information, to speak to each other and talk his language to him.[52]

Leaving St. Petersburg in mid-January, 1867, on his sales trip to the United States, Stoeckl arrived in New York on February 15, following an extremely rough crossing of the Atlantic, during which he had fallen and sprained his foot. Rather than continue to Washington, where a lame-duck Congress was sitting through its final sessions, the envoy elected to convalesce in New York City and plan for the forthcoming negotiations. Despite this delay, the Russian minister lost no time in contacting the American Government. He sent an intermediary, probably Thurlow Weed, an intimate of William Seward, to hint to the Secretary of State that the Czar might be willing to sell his colonies in North America. Such a course seemed necessary, for Gorchakov had advised

Stoeckl to maneuver the Americans into making the first official offer. Russia must not appear to be a peddler hawking used goods in a public market place to anyone willing to buy.[53]

Early in March, Waldemar Bodsico, First Secretary of the Russian Legation and charge d'affaires at Washington during Stoeckl's leave of absence, came to New York with fresh dispatches from St. Petersburg. These included summaries of the objectives to be pursued in selling Russian America. One report outlined the boundaries which should be arranged and the other suggested terms which should be included in the treaty. In the latter, the Minister of Finance, Mikhail de Reutern, advanced six points. First, all Russian citizens and other inhabitants of the colonies should be permitted to leave the territory or remain there after the cession at their personal discretion. Property rights of all residents must be protected. The American Government should not interfere in any manner with the religious affairs of the colonial people. During the transition period, between the exchange of ratifications and the formal occupation of the territory by the United States, the Government in Washington must guarantee that the inhabitants should suffer no serious supply shortages. The United States should be urged to assume the unexpired contractual obligations of the Russian American Company with with the Hudson's Bay Company, regarding the lease of the panhandle, and with the American Russian Company, concerning the ice deliveries. Finally, Reutern advised Stoeckl to accept nothing less than $5,000,000 for the colonies.[54] With these few instructions to guide him, Stoeckl arrived in Washington about March 12 or 13, to begin the delicate talks with Seward.

The customary courtesy call on the Secretary of State, expected from all returning foreign representatives, provided the Russian envoy with an

excuse immediately to visit the State Department, which he did on Wednesday, March 13. During a discussion ranging over various matters concerning Russian America, including a request from the Washington Territorial Legislature for fishing rights in the Russian colonial waters, Secretary Seward finally asked if the Russian Government would cede its North American possessions to the United States. Carefully displaying no particular enthusiasm, Stoeckl replied that the Czar had given him authority to treat if the subject came up.

Further talks were held the following day, after Seward had received permission from President Andrew Johnson to negotiate. Various details were examined, among which was the problem of price. Seward offered $5,000,000 in gold, then raised the ante by one half million. Stoeckl replied that $7,000,000 was more appropriate, but he privately hoped for six or six and one half millions as a maximum. On March 15, Seward laid the matter before the full Cabinet, which gave its qualified approval at a sum of $7,000,000, which the Secretary had not yet conceded to the Russian Minister.

The two negotiators did not confer again until Tuesday morning, March 19. In the interim, Seward gathered information and had a draft treaty prepared. He sought a map from the United States Coast Survey and advice from Julius E. Hilgard, Assistant to the Superintendent, who joined the Secretary at that Tuesday meeting in arranging the proposed new boundaries. Just before the interview, he received a cable from Major-General Henry W. Halleck, Commanding the Military Division of the Pacific, whose counsel he had requested in determining the value of the Russian territories. Halleck responded that Russian America "might, under certain circumstances, be worth from five to ten millions."[55]

Various subjects were probably discussed at the Tuesday conference in addition to the boundary question. Seward apparently slowly raised the proffered price to $6,500,000, which was as much as Stoeckl had hoped ever to achieve. At noon, the Secretary met with the Cabinet for the second time, and their full approval was given to the proposed treaty. A fourth session of negotiations on Wednesday nearly completed the treaty and determined all but one outstanding problem. On this day Seward finally conceded the full seven millions of Stoeckl's original request, a figure which the Secretary of State had been prepared to grant from the beginning. The single major point still in contention concerned the Russian request that the United States assume responsibility for the unexpired commitment of the Russian American Company to the two firms noted above. Stoeckl held out for such an agreement, although he probably did not expect to win American concurrence; while Seward correctly demanded a free and clear title to Russian America as a condition of purchase.

Two days passed without further contact between the two men. Time was running out for Seward, however, and Stoeckl must have realized that delay would work to his advantage. The current session of Congress would end on Saturday, March 30, and despite the President's plans for an extra session, a treaty would have to be completed quickly in order to present it to Congress before it went home until December. Postponement of the matter until the end of the year would risk defeat of the treaty. Therefore, on March 23, Seward tendered a final proposal, in which he again demanded an unencumbered transfer, free of all reservations, in return for which he offered to raise the purchase price by two hundred thousand, to $7,200,000.

On the 25th of the month, Stoeckl accepted this final definition of the treaty terms, perhaps sensing that the Secretary had made his last concession. The Russian Minister too labored under pressure, the requirement that he sell Russian America, upon which the remainder of his foreign service career probably would depend. Consequently, the time had come to bargain, despite his instructions. Late on March 25, 1867, the Russian envoy dispatched a summary of the treaty terms to St. Petersburg by telegram, requesting authority to sign.

On Friday evening, March 29, Stoeckl received instructions from the Czar to accept the American terms, and he hurried to the home of the Secretary of State. Arriving about 10 p.m., he interrupted Seward playing whist with members of his family. Stoeckl announced the Emperor's acceptance, whereupon Seward suggested that they gather their respective staffs and meet at the State Department immediately to complete the treaty. After initially suggesting a delay until the morrow, Stoeckl rushed off to find his assistants. Seward sent his son, Frederick W. Seward, to find Charles Sumner, Chairman of the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, "to inform him of the negotiations in progress, and to urge his advocacy of the treaty in the Senate".[56] Although not at his residence, Sumner received a message left by the younger Seward and arrived at the Secretary's quarters in time to talk with Frederick and the Russian Minister who had just returned. From them the Massachusetts Senator received his first information on a project for which he would soon provide the major Senate support. Whether he immediately approved the purchase is not known, but it is unlikely that this brief conversation convinced him of the merits of the treaty. Stoeckl went on to the State Department, and Sumner retraced his steps homeward. The Senator definately did not attend the late night signing, despite his inclusion in the famous painting of that scene by Emanuel Leutze.[57]

Stoeckl and Seward met at the State Department near midnight on March 29, to make final arrangements and to sign the treaty. While their assistants labored on true copies and a translation in French, the two men discussed a few remaining details and two items raised by Stoeckl's telegram of authorization. However, it was too late for the Russian envoy to renegotiate the issue of the contracts, and Seward refused to pay the purchase price in London, which would have been advantageous to Russia. They did arrange to exchange ratifications within three months of the Senate's grant of consent, and the payment was to be made in Washington within ten months of that approval.

With all the last points resolved and the final copies completed, Seward and Stoeckl set their hands to the treaty at about 4 a.m., on the morning of March 30, 1867. With the flourish of a pen, the Russian Minister signed away 586,400 square miles of territory, ending more than one hundred years of Russian activity in North America. With his signature, the Secretary of State made the United States potentially the owner of a vast land about which few of his countrymen knew anything and for which even less cared. The tasks of negotiation had ceased; the chores of guiding the treaty though the Senate lay ahead. Stoeckl feared this phase of the project, and Seward may have been more apprehensive than he allowed himself to appear.

V

The descriptive phrases most commonly associated in the popular mind with the purchase of Russian America have been the hyperboles "Seward's Folly" and "Seward's Icebox", coined by opponents of the treaty. Although subsequent events - the Alaska gold rush, the booming salmon and crab

fisheries, the North Slope oil discoveries and twentieth century political developments - have long since proved the fortuity and wisdom of this acquisition and the absurdity of those persistent witicisms, the inclusion of Seward's name in those expressions recognized a fundamental truth concerning the purchase. The negotiation of the treaty and much of the effort in achieving its acceptance by the Senate was the work of the Secretary of State.[58] From the beginning, it was his project. Stoeckl reported to his superiors that President Johnson, upon being informed by Seward, at the beginning of the negotiations, of the opportunity to acquire Russian America, had expressed no enthusiasm for the idea, but that he had consented to support the project if the Secretary of State believed it would benefit the United States.[59] Thus, the decision to pursue the negotiations must be credited to Seward, to him also must go much of the credit for winning Cabinet approval, and at him must be leveled any criticism of the terms of the agreement. The motives of the Secretary in arranging this cession have been obscured by the fact that he left no written explanation for his action. Nevertheless, his career as a Senator and statesman, comments made by his contemporaries, and remarks he made on related matters enable one to reconstruct the probably outlines of his thinking in that period during which he and the Russian Minister wrote the treaty.

The available evidence suggests at least four possible reasons for Seward's alacrity in embracing the opportunity to purchase Russian America. First, the acquisition of the Russian colonies would increase the size and presumably the power of the United States, an objective never far from the Secretary's thoughts. Seward's credentials as an ardent American expansionist are well known and require no extensive validation here.[60] His many schemes to purchase Caribbean real estate, his interest in the Hawaiian

Islands, his fascination with the Orient and its trade, and his support for Canadian annexation speak clearly enough of his dedication to the aggrandizement of his country. Professor LaFeber credits Seward with being the founder of the "New Empire" and second only to John Quincy Adams as a great Secretary of State. "Although Seward left the stage in the first act of the drama, only a few of the other players could improve on his techniques, and none could approach his vision of American Empire."[61]

Seward foresaw an United States encompassing the entire North American continent and controling a world-wide commercial empire, but he sought these objectives peacefully. Annexation of foreign segments of the continent would come through purchase or by the free choice of the people resident there as they came to understand the benefits in such a connection. Force was unnecessary; the United States could afford to wait.[62] In a speech in Boston, in the summer of 1867, Seward promised:

> Give me only this one assurance, that there will be no unlawful resistance by armed force to the President bearing the authority of the United States, and give me then 50, 40 or 30 more years of life, and I will engage to give you possession of the American continent, and the control of the entire world.[63]

To achieve such prominence in the world, Seward reasoned that the country required more naval stations for supply and coaling purposes. The Civil War made this requirement especially obvious to the Secretary, as his son Frederick Seward later noted:

> During its continuance my father . . . had found the Government labouring under great disadvantages for the lack of advanced naval outposts in the West Indies and in the North Pacific. So, at the close of hostilities, he commenced his endeavors to obtain such a foothold in each quarter.[64]

This explains Seward's persistence in attempting to buy anyone of several islands or portions of such lands in the Caribbean during the Johnson administration. Although he failed in all these essays, he did succeed in other corner of the globe mentioned by his son.

Seward had evinced an interest in the Russian colonies even before becoming Secretary of State. In a speech delivered in St. Paul, Minnesota, in 1860, the Senator had predicted:

> Standing here and looking far off into the Northwest, I see the Russian, as he busily occupies himself in establishing seaports and towns and fortifications on the verge of this continent, as the outposts of St. Petersburg; and I can say: 'Go on, and build up your outposts all along the coast, up even to the Arctic Ocean; they will yet become the outposts of my own country, - monuments of the civilization of the United States in the Northwest.' [65]

Later, in the closing months of the Civil War, with Union victory becoming increasingly probable, Seward dropped a hint to the Russian Government that the United States might be interested in Russian America. The American Minister to St. Petersburg, Cassius M. Clay, in November, 1864, had written to the Secretary of an interview with Czar Alexander regarding the "Intercontinental telegraph". He closed that dispatch with the comment that "The time will come, no doubt, when it will be the interest of Russia to sell, and our interest to buy out, their property in America".[66] Seward replied with an invitation for the Grand Duke Constantine to visit the United States in the near future. "I think it would be beneficial to us, and by no means unprofitable to Russia. I forbear from specifying my reasons. They will readily occur to you, as they would to his Imperial Highness, if his thoughts were once turned in that direction."[67] Thus, the Secretary of State was not unprepared to discuss the purchase of Russian America when the opportunity offered itself in March, 1867. His support for expansion in general and his interest in the Russian colonies in particular, perhaps as future naval stations, made him immediately receptive to the project.

A second possible source of Seward's ready acceptance of the idea involved British Columbia, a large and sparsely populated English crown

colony on the shores of the North Pacific, in which was situated, on Vancouver Island, the only British naval station in that area of the globe. In the event that a cession of the Russian possessions could be arranged, British Columbia would be the only land intervening between the new American acquisition and the remainder of the United States. It seems unreasonable to believe that this did not occur to the Secretary of State while negotiating with Stoeckl. With Yankee lands to the north and south, with a vast and violent sea to the west and a thousand miles of wilderness to the east, the position of the English colony would not be enviable. Some evidence suggests that Seward hoped that the purchase of Russian America would lead eventually to the acquisition of British Columbia by the United States. The Secretary was far too much an expansionist and his interest in British North America too deep for such thoughts not to have passed through his mind.[68]

A third and somewhat doubtful reason for Seward's willingness to seek a cession concerns an alleged desire to oblige the Russian Government in their wish to see their colonies, to demonstrate American friendship, and to repay the Czar for his staunch support of the Union during the Civil War. Evidence for this position rests mainly on the accounts of several contemporaries. There can be no doubt, certainly, of the Secretary's warm regard for the Czar's Government and his appreciation for the substantial assistance that Russian foreign policy rendered his diplomacy during the recent American bloodletting. However, it does not follow that Seward would sustain a plan to buy seven millions worth of real estate as a means of demonstrating American gratitude. The Secretary seems to have been too much the professional, calculating politician and diplomat to be moved overly by such sentiments.

Nevertheless, John Bigelow, American Minister to France and friend of Seward, later wrote that he believed that American gratitude for the Czar's attitude in 1862 was the motivation for the treaty, despite the fact that neither the Secretary of State or the Russian envoy would "distinctly" admit this.[69] James G. Blaine, a Congressman at the moment of the purchase, suggested that "a feeling of marked kindliness towards Russia . . . no doubt had great weight with Mr. Seward when he assented to the obvious wishes of that government".[70] Both of these accounts, however, were penned years after the event and their credibility suffers as a result.

A fourth and more probable motive for the Secretary of State was the opportunity which such a cession would afford him to enhance his personal prestige. Once a major force in the Republican party and the early favorite for its presidential nomination in 1860, Seward had fallen into discredit as the reins of party power fell to the Radicals in the 1866 Congressional elections. His support for President Johnson had earned him the hatred of that bitter bloc of Republicans. A number of his associates and critics, therefore, believed the purchase of Russian America was intended to take the focus of public attention off the failings of the Johnson administration and to regain some measure of personal support for Seward.

Her Majesty's Minister to the United States, Sir Frederick Bruce, stated to Lord Stanley, 14th Earl of Derby and Prime Minister, that "Mr. Seward having failed entirely in carrying through Congress his policy on internal questions, is bent on connecting his name with acquisitions of territory".[71] Stoeckl believed he recognized the same attitude in Seward's actions. In a despatch to Prince Gorchakov, shortly after signing the treaty, the Russian Minister explained that "Mr. Seward thought

to see in this treaty an opportunity to regain his former popularity." Stoeckl incorrectly estimated Seward's strength in the Johnson administration, however, for he judged the Secretary of State to be in danger of losing his post momentarily.[72] In error on this point, he also may have been wrong in calculating the motives of Seward in the purchase of Russian America.

Gideon Welles, Secretary of the Navy in the Lincoln and Johnson administrations and a close associate of Seward, also took a suspicious view of the Secretary's anxious search for available territory. In his diary, on May 21, 1867, he recorded that "Seward is anxious to make a purchase somewhere. Has loose, indefinite, and selfish notions. It is more the glory of Seward than the pure interests of the country, I apprehend". Later, he mused that "Seward had become a monomaniac on the subject of territorial acquisitions, that being the hobby on which he expects to be a candidate for President".[73] Senator Cornelius Cole discovered indications of Seward's vanity and ambition regarding the cession during a personal interview with the Secretary of State on July 18, 1867. In reflecting on that meeting later in the day, he wrote that Seward "takes to himself great credit on account of the Russian treaty and strongly hints that the Pacific coast people are not duly grateful for the benefits he has been instrumental in confering upon them, remarking that he 'supposed they would forgive him for that treaty.'"[74]

Opposition newspapers accused Seward of turning attention from his failures and those of the Johnson administration. One such journal, the New York Tribune, the leading journalistic opponent of the treaty and the personal vehicle for editor Horace Greeley's vituperous pen, suggested that "The collapse of the President's home policy is so total and so disastrous that attention must be diverted elsewhere at any cost. Russian

America is a good way off and so good a place on which to fix the public eye." Similar sentiments appeared in other papers. The Cincinnati Daily Gazette declared that "For a long time JOHNSON and SEWARD have been searching for some stroke of foreign policy which would cover their disgrace at home".[75]

But perhaps the above reasons for Seward's enthusiasm are too complicated. Certainly, he saw the purchase as good because it expanded the nation and threatened British Columbia, and quite probably it did occur to him that a popular treaty would improve his personal reputation. However, his approval may have been a more "gut-level" reaction. Former Representative Blaine may have been close to the truth when he wrote "Mr. Seward did not consider the treaty from a financial point of view. He knew intuitively that the territory was worth more to the United States than to any other power; . . ."[76] Actually, the Secretary's actions during the negotiations and at the time of the Senate deliberations would suggest that he knew little about the resource value of the Russian colonies when the talks with Stoeckl began. His almost frantic search for information to support the treaty came later. But his lack of knowledge did not matter; it was immaterial. Once, in answer to critics of the transcontinental railroad who wailed about the cost, he succinctly stated "It is necessary; and since it is necessary, there is an end of the argument".[77] The same principle may have been sufficient for Seward in the purchase of Russian America. His critics could debate the cost or the need or the value; but he may have sensed intuitively that the acquisition was necessary. For William H. Seward, perhaps that was quite enough.

CHAPTER II

FOOTNOTES

[1]National Archives, "Papers relating to the cession of Alaska," (enclosures No. 2 and 3 to Dispatch 2115 of December, 1936, from the U.S. Embassy at Moscow), photostatic reproductions of the originals in the Archives of the Soviet Union, Microcopy T-495, 1 Ross. The documents are in Russian and French. Those in Russian were translated by the U.S. Embassy before transmission and hereafter noted as "Official translation." Those in French have been translated by David Hunter Miller as indicated in footnote no. 2 below. Subsequently, this series will be designated as: PRCA, with the document designation of Annex, number and date.

The five men who attended the meeting with Alexander were: his younger brother, the Grand Duke Constantine Nikolaevitch; the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Prince Alexander Gorchakov; Edouard de Stoeckl, Minister to the United States; Vice-Admiral N. Krabbe, Minister of Marine; and Mikhail Kh. Reutern, Minister of Finance. Annex 12, December 12, 1866, (O.S.), Gorchakov to Alexander, and Annex 14, December 15, 1866 (O.S.), Gorchakov to Alexander.

This collection of documents must be considered the most important single group of records pertaining to the Russian side of the story of the purchase of Russian America outside the Soviet Union. They are also of great value in throwing light on the American phase of the process, as Stoeckl, author of many of the documents, was verbose and fond of commenting on all manner of things. Without this material, scholars would know very little concerning the details of the negotiations and the Russian reasons for selling Russian America.

[2]During the debate on the Alaska Treaty in the United States in 1867-1868, rumors spread that the purchase of Russian America had been proposed as early as the administrations of Presidents Martin Van Buren and James K. Polk. Various newspapers at the time of the cession repeated these stories, and several Congressmen mentioned them in their remarks in the House of Representatives. David Hunter Miller has concluded that "Nothing in the way of substantial evidence in support of those stories was then or has since been brought forward". Thus, in the absence of such verifications, the incidents should be considered apocryphal. However, since the alleged occurences transpired during the period of intense American interest in the Oregon country and the crisis with Great Britain concerning those lands, it is inherently believable and likely that someone in those administrations might have suggested that the United States should close up the Pacific Coast by buying or taking Russian America at the same time that it wrested the entire Oregon country from England. Since the name of Robert J. Walker, ardent expansionist and Secretary of the Treasury under President Polk, is one of the names associated with the early sale attempts, the possibility is even more likely. Nevertheless, Miller is correct in assessing the stories as merely popular remors in the absence of hard evidence. David

Hunter Miller, "The Alaska Treaty", unpublished manuscript prepared for publication as part of Volume 9 of the Department of State's edition of Treaties and Other International Acts of the United States of America, Archives of the Department of State, 1942-44, p. 56. Hereafter referred to as DHM "Alaska Treaty".

The author acknowledges his deep debt to Mr. Miller's study of the purchase of Alaska, which to his knowledge remains the best work on the subject yet attempted, and it continues to be little used. I secured a xerox copy of the manuscript from the Department of State, and I have referred to it often. It is now available also on microfilm from the National Archives. Although this study provided little material that I had not discovered earlier and independently, his presentation did assist me in clarifying several phases of the topic and occasionally indicated areas requiring further research. Most importantly, Miller's work included complete translations of most of the Russian material in the National Archives described in footnote no. 1 above. When possible, I have used these translations of the French documents, rather than my own, indicating the fact as "DHM Translation", followed by the relevant page number from his manuscript.

[3]Various students of the purchase of Alaska have discussed the basic reasons for the Russian action in their writing on the subject, but their accounts vary widely in regard to where they place the main emphasis. Most seem to have sought to discover an overriding cause or two, when the evidence plainly demonstrates that many factors were considered by Russian leaders.

Semen B. Okun stressed the problem of defending the colonies and the political advantages of the sale as the principal forces behind the Russian decision. Okun, The Russian-American Company, p. 249. Glyndon G. Van Deusen, in his study of William Seward, focused on the financial difficulties of the Russian American Company, growing Russian interest in the Amur country, and the desire to avoid political problems with the United States. Van Deusen, William Henry Seward, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1967), p. 539. Clarence L. Andrews believed the sale resulted from the decline of Russian power in North America. Andrews, The Story of Alaska, p. 124. Anatole G. Mazour has been the only scholar to discuss and emphasize equally most of the major issues debated by Russian leaders, and his published account, although brief, remains one of the two best analyses in print. Mazour, "The Prelude to Russia's Departure from America", PHR, X (September, 1941), pp. 311-319. Frank A. Golder, in a sense the father of the historical study of the purchase of Alaska, and the only scholar to see most of the documents in Russia pertaining thereto, wrote "that Russia sold Alaska not out of enmity to England, not out of friendship for the United States, but out of a desire to get rid of a territory which had become valueless and burdensome". Golder also discussed most of the other issues considered by Russian leaders, but he chose to stress the financial issues. His brief study, with that of Mazour, is one of the two best available in print. Golder, "The Purchase of Alaska", American Historical Review, XXV (April, 1920), p. 424. This journal hereafter referred to as AHR. Hector Chevigny, apparently attempting to advance a different theory, claimed that the Russian motives stemmed entirely from

friendship to the United States. Chevigny, Russian America, p. 245. Stuart Ramsay Tompkins concluded that the Russian decision was determined by the state of the Company's finances, by defensive problems, and by opposition to monopolies of the type of the Russian American Company. Tompkins, Alaska: Promyshlennik and Sourdough, p. 185.

Neither David Hunter Miller or Victor J. Farrar attempted to isolate a particular reason for the Russian action. Miller, in his unpublished study, included most of the documents pertaining to the subject in full, but he did not essay an analysis. Farrar chose not to study the causation factor at all. Farrar, The Annexation of Russian America to the United States, (Washington: Press of W. F. Roberts Co., 1937).

The author's own analysis of the Russian motives is presented here only in brief. For a more detailed study see Chapter 2 of his master's thesis referred to above.

[4]In July, 1867, following the exchange of ratifications, Stoeckl sent to Gorchakov a lengthy summation of the background of Russian colonization in North America and a brief but comprehensive explanation of the factors which had convinced the Russian Government to see Russian America. This report so impressed the Czar and Prince Gorchakov that they discussed the possibility of publishing extracts from it, presumably in an attempt to explain the cession to the Russian public. Consequently the views expressed in this document may come close to approximating those held by the Czar himself. On the other hand, Alexander and Gorchakov merely may have recognized a good piece of propogranda when they saw it. PRCA, Annex 43, July 12/24, 1867, Stoeckl to Gorchakov.

[5]Golder Collection of photostat copies of documents in the Russian Archives, Library of Congress, Division of Manuscripts, Box 6, a, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 1 - 9, #4, 1857-1892, Documents relating to the Transfer of Alaska, Letter from Constantine to Gorchakov, March 22/April 3, 1857, in Russian, translated for the Library of Congress by DHM. This collection hereafter referred to as Golder Collection.

[6]PRCA, Annex 1, December, 1857, Gorchakov to Constantine. On the microfilm and in the original photostats held in the National Archives, this document is incorrectly dated as December, 1856.

[7]Ibid, Annex 6, Dec. 23/Jan. 4, 1860, Stoeckl to Gorchakov. DHM translation, p. 121.

[8]Ibid., Annex 8, Dec. 23/Jan. 4, 1860, Stoeckl to Gorchakov.

[9]The actual dispatch is not available to historians in the United States, but indications of its contents can be found in several sources. Ibid., Annex 10, July 4/16, 1860, Stoeckl to Gorchakov. Frank A. Golder, Guide to Materials for American History in Russian Archives, Carnegie Publication No. 239, (Washington: Carnegie Institution of Washington, D.C., 1937) II, p. 24.

[10]PRCA, Annex 10, July4/16, 1860, Stoeckl to Gorchakov. DHM translation, p. 146.

[11]Golder Collection, Boxes 16 and 18. These portions of the collection, consisting of several hundred pages of photostats, include the bulk of Stoeckl's dispatches to Gorchakov concerning the outbreak of fighting and the progress of the war in the United States from late 1860 to the summer of 1865. In many of these communications, Stoeckl voiced his gloomy view of the conflict and his dire forecast of the outcome. As for example, see: Stoeckl to Gorchakov, December 11/12, 1860, Microcopy A2908, Reel 3, Microfilm Division, University of Washington Library, Seattle.

[12]Vladimir Gsovski, Russian Administration of Alaska and the Status of the Alaskan Natives, prepared by the Chief of the Foreign Law Section, Law Library of the Library of Congress, 81st Congress, 2nd Sess., Senate Doc. no. 152, (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1950), pp. 27-28. Gsovski includes translations of a number of sections of the proffered but never accpeted new charter.

[13]No firm documentary evidence exists in the United States to support the story of Constantine's and Reutern's intervention with Stoeckl. However, intimations of this can be found, and Frank A. Golder, who presumably saw the appropriate documents included these incidents in his early account of the treaty. See: Frank A. Golder, "The Purchase of Alaska", pp. 418-419.

[14]The events surrounding the final decision to see the colonies, including the sudden reversal of the policy to renew the charter, have not been examined satisfactorily in print. One scholar looked at the role of the California Fur Company, but his analysis was limited by not having access to the most important relevant manuscripts. Victor J. Farrar, "Senator Cole and the Purchase of Alaska", The Washinton Historical Quarterly, XIV (October, 1923), pp. 243-247. The best material on the California Company's bid can be found in the papers of Cornelius Cole in the Library of the University of California at Los Angeles. An additional source of great value is the material in the records of the U.S. Embassy in St. Petersburg. Cole was a United States Senator and a brother-in-law of one of the founders of the California firm. He used his political influence in the attempt to win the desired lease. Although he failed, his correspondence with various men and his interviews with Stoeckl reveal some of the events that transpired in the Russian capital before the December 1866 meeting. For a full discussion see the author's Master's Thesis, pp. 43-50.

[15]Semen B. Okun, The Russian-American Company, p. 233, report of a select joint committee to study the colonies, 1863.

[16]Ibid, p. 233.

[17]PRCA, Annex 12, December 12, 1866 (O.S.), digest of the views of Minister of Finance, Reutern.

[18]Semen B. Okun, The Russian-American Company, p.233, report of the Minister of state Property, 1862. Also: PRCA, Annex 43, July 12/24, 1867, Stoeckl to Gorchakov. Although is document post-dates the sale, it was a summary by the Russian envoy of the reasons for the cession of the colonies.

[19]Ibid., Annex 9, February 7, 1860 (O.S.), correspondent unknown. Official translation. Frank A. Golder judged the writer to be Rear-Admiral Popov, who had considerable experience in the Pacific area and was a confidant of Constantine. Golder, "The Purchase of Alaska", p. 416.

[20]Semen B. Okun, The Russian-American Company, p. 233, report of a select joint committee to study the colonies, 1863.

[21]PRCA, Annex 4, November 1/13, 1857, Stoeckl to Gorchakov. DHM translation, p. 110.

[22]Golder Collection, Box 6, a, Letter from Constantine to Gorchakov, December 7, 1857 (O.S.). Translated for the Library of Congress by DHM.

[23]Semen B. Okun, The Russian-American Company, p. 256. Report of the Department of State Economy, 1862.

[24]PRCA, Annex 43, July 12/24, 1867, Stoeckl to Gorchakov. Translation by the author.

[25]Ibid., Annex 9, February 7, 1860 (O.S.), correspondent unknown, probably Rear-Admiral Popov.

[26]Semen B. Okun, The Russian-American Company, p.253. Extract from a report of the General Chancery of the Ministry of Finance, 1866.

[27]Vladimir Gsovski, "Russian Administration of Alaska . . .", p. 27. Principle number 16 of the charter guidelines of June 19, 1865 (O.S.) provided that: "An Administrator-General of the colonies, appointed by His Majesty, independent of the Company and subordinate directly to His Majesty's government, shall be entrusted with the supreme administration of the region and supervision over Company administration; a colonial council shall be attached to him consisting of members appointed by the government and the Company . . . ."

[28]PRCA, Annex 6, Dec.23/Jan. 4, 1860, Stoeckl to Gorchakov. Translation by the author.

[29]Ibid., Annex 12, December 12, 1866 (O.S.), Digest of the views of the Minister of Finance, Mikhail de Reutern.

[30]Ibid., Annex 43, July 12/24, 1867, Stoeckl to Gorchakov. Translation by the author. This theory is also expressed in: (1) Annex 9, 1860 (O.S.), Author unknown, but probably Rear-Admiral Popov. (2) Annex 12, December 12, 1866 (O.S.), digest of views of Constantine.

[31]Golder Collection, Box 6, a, Letter from Constantine to Gorchakov, December 7, 1857 (O.S.). Translation for the Library of Congress by DHM.

[32]PRCA, Annex 43, July 12/24, 1867, Stoeckl to Gorchakov. Annex 12, December 12, 1866 (O.S.), digest of the views of Constantine and Stoeckl. Both had stated this position to Gorchakov at that time.

[33]Semen B. Okun, The Russian-American Company, p. 242.

[34]PRCA, Annex 6, Dec. 23/Jan. 4, 1860, Stoeckl to Gorchakov. Translation by the author.

[35]Ibid., Annex 43, July 12/24, 1867, Stoeckl to Gorchakov. Stoeckl has been powerfully impressed by the American behavior in British Columbia, which he believed had ended nearly with the seizure of the colony by the Americans. "Fortunately for her, the gold was not as abundant as they believed, it soon became exhausted and the Americans dispersed. Without that, British Columbia would be a territory of the United States today." Translation by the author.

[36]Ibid. Translation by the author.

[37]Ibid. Annex 9, February 7, 1860 (O.S.), correspondent unknown, but probably Rear-Admiral Popov. In one report, he wrote:

> Whatever they may say in Europe about the cynicism of the dogma known as the 'Monroe Doctrine' or the doctrine of 'manifest destiny', anyone who has lived the North American life cannot fail to understand instinctively that this principle is entering more and more into the blood of the people, and that new generations are sucking it in with their mothers' milk and inhaling it with every breath of air.

Official translation.

[38]Golder Collection, Box 6, a. Letter from Constantine to Gorchakov, December 7, 1857 (O.S.). Translation for the Library of Congress by DHM. For similar views see also: PRCA, Annex 9, February 7, 1860 (O.S.), Rear-Admiral Popov. Annex 43, July 12/24, 1867, Stoeckl to Gorchakov.

[39]Ibid., Annex 9, February 7, 1860 (O.S.). Rear-Admiral Popov.

[40]Ibid. Also: Annex 4, November 1/13, 1867, Gorchakov to Alexander, a digest of the views of Stoeckl.

[42]Ibid., Annex 12, December 12, 1866 (O.S.), digest of the views of Stoeckl. Annex 13, December, 1866 (O.S.), draft of a note from Gorchakov to Alexander. Annex 43, July, 12/24, 1867, Stoeckl to Gorchakov.

[43]Semen B. Okun, The Russian-American Company, p.262.

[44]Barry M. Gough, The Royal Navy and the Northwest Coast of North America, 1810-1914, (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1971), pp. 122 and 186-190.

[45]Semen B. Okun, The Russian-American Company, p. 262.

[46]PRCA, Annex 6, Dec. 23/Jan.4, 1860, Stoeckl to Gorchakov. Translation by the author.

[47]Ibid., Annex 13, December, 1866, draft of a note from Gorchakov to Alexander. DHM translation, p. 158.

[48]Ibid., Annex 6, Dec. 23/Jan. 4, 1860, Stoeckl to Gorchakov. Translation by the author, paranthesized word inserted by author.

[49]Ibid., Annex 9, February 7, 1860 (O.S.), correspondent unknown, but probably Rear-Admiral Popov. Official translation. Paranthesized words inserted by the author.

[50]For information concerning Stoeckl's career, see: Frank A. Golder, "The American Civil War Through the Eyes of a Russian Diplomat," AHR, 26 (April, 1921), pp. 454-463. Also: Frank A. Golder, Guide to Materials . . . . etc., pp. 17, 19, 36 and 38.

[51]Frank A. Golder, "The American Civil War . . . etc.", p. 457.

[52]PRCA, Annex 28, April 7/19, 1867, Stoeckl to Gorchakov. DHM Translation, p. 258.

[53]The remainder of this section, in which few footnotes will be used, has been summarized from the third chapter of the author's Master's Thesis. For further details and for documentation if questions arise, the reader is referred to that work.

[54]PRCA, Annex 17, January 5, 1867 (O.S.), Reutern to Gorchakov, included as an enclosure in Annex 18, January 16, 1867 (O.S.), Gorchakov to Stoeckl.

[55]National Archives, Record Group 59, General Records of the Department of State, "Miscellaneous Letters," Microcopy, M-179, Reel 254, under date of March 18, 1867, Halleck to Stanton. Hereafter this main collection referred to as NA, RG 59, with the appropriate sub-group designated. Also found in National Archives, Record Group 107, Department of War, "Telegrams Received by the Office of the Secretary of War," Microcopy, M-473, Reel 120, p. 382. Hereafter referred to as NA, RG 107, with the appropriate sub-group designated.

The origin of this telegram was not known at the time of the writing of the quthor's Master's Thesis, and it was incorrectly assumed that Stanton might have sought the information from Halleck following the first Cabinet presentation of the purchase plan. However, later research has revealed that Seward asked Stanton, on March 14, to make the inquiry of the General. See for Seward's note to Stanton: Edwin M. Stanton MSS, Library of Congress, an unsigned note from the State Department, dated March 14, 1867. For the telegram to Halleck, see: RG 107, "Telegrams Collected by the Office of the Secretary of War (Bound), Telegrams Sent by the Secretary of War, June 20, 1866- Feb. 12, 1868", Microcopy, M-473, Reel 91, p. 152.

[56]Frederick W. Seward, Reminiscences of a War-Time Statesman and Diplomat: 1830-1915, (New York and London: G. P. Putnam's and Sons, 1916), p. 361.

[57]In his Master's Thesis, the author ventured the guess that Sumner did not go the State Department, but the available evidence was not conclusive. See footnote 88, p. 109 of that work. However, since that time, new evidence has made it possible to state with assurance that Sumner returned to his home and was not present at the State Department at all that evening. Charles Sumner MSS, Massachusetts Historical Society, Boston, the Charles C. Beaman Memorandum, p. 2. The actual words used by Sumner's private secretary were "Seward went home." Inherently, that was impossible under the circumstances. Thus, in the haste of taking notes in the midst of a committee hearing, with various names being used, Beaman must have intended to write the Sumner, rather than "Seward".

[58]For a discussion of Seward's lobbying efforts during the Senate's consideration of the treaty, see below, Chapter 3.

[59]PRCA, Annex 21, March 6/18, 1867, Stoeckl to Gorchakov. Evidence that Seward had reported Johnson's attitude correctly can be found in a revealing item in the diary of Col. William G. Moore, Secretary to President Johnson. The Cabinet discussions of the treaty, pro or con. Andrew Johnson MSS., Col. William G. Moore,

"Small Diary," Library of Congress, Microcopy, Reel 50, pp. 29-31.

[60]Glyndon G. Van Deusen, William Henry Seward. The most recent and most thorough study of the Secretary of State.

[61]Walter LaFeber, The New Empire: An Interpretation of American Expansion, 1860-1898, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1963), pp. 24 and 25.

[62]Glyndon G. Van Deusen, William Henry Seward, p. 549.

[63]San Francisco Daily Bulletin, July 18, 1867. Extract from a speech given by Seward during a reception given by citizens of Boston for President Johnson.

[64]Frederick W. Seward, Reminiscences of a War-time Statesman and Diplomat, p. 360.

[65]Ibid., p. 259.

[66]NA, RG 59, "Despatches from U.S. Ministers to Russia, 1808-1906", Microcopy, M-35, Reel 20, Clay to Seward, November 14, 1864, no. 62, "official".

[67]Ibid., "Diplomatic Instructions of the Department of State, 1801-1906: Russia", M77, Reel 136 Seward to Clay, December 26, 1864, no. 112, p. 381. Also published in: United States House of Representatives, Executive Document No. 177, 40th Cong., 2nd Sess., 1867, p. 5.

[68]This phase of Seward's motivation will be discussed and documented in some detail in Chapter 8, as part of the broader topic of British Columbia and the purchase of Alaska.

[69]John Bigelow, Retrospections of an Active Life, (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, Page & Company, 1913), vol. I, footnote on p. 499. This was written by a man at least ninety years of age, as it was not part of his diary, but rather a footnote added in preparing his diary and memoirs for publication.

[70]James G. Blaine, Twenty Years of Congress: From Lincoln to Garfield, (Norwich, Conn.: Henry Bill, 1884), vol. 2, p. 333.

[71]Public Records Office, London, Foreign Office 115, vol. 465, no. 112, Bruce to Stanley, April 16, 1867, photostatic copies in the Library of Congress. Hereafter referred to as PRO, F.O. 115/volume no.

[72]PRCA, Annex 30, April 7/19, 1867, Stoeckl to Gorchakov. In another communication, written the same day, he expressed the idea that Seward "himself was not a stranger to some of these suggestions which increased he importance of an act the exclusive merit of which he sought in the public eye to attribute to himself". Annex 29, 7/19, 1867, Stoeckl to Gorchakov. DHM translations, pp. 271 and 261.

[73]Gideon Welles, Diary of Gideon Welles, (New York: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1911), vol. 3, pp. 96 and 125.

[74]Cornelius Cole Mss., Box 27, Folder 3, a single sheet of paper, dated July 18, 1867, in Cole's handwriting. This was neither a letter, a draft of one nor a diary entry, but apparently only a means of recording the details of his interview.

[75]New York Tribune, Horace Greeley, editor, April 1, 1867; see also the "Washington Letter", dated April 1, 1867, published April 2, 1867. Cincinnati Daily Gazette, April 4, 1867.

[76]James G. Blaine, Twenty Years of Congress, vol. 2, p. 340.

[77]Walter LaFeber, The New Empire, p. 27.

Chapter III

S I T T I N G I N J U D G E M E N T:

Seward's Lobby and the Senate's Consideration of the Treaty.

In the sober light of morning, following the pre-dawn signing of the treaty ceding Russian America to the United States on March 30, 1867, Secretary of State Seward's enthusiasm for his achievement must have been dampened somewhat as he contemplated the tasks which lay before him. Unlike the work of his Russian counterpart, Edouard de Stoeckl, which required only the approval of Czar Alexander II for ratification and implementation, the results of Seward's negotiations would have to be submitted to the United States' Senate for its "advice and consent", a process that would commence later that day. If the Senate agreed to the treaty, fulfillment of the terms of the cession would have to await the pleasure of the House of Representatives, for only they could initiate the money bill to appropriate the funds necessary to complete the purchase.

Several considerations made these required steps hazardous for Seward and the Russian American treaty. First, as the principal Cabinet officer in the administration of President Andrew Johnson, Seward had many, powerful enemies in both houses of the Congress. With the seating of the Fortieth Congress in March, 1867, the Radical Republicans had gained control of both the party and the legislative branch of the government, where they led majorities in both houses. Outspoken in their denunciation of the President and his Reconstruction policies and critical of those Republicans who served him, the Radical leadership might choose to block the treaty regardless of its merits merely because it had been arranged by an administration which they despised. Although Seward was a distinguished veteran of the Senate and had been instrumental in the founding of the Republican Party which the Radicals now dominated, his loyalty to Andrew Johnson had deprived him of whatever natural support his services to the party and the Senate otherwise would have ensured him. Consequently, on the morning of March 30, Seward could not be certain that venemous parti-

sanship and personal animosities might not block the acquisition of Russian America.

A second difficulty confronting the treaty arose from the fact that there had existed no significant public, press or Congressional support for the acquisition of the Russian colonies prior to the conclusion of the negotiations. In all earlier purchases of territory by the United States, some demand for all or part of the lands eventually obtained had been expressed in newspapers and in Congress before the actual cession had been arranged. In the case of Russian America, the possibility of its annexation simply had not been openly a topic of discussion. Furthermore, among the public, the editors of important journals and Congressmen there were few who knew much about the Russian possessions in North America. Information regarding these remote territories did exist in the American scientific community and among a small number of Yankee ship captains and sailors who had visited the Czar's colonies, but such knowledge was not common. Finally, the Russian lands were not contiguous to current United States holdings, and the nation had never before annexed a large, detached region. Therefore, Seward could not depend upon receiving immediate support for the purchase in the Senate or from the press or the public, and the general ignorance of the American people and the Congress regarding Russian America made any hope of a sudden ground swell of approval for the cession doubtful.

A third important factor which cast gloom over the fate of the treaty was the condition of the United States in the spring of 1867. Not two years earlier, the American Civil War had ended. The leaders of the victorious North had focused their main attention since upon the Reconstruction of the nation and the South, and the vengeful men who now held the reins of power in Washington might have little interest in distant

additions to the national domain while the tasks of molding the defeated states anew remained before them. Further, the war had extracted a terrible price in blood and treasure. The national debt stood at nearly two and three-quarter billion dollars, while annual government income hovered approximately at five hundred million.[1] For many Americans, the reduction of the former figure held first place in the list of priorities facing the government, and an expenditure of even $7,200,000 for a remote wilderness might seem an unconscionable extravagance to such individuals. The United States had once been aggressively expansionist; once the acquisition of Russian America would have been greeted enthusiastically; but it remained to be seen if four years of fraticidal war had drained the Republic of its nationalistic optimism and hunger for more territory.

There is no way of knowing how many of these difficulties occupied Seward's mind as he took his treaty to the Capitol on that March morning, but certainly he was sufficiently astute as a politician to have anticipated some of the problems the purchase would encounter. Stoeckl had been fearful of a negative reaction in Congress and had offered to lobby for the treaty personally, but Seward had politely rejected this suggestion with the assurance that "confirmation would not meet with any delay and would be given without the least difficulty."[2] Stoeckl remained unconvinced, and there is reason to believe that the Secretary of State was not as sanguine as he pretended.[3] The energy with which Seward lobbied for the treaty from the day it was announced and the efforts he made to amass information favorable to the purchase suggest that he clearly understood the unique character of the acquisition and the special problems which the temper of the times had placed in its path to acceptance.

I

Seward's campaign to win the "advice and consent" of the Senate to the annexation of Russian America began within hours of the 4:00 a.m., March 30, signing of the treaty. The imminent adjournment of the Fortieth Congress, scheduled for noon of that very day, compelled the Secretary of State to move expeditiously. Fortunately, a special session of the Senate, to be announced officially later in the morning, would commence on the following Monday, April 1, but Seward could not be certain how many days these additional meetings would continue. The full Congress was expected to be in recess until at least July, and perhaps it would not reconvene before December.[4] Consequently, it was imperative that the Russian treaty be submitted to the Senate immediately, even that morning if possible. The impending special session, which offered the only hope of quick Senate action, was entirely coincidental, for there is no evidence that it had been planned with the Russian American treaty in mind. President Johnson had suggested the idea of such additional meetings in a note to Seward on March 23, several days before the purchase agreement was concluded.[5] The purpose of holding the Senate beyond its scheduled adjournment was the press of executive business, especially military and civilian appointments.

Nevertheless, the plans for an extra session of the Senate may have saved the treaty from defeat. It is unlikely that news of the purchase could have remained a secret throughout a long Congressional recess, and if the existance of a treaty had become public knowledge, the enemies of the administration might have marshalled sufficient forces to destroy the project before Seward could have submitted it to the Senate. Therefore, it was essential that the matter be handled quickly, before the Senate

adjourned. A decision would have to be reached during the special session to avoid having the treaty held over or seeing it languish in committee and be forgotten while Congress was absent from Washington. This same need for swift action probably had dictated the unusual events which had filled the previous evening, when Seward and Stoeckl, the latter having just received full powers from his government to sign, had agreed at 10:00 p.m. to gather their respective staffs, meet at the State Department by midnight and complete the final negotiations. They had not concluded their labors until 4:00 a.m., hardly a normal time to conduct important affairs of state.[6] But as a result of such exertions the treaty was now ready for submission to the Senate.

With little or no sleep to fortify himself for the events of the day, Seward arrived at the Capitol well before 10:00 a.m. to await the President and the other members of the Cabinet who were expected on the hour.[7] Gideon Welles, Secretary of the Navy, also came early, and Seward immediately related to him the events of the preceding night, explaining that the treaty would be sent in to the Senate as soon as the President reached the Capitol. Welles observed that Charles Sumner, Chairman of the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, was opposed to the impending adjournment of Congress and might "avail himself of the occasion to delay" it to deal with the treaty. This idea rather startled Seward, who apparently did not want the adjournment of the regular session postponed, for holding the members of the House of Representatives in Washington, primarily to await the action of the Senate on the treaty and then to vote the required appropriation, would win few friends for the purchase. As for the payment to Russia, Seward explained that "it would not take place immediately, but could be made next winter."

After this exchange with Welles, the Secretary of State made confidants, one at a time, of four or five Senators, beginning with Cornelius Cole, junior member from California. The latter may have been chosen because of his interest and knowledge of the Russian possessions resulting from his efforts to lease the territories from the Russian Government for a group of California speculators.[8] Who the others were to whom he revealed the unexpected news has not been established, but they almost certainly were among those who either supported Seward's policies generally or would be instantly favorable to such a purchase. This would give him a core of positive response on the Senate floor when the treaty was announced later in the morning. The whole process of conspiratorial revelations and "tête à têtes" left Gideaon Welles "some amused and disgusted with the little acts and overwhelming egotism" of the Secretary of State. The latter trait, Welles observed, was "a growing infirmity with him."

By 10:00 a.m. the President and the remainder of the Cabinet had arrived at the Capitol, where they probably learned for the first time from an eager Seward that he had concluded the cession agreement with Stoeckl. Among the final communications now sent into the Senate was a brief document prepared by the Secretary of State for Johnson's signature which transmitted the Russian treaty "for . . . consideration with a view to ratification."[9] Following Senate receipt of these papers, the purchase convention was "read" officially a first time, whereupon Charles Sumner moved the "said treaty, together with the message and accompanying documents, be referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations and printed in confidence for the use of the Senate." The motion was adopted and so ordered.[10] The fate of the purchase was now in the hands of the seven men who comprised the Committee on Foreign Relations; it would be more than a week before the full Senate would consider the subject again.

As a result of Seward's confidential revelations, a selected few Senators had knowledge of the treaty before it was presented to the full membership, but most must have been somewhat stunned by this unexpected announcement. Many were probably incredulous, and the Philadelphia Inquirer reported that the news had "created a general smile, and in some instances ridicule." According to the Inquirer, "Had the vote been taken (immediately) nearly all the Senators would have voted against it as a farce".[11] Stoeckl's dispatches to his government confirm this view of the initial reaction of the Senate. In a report to Prince Gorchakov, dated April 3, 1867, the Russian diplomat explained that there had developed "among several Senators, and especially in the press, an opposition greater than I had expected." Stoeckl credited this response "not so much to the transaction itself but rather to the passionate animosities which reign in the Congress against the President and still more against the Secretary of State."[12] Elaborating on this theme in a later dispatch, Stoeckl revealed that "Several Senators told me that they had nothing against the transaction itself, that they approved it, but they could not confirm an act which carried the signature of Mr. Seward." So serious was the situation, the Russian minister asserted, that Charles Sumner had come to him "to beg me to withdraw the treaty which had, according to him, no chance of being confirmed." In fact, Stoeckl concluded, "If the treaty had been immediately submitted to a vote, it would have been rejected."[13]

This assessment of Senate response to the treaty may have been overdrawn, perhaps the result partially of Stoeckl's attempts to enhance in the eyes of his superiors the difficulties he had encountered in securing a cession,[14] but it seems reasonable to conclude that the initial Senate reaction was not warm. Not much more could be expected realistically

from a group who were critical of the administration which had produced the purchase agreement, who surely knew that little popular demand for the territory existed anywhere in the United Staes, and who understood that this acquisition would cost a financially pressed nation more than seven millions in gold coin.

In any case, news of the purchase certainly did create a sensation in Washington, where for several days the subject was a favorite topic of conversation in the corridors of the Capitol and the homes of Congressmen. During the evening of March 30, the treaty was reviewed over dinner at the home of the Secretary of State, where the Sewards entertained Gideon Welles and his wife, Senator Alexander Cattell of New Jersey, John Bigelow, former ambassador to France, and Mrs. Bigelow. Seward discoursed at length about his new achievement and his plans, much to the "ennui" of poor Welles. Stoeckl joined the group after dinner and the purchase was discussed further. Later, the Bigelows went to the home of Representative Samuel Hooper of Massachusetts, where they found Congressmen George S. Boutwell and Benjamin Butler, also of the Bay State, Charles Sumner, former Senator Ira Harris of New York and several others. "All talked of the Alaska treaty. Harris felt badly about it, he hated Seward", and thought the United States was buying an "elephant".[15] Most if not all in this group either opposed the treaty or entertained serious reservations at this early stage, further evidence of the initial negative Congressional reaction. However, only one of them, Butler, eventually voted against either the treaty or the appropriation.[16] Time and other considerations would make converts of many who originally condemned the purchase.

In pursuit of such shifts in attitude and in an attempt to persuade the large number of uncommitted Americans, Seward had begun to lobby for

the treaty almost from the moment Stoeckl and he had signed it. First, he had held private interviews with several Senators before the cession agreement was formally submitted. Second, as soon as he had sent the treaty to the Senate, the Secretary released to the press a carefully worded statement, the first information regarding the purchase to be made public.[17] During the days to follow, the State Department would provide correspondents with other propoganda pieces: letters from prominent individuals with knowledge of Russian America extolling the value and wisdom of the cession and reports highlighting the abundant resources of the czarist colonies. Because alternate sources of information concerning these lands were not readily available, the press generally gave the material issued by the State Department rather wide dissemination through the Associated Press.

The first news release may have been carried out in two stages, for it appears that the Secretary initially gave the information to the New York Commercial Advertiser, a paper owned by his long time confidant and supporter, Thurlow Weed. In a dispatch to Gorchakov, dated April 7/19, 1867, Stoeckl asserted that this was the case, and the announcement of the treaty did arrived in New York in time for the 4:00p.m., March 30, edition of that journal, making the Commercial Advertiser the first newspaper to carry word of the purchase and the only one to do so on March 30.[18] Later in the day, Seward released to the Associated Press and others a statement apparently identical with that provided to the Commercial Advertiser. This tersely worded dispatch became the basis for the initial report of the treaty which appeared in newspapers across the nation during the next several days.

This original announcement of the purchase seems to bear the stamp of the Secretary of State, and it probably reveals partially his inter-

pretation and justification of the event, but especially the manner in which he hoped the American people would regard its importance.

> The cession of Russian America to the United States excites intense interest and enthusiasm.
>
> Influential parties regard it as significant of Russian policy, in view of impending European complications on the Eastern question.
>
> Russia cedes her American territory for the same reasons that induced Napoleon to sell Louisianna (sic).
>
> In the event of war Russia would probably lose this territory; and by parting with it the Czar secures the friendship of our Government.
>
> The English representatives here are deeply chagrined, and it is said that Sir Frederick Bruce will telegraph to Earl Derby for instructions to protest its acceptance by our Government.
>
> This acquisition more than doubles the United States coast on the Pacific, which now extends from Lower California to Behring's Straits, with the exception of the comparatively narrow strip comprising British Columbia.
>
> The Ceded Territory
>
> The whole territory ceded by Russia to the United States comprises the whole of the Continent of North America West of longitude 141 deg. It is bounded by British Columbia and the Pacific and Atlantic Oceans.
>
> It includes a number of islands, and it is of the highest importance as a naval depot, and for strategic purposes.
>
> It is a valuable fur country, and includes a vast selection of territory, the possession of which will influence in our favor the vast trade of the Pacific.[19]

Through this statement, Seward suggested to the American public several reasons for approving the treaty. He also outlined much of the argument which would be used subsequently by advocates of the purchase in the Congress and the press. Nevertheless, much of this announcement was propaganda and clearly incorrect at the time it was made.

The assertion that the cession had created "intense interest and enthusiasm" was obviously false, premature at best, for it implied that this sentiment was general, widespread and prevailed at the time the dispatch was published. At the moment the news was released, only a few

individuals knew anything about the treaty; it was simply too early to measure a popular or Congressional reaction. By explaining the Russian reasons for selling as the desire to avoid the loss of her colonies through war over the Eastern Question, Seward suggested that only an emergency had induced the Czar to part with territory which was otherwise valuable, for it would be unfortunate for the Secretary to permit the idea to form that Russia had sold lands stripped of their riches. Further, it was not by accident that Seward compared the transaction with the annexation of Louisiana, a block of territory which few Americans, in 1867, regretted the United States had bought. The passage dealing with the British reaction was not only sheer invention, but also politically motivated. When this statement was given to the press, it was extremely unlikely that the English representative had heard of the cession. Rather, it would appear that Seward merely anticipated the response of Sir Frederick Bruce, the British ambassador in Washington. However, the suggestion that the treaty would displease the government of Great Britain seems calculated to enhance the acceptance of the transaction by the many Americans who hated England. An anti-British stance was good politics in 1867. The emphasis on territorial aggrandizement found in this first news release appears intended to appeal to the numerous Americans who still favored "spread-eagleism" and "manifest destiny", and the twice mentioned fact that British Columbia remained the only piece of real estate which lay in the way of total United States control of the Pacific coast north of Mexico seems deliberate and perhaps included to suggest the heightened vulnerability of that region to American absorption. Finally, the public was informed that the future of the new possession as a "naval depot" was of the "highest importance" and that the lands had "strategic value". In 1867, such ideas were believable to many Americans, although the first has

never been realized and the latter was invalid until the mid-twentieth century. It was suggested, moreover, that the ceded area would give the United States a distinct advantage in the contest to control the "vast trade of the Pacific." Seward could have concluded with no assertion better calculated to excite the cupidity of many of his countrymen. It was old rhetoric; but it must have struck the nation's speculative nerve, for politicians dredged it up often enough. American merchants had long dreamed of tapping the markets of Asia, and Yankee visionaries often had been driven to heights of impassioned oratory by the lure of the fabled riches of the Orient which lay beckoning just beyond the Pacific. Somehow the promised wealth always remained illusive, but it seemed an article of faith among Americans and their European ancestors that it was there waiting to be unlocked.

Sunday was a day of relative inactivity regarding the Russian treaty, a day when many Americans first discovered that their nation proposed to buy a distant and little known land. With Congress adjourned and government offices closed, the Secretary could do little to push his new project, a possibility suggested by the fact that he did call Senator Cole to his home for further discussions.[20] Stoeckl also approached Cole on Sunday, calling at the Senator's residence to "speak about the pending treaty," and to express the Emperor's regrets that the commercial objectives of Cole's California associates could not be realized. The real objective of this social call may have been aimed at mollifying any anger which the Senator may have felt over this disappointment and heading off any opposition to the treaty which such feelings might have aroused. To Cole, it was obvious that both Seward and Stoeckl were "anxious" about the treaty.[21]

Seward did not ignore the press on Sunday, for he released to the newspapers a copy of the Washington Territorial Legislature's petition concerning the fisheries of the North Pacific which had been sent to the President the previous year and which had figured in the beginning of the negotiations with Stoeckl earlier in the month.[22] Many newspapers published this document in their April 1, editions, and it was widely suggested, perhaps based on a verbal statement by the Secretary of State, the the purchase had resulted from this memorial.[23] Elsewhere in the capital city, Spencer F. Baird, assistant secretary of the Smithsonian Institution, commenced the important and fruitful collaboration of that organization in the passage of the treaty. In a note to Senator Charles Sumner, he wrote "I hope the purchase of Russian America as proposed, will be authorized by the Senate", adding that the region was "swarming with animals of economical importance, . . . while the inland abound (sic) in coal." He informed Sumner that the Smithsonian possessed "much information respecting the resources of that region" and that there currently were two persons at the Institute with personal experience in the Russian colonies who would be available to talk with the Senator.[24] Sumner accepted this offer, and the Smithsonian subsequently provided him with a major share of the data which he used in his defense of the treaty. Whether the original contact had come as a result of Baird's personal interest in the cession or as a product of a suggestion made by Seward is not known, but the association which developed proved extremely important in the conversion of Sumner to support for the treaty.

II

On Monday, April 1, the Senate reconvened at noon for the beginning of the special session, and the Committee on Foreign Relations held its first

meeting to consider the Russian treaty.[25] As one of its initial decisions, the Senate voted to maintain the same committee assignments for the special session as had prevailed before adjournment.[26] Consequently, the Foreign Relations Committee consisted of seven men: Charles Sumner, Chairman, of Massachusetts, William Pitt Fessenden of Maine, Simon Cameron of Pennsylvania, James Harlan of Iowa, Oliver H. P. T. Morton of Indiana, James W. Patterson of New Hampshire, and Reverdy Johnson of Maryland.[27] Dominated by Eastern and especially New England interests, it was not a group ideally suited to sit in judgement on a proposal to purchase lands on the Western frontier. Three of these men represented New England states, one came from the Mid-West, Harlan alone represented a state west of the Mississippi, Cameron had once been the United States minister to Russia, a post of political exile for him which he despised, and Johnson was the only Democrat and member from a border state. The South and Far West had no spokesmen at all.

The meeting began with only Sumner, Cameron, Johnson, Harlan and the Chairman's Secretary, Charles C. Beaman, present. Fessenden came later; and Morton and Patterson apparently never appeared at this first session.[28] Initially, the talk was light, good-natured banter, while they waited for others to arrive, the topic being generally Russia and Cameron's experiences with food and drink at the Imperial Court. Someone, probably Sumner, mentioned the late Theodore Parker - clergyman, abolitionist, close friend of the Chairman, believer in an "American mission" - and his idea of Anglo-Saxon land greed, a theory which the purchase of Russian America may have seemed to confirm. Fessenden came in at this point, and the group decided to proceed without waiting further for the missing members.

First, there was some general conversation about the rumored riches of the Russian colonies. Fessenden asked rhetorically "What have we been buying", and answered his own querie by labeling it "Seward's Farm". Sumner followed this remark with a description of the proposed cession, using both a map and globe. Thereafter, he outlined in detail the background of the treaty, mentioning the Washington Territorial Legislature petition, the negative response of the Russian Government, Seward's inquiry about a cession, and the agreement between the Secretary of State and Stoeckl to open negotiations. The Russians were unwilling, Sumner explained, "to concede anything, but were willing to cede." Further, the Chairman mentioned Seward's telegram to General Halleck, the latter's evaluation of Russian America at five to ten millions, the Secretary's offer of seven millions, and the final addition of $200,000 to clear the title of the rights of monopolies such as the Hudson's Bay Company. Finally, the Chairman described the events of the night of March 29-30, his conference with Stoeckl, and what he knew of the signing.

Fessenden, obviously hostile to the treaty, asked what the political advantages would be in the proposed cession. Sumner suggested that the "political results" might be to "squeeze England out of the continent". It puts us "face to face to England alone", he continued; "I see the beginning of a pressure." Johnson cautioned that there would be "No squeeze without a war", and that foreign representatives had all cabled their governments on Saturday. The Chairman recalled that he always had looked to the time when the United States would control the entire continent, but he believed this objective would be realized better "without pressure than with pressure". Still, Sumner observed, the Pacific Coast was for the treaty, but "I would have kept (the cession) in hand but delayed it". Cameron, Fessenden and Johnson all concurred in this view.

Beaman left the meeting at this moment to find some material in the library, and consequently we know nothing of what points were discussed next. He returned near the end of the session to find Fessenden apparently speculating on the probable reactions of the people of the British North American Provinces. "Would not you be alarmed to be so near the U.S.", he asked. In fact, the Main Senator observed, his state would be "better off to be with (the) Provinces . . . especially Portland." As for himself, Fessenden observed that "I would be worth three times as much." To this irreverant remark, Johnson replied "we had better hang Fessenden", and on this jocular note, the meeting adjourned with an understanding that they would "wait (to) hear the popular sentiment."

The Committee on Foreign Relations convened three more times during the following week to consider the Russian treaty. On Wednesday, April 3, the members discussed further their own views on the cession, and at the Friday, April 5, session, they heard testimony from specialists with knowledge of the Russian colonies. Finally, on Monday, April 8, they gathered a final time to approve the treaty for submission to the full Senate.[29]

Before the Committee met for a second time to weigh the merits of the treaty, the public sentiment they had anticipated began to be heard, through the press, in letters to Sumner, Seward and others, and in personal conversations between Senators and various individuals residing in Washington. The American press, in their initial reactions to the purchase, expressed a variety of attitudes, but generally newspaper editors were more positively than negatively disposed towards the agreement. Some journals immediately endorsed the cession with enthusiasm, but most editors who approved did so guardedly. Many publications, especially in the South, ignored the issue completely, while others, across the nation,

took no position in the first days following the announcement of the treaty. Only a small minority of the newspapers which actually stated an opinion expressed strong disapproval. The New York Tribune, a leading Radical Republican organ edited by Horace Greeley, no friend of Seward, was the most notable example of this last category of response.[30]

A number of Americans, some prominent, others obscure, wrote to their Senators and Congressmen, some to Seward, to make known their attitudes towards the treaty. Many who possessed information regarding Russian America made it available to the Committee or to the Secretary of State. Two from whom Sumner received letters by April 3, were the former Assistant-Secretary of the Navy, Gustavus Vasa Fox and Bvt. Major General Montgomery C. Meigs, Quarter-Master General of the United States Army. In a telegram from Portsmouth, New Hampshire, dated April 2, Fox reported rumors that English officials believed his mission to Russia the previous year had been to buy Russian America. Fox approved the purchase, explaining "Our whaling fleet go there & it has important fisheries. Its islands", he continued, "lie in the route half way between Oregon and Japan & is of great value to the United States." In a note dated Philadelphia, April 2, Meigs described the Russian territory as a "great acquisition", which would "doubtless be jealously regarded by Britain and France... ." He emphasized the value of the fisheries, the gold which certainly would be found, and the rugged coastline which would be "a nursery of strong daring adventurous men, . . ."[31] Others who spoke or wrote to the Chairman by April 3 were Professor Benjamin Peirce, superintendent of the United States Coast Survey, and Professor Baird of the Smithsonian.[32] The latter, in fact, seemed to be involved in a considerable correspondence with Sumner, offering to gather information for him and have an associate, Henry Bannister, who later testified before the

Committee, translate material from a work on the Russian American Company, probably the study by Tikhmenev.[33] Another influential voice raised in support of the treaty was that of Thaddeus Stevens, the powerful Chairman of the House Committee on Appropriations and a major force among the Radicals.[34] Finally, the Senators themselves had not been idle, for reports from Washington commented on the search being made in the city's private and public libraries for information on Russian America. Even past issues of newspapers were perused for this purpose.[35] Sumner was among those aggressively seeking data on Russian America, turning to the Coast Survey and the Smithsonian for assistance, and he may have suggested that authorities outside Washington be contacted. In a letter dated April 5, Julius E. Hilgard, assistant to Peirce in the Coast Survey, reported that Professor Guyot had telegraphed that he had no special information "in regard to the physics of the region in question." Hilgard did provide, however, a map of the Pacific Northwest, with some alterations concerning the physical geography, and digests of several different authorities on the Russian colonies.[36]

The second meeting of the Committee on Foreign Relations was held on Wednesday, April 3, and again it appears that less than the full membership attended. Beaman's notes specifically mention only Sumner, Fessenden, Johnson, Morton and Cameron. Once more, Patterson of New Hampshire seems to have been absent, and Harlan of Iowa may have missed this session also.[37]

Sumner led off the discussion by remarking that the resources of Russian America were "next to nothing except fisheries", although he noted that there might be some value in the minerals, according to Baird. Fox had telegraphed his support, and Meigs had written his, the Chairman continued, while Professor Peirce had pledged his willingness to report on the territory. Whether the chief of the Coast Survey intended a written

study based on existing sources or an actual expedition to investigate the area is not clear from Beaman's notes. However, he probably envisioned an on-the-scene survey, as he later suggested in a note to Sumner on April 8 or 9, during the Senate debate on the treaty.[38] In any case, none of the members of the Committee seemed interested in the offer at that point.

Fessenden doubted that Russian America had any value, and was afraid the United States would have to pay for nothing. Despite the value of the fisheries stressed by Fox, Meigs and Baird, he saw little importance in them. "What would England pay for the Newfoundland fisheries", he asked. They "couldn't get a half million", he answered without waiting for someone else to reply.

There followed a debate on the possibility of delaying consideration of the treaty until the December session of the Congress. Sumner stated that the "House must appropriate if (the) Senate concurs in (the) Treaty", but he blamed "Seward for not consulting the Senate", thereby creating the current problem. "Which is better", he asked, "to spend money for the South to help them or for this"?

After some repartee about whether the treaty had been lubricated by whiskey or champagne, perhaps referring to the current round of dinner parties in which Seward was lobbying for the treaty, the group returned to the matter at hand and began to sum up their personal sentiments towards the purchase. "I'll vote to postpone or to vote against it", Fessenden stated, not having changed his original opposition one inch. Johnson admitted that he was not "prepared to vote against it", while Cameron confessed that "I should vote for the treaty but had rather wait." Someone, perhaps Patterson or Harlan, observed that the land was "worth nothing", that the "Fisheries may be had for nothing". Morton, the only one

emphatically in favor of the acquisition, succinctly voiced his position as "am for it". He wanted to "report it to the Senate and act on it" immediately. Beaman summed up Morton's justification for his support as "spread-eagle".[39]

Fessenden, ever the critic of Seward, suggested, with "tongue-in-cheek", that he would go for the treaty on the condition that the "Secretary of State be compelled to live there, and the Russian government be required to keep him there." Johnson gleefully supported this idea, suggesting that the plan "will be carried unanimously", and that he would "go for it and lead off on our side" of the Senate.

Sumner regretted very much having to support the treaty. "I've a heavy load to carry", he complained. "Yes", Beaman interjected, "and its harder when you don't want to carry it." The Chairman especially bemoaned the fact that the Committee consisted of so many New England men, because, he explained, "If we should go against it (the treaty), it would be put down against New England and I don't want to deal her such a heavy blow." With that remark, Sumner adjourned the Committee.

At least three specialists from the Smithsonian Institution testified before the Committee at its next meeting on Friday, April 3: Spencer F. Baird, Henry M. Bannister and Ferdinand Bischoff, the latter two being the experts to whom Baird had referred in his March 31, note to Sumner.[40] Both had been in Russian America during the preceding year as employees of the Western Union Telegraph Company in Robert Kennicott's "Scientific Corps", Bannister as a specialist on paleontology and Bischoff as an authority on insects. The former worked at Norton Sound and the latter convalesced and researched at Sitka; health problems had brought both back to the United States in 1866.[41]

Little is known concerning the testimony which these scientists gave before the Committee on Foreign Relations, for apparently no minutes of this session exist. Nevertheless, a few details of the proceedings can be pieced together from other sources. Because they were nearly the only people in Washington with specific knowledge of Russian America, they probably were questioned intensively by the Senators. Baird related in one letter that "I had to tell all I knew about R. A."[42] Much of the information which Sumner included in his important speech on the treaty to the full Senate and which he later used in the publication of that discourse probably came from these men. Of the three, only Baird had never been to Russian America, but he based his significant contribution on a thorough familiarity with the large collections which the Smithsonian had been gathering on the northwest portion of the continent during the preceding several years. He talked at length about the animal life of Russian America, and he also provided at least two maps for the Committee's perusal, one of the geographic outlines of the region and the other of the climate. His information came from material sent to the Smithsonian by Kennicott's "Scientific Corps", including such men as Bischoff and Bannister, William Healey Dall, Colonel Charles L. Bulkley, J. T. Rothrock, and Lieutenant Charles Pease.[43] Bannister testified before the Committee on the climate of Russian America and his experience at Norton Sound. Furthermore, his ability to read Russian, a talent shared by few Americans in 1867, proved enormously useful to Baird and Sumner in the translation of portions of scientific and historical works in that language held in the Smithsonian and Congressional libraries, studies which otherwise would have been worthless to the Committee.[44] As for Bischoff, there is no indication of what he may have discussed with the Committee, but it seems likely that they quizzed him about Sitka. No one in Washington could

have given the Senators a more current description of the capital of Russian America and its environs.

The effect of the testimony of Baird, Bannister and Bischoff on the members of the Committee can only be guessed, but it may have been decisive. Bannister later wrote that "the annexation was ridiculed at that time but we could testify that the country was worth the price asked."[45] Something of that nature must have been conveyed to the Committee, because one of the major arguments for the treaty would be that Russian America was at least worth $7,200,000. Further, Sumner, who was reluctant to approve the purchase, made his decision to support the cession sometime between the April 3 meeting and the final session on Monday. By Sunday, if not earlier, he was involved deeply in the preparation of the speech he would deliver the next day advocating the treaty. On Sunday, Baird wrote to Bannister asking him to visit Sumner that afternoon to deliver several Russian books from the Smithsonian. In addition, he directed Bannister to prepare a "short general statement" on the geology of the Russian colonies and a map to illustrate that information, to research certain facts about the government of those possessions and to be available to answer whatever questions about the land which Sumner might have.[46]

Consequently, it would seem that by Sunday, Sumner and the majority of the Committee had decided to approve the treaty for the purchase of Russian America. Both newspaper comment and Beaman's notes suggest that the fourth and final meeting of the Committee on Monday morning was brief. Little debate or persuasion could have occured in such a short time; opinions must have been solidly formed by that hour. A final vote was taken, with Sumner, Johnson, Cameron, Harlan and Morton approving the report of the treaty to the Senate without amendment. Fessenden and Patterson dissented; but all except Morton wished that it could be delayed.[47]

Although the specific reasons for the favorable majority decision of the Committee on Foreign Relations may never be known, several probable explanations are suggested by the available evidence. Morton, for one, had advocated the treaty for expansionist motives. Other members of the Committee may have been persuaded by the testimony of Baird, Bannister and Bischoff that Russian America was not worthless as some opponents of the acquisition had asserted. The list of prominent Americans who supported the purchase, including scientists, military men and government leaders, must have had some impact on these Senators. Beaman's brief notes for the final meeting mention only one topic of discussion before he recorded the vote, the many "letters from various persons" endorsing the treaty, including one from the renowned Jean Louis Rodolphe Agassiz, perhaps the most respected scientist in the United States.[48] In addition, many influential newspapers had approved the purchase, and although the press did not reflect necessarily the attitude of the American public, no better measure of the popular will was available. Because the April 1, meeting of the Committee had adjourned with the decision to await "the popular sentiment", the Senators were unlikely to ignore the favorable reaction of the newspaper community. But the decisive factor probably was the personal conversion of Charles Sumner from initial opposition to active support for the treaty. No man enjoyed more influence in the Committee than the Massachusetts Senator, and no person's advocacy of the measure before the full Senate could have a greater effect on his colleagues in the area of foreign affairs. His disapproval probably could have blocked the treaty, and his recommendation to submit the document to the Senate probably carried the day, both with the Committee and in the subsequent vote of the Senate to consent to the purchase.[49]

Nevertheless, Sumner was not enthusiastic about the role he had played in the acceptance of the treaty. Like his colleagues on the Committee, he would have preferred to delay the purchase, but he realized that the matter already had gone too far for the United States to decline gracefully. To John Bright, a noted English friend, he wrote that:

> The Russian treaty tried me severely; abstractly I am against further accessions of territory. Unless by the free choice of the inhabitants. But this question was perplexed by considerations of politics and comity and the engagements already entered into by the government, I hesitated to take the responsibility of defeating it.[50]

Not only was Sumner reluctant to offend Russia, whose warm friendship for the United States during the Civil War he well remembered, but the Massachusetts Senator did not wish to antagonize the Western States by rejecting the purchase. With three New Englanders on the Committee on Foreign Relations, Sumner feared that the West would interpret a refusal to accept the acquisition as an indication of prejudice against their section. As it was, the other two New England Senators, Fessenden and Patterson, did vote against the favorable report of the treaty, and in the final ballot on this question in the Senate the only two negative votes were cast by New England men, Fessenden again and Justin S. Morrill of Vermont. Sumner was also probably persuaded by his own research and by the testimony of various authorities that Russian America possessed sufficient value to justify its purchase. Finally, the Massachusetts Senator had believed for many years in the desirability of American expansion, and if the pending annexation seemed neither timely or initiated by the local inhabitants, it did further the ultimate goal of obtaining all of the lands north of the current borders of the United States.[51]

III

In the meantime, while the Committee on Foreign Relations had deliberated on the treaty and had waited for the public to react, the Secretary of State had been lobbying aggressively to convert reluctant Senators and to influence the popular response. The New York Herald, referring to Seward as the "Premier", reported he was "working the telegraphs and the Associated Press in the manufacture of public opinion night and day," while additionally he had "two other machines running off the same material, yard wide, at ten cents a yard, . . . high pressure, oscillating machines, . . . first, the Secretary's dinners and second, the Washington lobby, strengthened by some of the most skillful graduates of the old Fagin of Albany."[52]

Certainly the most colorful feature of Seward's varied campaign was the round of dinner parties reported by the Herald to have been held at his residence, during which the Secretary allegedly tried to convince his Senate guests to support the treaty. During the first week of April, while the Senate considered the purchase, Seward undoubtedly did continue his accustomed practice of dining often with Senators, Representatives, Cabinet officers and foreign diplomats. He loved to entertain, and he did so sumptuously, spreading his table with a variety of fish, meats, poultry, game, vegetables and desserts, accompanied by a selection of imported and domestic wines from his amply stocked cellar. Between courses and over sherry and cigars Seward customarily discussed with his guests a wide range of topics.[53] How often he hosted such gatherings while the treaty lay before the Senate is not known, nor has it been determined which Senators accepted his hospitality.[54] At the only dinner party given in this period for which there is certain evidence, the one

held on Saturday, March 30, mentioned above, only one of the five who attended was a Senator, Alexander G. Cattell of New Jersey.[55]

There can be little doubt, however, that Seward entertained on other occasions during the week which followed, and it is reasonable to assume that he seized such opportunities to expound on the value of Russian America and the wisdom of the purchase. Certainly, Senators did call at the Seward home during this period, even if they did not come to dine. The Secretary's Memoirs relate one incident, for instance, which must have occured at this time.

> One evening, some Senators calling at Seward's house were expressing their surprise at the unfriendly criticisms. He amused himself, and them, by reading from old newspaper files, the unfavorable comments made upon Jefferson's purchase of the "desert waste" of Louisiana, and the treaty for the "noxious swamps" of "snake-infested" Florida."[56]

The New York Tribune and the Herald asserted that such gatherings played an important part in the passage of the treaty, with the Herald claiming that they "worked . . . wonders among the conscript fathers of the Senate." With "Pennsylvania beef, his Virginia oysters, his smoked walrus from Behring Strait, his Esquimaux stews and ices, his California wines and Kentucky Bourbon," Seward was accused of seducing Senators into voting for the purchase. The Herald's correspondent in Washington reported that:

> Mr. Seward's dinner table is spread first with a map of Russian America, and this cloth is covered with "roast treaty, boiled treaty, treaty in bottles, treaty in decanters, treaties garnished with appointments to office, treaty in statistics (Thurlow Weed's), treaty clad in furs, ornamented with walrus teeth, fringed with timber and flopping fish."[57]

It is difficult, however, to assess the importance of Seward's entertaining on the outcome of the Senate's action on the treaty. We do not know who or how many Senators attended his dinners or how often the Secretary held such gatherings. With slightly more than forty Senators in Washington for the special session, it is possible that Seward could

have invited most or all of them during the time that the treaty lay before the Senate if he entertained almost nightly as the Herald and Tribune seemed to suggest. Furthermore, perhaps only ten or a dozen Senators were men of great influence, and it would have been only necessary to have wined and dined these individuals and won their support. The remainder of the Senate would have followed the lead of such power brokers. Nevertheless, there is little evidence that Seward entertained so extensively during this period, nor is it likely that some Senators would have accepted an invitation to a discourse on Russian America. Consequently, it is difficult to credit the Secretary's dinner lobbying with having a decisive influence on the final action of the Senate.

A more promising means of building support for the treaty involved the gathering of information which could be employed to demonstrate the substantial value of Russian America, the collection of letters from prominent men who favored its acquisition and the judicious dissemination of those materials to the press and various Senators. Such tasks were made necessary by the general ignorance prevailing in the United States concerning the czarist colonies. The average Senator certainly was as uninformed about that region as most Americans. Therefore, Seward faced the major problem of educating both the Senate and the American public, and he accepted this responsibility with enthusiasm.

One item which the Secretary of State hastened to provide was a map of Russian America, for few people in the United States, including the members of the Senate, knew where the Russian colonies were located or what territories were included in them. During the negotiations, while arranging the tentative boundaries of the cession at the March 19 meeting, Stoeckl and Seward had worked with three charts, one of American and two of Russian origin.[58] Two of these versions, plus two others from British

and Canadian sources, apparently were used later by the Senate in its consideration of the treaty,[59] but these few copies would not be sufficient if the Congress and the American people were to be informed of the limits of the land which the United States would acquire if the bargain with Russia was made. Consequently, on March 20, the United States Coast Survey, at the urging of the Secretary of State, began preparation of a new map of Northwest America, perhaps expecting that it would be available in time for the Senate to consult during its debates on the purchase. But this was not to be. The composition of the new chart was not completed until Saturday, April 13; the etching, which had commenced on March 23, was not finished until April 19; and the first publication of 500 copies, begun on April 20, was not concluded until April 30.[60] However, this edition was not wasted, for the files of the State Department include a number of requests from American citizens for information and a map of the new acquisition. Senators and newsmen must have been provided copies eventually, and a number of Representatives probably received them before the debate on the appropriation bill in the House in July, 1868. In any case, the demand immediately was sufficient to require a second printing to be ordered as early as May 2, 1867.[61]

The failure of the Coast Survey to complete the publication of the new map of Northwest America before the Senate debated the merits of the purchase did not affect adversely the chances of acceptance. Other maps were available in limited quantities. On April 1, the New York Herald printed a map of Russian America that was obviously a rushed production, because it offered only basic and somewhat distorted outlines of the Russian possessions.[62] It was inaccurate in some major respects, especially regarding the failure to include the littoral in the Russian possessions, assigning the entire coast instead to British America. Nevertheless,

this map must have provided many, including some Senators, with their only representation of the Russian colonies, and for this reason its publication may have been valuable. In addition, the Committee on Foreign Relations had used both a map and a globe during their deliberations; the full Senate may have had four versions available during their sessions; several copies were given to the Coast Survey for its work; and Baird of the Smithsonian used one to provide a photographic reproduction series. In a letter to the Secretary of State, dated April 8, Baird explained that he had given the map of Russian America that very afternoon to the photographer of the Treasury Department, who had "promised to put it in hand at once, and if possible, to furnish copies by tomorrow night."[63] If these were completed by the evening of April 9, as had been hoped, they did not arrive in time to influence the debate either, but the haste with which Baird had acted seems to suggest a genuine concern that a map for swift and general distribution to the Senate was needed. The note had been written following the first afternoon of the Senate's consideration of the treaty in the Committee of the Whole. Little is known of the discussions held that day, but the decision of Baird to rush completion of a photographic presentation of the map of Russian America seems to indicate that the lack of such a chart had been criticized during the April 8 session.

If maps were not provided in sufficient time to influence the Senate, Seward may have had more success with the publication of several letters which he had received praising the treaty and Russian America. Such notices of support began to arrive at the State Department within a few days of the announcement of the treaty. Seward seized upon them to demonstrate to the Senate and the public the popularity of his acquisition with influential men. Consequently, late on April 5, the Secretary of State released four of these notes - those of Commodore Rodgers, Bvt. Major

General Meigs, Major General Halleck, and Charles Fosdick Fletcher - to local Washington newspapers and to the Associated Press, which distributed the first three across the nation.

Commodore John Rodgers, then commandant of the Boston Navy Yard and an officer with nearly a decade of pre-war service in the Arctic with the North Pacific Exploring and Surveying Expedition, wrote to Seward on April 3, that:

> I think the Russian American acquisition would be valuable and if worth anything the price would be a bagatelle.
>
> A few houses in Broadway would amount to as much.
>
> I see in the papers that the value of the ground in New York proposed for the post office is estimated by some parties at five millions of dollars.
>
> The stretch of coast to the Southward of Mt. Elias left out of the Herald's map is the important part.
>
> The southern part of the Russian possessions in America at Latitude 55 is in the same Latitude as the Northern part of England.
>
> We should get a strip of shore much like Norway - which supplies Europe with enormous quantities of timber.
>
> The furs are a minor consideration; fisheries and timber may be valuable:- the timber particularly so to a coast so bare as that of the Pacific.[64]

The value of such comments from a man who could speak from experience and with the authority of fame must have been immediately obvious to Seward. He wired Rodgers on April 5, for permission to publish the parts of his letter concerning Russian America. The Commodore replied affirmatively by telegraph that very day, appologizing, however, for the carelessness of his composition. With slight revisions, Seward passed it on to the press, and the Washington National Intelligencer, among others, printed it on April 6, and it appeared in other important journals in the days to follow.[65]

Bvt. Major General Montgomery C. Meigs, Quarter-Master General of the United States Army, wrote to Seward on April 4, expressing his

enthusiasm for the purchase. Objections to the treaty puzzled Meigs, because, he explained:

> I can conceive of no greater boon to our Pacific States & I can not suppose that Atlantic Senators will deny to the people of those states the fisheries depending upon Russian American now within their grasp.
>
> We need such a nursery of seamen, such a commerce as these fisheries will produce.
>
> They will feed the coasts and islands of the Pacific & the vigorous climate will breed on the Pacific, softened by Christian Civilization, the deeds of the old Norse sea kings in the Atlantic.
>
> As a lover of my country anxious for the growth & prosperity & strength & virtue of the nation I should value Russian America its fisheries & mines beyond the hot plains of Mexico or the fertile plantations of Cuba.
>
> I trust that no effort needed to secure this acquisition will be omitted.[66]

Seward must have found the references to the probability that Atlantic coast Senators would not deny the purchase to the West Coast especially useful. As in the case of the Commodore's note, the National Intelligencer published Meigs' comments on Spril 6, as did other journals on the same day or during the following week.[67]

On April 5, Secretary of War Edwin M. Stanton received a telegram from Major General Henry W. Halleck, Commanding the Division of the Pacific, which he passed on immediately to Seward. Halleck, who had been approached during the negotiations for an estimate of the value of Russian America, had revised his original analysis. In his brief wire of April 4, he stated that "I learn from a gentleman who has recently visited many parts of Russian America that its value is greater than has been supposed. The rejection of the treaty," Halleck concluded, "would cause great dissatisfaction on this coast especially in California."[68] Here was additional warning of the possible reaction in the West if the Senate should veto the purchase, and here also was further testimony to the value of

the Russian territories. Seward included Halleck's telegram in the collection of documents he gave to the press, and the National Intelligencer published it along with the others on April 6, as did many major newspapers.[69]

Immediately following the release of these four letters, Seward received an even more important communication from Perry McDonough Collins of the Western Union Telegraph Company and United States Consul at the Amour River post, currently in New York. Collins' letter, containing a detailed and lengthy description of the resources and climate of Russian America, based on the author's personal observations while working on the Russian-American Telegraph project, was precisely the type of information which Seward needed to persuade reluctant Senators and sceptical Americans that the Russian territories were desirable. Dated April 4, the report probably arrived at the State Department on April 6, and Seward immediately telegraphed Collins to suggest "Let your letter to me appear in the New York papers Monday morning." Collins agreed and his article appeared in several of that city's journals and in leading organs elsewhere.[70]

The Collins' portrait of Russian America refuted in detail the negative reports being circulated by opponents of the treaty. In describing the Aleutians, the Alaskan littoral and the mainland, Collins stressed the rich resources of fish, timber and game or furs, while stating that proven deposits of gold existed in several places. Many rivers were navigable for miles, one being open to potential steamboat travel for 1,000 miles. The natives were generally friendly, and in the area of Fort Yukon Collins described them as "peaceable and wonderfully honest . . . a vigorous, enterprising people, and very fond of foreign trade and merchandise". Furs were "wonderfully plentiful". The fisheries, he asserted, would "build up a population and commerce there which

. . . (would) rival Newfoundland and the coast of the Atlantic east of Cape Cod", the shoals and coasts being the "resort of codfish, unsurpassed in size and delicacy." The vast populations of Asia, Collins continued, would greedily consume all the fish which might be surplus, thus opening large new markets to American commerce. Coal, copper and silver were available; there existed "an inexhaustable supply of very pure ice"; whales were "found in great abundance"; walrus were "as plentiful . . . as blackberries are with us in August"; and there was land suitable for wheat, barley and oats.[71]

As if this impressive testimony to the value of Russian America was not sufficient for Seward's purposes, someone, probably in the State Department, undoubtedly with the Secretary's blessings, prepared a digest of the information which Spencer F. Baird had provided based on the experience of Bannister and Bischoff, who had appeared before the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations. This brief survey of the resources, climate and inhabitants of Russian America was distributed to the press also, and it was published in the National Intelligencer on April 9, the final day of Senate debate on the treaty.[72] Parts of Russian America were said to have "about the same climate and temperature as Washington city." The whole country was "heavily timbered". The soil on the west coast produced barley and rich roots crops, while furred animals were said to "abound in great numbers" and "Herring, Salmon, halibut, and codfish abound in exhaustless numbers." Whales were "very numerous". "Surface washings of gold" and "Native copper" had been discovered, and "iron ore of excellent quality and believed to exist in exhaustless quantities" had been unearthed, while coal "in great quantities" had been found. Finally, the Indians were universally described as "industrious and peaceful", one of the many statements which Russians in the czar's colonies might have

disputed. For some Americans who read the Collins' letter and the evaluation attributed to Baird, it must have been difficult to comprehend the willingness of Alexander II to part with possessions so abundantly blessed by Nature, so overflowing with inexhaustable resources, so graced with a native population with such Puritan-like attributes of industriousness and sobriety.

Having released the letter of Rodgers, Meigs, Halleck, Fletcher and Collins to the press, accompanied by the digest of the views of Baird, Seward apparently chose to pile the evidence even higher by one final attempt to reach the Senators who might still be hesitating. Taking these six items and adding a written opinion of George Gibbs, who had studied the Indians of the Pacific Northwest and Russian America, Seward rushed them into print as a State Department pamphlet entitled the "Purchase of the Russian Possessions in North America by the United States".[73] Whether this document reached the hands of the Senators before the final vote on the treaty on April 9 is not known, because the exact publication date of this collection of letters has not been determined. In any case, the pamphlet would be used in later weeks to fill requests from various people for information on the new acquisition. The same seven papers were reproduced again by the State Department in December, 1867, as part of a lengthy report to the House of Representatives, which had asked for all documents pertaining to the purchase of Russian America preparatory to their consideration of the appropriation bill to fund the cession.[74]

In addition to publishing and to wining and dining, Seward lobbied on behalf of the treaty through his personal appeals through interviews to a number of Senators. The Chicago Tribune reported that the Secretary of State lost no opportunity to insert the topic of Russian America into every conversation and had "armed himself with maps, statistics, reports,

travelers' notes" to substantiate his arguments.[75] It is certain that he conferred with at least three of the seven members of the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations: Sumner, Johnson and Harlan, and it seems likely that he talked with or attempted to confer with the other four as well.[76]

Seward's efforts were reinforced by a number of prominent men who either wrote or spoke to members of the Senate during the first week in April. In addition to members of the scientific community and various military officers mentioned above, there were political figures who worked for the treaty. Thaddeus Stevens, the enormously influential Chairman of the House Committee on Appropriations, had supported the purchase from the time of its first announcement, and it seems that he conferred with Sumner and other Senators on the subject. In a letter to Seward dated April 11, he wrote "I congratulate you and rejoice at your safe deliverance. I hope the after birth is easy . . . Sorry I did not see you the other day, but did some work for your treaty."[77] Such an admission from one of Seward's bitterest political foes must have been a difficult one, but it suggests that the treaty had not become a partisan issue, which may have been essential to avoidance of defeat in the Senate. Representative John Van Schaick Lansing Pruyn of Albany, New York, informed Seward that he had "written to several Senators urging confirmation of the Russian-American treaty".[78] George Gibbs, whose letter to Seward was to be included in two government publications, called on Sumner while the treaty lay before the Committee to urge its passage, suggesting that "it was as advantageous to the New England people as to the Pacific" because of the fisheries.[79] Former Assistant Secretary of the Navy, Gustavus Vasa Fox, from his home in Portsmouth, New Hampshire, had persuaded "some leading men to telegraph . . . to New England Senators" and wrote some

newspaper articles advocating the cession.[80] Edouard de Stoeckl, the Russian Minister, who had promised Seward that he would not intervene, did so anyway. It is certain that he talked with Senators Sumner, Cornelius Cole of California, and Edwin D. Morgan of New York, and it seems most likely that his lobbying did not stop there, for one dispatch to his government mentioned discussing the treaty with several Senators.[81] What impact these personal appeals to Senators may have had can only be surmised; perhaps they made little or no difference. By the beginning of the second week in April, the time for influence of any type had nearly passed, for the Senate was about to begin debate on the treaty.

IV

On Monday morning, April 8, the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations met for the final time to consider the treaty for the purchase of Russian America and decided, by a vote of five to two, to report the convention back to the Senate without amendment and with the recommendation to grant consent.[82] Reverdy Johnson immediately scribbled a note to Seward informing him that "The treaty case reported finally. Expect today."[83] At 1:00 p.m., Sumner laid the report of the Foreign Relations Committee before the full Senate and moved that the treaty be read a second time and be considered.[84] Following the second reading, the Senate organized itself into the Committee of the Whole and went into Executive Session, which required that the doors to the Senate Chamber be locked and secrecy maintained. Accordingly, information concerning these discussion has been scanty and has consisted mainly of the subsequently expanded, published speech of Charles Sumner advocating the treaty in the Senate on April 8, 1867. However, other pieces of evidence do exist. Secrecy regarding

Government affairs was probably not maintained more effectively in the 1860's than in the 1960's, and the press was able to glean tidbits of news from the Senators who attended the two sessions at which the question of Russian America was examined, on April 8 and 9, 1867. Furthermore, a small amount of information has become available from private papers. Nevertheless, our knowledge of the Senate debate on this issue still remains extremely limited, and the additions made in this study must be considered largely tentative because they depend so heavily on second hand and hearsay evidence.

Charles Sumner led off the defense of the treaty on April 8, following the second reading of the convention, with a major speech of at least two hours' duration.[85] According to the Philadelphia Inquirer, he lectured with the aid of "documents, maps, charts, geographies, . . . many of which were improvised for the occasion." Sumner reportedly was followed by Senator Doolittle of Wisconsin and one or two others who spoke in favor of the treaty. At that point, the Inquirer's correspondent related, opposition appeared and the debate continued until 5:00 p.m., when further consideration of the purchase was postponed until the following day, when the Senate planned to reconvene at 11:00 a.m., one hour earlier than normal so that there would be sufficient time to complete consideration of the purchase. A New York Times dispatch also mentioned some opposition and tied it to fears that the American title would be encumbered by charters and privileges granted previously by the Russians. An attempt to have the doors opened to remove the veil of secrecy which hung over the proceedings was defeated, and the press remained barred from the Senate Chamber.[86]

The debate on April 9 lasted between five and six hours, and concluded with the Senate consenting to the treaty by a vote of 37 to 2.

Senators from the Pacific states reportedly played a major part in the second day's discussions. Cornelius Cole and John Conness, both of California, spoke in support of the purchase, as did Senator James W. Nye and William M. Stewart of Nevada, asserting generally as a group that its rejection would seriously weaken the Republican party on the West Coast. Nye argued that it was not important whether the territory in question was worth $7,200,000. Russian America would add to the country's holdings, and that was the essential point to a public which expected the United States eventually to occupy the entire continent.[87] This manifest destiny appeal apparently carried considerable weight, because Nye's remarks met with the vocal approval of several of his colleagues and a number of speakers seemed to employ this argument. Cole was able to provide considerable information on Russian America as a result of his involvement with the California Fur Company's attempted lease of the Czar's North American holdings. Sumner may have spoken for the treaty for the second day in a row, and the Herald listed Senators James Dixon of Conneticut, Reverdy Johnson of Maryland, and James R. Doolittle of Wisconsin as having made favorable addresses on April 9.[88]

Despite the weight of opinion which supported the treaty, opposition was not wanting on this second day of debate. The negative forces were reportedly led by William Pitt Fessenden of Maine, principal dissenter on the Committee on Foreign Relations, and Orris S. Ferry of Conneticut. Others spoke against the purchase or at least voiced their reservations. The Cincinnati Commercial stated that Fessenden "spoke at some length against it", explaining that one of his major objections focused on the state of national finances, which made the payment of a large sum of gold unwise. The Tribune praised Fessenden and Ferry for making "very able speeches against the job, and fought it nobly, notwithstanding the over-

whelming odds against them." The New York Herald related that the Maine Senator had seen little value in the alleged resources of Russian America and that he especially ridiculed the fisheries argument. Ferry was said by the Springfield Republican to have argued that by the purchase the United States was entering a new era, because Russian America was not connected to the nation and would remain a dependency, an outlying province, for years. Some members, according to the Inquirer, were troubled by the amount of money being paid out, the speed with which the treaty was being pushed through the Senate, and the question of where the money was going.[89]

The general uneasiness of the opponents on these issues and perhaps their frustration at the obvious size of the treaty supporter group led them to attempt a delay in the debate. Late in the final session, Fessenden introduced a motion calling for the postponement of further discussion until the following day. A vote was taken on this motion and it was defeated by a toll of 12 yeas and 29 nays. An affirmative position on this issue probably can be interpreted as indicating some opposition to the treaty.[90] Seven of those who supported postponement represented New England states, and they totaled seventy percent of the Senators from that region who voted on the motion, for two were absent or abstained.

Debate continued for a time following the defeat of the delaying tactic, but then Sumner tried to end the discussions by moving the question. Because no amendment had been approved, the Massachusetts Senator submitted the following resolution:

> Resolved (two thirds of the Senators present concurring), That the Senate advise and consent to the ratification of the treaty between the United States of America and the Emperor of all the Russias for the cession to the United States of all the territory and dominions now possessed by His Majesty on the continent of America, and in the adjacent islands, concluded at Washington, D.C., the 30th day of March, 1867.

The Senate unanimously agreed to consider the resolution and a vote was taken. Only two members, Fessenden of Maine and Morrill of Vermont, stood against the treaty; thirty-seven signified their approval. Two-thirds of the Senators present having voted in the affirmative, the resolution was declared agreed to, and the Secretary was ordered to "lay the said resolution before the President of the United States."[91] On this final tally, both negative votes had been cast by New England Senators; Sumner's fears had been realized in part.

Although the treaty had been approved by the Senate, one issue remained to be considered, that of the cover of secrecy under which the debates had been held. A number of newspapers had commented unfavorably on this aspect of the proceedings, despite the fact that this was the usual practice in the mid-nineteenth century for executive sessions. Those editors who opposed the purchase thought they saw something sinister in the insistance on this privilege. The Indianapolis Daily Journal suggested that it looked "very much as if the Senators were afraid of their own arguments", while the correspondent for the New York Tribune wrote that "Senators seemed ashamed of their votes". The Springfield Daily Republican, however, scolded Horace Greeley's paper for such an attitude, pointing out that "secrecy is customary in such cases, and manifestly proper, sometimes quite essential."[92] Perhaps as a result of such press sentiments and possibly because there had been numerous leaks to newspaper reporters concerning the treaty debates, Sumner, on Monday, April 13, submitted a resolution to the Senate calling for the removal of the injunction of secrecy from the Russian treaty so that a true copy, at least, could be published. Fessenden, however, proposed an amendment that would strike all words following "Resolved" and add:

TABLE I

Senate Votes on the Treaty, April 9, 1867.[1]

State - Senator - Home	Party	Motion to Postpone	Final Vote
California:			
John Conness - Georgetown	U. Rep.	N	Y
Cornelius Cole - San Fran.	U. Rep.	N	Y
Conneticut:			
James Dixon - Hartford	Rep.	N	Y
Orris S. Ferry - Norwalk	Rep.	Y	NV
Delaware:			
Willard Saulsbury - Georgetown (seat vacant)	Dem.	-	-
Illinois:			
Lyman Trumbull - Chicago	Rep.	N	Y
Richard Yates - Jacksonville	U. Rep.	N	Y
Indiana:			
Thomas A. Hendricks - Indianapolis	Dem.	-	-
Oliver H. P. T. Morton - Indianapolis	U. Rep.	-	-
Iowa:			
James W. Grimes - Burlington	Dem.	-	-
James Harlan - Mount Pleasant	U. Rep.	N	Y
Kansas:			
Samuel C. Pomeroy - Atchinson	Rep.	-	-
Edmund G. Ross - Lawrence	Rep.	N	Y
Kentucky:			
Garrett David - Paris	Dem.	N	Y
James Guthrie - Louisville	Dem.	-	-
Maine:			
Lot M. Morrill - Augusta	Rep.	Y	Y
William P. Fessenden - Portland	Rep.	Y	N
Maryland:			
Reverdy Johnson - Baltimore (seat vacant)	Dem.	N	Y

State - Senator - Home	Party	Motion to Postpone	Final Vote
Massachusetts:			
Charles Sumner - Boston	Rep.	N	Y
Henry Wilson - Natick	Rep.	N	Y
Michigan:			
Zachariah Chandler - Detroit	Rep.	Y	Y
Jacob M. Howard - Detroit	Rep.	-	-
Minnesota:			
Alexander Ramsey - St. Paul	Rep.	N	Y
Daniel S. Norton - Winona	U. Cons.	-	-
Missouri:			
John B. Henderson - Louisiana	Dem.	Y	Y
Charles D. Drake - St. Louis	Rep.	N	Y
Nebraska:			
John M. Thayer - Omaha	Rep.	N	Y
Thomas W. Tipton - Brownville	Dem.	Y	Y
Nevada:			
William M. Stewart - Virginia City	Rep.	N	Y
James W. Nye - Carson City	Rep.	N	Y
New Hampshire:			
Aaron H. Cragin - Lebanon	Am. Pty.	Y	Y
James W. Patterson - Hanover	Rep.	Y	Y
New Jersey:			
Alexander G. Cattell - Camden	Rep.	N	Y
Frederick T. Frelinghuysen - Newark	Rep.	N	Y
New York:			
Edwin D. Morgan - New York City	U. Rep.	N	Y
Roscoe Conkling - Utica	Rep.	Y	Y
Ohio:			
Benjamin F. Wade - Jefferson	Rep.	N	Y
John Sherman - Mansfield	Rep.	-	-
Oregon:			
George H. Williams - Portland	U. Rep.	N	Y
Henry W. Corbett - Portland	U. Rep.	N	Y

State - Senator - Home	Party	Motion to Postpone	Final Vote
Pennsylvania:			
Charles R. Buckalew - Bloomsburg	Dem.	N	Y
Simon Cameron - Harrisburg	Rep.	N	Y
Rhode Island:			
Henry B. Anthony - Providence	Rep.	Y	Y
William Sprague - Providence	Rep.	-	-
Tennessee:			
Joseph S. Fowler - Nashville	U. Rep.	N	Y
David T. Patterson - Greeneville	Dem.	N	Y
Vermont:			
George F. Edmunds - Burlington	Rep.	-	-
Justin S. Morrill - Stafford	U. Rep.	Y	N
West Virginia:			
Peter G. Van Winkle - Parkersburg	Con. Un.	N	Y
Waitman T. Willey - Morgantown	Rep.	N	Y
Wisconsin:			
James R. Doolittle - Racine	Rep.	N	Y
Timothy O. Howe - Green Bay	U. Rep.	Y	NV
TOTALS:	yea:	12	37
	nay:	27	2
	present but not voting:	0	2
	absent:	11	11
	seats vacant:	2	2

[1] Journal of Executive Proceedings of the Senate of the United States, vol. 15, "Washington: Government Printing Office, 1887), pp. 675-76.

> That the injunction of secrecy be forthwith removed from the treaty with Russia recently ratified by the Senate, and from all proceedings of the Senate, votes, communications, and debates, relating thereto:

Lyman Trumbull responded to this suggestion with his own resolution that the question be tabled. It was so ordered.[93] That effectively concluded the Senate's consideration of the issue of secrecy and terminated also their involvement with the treaty for the purchase of Russian America. Henceforth, the fate of the cession would rest in the hands of the Executive and the House of Representatives.

V

One final question remains to be considered in relation to the Senate phase of the treaty story. Why did the Senate consent to the purchase of Russian America? Our knowledge of the debates on this subject is limited, but it is possible, by examining the various threads of evidence from newspapers and by analyzing Sumner's notes and the published version of his speech, to arrive at some conclusions. On this basis, there seem to be six reasons, not necessarily of equal significance or ranked in order of importance, for the Senate's acceptance of the cession.

First, the political and economic interests of the Western States were an essential factor in the Senate's decision. Sumner wrote, in his published work on the treaty, that:

> Foremost in order, if not importance, I put the desires of our fellow citizens on the Pacific Coast, and the special advantages which they derive from this enlargment of Boundary. They were the first to ask for it, and will be the first to profit by it.[94]

This same point was the first which Sumner discussed in one of his possible two speeches before the Senate, as indicated by the single sheet of notes, dated April 9, which he used.[95] Earlier in the Committee on

Foreign Relations, Sumner had expressly based his reluctant support of the purchase on the necessity of avoiding the possibility that the Wester States might interpret a rejection of the cession as callous neglect of their interests by the Congress. He was especially solicitous of Western feelings because three of the seven members of the Committee were from New England. Others must have agreed with this view, for Western Senators won considerable support for the cession by arguing that they needed this victory politically, that a defeat would weaken the Republican party in the West and that their section needed the Russian territory. Sumner, in his published work on the treaty, described the plans of the California Fur Company, the Washington Territorial Memorial regarding the fisheries of Russian America, and the ice business as evidence of the commercial interest of the West Coast in the Russian colonies. Sumner and others stressed the importance of the many potential harbors along the coast and the encouragement this would give to the growth of commerce between the Pacific States and China and Japan.[96] The issue, then, seemed to be that the Senators did not wish to offend the West by denying it this remote piece of territory, a land which the people of the West Coast apparently wanted and one that actually might be commercially beneficial to them. The West Coast States were critical to the unity, the strength and the future of the nation, and it would not do to weaken the ties between the East and the West by begrudging an expenditure of $7,200,000.

A second important factor in the Senate's decision was force of expansionism. Sumner wrote that "The extension of dominion" was "another consideration calculated to captivate the public mind. Few are so cold or philosophical to regard with insensibility a widening of the bounds of the country."[97] In his spoken remarks, this point apparently received close attention, for the single sheet of notes he used refers twice to the

topic, once as "addition to empire - captivates many", and again as "another step to the occupation of N. America".[98] Senator Nye had argued that expansion was all that mattered to the American people in the cession, and his statement was approved by several of his colleagues. Sumner wrote later that: "The present treaty is a visible step in the occupation of the whole North American continent. As such it will be recognized by the world and accepted by the American people."[99] Americans, afterall, had been land-hungry, acquisitive people from their beginnings in the Colonial Period on the East Coast, and the extention of the nation's dominion over even distant, northern reaches harmonized better with this old pattern than would the rejection of this opportunity.

A third consideration in the acquisition of Russian America was the belief apparently held by some Senators that the territory did contain resources which made the land worth the price. This was not, however, a major factor with most who voted approval. In a speech to the Senate, Sumner remarked that it was "important to consider (the) character of (the) country. But - (the) treaty will be ratified with reference to other conditions." Later in this address, he admitted that there was "Little known - very little" about the Russian colonies, but he did discuss the population, climate, properties of the soil, mineral products and fisheries.[100] A few others may have talked about the resources of Russian America, mentioning the coal deposits and fisheries. Reports of gold and iron were regarded, it seems, as unsubstantiated rumors, and they stirred no enthusiasm. Claims that the land suited agriculture appently met with disbelief.[101] Senator Nye even stated that it was immaterial whether or not the land was valuable. But support for the purchase on the grounds that the territory had some worthwhile resources must have carried some weight, because Senator Fessenden, the leading opponent of

the treaty, attempted to belittle the idea. Sumner took care, in the published version of his speech, to detail and document the several categories of resources he had discussed in his address, and he added two new topics, furs and vegetable products.[102] However, if Senators believed that the Russian possessions offered valuable products, this seems to have been regarded merely as a bonus in the purchase, but not a factor alone to justify acceptance of the treaty.

A fourth reason for the Senate's approval may have been that the acquisition of the Russian colonies by the United States would remove another imperial power from North America. Sumner wrote that the treaty signified an:

> extension of republican institutions, which is a traditional aspiration. It was in this spirit that independence was achieved. . . . By it we dismiss one more monarch from this continent. One by one they have retired: first, France, then Spain, then France again, and now Russia; all giving way to that absorbing unity which is declared in the national motto, E Pluribus Unum.[103]

In his spoken remarks, Sumner observed that the treaty "dismisses from N. America one of the monarchical powers".[104] Other Senators may have spoken on this theme, for it would have strong appeal in a country which boasted of its democratic institutions, which recently had defeated what many viewed as an aristocratic South, and which had cheered as the Imperial French forces had withdrawn from Mexico earlier in the year.

A fifth consideration which apparently won support for the treaty was the belief that American occupation of the Russian lands forestalled English designs on the same territory. "Another motive to this acquisition", Sumner wrote, "may be found in a desire to anticipate the imagined schemes or necessities of Great Britain." Although he doubted that England actually desired the Russian possessions, he nevertheless discussed reports to the contrary. If such remors were true, Sumner suggested,

that was reason enough to buy.[105] His notes also reveal his concern over the matter, for he scribbled in the question "Does England desire it?"[106] The Springfield Republican and the Boston Semi-Weekly Advertiser reported that other Senators saw the importance of preventing British acquisition of the Russian lands.[107] This may have moved some to approve the cession, for an anti-British stance was politically sound in the United States in 1867. However, it is not known if Senators supported the treaty because it jeopardized the position of England in British Columbia. Almost certainly the subject was mentioned in Senate debate, because the heavy emphasis given it by the press would have made the topic hard to ignore.

A final matter which swayed Senators to consent to the Treaty was friendship for Russia. Cordial relations between Czarist Russia and the United States extended back over many years, and the sympathy which the former expressed for the Union cause during the Civil War was well-known and warmly appreciated. Nevertheless, the United States did not buy Russian America merely as a favor to the Czar. It was a question, instead, of practical politics and national honor. In his published remarks, Sumner wrote:

> There is still another consideration concerning the treaty which must not be disregarded. It attests and assures the amity of Russia. Even if you doubt the value of these possessions, the treaty is a sign of friendship.[108]

Sumner pointed out that the overtures leading to the treaty had preceded from the United States. The nation was now obligated. "A bargain once made must be kept", he moralized, and "Even if still open to consideration, it must not be lightly abandoned," because "the dishonor of this treaty, after what has passed would be a serious responsibility for our country".[109] Perhaps it would have been better, Sumner admitted, if the Secretary of State had consulted first with the Senate, but he had not done so, and other

nations did not understand the safeguards of the American treaty making process, which gave final approval to the Senate. If they rejected this treaty, Sumner lectured, the news would be greeted internationally with scorn. "There would be jeers at us", he wrote, "and jeers at Russia also; at us for levity in making overtures and at Russia in yielding to them."[110] Sumner was not the only Senator to urge this justification for consent. Cornelius Cole later wrote that "The friendship of the Russians towards us in our late struggle for national existence, . . . afforded strong leverage in support of the treaty."[111]

If any motives for the Senate's decision predominated, however, they were probably the combination of expansionism and the interests of the West Coast States. In both respects the Senators would be responding to powerful almost instinctive forces: the one was historical and cultural and the other political. The purchase of Russian America was clearly in the mainstream of American expansion and the westward movement. It really did not matter, as Senator Nye astutely observed, if the Russian lands were worth anything or not. They were part of the North American continent, and that was enough. The acquisition of the Russian colonies was merely the latest link in a chain that led back to the first settlers on the East Coast who had bought or seized Indian lands; it was merely a successor to Louisiana and the Oregon Country. Sumner had said it in his speech; now was the time to obtain Russian America: "without force - without effort - like emancipation. (The) Best treaty is here."[112] But of equal importance must have been the expressed desires of people on the West Coast. United States Senators were preeminently political creatures. The warning that the Republican party would suffer, perhaps be defeated, in California if the treaty failed to be ratified was superbly calculated to appeal to a Senate leadership which was currently struggling to remake

one nation out of two. The slightest hint of disaffection in the West must have conjured up images too, too horrible to be suffered, when they could be so easily dispelled by the expenditure of only $7,200,000. This was no time for political animosities or financial niggardliness, and the Senators must have sensed this. The Senate would have been peopled by fools if they had turned down the purchase of Russian America.

Chapter III

FOOTNOTES

[1]Data taken from the Third Annual Message of Andrew Johnson, December 3, 1867. Messages and Papers of the Presidents, (New York: Bureau of National Literature, 1897), vol. IX, p. 3773. The public debt on June 30, 1866, was $2,783,425,879; and on June, 30, 1867, $2,692,199,215. Government receipts for the fiscal year ending June 30, 1867, were $490,634,010; while the expenditures had been $346,729,129; leaving a surplus of $143,904,880. By November, 1867, the public debt had fallen to $2,491,504,450; but by November, 1868, the figure had risen again to $2,527,129,552. Later figures taken from the Fourth Annual Message of Andrew Johnson, December 9, 1868, Ibid., pp. 3874-5.

[2]PRCA, Annex 21, Stoeckl to Gorchakov, March 6/18, 1867, DHM Translation, p. 196.

[3]Ibid.

[4]Howard K. Beale, edit., Dairy of Gideon Welles, vol. III, (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1960) p. 75

[5]Andrew Johnson MSS.,

[6]For a detailed discussion of the final negotiating session, see: Richard E. Neunherz, "The Cession of Russian America", pp. 92-98.

[7]Howard K. Beale, edit., Diary of Gideon Welles, vol. III, p. 75. Unless otherwise noted, this and the following paragraph are based primarily on the Welles account. The 1960 edition is used, rather than the original publication by Welles himself in 1911, because the former Secretary of the Navy edited his diaries before allowing them to be printed. In some instances, he changed his original wording in the diaries sufficiently to alter substantially the intent of his comments as they were written immediately after the events occured. As an example, the 1911 edition stated the correct $7,200,000 price of the purchase, while in the original diaries it was quoted as "four million two hundred thousand Dollars". The Beale edition republishes the diaries as approved by Welles in 1911, but it adds in the margins the alterations made from the originals. See: Gideon Welles, The Diary of Gideon Welles, (New York: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1911), p. 75.

[8]For further information on this venture, see the author's Master's Thesis, Chapter 2, pp. 48-51; Cornelius Cole, Memoirs of Cornelius Cole, (New York: McLoughlin Bros., 1908) pp. 281-285; and Victor J. Farrar, "Senator Cole and the Purchase of Alaska", Washington Historical Quarterly, XIV (October, 1923), pp. 243-247.

[9]Messages and Papers of the Presidents, vol. IX, p. 3719.

[10]Journal of Executive Proceedings of the Senate of the United States of America, (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1887) vol. XV, part II, pp. 558 & 559.

[11]The Philadelphia Inquirer, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, April 1, 1867, p. 12. The word in parentheses was inserted by the author for clarity. The Secretary's son, Frederick, who may have attended this session of the Senate, also wrote of the surprise which news of the treaty created in the Senate chamber when it was announced. Frederick W. Seward, Reminiscences of a War-Time Statesman and Diplomat: 1830-1915, pp. 362-363.

[12]PRCA, Annex 26, Stoeckl to Gorchakov, March 22-April 3, 1867. Translation by the author from the original French.

[13]PRCA, Annex 30, Stoeckl to Gorchakov, April 7/19, 1867. Translations by the author from the original French.

[14]For further information on this aspect of Stoeckl's labors, see the author's Master's Thesis, Chapter 4.

[15]Howard K. Beale, edit., Diary of Gideon Welles, p. 75; and John Bigelow, Retrospective of an Active Life, vol. IV, pp. 53-54.

[16]Boutwell's early opposition to the treaty is documented in a letter to Charles Sumner dated April 7, 1867, in which he wrote:

> "If you conclude to reject it (the treaty), and it is so managed as to give no offense to Russia, there will be a general acquiescence among the people of New England. My reflections tend to strengthen my opposition to the project."

Charles Sumner MSS., Widener Library, Harvard University, Boston, George S. Boutwell to Charles Sumner, April 7, 1867, Groton Mass. The words in parentheses were inserted by the author for clarity.

Butler's continued opposition to the purchase, as demonstrated by his vote against the appropriation in the summer of 1868, is suspect, however. It is not clear if he rejected the appropriation because he still disapproved of the treaty or because he had become interested in the Perkins' Case, whose supporters were attempting to block passage of the money bill until their claims against Russia had been satisfied. See below, Chapter 8.

[17]Chicago Tribune, Chicago, Ill., April 10, 1867, under: "Special Correspondence of the Chicago Tribune", Washington, D.C., April 5, 1867. The unnamed correspondent wrote, in referring to this news release, that "This telegram was prepared in the State Department and given out to the press when the treaty was sent to the Senate . . ."

[18]PRCA, Annex 30, Stoeckl to Gorchakov, April 7/19, 1867; and the New York Commercial Advertiser, 4:00 p.m. edition, Saturday, March 30, 1867, p. 4, under "Special dispatch to the Commercial Advertiser". The early release to this paper does not refute the statement published in the Chicago Tribune, mentioned in the preceding footnote, for it is certainly feasible that Seward could have given Weed's paper the first information, perhaps before the Senate even convened that morning, and then have provided the news to the Associated Press and others while the Senate still sat.

[19]New York Commercial Advertiser, March 30, 1867. The first notices of the treaty which appeared in newspapers across the country included all or parts of this statement.

[20]Cornelius Cole MSS., Cole to Judge Burke, April 1, 1867.

[21]Ibid.; and Cornelius Cole, Memoirs of Cornelius Cole (New York: McLoughlin Bros., 1908), p. 283. The account in the published memoirs differs somewhat with the details of the letter to Burke. In the former, Clay clearly implied that the meeting with Stoeckl occured before the treaty was submitted to the Senate, and perhaps before Stoeckl approached Seward. The letter to Burke, however, refutes these statements made by an old man decades later, placing the talk in its more reasonable time frame, after the purchase agreement was submitted to the Senate.

[22]For a discussion of this petition and its significance in the negotiations, see the author's Master's Thesis, Chapter 3, and Victor J. Farrar, "Joseph Lane McDonald and the Purchase of Alaska", Washington Historical Quarterly, XII (April, 1921) pp. 83-90.

[23]New York Times, April 1, 1867, under "To Associated Press" section, Typical of the current concept concerning this document, the Times stated in this issue that it "is the foundation of the treaty now awaiting the ratification of the Senate."

[24]Charles Sumner, MSS., Harvard, Spencer F. Baird to Charles Sumner, March 31, 1867.

[25]Charles Sumner MSS., Massachusetts Historical Society, Boston, the "Beaman Memorandum", hereafter referred to as the "Beaman Memorandum".

[26]Journal of the Senate, 40th Congress, 1st Session, (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1867) p. 196.

[27]Ibid., p. 10.

[28]"Beaman Memorandum". The material in this and the next three paragraphs is based entirely on this source.

[29]The "Beaman Memorandum" includes notes for only two specific dates, April 1 and April 3. However, the final paragraph, although it does not bear a separate date, could not have referred to the April 3 meeting, because it includes the following: "Four Meetings. Ten hours work." Consequently, this must have been penned at the close of the last or Monday morning session.

There is ample evidence to substantiate a Friday meeting despite the absence of any notes from Beaman for that date. Sumner's clerk may have been absent on that day or he may have been charged only with taking notes of the discussions among the Senators. There may have been no minutes taken on the statements made by these experts, or they may have worked from data in the holdings of the Smithsonian or the Coast Survey, material which may have been returned after Sumner and the Committee had finished their labors. For documentation on the Friday meeting see: New York Times, April 4, 1867, dispatch from Washington, April 3, 1867, which mentioned plans for another session of the Committee on Friday; The Cincinnati Commercial, Cincinnati, Ohio, April 6, 1867, in a dispatch dated April 5, 1867, Washington, noted "The Senate Committee on Foreign Relations had another meeting today, on the Russian Cession treaty, . . ."; New York Tribune, April 5, 1867, in a dispatch dated April 4, 1867, reported plans for another meeting of the Committee on the following day; a letter from Spencer F. Baird to a W. M. Band, dated April 4, 1867, mentions being scheduled to appear before the Committee on the next day, Spencer F. Baird MSS., "letter Book", Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.

The evidence for the Monday, April 8, 1867, meeting rests largely on the last paragraph of the "Beaman Memorandum", which states that there had been four sessions of the Committee devoted to the treaty. Because the third had been held on Friday, that left only Saturday or Monday morning as the probable dates for the last one held before the submission of the convention to the full Senate on Monday afternoon, April 8. The Philadelphia Inquirer, April 9, 1867, confirms this conclusion in a dispatch dated April 8, which states that "The . . . Committee . . . held an extra meeting this morning, and agreed to report the Russian treaty to the Senate, . . ." See also a letter to Seward from Reverdy Johnson, dated April 8, 1867, which stated "The treaty will be reported favorably upon to day"; Seward MSS. Also, see the Cincinnati Commercial, April 9, 1867, in a dispatch dated April 8, Washington, which noted: "The Senate Committee on Foreign Relations held a meeting this morning and decided to report the Russian treaty to the Senate for its immediate action."

[30]For a detailed analysis of the American press reactions to the treaty, see Chapter 4, below.

[31]Sumner MSS., Harvard University, G. V. Fox to Sumner, telegram, April 2, 1867, Portsmouth, N.H.; M. C Meigs to Sumner, April 2, 1867, Philadelphia; and the "Beaman Memorandum".

[32]"Beaman Memorandum". Beaman's notes do not mention the name Peirce, rather Sumner's secretary attributed certain communications to "Bache" (Alexander Dallas). Because Bache, the former superintendent of the Coast Survey, had died on February 17, 1867, this was incorrect. Apparently, Beaman mistakenly credited the information to Bache and intended to refer to the new superintendent, Peirce.

[33]Two letters dated April 3, 1867, Baird to Sumner, Baird MSS., "Letters", vol. 37, p. 423.

[34]New York Times, April 2, 1867, in a dispatch from Washington dated April 1, 1867. There is a strong possibility that Stevens may have spoken to Sumner personally of his advocacy of the purchase. A curious remark reputed to have been made by Sumner on the night of March 30, at the home of Congressman Hooper, may have been the result of such a conversation between Stevens and the Senator. According to Bigelow, Sumner had stated that "The necessary appropriation would pass Congress in twenty-four hours." This comment from a man who had not decided yet to recommend the purchase to the Senate seems more than strange. But, if he merely were repeating an assurance given to him by Stevens, the statement is confusing only because Bigelow did not report it accurately or Sumner did not clarify the basis of his assertion. This possibility is supported by the report of Stoeckl to his government, dated April 7/19. According to the Russian minister, Stevens assured him "that the same day that Congress reconvenes, he will see that the allocation is passed and will put the money at our disposal." John Bigelow, Retrospective of an Active Life, p. 53; and PRCA, Annex 28, Stoeckl to Gorchakov, April 7/19, 1867. Translation of the latter document made by the author from the original French.

[35]New York Times, April 3, 1867, in a dispatch from Washington dated April 2, 1867; and the New York Herald, April 6, 1867, which stated that two Senators had visited the Washington bureau of that paper on Friday evening to borrow a bound volume of the Herald containing a study of the resources of Russian America published on June 12, 1865, which emphasized gold, oil and coal.

[36]Sumner MSS., Harvard University, Julius E. Hilgard to Sumner, April 5, 1867. Arnold Henry Guyot was a distinguished geologist and a professor at Princeton University.

[37]"Beaman Memorandum". The material in this paragraph and the six which follow is taken from this source except where otherwise noted.

[38]See footnote [32] above for the identification of Professor Peirce as the correspondent intended by Beaman. As for the type of report Peirce anticipated, see: Charles Sumner MSS., Harvard University, Benjamin Peirce to Charles Sumner, Coast Survey Office, Washington, April, 1867. There is no exact date on this note, but Sumner added underneath the message: "Handed to me at the door of the Senate during the debate on the treaty . . . by Prof. Peirce . . . with a suggestion

that I use as an amendment to the treaty." The message read: "Provided that two hundred thousand dollars be appropriated to the preliminary survey of this territory in its coasts under the direction of the Coast Survey of the United States."

[39]Beaman did not place Morton's name next to these last comments, but they clearly belong to the Indiana Senator, because later notes identify him as the only member of the Committee with such enthusiasm for the treaty and the only one who wished to submit the purchase to the Senate at once.

[40]Morgan B. Sherwood, Exploration of Alaska: 1865-1900, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1965), p. 32; J. A. James, The First Scientific Exploration of Russian America and the Purchase of Alaska, (Evanston and Chicago, 1942), pp. 35 and 42-45; Annual Report of the Board of Regents of the Smithsonian Institution, Senate Misc. Doc. No. 86, Fortieth Congress, Second Session, (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1868) p. 43; Spencer F. Baird MSS., "Letters", Vol. 37, Baird to W. W. Band, April 4, 1867, and "Private Letters", vol. 6, p.289, Baird to Sumner, April 1867; Ibid, vol. 6, Baird to Mark (?), April 21, 1867; Ibid, vol. 6, p. 298, Baird to Hon. R. Hale, May 9, 1867; and New York Herald, April 6, 1867, which merely stated that several "scientific gentlemen" had appeared before the Committee. The Annual Report specifically named Baird, Bischoff and Bannister as the men who testified before the Committee, and the letters of Baird refer to his and Bannister's appearance.

[41]Morgan B. Sherwood, Exploration of Alaska, p. 18.

[42]Baird MSS., "Private Letters", vol. 6, Baird to Mark, April 21, 1867.

[43]Annual Report of the Board of Regents of the Smithsonian Institution, 1868, p. 43; Baird MSS., "Letters", vol. 38, pp. 182, Baird to Sumner, May 25, 1867; and J. A. James, The First Scientific Exploration of Russian America and the Purchase of Alaska, pp. 32-33.

[44]James, Ibid., p. 35; and Baird MSS., "Letters", vol. 37, p. 423, Baird to Sumner, April 3, 1867.

[45]James, Ibid., p. 44-45.

[46]Baird MSS., "Private Letters", vol. 6, p. 290, Baird to Bannister, "Sunday morning". Although no specific date is given on this document, it seems likely that it was written on Sunday, April 7, 1867. The urgency of the note suggests strongly that Sumner needed the information immediately and was preparing something of importance and wide scope on Russian America, such as the speech he delivered in the Senate on Monday, April 8, 1867. The previous Sunday, March 31, 1867, would seem to be too early for this exchange to have occured. A later date seems improbable because the urgency would have been

unnecessary except just before the completion of the expanded work for publication. That took place in May. From its position in the letter book, this note clearly was written in April.

[47]"Beaman Memorandum".

[48]Ibid. Agassiz was currently a professor of natural history at Harvard University.

[49]David Donald, Charles Sumner and the Rights of Man, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1970) p. 309 ff. and 354.

[50]Edward L. Pierce, Memoirs and Letters of Charles Sumner, vol. IV, 1860-1874, (Boston: Roberts Bros., 1889) pp. 318-319.

[51]Ibid, p. 325, and especially footnote no. 1 on that page, which states that the views which Pierce expressed were those given him by Sumner upon the latter's return to Massachusetts following the Senate passage of the treaty.

[52]New York Herald, April 9, 1867.

[53]Glyndon G. Van Deusen, William Henry Seward, pp. 257-258 and 403.

[54]James Harlan, Senator from Indiana and member of the Foreign Relations Committee, refused an invitation on April 5, preferring to discuss the treaty during the daylight. Ronald J. Jensen, "The Alaska Purchase and Russian-American Relations," unpublished PhD. dissertation, Indiana University, 1971, p. 94.

[55]John Bigelow, Retrospectives of an Active Life, vol. IV, p. 53; and Howard K. Beale, Diary of Gideon Welles, p. 75.

[56]George E. Baker, ed., The Works of William H. Seward, (Boston: 1853-1883) vol. III, p. 367-368.

[57]New York Herald, April 9, 1867; and also the New York Tribune, April 9 and 10, 1867, in letters from Washington, dated April 8 and 9, 1867.

[58]Richard E. Neunherz, "The Cession of Russian America", pp. 83-84 and footnote 16, p. 106.

[59]DHM, "The Alaska Treaty", p. 329. Miller's source for this information was the testimony of David T. Watson, counsel for the United States before the Alaskan Boundary Tribunal, that four maps were used by the Senate in 1867: a Russian map of 1826, an Arrowsmith map of 1833, a Canadian map of 1853 and the House of Commons map of 1857. Although Miller points out that no evidence was presented to prove that these four

maps were in fact referred to by the Senate, it is reasonable to assume that several maps were used and that one or more of them may have been from this list, including the Russian chart which probably had been one provided by Stoeckl.

[60]Ibid., pp. 325-327. Miller's source for this sequence of events was the testimony of Adolph Lindenkohl before the Alaskan Boundary Tribunal on April 13, 1903. Lindenkohl claimed to have drafted the new map the commissioning of which he incorrectly attributed to Charles Sumner. As Miller points out, Sumner could not have known of the pending treaty on March 20 and could not have requested a new edition of the map of Northwest America at that time. Thus, the author must have been Seward, as suggested in a letter dated April 18, 1867, from Julius E. Hilgard to Seward, in which the former wrote that he was sending twelve copies of the new map "which has been prepared at this Office in conformity with your suggestion." See: NA, RG 59, "Misc. Letters", Hilgard to Seward, April 18, 1867, microfilm, M-179, R-256.

[61]DHM, "The Alaska Treaty", p. 237. Seward wrote to Hilgard, after receiving the first copies sent on April 18, that he would need an additional 100 for the State Department. NA, RG 59, "Domestic Letters", Seward to Hilgard, April 18, 1867, microfilm M-40, R-63.

[62]New York Herald, April 1, 1867, p. 8.

[63]NA, RG 59, "Misc. Letters", Spencer F. Baird to Seward, April 8, 1867, microfilm, M-179, R-255.

[64]NA, RG 59, "Misc. Letters", Commodore John Rodgers to Seward, April 3, 1867, microfilm, M-179, R-255.

[65]NA, RG 59, "Telegrams", R. S. Chew to Rodgers, April 5, 1867, and Rodgers to Chew, April 5, 1867. Both messages were paid for by the State Department. Daily National Intelligencer, Washington, D.C., April 6, 1867. The Rodgers' letter was published in other papers such as the New York Times, New York Herald, New York Tribune, Washington National Republican, Washington Daily Chronicle, Cincinnati Commercial, Milwaukee Daily Sentinel, and the Des Moines, Iowa, Daily State Register.

[66]NA, RG 59, "Misc. Letters", Meigs to Seward, April 4, 1867, microfilm, M-179, R-255.

[67]The Meigs letter was one of the most widely disseminated, appearing in the Washington National Intelligencer, April 6, 1867, and among others, in the New York Herald, New York Times, New York World, New York Tribune, Washington National Republican, Washington Daily Chronicle, Cincinnati Commercial, Chicago Times, Milwaukee Daily Sentinel, and Des Moines, Iowa, Daily State Register.

[68]NA, RG 59, "Misc. Letters", Stanton to Seward, April 5, 1867, enclosing a copy of a telegram from Halleck to Stanton, San Francisco, April 4, 1867, microfilm, M-179, R-255. The cable from Halleck was marked as received at 10:00 a.m. on April 5, and the note from Stanton was marked received at the State Department at 11:00 a.m. on April 5.

[69]Daily National Intelligencer, April 6, 1867. See also: New York Times, New York Herald, New York Tribune, New York World, Washington National Republican, Washington Daily Chronicle, Cincinnati Commercial, Chicago Times, Milwaukee Daily Sentinel.

[70]NA, RG 59, "Telegrams", Seward to Collins, April 6, 1867. The Collins' letter appeared in the New York Times, New York Herald, New York World, Chicago Tribune, Chicago Times, Chicago Republican, and Cincinnati Daily Gazette.

[71]NA, RG 59, "Misc. Letters", Collins to Seward, April 4, 1867, microfilm, M-179, R-254.

[72]Daily National Intelligencer, Washington, D.C., April 9, 1867. Among other journals in which it appeared were the New York Herald, New York World, Washington National Republican, Chicago Tribune, and Baltimore American.

[73]Department of State, "Purchase of the Russian Possessions in North America by the United States; Papers Relating to the Value and Resources of the Country", (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1867.)

The Gibbs letter, not circulated to the press, called the country ceded by Russia "the most important acquisition that we could obtain." Gibbs was certain that the loss of those lands would create great disappointment on the Pacific Coast and do great injury to the United States. He especially emphasized the importance of the many bays along the coast of Russian America which would prove enormously useful in time of war, especially one against a naval power like Great Britain.

The author has been unable to trace the background of Charles Fosdick Fletcher, but his name must have carried some weight for his comments were published in at least three newspapers in Washington, the Daily Chronicle, the National Intelligencer and the National Republican, and they were reprinted in the two later government documents mentioned above and below. He also wrote a letter to Sumner, dated April 3. Both notes stressed the value of the fisheries in the new acquisition. See: NA, RG 59, "Misc. Letters", Fletcher to Seward, Mount Airy, Philadelphia, April 3, 1867, microfilm, M-179, R-255, and Sumner MSS, Harvard, Fletcher to Sumner, April 3, 1867.

[74]House of Representatives, 40th Cong., 2nd Sess., Ex. Doc. no. 177, Part I, serial 1339, pp. 25-31, and 33.

[75]Chicago Tribune, April 10, 1867, in "Special Correspondence" from Washington, April 5, 1867.

[76]For evidence of the Sumner and Johnson interviews, see: John Bigelow, "Retrospectives of an Active Life", vol. IV, p. 58. The reference is to a diary entry for April 1, which indicates that Seward had spoken with Sumner, probably that very day, probably after the first Senate Committee meeting, and that afterwards he had gone to see Johnson. Evidence for the Harlan meeting is based on Ronald J. Jensen, "The Alaska Purchase and Russian-American Relations", p. 94, whose source is a letter in the Seward MSS., which the present author did not note when he examined that collection.

[77]Seward MSS., Stevens to Seward, April 11, 1867; see also footnote 34 above.

[78]Ibid, Pruyn to Seward, April 8, 1867.

[79]Alexander S. Johnson MSS., Bancroft Library, Berkley, Cal., HHB, P-B, 208, v. 1., Gibbs to Johnson, early April, 1867.

[80]Seward MSS, Fox to Seward, April 8, 1867, and Seward's acknowledgement, F. W. Seward to Fox, April 12, 1867.

[81]Cornelius Cole MSS., Cole to Judge Burke, April 1, 1867; PRCA, Annex 30, April 7/19, 1867, Stoeckl to Gorchakov; and Edwin D. Morgan MSS., New York State Library, Albany, New York, a diary entry for April 7, 1867, noting that Stoeckl had called upon him at home.

[82]"Beaman Memorandum"; Charles Sumner, The works of Charles Sumner, vol. IX, pp. 183-184; and Journal of Executive Proceedings of the Senate of the United States of America, vol. XV, p. 662.

[83]Seward MSS., Johnson to Seward, April 8, 1867.

[84]Philadelphia Inquirer, April 9, 1867; and Journal of Executive Proceedings . . . etc., vol. XV, p. 663.

[85]There is some confusion as to the date of this famous speech on the purchase on which the later published version was based. Edward L. Pierce, writing in the Memoirs of Sumner, stated that the Senator spoke on April 9 for three hours using a single sheet of notes. However, this date does not conform to the Newspaper accounts. Dispatches and letters from correspondents of the New York Tribune, New York Times, Philadelphia Inquirer and Cincinnati Commercial all place the speech on April 8. Since these dispatches or letters were all dated on that day, this would seem decisive. However, the Pierce account may not be entirely wrong, only misleading. There is some evidence that Sumner

spoke on both days, with his major effort coming on April 8. This would explain the apparent confusion caused by Sumner's official document and memoirs' editor. There is in the Beaman file of the Sumner MSS at the Massachusetts Historical Society a single sheet of notes which has been marked "Autograph of Senator Sumner Speech on Russian America - afterwards written out." In one corner there is the date "1867 - April 9", apparently in the handwriting of Beaman, as was the foregoing. It may be this document which Pierce saw, and he may have surmised that the major speech was given on April 9 from this simple outline, when in fact this brief, one page digest may have served for his remarks on April 9.

The newspaper accounts disagree on the length of the main Sumner speech. The Commercial described it as "of considerable length"; the Times stated that it was "of two hours' duration"; the Inquirer timed it as "about two hours and a half"; and the Tribune said that it was "of three hours and a half duration".

Edward L. Pierce, Memoirs and Letters of Charles Sumner, vol. IV, p. 326; Sumner notes, single sheet, "Beaman file", Sumner MSS, Massachusetts Historical Society; New York Tribune, April 9, 1867; New York Times, April 9, 1867, in a dispatch from Washington dated April 8, 1867; Philadelphia Inquirer, April 9, 1867, in a dispatch dated Washington, April 8, 1867; and the Cincinnati Commercial, April 9, 1867.

[86]Philadelphia Inquirer, April 9, 1867, in a dispatch from Washington, dated April 8, 1867; New York Times, April 9, 1867, in a dispatch from Washington, April 8, 1867; Cincinnati Commercial, April 9, 1867; and Journal of Executive Proceedings . . . etc., vol. XV, p. 663. There is no reason to doubt the assence of the Inquirer account. Sumner had scoured the holdings of the Smithsonian and probably the Congressional Library for books and other materials on Russian America, and Baird and Bannister had prepared special reports for him. It is reasonable to assume, in view of the limited time available to Sumner in which to prepare a lengthy, complicated speech, that he spoke from limited notes and made heavy use of books, maps, scraps and reports. The Commercial concurred in the view that the treaty did not encounter opposition until late in this session. The Times and the Commercial agreed with the Inquirer on the issue of an earlier than usual meeting hour for April 9, but only the Times mentioned the idea that this was done to make it possible to complete debate in one more day. The Times also included a note on the attempt to remove the secrecy of the meetings.

[87]New York Times, April 10, 1867, in a dispatch from Washington, April 9, 1867; New York Herald, April 10, 1867; Cincinnati Commercial April 10, 1867; Philadelphia Inquirer, April 10, 1867; Springfield Daily Republican, Springfield, Mass., April 17, 1867; Boston Semi-Weekly Advertiser, Boston, Mass., April 17, 1867; Portland Oregonian, May 9, 1867, in "Our Washington Letter", April 10, 1867; and Cornelius Cole MSS., Cole to Judge Burke, April 10, 1867, from "Senate U.S."

The Inquirer stated that the debate lasted six hours; the Times quoted five hours; and the Commercial spoke of a "long executive session".

The Advertiser and the Republican agreed that Nye spoke and they concurred on the main point of his remarks, while the Oregonian and the Inquirer stressed the importance of Western Senators in general and the latter agreed on the argument concerning the future of the party on the West Coast. The Herald also noted that Conness and Stewart delivered their views and the Cole letter mentioned that he and Conness had spoken. Most of these sources agree on the importance of the expansionist point of view in the Senate debate.

[88]The Cincinnati Commercial, April 10, 1867, dispatch from Washington, dated April 9, 1867, is the source of the story that Sumner also spoke on April 9: "Mr. Sumner made another speech in favor of the treaty, . . ." See also footnote 85, above. See also: the New York Herald, April 10, 1867; and Cornelius Cole MSS, Cole to Burke, April 10, 1867.

[89]Cincinnati Commercial, April 10, 1867; New York Tribune, April 11, 1867, in a letter from Washington, dated April 10, 1867; New York Herald, April 12, 1867; Springfield Republican, Springfield, Mass., April 17, 1867; the Philadelphia Inquirer, April 10, 1867. The Cole letter cited in the preceding footnote agreed that more than the final two who voted against the treaty actually opposed it during the debates.

Although Ferry voted for the treaty in the end, it is reasonable to assume that he did speak forcefully against it earlier. Many papers on April 10 tried to establish which two had voted against the purchase. All named Fessenden, and they split over the other one being Ferry or Richard Yates of Illinois. Ferry also voted for postponement on April 9, and probably concurred in the cession on the final ballot only to perhaps make the tally unanimous as a courtesy to Russia. Yates may have opposed the acquisition at some point, but there is no evidence to that effect.

[90]Journal of Executive Proceedings . . . etc., vol. XV, p. 675. For a list of the voting positions on this issue see Table I below.

[91]Ibid., pp. 675-676. See Table I below for the vote.

[92]Indianapolis Daily Journal, Indianapolis, Indiana, April 13, 1867; New York Tribune, April 10, 1867, in a telegram to the Tribune from Washington, dated April 9, 1867; and the Springfield Daily Republican, Springfield, Mass., April 11, 1867.

[93]Journal of Executive Proceedings . . . etc., vol. XV, p. 710. The New York Times, April 15, 1867, in a dispatch to the Times, dated Washington, April 14, 1867, discussed the angry debate over the secrecy matter in the Senate on April 13. According to the Times, much of the trouble revolved around the "improper divulging of proceedings in Executive Session. The premature publication of the Russian treaty" and other privileged information. Apparently, the debate was sufficiently heated to make several Senators feel obliged to deny openly their guilt in the affair.

[94]House of Representatives, 40th Congress, 2nd Session, Ex. Doc. 177, serial 1339, Part I, p. 136. Hereafter referred to as "HR 177".

[95]"Beaman File". This single page of notes, dated by Beaman, may have been used in his major speech on April 8, or it might have served for the possible address on April 9. Point one reads "advantages to Pacific Coast".

[96]HR 177, Part I, pp. 137-138; the Springfield Daily Republican, Springfield, Mass., April 17, 1867; and the Boston Semi-Weekly Advertiser, April 17, 1867. Both newspapers, in referring to arguments used in the debates, mentioned the appeal of the fine coastline and the hopes for commerce with the Orient.

[97]HR 177, Part I, pp. 138.

[98]"Beaman File".

[99]HR 177, Part I, pp. 139.

[100]"Beaman File". Words in parentheses were added for clarity.

[101]Boston Semi-Weekly Advertiser, April 17, 1867.

[102]HR 177, Part I, pp. 143-189.

[103]Ibid., pp. 138-139.

[104]"Beaman File".

[105]HR 177, Part I, p. 139.

[106]"Beaman File".

[107]Springfield Daily Republican, April 17, 1867; the Boston Semi-Weekly Advertiser, April 17, 1867.

[108]HR 177, Part I, p. 141.

[109]Ibid., pp. 142-143.

[110]Ibid., pp. 142-143.

[111]Cornelius Cole, Memoirs of Cornelius Cole, p. 284.

[112]"Beaman File". Word in parentheses added for clarity.

Chapter IV

AT THE MERCY OF THE PRESS:

The Reactions of the American Press to the Purchase of Russian America

"The getting of this land offers us no advantage that can counterbalance the objections to the treaty, . . . We have more territory than we want. . . It is a luxury we are in no condition to afford. . .We have literally no use for this territory, . . . it is idle to talk of needing land, or of needing more fisheries and fur-trading, . . ."

Horace Greeley, editor, N. Y. Tribune, April 1, 1867.

"If this treaty is ratified, as most probably it will be, the British authorities will be sandwiched in British Columbia by the possessions of the United States on the north and on the south of them."

The Baltimore Sun, April 1, 1867.

"The country known as Russian America . . . has a greater prospective value than might . . . be at first supposed. . .It is its deeply indented and well timbered coast, its peninsulas and archipelagos . . . its fishing banks and hunting grounds, that make it valuable."

San Francisco Evening Bulletin, April 1, 1867.

The first information received by the American press concerning the purchase of Russian America apparently was released in two stages by Secretary of State William H. Seward on March 30, 1867. As explained in the preceding chapter, Seward originally gave the news to the New York Commercial Advertiser, published by his old friend and political colleague, Thurlow Weed. This newspaper broke the story in its 4:00p.m. edition on March 30. Subsequently, either late that afternoon or in the early evening, Seward probably revealed the news to the local Washington, D.C. reporters and the Associated Press. Correspondents must have been searching for corroboration of the story by that time, because the cession had been presented to the United States Senate before noon and word of the event almost certainly would have leaked to the press by late in the day.

News of the purchase sped across the nation, and the public generally learned on Sunday, March 30, or on Monday, April 1, that the United States intended to buy a new territory about which few Americans had much knowledge. It would be the frustrating task of the newspaper community during the following two or three weeks to reduce partially the nearly total national ignorance concerning Russian America and to formulate an editorial opinion regarding the desirability of its acquisition. After some initial delay resulting from the lack of information about the Russian colonies and to the dearth of detail concerning the terms of the treaty, American newspapers voiced their positions on the purchase. Collectively, they neither strongly supported the Government's action nor broadly denounced it. Rather, only a plurality of the seventy-six journals for this study favored the acquisition of Russian America. The remainder, the majority, either opposed the cession, took no firm stand or ignored the issue altogether.[1]

I

During the first two weeks of April, 1867, while the Senate deliberated on the treaty and for several days following ratification on April 9, the purchase of Russian America was a major story for many American newspapers. Coverage of the event ranged from editorials on the subject to reporting the latest dispatches from Washington, printing the most recent rumors and providing data on the lands being purchased. However, the treaty was by no means the dominant news story before the nation as measured by the press response. In fact, the cession seems to have been less important than several other issues to which the average paper gave more time. For most Eastern papers, the Connecticut elections on April 1, which resulted in a resounding Democratic victory, received far more coverage generally than did the treaty with Russia. Republican journals, especially those committed to the Radicals, were greatly distressed by this resurgence of the hated opposition, and they moaned and moralized over the defeat. A variety of topics concerning the South and the Government's reconstruction policies usually received more attention from newspapers than did the purchase of Russian America. Some journals showed special interest in labor problems and the current campaign for the eight hour day, while others gave much attention to reports of war scares in Europe. Some displayed special fascination with the unfolding drama in Mexico, where the inept Maximillian was hard pressed by the growing power of the Juaristas. Finally, except for publications in the largest Eastern cities, most papers focused more on local matters than on the treaty story.

The task of reporting the news of the purchase was made difficult by lack of the information on the subject. Few papers had access to people who had knowledge of or experience in that region. New England journals

TABLE II

Analysis of the United States Press (76 Papers)[1]

Position	Sub-Totals	New Eng.	Mid-Atl.	South	Mid-West	Far West
Support	32	6	11	0	7	8
Opposition	24	4	5	6	8	1
Neutral (no opinion)	20	1	1	9	4	5
Totals:	76	11	17	15	19	14

Note: New England: Me., N.H., Vt., Mass., Conn., R.I.; Middle Atlantic: N.Y., N.J., Penn., Md., Del.; South: Va., N.C., S.C., Ga., Ala., Miss., Tenn., Ky., La., Ark., Tex.; Mid-West: Ohio, Ind., Ill., Mich., Wis., Minn., Iowa, Neb., Kan., Mo.; Far West: Mont.,Terr., Wash. Terr., Ore., Cal., Nev.

Analysis of Support Issues (32 Papers)

Issue/Party	Sub-Totals	New Eng.	Mid-Atl.	South	Mid-West	Far West
Totals:	32	6	11	0	7	8
Valuable	18	3	7	0	3	5
Fisheries	16	4	6	0	2	4
Br. Columbia	16	0	7	0	3	6
Man. Destiny	18	2	7	0	4	5
Orient Trade	9	2	4	0	1	2
Pacific Coast Control/Trade	12	1	4	0	5	2
Pacific Coast States Benefit	4	0	2	0	0	2
Russian Friend.	3	0	2	0	1	0
Anti-British	9	0	3	0	2	4
Republican	11	2	5	0	1	3
Radical Rep.	3	1	1	0	1	0
Democrat	11	3	4	0	4	0
Party Unknown	7	1	1	0	0	5

Analysis of Opposition Issues (24 Papers)

Issue/Party	Sub-Totals	New Eng.	Mid-Atl.	South	Mid-West	Far West
Totals:	24	4	5	6	8	1
Valueless	19	3	3	4	8	1
Cost Too Much (Now & Later)	11	1	2	2	6	0
Anti-Expansion (Not Needed)	11	1	3	4	2	1
Political (Anti-Admin.)	7	1	1	2	3	0
Republican	7	1	1	0	4	1
Radical Rep.	8	2	3	1	2	0
Democrat	5	0	1	3	1	0
Party Unknown	4	1	0	2	1	0

[1]Based on newspapers examined by the author.

were able to use letters from or interviews with seamen who had visited Russian America, and the West Coast editors used similar sources. Most editors, however, had to depend heavily on information which originated in Washington, much of it from the State Department. The letters to Seward from Bvt. Major General Meigs, Commodore Rodgers, Major General Halleck, Spencer F. Baird and Perry McD. Collins were widely disseminated, as was the Washington Territorial Memorial, which many papers credited with having induced the cession.[2] Numerous journals published only these items and the various dispatches from Washington carried by the Associated Press. The printing of such material, however, should not be interpreted as an indication of support for the purchase, for nothing else was available for most newspapers, especially the smaller and more local ones. Many of these journals never did comment editorially on the treaty.

Those editors who chose to search for independent sources turned most often to one of several encyclopedias, among which were the Gazeteer of the World, The American Cyclopedia, and the New American Cyclopedia, from which they sometimes quoted at length.[3] Other papers reprinted a description of the Russian colonies taken from the writing of Alfred R. Roche, who had argued in 1855 against the neutrality agreement between the Russian American Company and the Hudson's Bay Company during the Crimean War, urging instead a British seizure of the Czar's possessions in North America because of their economic and strategic value.[4] A number of newspapers used a letter written by the Rev. Dr. Horace Bushnell, a Congregational clergyman and theologian, who praised the climate, fisheries, and mineral resources of Russian America. He saw the purchase as likely to bring British Columbia into the United States, and he urged the building of a railroad to encourage such a development.[5]

Some newspapers, especially those in the larger Eastern cities, tried to provide adequate information on the treaty by printing every dispatch on the subject which came from Washington. The most important dailies often had their own correspondents in the nation's capital and they passed on in their "Letters from Washington" the latest tidbits about the treaty gleaned from interviews, deduced from fragments of hard facts, or fabricated. Such letters in the New York Tribune and the New York Herald, for instance, provide almost the only sources for the story of Seward's lobbying for the treaty at lavish dinner parties. Large West Coast papers and some in the Mid-West depended for "color" on periodic letters from individuals residing temporarily in Washington, some of whom wrote under pen names such as the Portland Oregonian's "Steamer Day". Smaller newspapers often borrowed from these sources and so spread the new information or propounded the distortions, as the case might be.

The New York Times, the New York Herald, the New York Tribune, the Philadelphia Inquirer and the Cincinnati Commercial, among others, kept close daily watch on such news items as the meetings of the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, the latest speculations regarding the fate of the treaty and the maneuverings of Seward on behalf of the agreement with Russia. The Herald and the Tribune enjoyed staying current with Seward's entertaining. The Times, the Inquirer and the Commercial reported early in the first week of April that the treaty would be held over until the December session, according to members of the Committee on Foreign Relations. By Saturday, April 6, however, the Commercial was stating that the committee would report the treaty but without a recommendation, while the Times informed its readers on April 8, that the Senate would vote on the cession that day.[6]

One dispatch from Washington which troubled many editors was the report that some Senators planned to vote against the purchase merely because of their hostility to the Johnson Administration and Seward. West Coast journals particularly denounced such a possibility. The Daily Union of Sacramento, California, mentioned the rumor in two editorials. In the second, published April 9, its editor stated that:

> The people don't care who negotiated this bargain. They can have no respect for a Senator who votes against ratification simply because he dislikes the Secretary of State. The interests of the nation should be set above all partisan considerations when an issue of this nature is presented, . . .[7]

The San Francisco Daily Alta California reported, on April 3, that "The Senate makes merry over the proffer as a good joke, and seems disposed contemptuously to reject it." But, the Alta cautioned, "That is not the temper with which the nation will regard the offer".[8] The San Francisco Bulletin expected Eastern politicians to act more responsibly in the matter of the treaty. "It is impossible", the Bulletin stated on April 3,:

> that partisan and personal animosity should long blind any large class of influential minds to considerations of national glory and aggrandizement, when these could be promoted at small expense and without any sacrifice of traditional policy or any risk of foreign complications.[9]

Eastern papers tended to concur in the reation of the Western press; they too decried the idea that Senators would oppose the treaty out of animosity to the Administration. The Detroil Free Press, on April 6, did not believe that Senators would act so willfully, because:

> Lost to all self-respect and decency, as the dominant majority undoubtedly are, they will hardly dare allow partisan spite against the head of the State Department and his superior officer to influence their policy on a question of grave national importance.[10]

The New York Times claimed that the only "opposition . . . has been that which has sprung from personal and political hostility to MR. SEWARD".

The New York Tribune, the Times charged, had led this campaign against the Secretary of State's accomplishment, and:

> In audacity and fertility of invention, in reckless assertion and covertly malignant insinuation, and in the use of calumny, the imputation of dishonest motives, and in fervid appeals to every facetious, mean and malicious passion, that journal has fairly outstripped its ancient and well-earned reputation.[11]

Seward was rather to be praised than scorned for his arrangement of the treaty, the Times suggested. "While narrow-minded political bigots have been exhausting all their resources in branding him a traitor to his party," the Times chided, "Mr. Seward has been providing for the power, growth and security of the nation. . . . quietly pursuing great objects of permanent interest to his country."[12]

Various editors showed interest in other topics connected with the acquisition of Russian America, such as the question of its international ramifications. The New York Herald saw the cession as an indication of the extent to which Russia was willing to pursue its "entente cordiale" with the United States, and as a "delicate hint from the Czar to England and France that they have no business on this continent".[13] The New York World expected Canadians, as a result of the treaty, "to consolidate more rapidly the party of confederation, and to hasten the acquiescence of British Columbia" to a union with British North America. As for Europe, the World agreed with the first dispatch released by Seward on March 30, that the cession was an indication that Russia was preparing for war over the Eastern Question.[14] The Alta California viewed the matter similarly, suggesting that Russia hoped for American moral support in that crisis in return for such favorable treaty terms. In the case of a European war, the Alta mused, the Czar might ask the United States for permission to build privateers in American ports, a curious "quid pro quo" for England's assistance to Confederacy during the American Civil War.[15] The Pioneer

of St. Paul, Minnesota, suggested that the principal motive behind the treaty for both Russia and the United States was "to prevent the extention of British power over the North Pacific ocean", in advance of a general European war over Greek Christians.[16]

Several journals stated that the announcement of a treaty purchasing Russian America had come as no surprise. The National Intelligencer asserted that the agreement was based "upon a proposition originally made by this Government in the Pierce Administration", and could be justified by the precedence of the acquisitions of Louisiana, Florida, Texas, California and Arizona.[17] The New York Times agreed, stating that "the future of the possessions which Russia is willing to transfer . . . has more than once engaged the attention of American Statesmen". The Russian withdrawal, according to the Times, was but another sign of that nation's acceptance of the Monroe Doctrine and the supremacy of "Republican Governments on this continent".[18] The Press of Philadelphia, however, believed that the treaty had evolved from the explorations of the Western Union Telegraph Company in connection with its project of constructing a telegraph line to Russia across the Behring Straits. "It is doubtful", the Press surmised, "whether Russia would have thought of selling, or anybody in the United States of purchasing, . . . if it were not to become an important highway of intelectual communication."[19] Finally on the matter of paying for the territory, several newspapers reported the rumor that the money would be paid in ironclads rather than cash.

Although many American newspapers did show interest in the peripheral issues associated with the acquisition, the majority of editors focused their attention on establishing an editorial policy either approving or condemning the purchase. Most who adopted a position in regard to the treaty published on or at the most two articles on the subject, but a few,

such as the New York Times, devoted nearly a column a day to the topic while the proposal lay before the Senate. Most editors hesitated for a few days, until at least April 2 or 3, before commenting directly on the purchase. Some papers, however, did not take a definite stand until the eve of the Senate debates, and a few withheld judgement until after that body consented to the treaty. Others, who originally opposed the cession, changed their viewpoint by the time the Senate approved the convention on April 9, while a few changed their opinion a week or two later. Delay and indecision were understandable. Because little was known about the Russian territories, many editors must have hoped to learn more about these lands before committing themselves on the subject, and as they became better informed, some altered their first impressions.

II

Less than a majority of the American press supported the purchase of Russian America, yet approval of the acquisition clearly was the most common reaction. About forty-five percent of the newspaper community apparently chose that position. The reasons for this plurality attitude covered a wide range of considerations which can be divided roughly into five categories in an approximate descending order of importance: (1) the known and imagined resources of the Russian colonies; (2) the lure of national expansion and especially the desire to annex British Columbia; (3) enlarged commercial opportunities on the Pacific Coast and in the trans-Pacific trade; (4) enmity towards Great Britain; and (5) friendship for Russia. Although it is not always possible to determine clearly which motives for the purchase a particular newspaper advocated, it appears that the first two found nearly equal favor with over fifty percent

of the editors who approved the treaty. Similarly, it seems that the last two reasons were important to only a few journals.

One of the two most popular justifications for the purchase among American editors was the belief that the Russian colonies contained resources of sufficient quantity and value to make the territory desirable to the United States. This argument received most support in the West Coast and Middle Atlantic States, while the Mid-Western papers seldom mentioned it. Many who urged this point admitted that little was actually known about Russian America, but they seemed confident that future explorations and American ingenuity would prove the cession to have been financially sound. Such optimism was common. The Rochester (N.Y.) Daily Democrat ridiculed the question of whether or not Russian America was valuable, observing that "we doubt if any territory on the face of the earth is absolutely worthless."[20] The Cincinnati Commercial agreed with this viewpoint, stating that "No investments are considered safer than real estate. Lands do not break up, burn up, or lose their intrinsic value."[21] The New York Times willingly admitted that Russian America was not likely to become "even under American enterprise, the most inviting portion of the American Union." But, the Times admonished, "we believe it is as wide of the mark to represent the entire country as worthless", which was the position taken by the major press opponents of the treaty.[22]

The resource which elicited the greatest enthusiasm in editorials and about which writers seemed most confident was the fisheries of the Russian American coastal waters and the North Pacific. American whalers had hunted those seas for years, and they had done much to educate their countrymen in the knowledge of the wealth of marine life which abounded in those regions. Because whaling ships frequented West Coast ports or were

based there, editors in those cities knew of these fisheries and stressed their importance. The San Francisco Alta California asserted that the value of this resource would more than compensate for the purchase price of Russian America, because:

> under American protection and bounty, the cod, halibut, and whale fisheries of the North Pacific would in five years yield from five to ten millions of dollars per year, and before the close of this century be worth more than all our other fishing interests combined.[23]

The Portland Oregonian lauded the cession for giving the United States "control of the valuable fishing . . . trade of the North Pacific Ocean." Off the coast of Russian America, the editor claimed, lay "the best and most extensive codfishery in the world", and possession of "ports adjacent to the whale fisheries" he considered to be "of great value".[24] The Seattle Puget Sound Gazette agreed with this assessment, explaining that along the shores of the Russian colonies were "the best fishing and whaling grounds on the entire coast".[25]

Eastern newspapers also expressed interest in the marine resources of Russian America. The Detroit Free Press, typical of Mid-Western journals, saw little commercial value in the acquisition but did believe that it might do for a whaling station, although its editor suggested that seven millions might be "a rather high price for such a convenience."[26] New England papers entertained less doubt about the worth of the territory, but the fishing and whaling potential of the Russian colonies interested them most. The Boston Herald described the price for the territory as "dog cheap", partially because "its rivers and bays . . . swarm with as fine fish as ever were caught."[27] The Boston Advertiser mentioned "the great whale fishery of the Northern Pacific and Behring Straits, in which Massachusetts" was "so deeply interested";[28] while the Daily Evening Transcript stressed "the great value and growing importance of our

fisheries, both for whale and cod, in the waters of the North Pacific."[29]

In the Middle Atlantic States, an area with large ports and an interest in seaborne commerce, newspapers praised the fisheries of Russian America. The Albany Argus believed they represented a major portion of the value of the territory,[30] while the New York Times suggested that they would serve the United States as a training ground for future sailors for the American Navy. All great maritime powers, the Times lectured, had also been nations with a large fishing industry; New Englanders, for instance, had been prominent in the past victories of American warships. One great virtue of the purchase of Russian America, the Times concluded, was that it would bestow on the United States "the unquestioned and entire command of the great North Pacific fisheries". This would encourage the growth of American naval strength and provide a substitute for the Newfoundland fisheries should England ever deprive the Americans of access to them.[31] The Philadelphia Inquirer also saw the Russian American fishing grounds as a training school for hardy seamen and as "more extensive than those upon the Atlantic Coast", while the Press of that city believed that they might be of sufficient value to make the territory worth the price asked even if no other commercial activity developed there for years to come.[32] Finally, the Washington, D.C., National Intelligencer judged it "convenient for the purposes of a great maritime nation to have the rest of the Polar Sea."

> These islands are alive with all the fish that enter into the commerce and consumption of the world. These fisheries will become highly important to us as the future nurseries for seamen for our mercantile and military marine.[33]

The production of these seas, the Intelligencer assured its readers, would feed Asia and Europe, and the fisheries would "in American hands, foster the largest marine in the world".

The produce of the ocean was not the only potential resource of Russian America which interested newspaper editors. Various newspapers also mentioned the fur trade, lumbering, mining and even the ice business. As in the case of the fisheries, West Coast journals were especially concerned with the other commercial opportunities of the new possession. The Sacramento Daily Union speculated that the gold-bearing rocks of British Columbia might extend into Russian America.[35] The Alta California also spoke of "prospective gold mines", but it doubted the reports of valuable timber, for the editor knew only of pine and cypress forests. "For the truly valuable resources", he wrote, "we must look to its mineral capacities". There could be no doubt, he assured his readers, "of its mineral richness, particularly in coal, copper, gold and silver".[36] The San Francisco Bulletin, however, seemed confident of the forst products and other resources of Russian America. "It is its deeply indented and well timbered coast, its peninsulas and archipelagos of innumerable islands, its fishing banks and hunting grounds, that make it valuable", the Bulletin stated. During the Russian regime, the editor explained, coal had been worked, the Indians used native copper, and the Western Telegraph construction crews had "found traces of gold in almost every river they explored", while "sea otter, seal, beaver, mink, ermine, fox and other skins" comprised the main trade between the Indians and the Russian fur company.[37] The Oregonian informed its readers there existed "an abundance of the best pine and fur timber on the low hills" which might "in time prove of considerable value." In a later issue, the editor of the Oregonian noted that "Nearly all the ice consumed on the Pacific coast and islands south of the Columbia river, comes from Sitka." Furthermore, he continued, "The Furs and skins of that country have . . . constituted an important trade", and there also existed "some gold and copper mines."[38]

A few Eastern newspapers evinced some interest in the non-marine resources of Russian America, although fewer editors seemed as convinced of their existence as they had been about the fisheries. The Boston Herald admitted that "The country is reported to abound in furs, forest and minerals," but it seemed certain only of the fishing potential.[39] The Albany Argus, however, mentioned the fur trade as being significant and believed that there was "a mineral wealth as great in this hyperborean region, as in Central America or in California".[40] The New York Times stressed what it described as two of the most valuable assets of Russian America, he continued, "there is a supply of the finest timber in the world - a product which will bring population and wealth to her shores". As for coal, the Times explained that:

> the growing navigation of the Pacific coast, and of the interior rivers of California, demand continual and vast supplies . . . . Russian America abounds in coal - just the very coal that the California steamers need, and the very material that will, in connection with the lumber supply, go far toward making it commercially great and valuable.

Concluding his discourse, the editor suggested that "any purchase that can supply the demand of the West Coast for wood and coal is a purchase that in a very little time will vindicate itself."[41] The Washington, D.C., National Intelligencer also saw Russian America as valuable for more than its fishing. The editor regarded the price as "a mere bagatelle", because "The ice trade of Sitka will be worth twice the money". Remarking later on the Senate's acceptance of the treaty, the Intelligencer stated that the lawmakers had recognized "that the resources of this region are immense, while coal and ores are known to exist, and . . . will be found in profusion."[42]

The idea of national expansion provided the American press with a second justification for the purchase of the Russian colonies. Editors

who adopted this viewpoint advocated the cession either for traditional reasons of manifest destiny, for the purpose of acquiring all continental lands north of the United States, or because they believed it eventually would lead to the annexation of British Columbia. Approximately fifty percent of those newspapers which supported the treaty used one or more of these explanations. Such motives were especially appealing in West Coast and Middle Atlantic States. Perhaps because cities such as San Francisco enjoyed close commercial ties with British Columbia, editors in Pacific Coast ports showed special interest in the idea that the purchase would hasten the absorption of that English colony. This possibility, however, also intrigued Eastern journalists, and the "hemming in" of British Columbia became a common theme in newspapers on both the Atlantic and Pacific Coasts.

The Sacramento Daily Union seemed almost gleeful as it described the predicament into which the treaty had placed British Columbia. In an article published on April 1, the editor suggested that British statesmen were alarmed about the cession because it "puts the Yankee on the flank of the . . . valuable territory of British Columbia, and gives them a geographical argument of great potency for the acquisition of that province." Americans loved the idea of "contiguity of empire," the Union explained, and it asked "How long will they tolerate the intervention of five hundred miles of British territory between the northern line of Washington and the extreme limit of the newly purchased land?" To make matters worse for England, the Union continued, there were a number of "influential persons" living in British Columbia who would prefer annexation to the United States. On April 2, the Union discussed the possible fate of the British colony again, stating that the Government of Great Britain could:

> read in this Russian treaty the fate of British Columbia and Vancouver Island. . . . The British colonies will be placed between two fires . . . Outflanking them all by planting the American flag in Russian America, as intended by our Government in the treaty just concluded, we get them in a position where they must gravitate to us, if peace prevail, or fall an easy prey in time of war.[43]

The San Francisco Bulletin also saw a chance to obtain British Columbia as a result of the treaty. The acquisition of Russian America, the Bulletin observed, had placed the English colony in a girdled position which would provide Great Britain with "a motive to cede that territory". "The British possessions on the Pacific", the editor explained, "will be a useless load, an indefensible point by which England's honor may be wounded", because an American force could seize it easily during a war. New Westminster could be taken, the Bulletin boasted, "as soon after the first shot has been fired . . . as we can spare a company of volunteers." "It is only a matter of time", the editor concluded; "Vancouver Island and British Columbia must belong to the United States sooner or later."[44] San Francisco's Alta California also predicted that the purchase of Russian America had doomed England's hold on British Columbia, arguing that "in case of war with the United States she would inevitably lose" her colony, which in addition would deprive "the new Canadian 'Kingdom'" of access to the Pacific.[45] Even the Daily Dramatic Chronicle, a San Francisco journal devoted to the arts and theatre, found the question of the future of British Columbia sufficiently intriguing to comment on it editorially. "Our English friends won't like" the cession, the Chronicle observed, because "It will . . . place British Columbia in a rather awkward position - sandwiched in between Washington Territory and the new acquisition". Nevertheless, concluded the Chronicle, when this British colony was ready, "Uncle Sam" would "doubtless be ready to adopt them, as he had so many other helpless orphans".[46]

In areas of the West Coast beyond California, newspapers also hailed the purchase of Russian America as a desirable step in the expansion of the United States. In portland, the Oregonian declared that it was "the most valuable acquisition of territory . . . since the cession of California", and the editor gloated that "British Columbia is now squeezed between two portions of our territory and may soon desire the abrogation of the treaty of 1846."[47] A Seattle journal, the Puget Sound Gazette, approved the cession as "a step towards the fulfillment of the prediction" that someday "the entire Continent of America shall be included within the boundaries of the United States".[48] A principal Mormon paper, the Salt Lake Telegraph, the "organ of Brigham Young" according to the San Francisco Bulletin, also welcomed the new American expansion. The editor explained that "We are among those sanguine individuals who expect the day to come when this whole continent of North America . . . will rejoice in one general government, . . . Mexico and Canada, as well as Russian America".[49]

A number of Mid-West newspapers approved the acquisition of the Russian colonies out of expansionist considerations and some clearly recognized its implications for British Columbia. The St. Louis Times, on April 10, published a long article discussing the necessity of obtaining that British colony now that the United States had annexed Russian America. One result of the Russian treaty, the Times predicted, "will be the acquisition . . . of that portion of British America lying on the Pacific ocean, . . . The fact is, we must have it, cost what it will".[50] The Chicago Evening Journal viewed the situation similarly, suggesting that "The effect of this cession will . . . be to hasten the time when British Columbia will become a part of the United States".[51] In its comments on the purchase, the Chicago Tribune asserted that the cession had locked Great Britain out of the Pacific, thus dooming her territory there to eventual American

annexation.

> The cession by Russia of her possessions determines the fate of the whole. It decides that the Pacific, as the Atlantic coast of this continent, must be under the same flag, and that European occupation shall never extend beyond its present limits, and that, obeying the laws of destiny, progress and freedom, they must eventually and rapidly pass into the control of the one great central American power.[52]

The Detroit Free Press, which originally opposed the treaty but shifted later to support, reluctantly admitted seeing in the purchase "a counter move to the new British North American Confederacy",[53] but the Cincinnati Commercial exuberantly took an expansionist stand on the acquisition, stating that:

> The Boundaries of the Great Republic will be enlarged till they take in the entire continent. That is manifest destiny. One after another of the outlying remnants will be absorbed and all will be connected and bound together by the iron bands of trade and commerce into a compact whole.[54]

New England journalists showed little interest in the expansionist aspects of the purchase, and they confined their approving remarks to comments on the resources of Russian America. The Bangor, Maine, Daily Times ran counter to this trend, however, and its editor argued the need for adding to the cominions of the United States as a major reason for accepting the Russian treaty. "Our internal forces are tremendous", he explained. "There must be extension and our people will be happier with the fact that they own a million more square miles than before, and that they have an indisputable right of way to the North Pole."[55]

If newspapers in New England demonstrated slight concern for the importance of the acquisition as a necessary step in expansion, journals in the Middle Atlantic States made up for this indifference by registering a strong plea for support of the treaty based on the need for territorial extension. The Rochester Daily Democrat, for instance, ridiculed the idea

that the United States owned sufficient land. "We have enough for thirty-five millions of people", the Democrat admitted, "But at our rate of increase at the end of a quarter of a century we shall have seventy millions, and at the end of fifty years from now a hundred and fifty millions of people to provide for. . . . That population will want all the land they can get on this Continent."[56]

New York City newspapers quickly addressed themselves to the issue of expansion in the purchase. "We cannot consent", the New York Herald immediately warned in an article on March 31, "that our territory . . . shall be broken between Washington Territory and Russian America". When the United States completed the occupation of the Russian colonies, the editor advised, "it will be well for England if she is discreet enough to profit by the example of Russia and withdraw gracefully". On the following day, the editor stressed this theme again, stating that the cession was a hint to England that its best policy would "be to sell out and leave the Pacific seaboard from Mexico to Behring Strait in the unbroken possession of Brother Jonathan." Speaking more to the general issue of American expansionism, the Herald, on April 11, complemented the United States Government for:

> carrying out step by step the fiat of inevitable destiny which, in time, must give us the whole of the North American Continent . . . The progress and expanding power of a great, active and ambitious nation cannot be restrained, . . . Manifest destiny is not, evidently, an unmeaning expression as applied to this country.[57]

The immediate reaction of the New York Times to the acquisition of Russian America focused on the impact it would have on British Columbia. If the United States intended to extend its sway in North America, the Times observed, "there could be no more practical way of setting about it than by getting hold of a vast coast-line like this of Russian America,

which enclosed with an impassable wall a section of British territory".[58] In an editorial published on April 1, the New York World spoke on the same issue. "The purchase of the Russian territory renders it morally certain that we shall some day acquire", British Columbia, the editor declared, because the American people would never allow a gap to exist between our possessions for more than a short time. There would be no need to seize the English colony if the United States and Great Britain remained at peace, the World explained, but if war occured, "we shall of course take it." Until that time, the American Government could only offer to purchase the territory. The World viewed the purchase of the Russian colonies as a wise move, despite its lack of commercial value, because "It is an advancing step in that manifest destiny which is yet to give us British North America. When we shall have completed our coast-line on the Pacific," the editor advised his readers, "we shall have hemmed around and shut in from the sea nearly the whole British territory."[59] Even the New York Post, which basically opposed the treaty, pointed out, in an article on April 1, that "The purchase of the Russian Territory is a step towards the retrieval of" the blunder of the 1846 Oregon Treaty "by giving us the undisputed prominence on the American coast of the Pacific" and "by pushing it out of the power of England to extend her territory in that quarter."[60]

Philadelphia newspapers did not express much interest in expansion, seeing the value of the purchase of Russian America instead in other considerations. However, the United States Railroad and Mining Register, published in that city, urged acceptance of the treaty as a means of counter-balancing the new Dominion of Canada. The "acquisition of Russian America will vastly strengthen the United States on the Pacific Ocean frontier", the editor declared, because it would give the nation "harbors

and strongholds on both flanks of the embryo collasses which meditates the building of Montreal into rivalry with New York and Victoria into competition with San Francisco".[61] To the south, in Baltimore, the Sun immediately focused on the effect of the treaty on English possessions in North America. "If this treaty is ratified", the Sun explained in an editorial on April 1, "the British authorities will be sandwiched in British Columbia by the possessions of the United States on the north and south of them." This situation, the editor predicted in a later article, "will most probably prepare the negotiations for the acquisition of British Columbia".[62] Finally, the National Intelligencer of Washington speculated that this English colony might be "in the diplomatic market, . . . Probably it has been thought expedient to prepare the negotiations for the acquisition of British Columbia by the purchase of Russian America."[63]

The belief that control of the Russian possessions would commercially benefit the United States through increased trade was a third major reason that many newspapers urged their purchase. More than one third of the journals which approved the treaty favored this general idea, with most maintaining that occupation of the long Russian American littoral would give the United States dominance in the commerce of the Pacific Ocean and as well as along the Pacific Coast of North America. Many editors argued that the acquisition of the Russian colonies would increase trade with the Orient, especially China and Japan. Such a goal had been an American dream for decades. Finally, a few newspapers pointed out that the greatest commercial benefits of the purchase would accrue to the economy and people of the West Coast States. These potential advantages seem to have been recognized and approved by journalists across the United States; but as in the case of the expansionist argument, the commerce justification

appears to have been most popular on the West Coast and in the Middle Atlantic States. The reason for this may have been that editors in those areas expected the ports and economies of their states to reap the greatest rewards from a growth in Pacific trade.

As might be expected, the two major newspapers of San Francisco, the Alta California and the Bulletin, saw the commercial advantages for their city in the cession of Russian America. No port in the nation, certainly none on the West Coast, could expect to benefit more directly from the annexation of the Russian colonies than San Francisco. Military posts and civilian settlements which might be established in the new territory undoubtedly would be supplied mainly through that California city. Furthermore, in anticipation of the completion of the first transcontinental railroad, merchants could expect to be major beneficiaries of any increase in American trade in the Pacific or with the Orient which might travel across those rails.

The Alta California declared, on April 3, that the possession of Russian America would "give the United States nearly the whole coast line and place them in a very advantageous position in relation to the present and future of the Pacific trade." In an editorial two days later, the Alta spoke of the importance of the whaling and fishing resources "To the wealth and trade of San Francisco."[64] The Bulletin seemed particularly enthusiastic about the probable effect of the purchase on California's leading port. "One of the first advantages that San Francisco will gain", the editor wrote, "Is the sole right to the cod-fisheries on the south of the Alaska peninsula and the Aleutian Islands." In addition, the Alta asserted that "the cession must make San Francisco the headquarters of the Pacific fur trade."[65]

To the north, papers in Oregon and in Washington Territory also

discussed the importance of the purchase to American commerce. The Oregonian stated that the cession would "confer on our people and our commerce very great advantages". In a later article, this paper published statistics on the value of exports and imports between San Francisco and the Russian colonies during the years 1864-1866, as evidence of the immediate commercial benefits of the treaty.[66] In Seattle, the Puget Sound Weekly Gazette suggested that if one considered the value of the resources of the new territory and "its importance as affecting our commerce with the Asiatic coast," the significance of the purchase was obvious.[67]

In the Mid-West, newspapers also showed interest in the possibilities of the Pacific Trade. The Chicago Evening Journal noted that commerce in that part of the world had not yet been much developed, but it suggested that such business was "destined to pass and perhaps rival, and probably surpass that of the Atlantic." The purchase of "Russian America", the editor speculated, "will probably help us materially in controling that commerce."[68] The Cincinnati Commercial was especially optimistic about the treaty and the future of the Pacific Ocean trade.

> In view of our growing commerce in the Pacific, the establishment of lines of steamers to run regularly between San Francisco, China, Japan and Australia, the increase of the coastwise trade, the completion of the Pacific Railroad and the Russo-American telegraph, . . . the acquisition of this vast possession is desirable, and seven millions of dollars is a small consideration for it.[69]

In a later article, the Commercial assured its readers that the Senate would accept the treaty despite the opposition of the New York press, because "California and the requirements of commerce on the Pacific are to be considered in this matter more than New York or any interest on the Atlantic sea-coast."[70]

New England journals generally ignored the idea that the purchase

would encourage the growth of America's Pacific Ocean trade. One newspaper in that section, however, the Portland Daily Eastern Argus, saw this possibility as the most persuasive justification for the treaty.

> It is only with reference to the future greatness of our country that we deem the acquisition of any considerable importance. In a few years the immense trade of China, Japan and India will find its best route to Europe across this continent. That trade, within twenty years, will be chiefly in the hands of American merchants. The harbors on the Pacific Shore will be its entrepots.

Portland, the Argus suggested, had an interest in this potential trade, in this route to India, a greater interest than any other city of comparable size. Consequently, Portland was in favor of the purchase of Russian America.[71]

The New York Times was quick to single out the commercial advantages of the purchase. In an editorial on April 1, the Times stated that "The main importance of this acquisition grows out of its bearing upon our future trade with Japan, China and the other countries of Eastern Asia." The editor was convinced that the day would soon come when the United States would dominate that commerce, "which has never yet failed to enrich the nations which enjoy it." He envisioned the Pacific Coast one day "studded with ports and cities" and the Pacific Ocean "covered with commercial fleets, exchanging between the Asiatic and American Continents the productions of each." It seemed inevitable, the Times concluded, "that all that commerce should be American."[72] In a later article, the Times claimed that the Aleutian Islands were particularly significant to the opening of an Oriental trade.[73]

To the south, in Philadelphia, the Inquirer proposed that the Aleutians and the Alaskan Peninsula "might become very useful to any power having naval interests in the Pacific," and that no nation had "as many reasons for desiring control of that ocean as the United States."[74] The National

Intelligencer of Washington, D.C., suggested to its readers that the people of the Pacific Coast were especially interested in the cession of the Russian colonies and that those wishes should receive much consideration by the Senate.[75] But the National Republican wasted no editorial space asking politely for careful deliberations, rather its editor demanded the acceptance of the treaty immediately for reasons of commerce and sheer expansionist exuberance.

> We want it for the purpose of being where we can shake hands with a friendly power across the Straits. We want it as a broad and unencumbered base of a trade with Japan and China, now growing up with rapidity, . . . We want it for the East as well as for the West. We want to fill out and perfect our Contintal Republic. And we want it for a hundred other reasons which it is not necessary to set forth here. And we want it now.[76]

A fourth factor in the support given by the press to the purchase of Russian America can be defined as hostility to Great Britain. A long history of troubled Anglo-American relations and American suspicions regarding England created by these strains probably made enmity towards the British a safe position on which editors could base their approval of the treaty. Although expansionist justifications for the cession certainly implied antagonism to British interests in North America, especially those which applied to American designs on British Columbia, some newspapers, perhaps as many as twenty-five percent, specifically urged acceptance of the Russian territories as a means either to prevent the sale of the Czar's possessions to England or to injure British economic and political activities on this continent.

Although various newspapers across the nation urged the purchase as a means to frustrate Great Britain, West Coast journals seemed more interested in this motive than publications in any other part of the country. In an article published on April 1, the San Françisco Bulletin

predicted that the cession of the Russian colonies "would deal a fatal blow to British interests in the North Pacific by destroying almost the sole remaining export trade Vancouver Island has." The profits of the Hudson's Bay Company would be reduced, the Bulletin argued, "to the point that a continuation of their establishment on that island would be inadvisable.[77] The Alta California recognized that the purchase of Russian America posed a serious threat to British power on the North Pacific, and the editor was particularly concerned lest the Senate reject the treaty. The cession endangered the future of Canada and British Columbia, the Alta explained, and consequently "England would not hesitate an instant to give twice as much as" the United States had been asked to pay for the Russian possessions. "Moreover," the editor warned, "there is danger that if our Senate refuses to ratify the treaty, Russia will make overtures to England; and that they would accept there can be no doubt."[78] The Sacramento Daily Union agreed with this analysis, asserting, in an April 2 editorial, that "None can doubt that the British Government would gladly pay Russia twice seven millions to keep the territory out of American hands.[79] Although such fears seem to have been unfounded, because there appears to be little evidence that Russia would have offered its possessions to England or that Her Majesty's Government would have accepted the tender if made, a number of newspapers in the United States saw such a development as a distinct possibility. Finally, in the East, no journals spoke out forcefully on animosity towards Great Britain as a justification for the purchase of Russian America, but a few did mention the issue as a consideration.

A fifth and final argument employed by a few newspapers to advocate the acquisition of Russian America stressed the importance of the treaty as a means of continuing and strengthening the special and cordial

relationship between czarist Russia and the United States which extended back to the early years of the Republic. Many Americans remembered with particular gratitude the appearance of two Russian naval squadrons in New York and San Francisco in 1863. Northerners generally interpreted their arrival as a sign of support for the Union cause in the Civil War and a warning to Great Britain and France not to interfere.[80] Consequently, the cession by the Czar of his North American possessions to the United States was seen by many as a further indication of Russian friendship. Although many journals viewed the treaty in this manner and believed that it would reinforce the existing understanding between the two nations, few editors were so idealistic as to argue that the United States should accept these Polar lands as a reciprocal means of demonstrating our gratitude to Russia.

The Philadelphia Inquirer did not doubt the reality of a genuine, warm friendship between the United States and Russia. In an article published on April 11, the editor commented on a rumor that the Czar had been so anxious to abandon Russian America that he had been willing to give it to the American Government as a gift. The Inquirer advised that, were the report true, it would be unwise to accept because it would have obligated the United States to Russia; however, the editor never questioned the idea that such a magnanimous gesture by the Czar would be unthinkable.[81] The Baltimore Sun admitted that political tensions in Europe may have induced the Emperor to cede his North American colonies, but it suggested also that the sale was "the fruit, in part, of the extremely friendly relations which have been maintained between our own and the government of the Czar."[82] Both the San Francisco Bulletin and the Chicago Tribune agreed with this view, but the latter was more effusive in its description of the Russian action, asserting that the treaty would:

> give new vigor to the friendship which has hitherto made the two nations allies under all circumstances. The United States has never had a friend among the nations of Europe save Russia. In peace and in war, in prosperity and distress Russia has confronted the nations of the world as the devoted friend of the United States. That friendship she has made practical by her magnificent cession of her vast domain to the United States.[83]

The Philadelphia U.S. Railroad and Mining Register also saw the purchase as a new indication of that special relationship existing between the Russian autocracy and the American democracy. "Every American has born in him a sympathy and affection for Russia; and these instilations of Divine Providence the Russian reciprocates", the editor exaggerated. He assured his readers that "Never was international friendship deeper than between America and Russia." In a remarkable bit of prophecy, the Register stated that both peoples believed that Washington and St. Petersburg were destined to become "the political poles of the earth".[84] The New York Herald, finally, did not doubt that England would have bought Russian America if the Czar had offered his possessions to the British Government, but the editor seemed certain that Russia had sold its territory with its naval advantages "rather to strengthen a friend than an enemy". The cession was conceived with special considerations in mind, the Herald suggested. "Russia, in her friendship for this country, from a desire to contribute to its progress and power, and for the purpose of perpetuating intimate relations with it, ceded these vast possessions for an insignificant sum." In an article published on April 29, the Herald seemed pleased that the treaty had removed Russia from the continent and thus from any possibility for future conflicts between the two great nations. "Russia and the United States must ever be friendly," its editor advised, "the Colossi having neither territorial nor maritime jealousies to excite the one against the other. The interest of both

demand that they should go hand in hand in their march to empire.[85]

III

While a large plurality of the American press supported the purchase of Russian America, a sizeable minority of the newspaper community did oppose its acquisition. Approximately one third of the journals surveyed for this study adopted the latter position. Perhaps because this view was presented so forcefully by Horace Greeley in his vituperous editorials in the New York Tribune and because opponents often employed colorful and exaggerated terminology to describe the Russian possessions, the negative press reaction to the treaty eventually came to be remembered better and to be accepted as the response of the majority of the American newspaper community. However, at no time during the month of April, 1867, did criticism of the cession represent the dominant sentiment of the press.

Opposents of the purchase generally favored one or more of the four main points in their editorials calling for Senate rejection of the treaty. In descending order of importance they were: (1) the belief that the Russian colonies were valueless; (2) the contention that the price for these lands was too high and that future control of that area would entail continuing large outlays of government revenues with no immediate hope for compensating financial returns; (3) anti-expansionism; and (4) political opposition to and hatred for the Johnson Administration and Secretary of State Seward in particular. The first of these motives proved to be the most commonly used. Approximately seventy-five percent of the editors who decried the acquisition cited the presumed worthlessness of the territory as a primary reason for their rejection of the agreement, while the next two criticisms both were discussed by slightly less than

one half of these newspapers.

In arguing that the Russian possessions in North America were essentially barren and useless, editors probably chose their most effective and believable means of attack. The lack of concrete information regarding the resources of Russian America was substantial, and it was credible to assert that the region possessed nothing which would be of real value to the United States. If the Russian colonies did contain the abundant riches claimed by advocates of the cession, why, some opponents asked, would Czar Alexander so willingly abandon such potential wealth at such a minimum price? The answer, it seemed, was simple. The Russian lands had no commercial value and Russia had sold to the United States a worthless wilderness of ice and snow.

The New York Tribune of Horace Greeley led all the hostile journals in the volume and venom of its assaults on the purchase of Russian America, and several of its articles on the subject focused on the question of the value of the new acquisition. In an editorial on April 8, Greeley referred to the lands as "useless", and he suggested that "the higher the value Mr. Seward places upon the Russian American desert, the greater the absurdity of the Russian sale." Recalling that claims had been made for immense fisheries, invaluable timber, and gold and silver mines, Greeley confided that he expected "to hear that orange trees as well as grain fields will flourish in the delightful climate." But if the territory was so rich in resources, the Tribune asked, "Why . . . does the Czar want to sell?" This treaty was impolitic, Greeley concluded. "We are opposed to cheating our good friend the Czar. If Russian America is worth anything, it must be worth as much to him, for fish are fish, timber is timber, ice is ice, all the world over."[86] The following day, the Tribune continued to ridicule the reports of abundant riches waiting to be

exploited by agressive Americans.

> On paper there is no place like Russian America. The climate is delicious and quite warm in winter; yet the ice fields are inexhaustable . . .Wheat, Seals, Barley, White Bears, Turnips, Icebergs, Whales and Gold Mines, are found as far north as the sixtieth degree. All the luxuries and necessities of life are grouped together . . . we find the Polar bear reclining among the roses, barley ripening on icebergs, grass of luxuriant growth over which Esquimaux shuffle with snowshoes, and Winter everywhere sleeping in the lap of May.[87]

Finally, on April 11, Greeley partially abandoned his sarcasm and struck a more practical note of criticism. Most of the territory the Senate had accepted, the Tribune argued, was "waste" land, "and no energy of the American people" would make "mining speculations in the sixtieth degree north latitude profitable, or . . . reclaim wildernesses which border on the Arctic Ocean. We may make a treaty with Russia", Greeley conceded, "but we cannot make a treaty with the North Wind or the Snow King."[88]

The Tribune was not the only New York newspaper to question the value of the Russian territory in North America, although none were as colorful in their denunciations. The New York Post, on April 8, stated its belief that the country had no need for "such a barren and distant spot", which the editor described as "an utterly worthless strip of ice-bound desert".[89] The Sun, however, merely noted that Russian America was of "little consequence."[90]

Several New England journals opposed the treaty because they believed the Russian colonies to be unimportant to the United States. The Worcester, Massachussetts, Spy, for instance, attacked three basic claims made by advocates of the treaty. "The chief part of these considerations is fanciful", the editor asserted. The coast of Russian America was not on the trade route to the Orient, the fur resources were disappearing, and there was no strategic reason to possess a naval station or military post in that area of the world.[91]

Southern newspapers generally seemed indifferent to the purchase of Russian America. Of the fifteen publications from that section consulted for this study, none took no discernable position on the subject. A few did not mention the cession at all, while the others merely printed dispatches from Washington and an occasional letter commenting on the treaty. Six journals clearly opposed the purchase, and none openly supported it. Although the present examination of the press response in the South is not comprehensive, it does seem reasonable to conclude, based on this evidence, that there was little interest in or advocacy for the acquisition in that section.[92]

Among those Southern papers who rejected the cession several discussed the value of Russian America. The Louisville (Kentucky) Daily Democrat assessed the advantages of the new territory as "ice, white bears, volcanoes and, perhaps, a whaling port."[93] The San Antonio (Texas) Daily Express described the land being purchased as "lying for the most part amid arctic snows", and concluded that "The nation needs its money too much to buy a snow-ball, even if it does contain a few codfish and beaver skins."[94] A French language journal in New Orleans, La Tribune de la Nouvelle- Orleans, saw the sale of the area by Russia as an indication of its real value, because "evidently useless to the Russians, it can not be of very great profit for the Americans."[95]

Opposition to the acquisition among the members of the press probably was strongest in the American Mid-West. Of the nineteen newspapers from that area examined for this study, eight announced against the treaty and only seven supported it. All in the group which rejected the cession agreed in declaring the Russian territory nearly worthless. The Indianapolis Daily Journal, for instance, described the purchase as "a tract of ice" which would be as valuable to the United States as ownership

of "vast tracts in the moon." The editor saw no chance that Russian America would produce revenue "in any form".[96] The Chicago Republican believed the "rigorous climate" promised "little or nothing in an agricultural view", although it did admit the fisheries would be valuable to the Pacific States.[97] The Milwaukee Daily Sentinel was convinced the region was useless and made numerous references to the chilly weather. The editor hoped that all the Senators who voted for the acquisition would be "furnished with a horse-blanket and a foot-stove each, and sent out as the first colony."[98] In Missouri, the St. Joseph Daily Morning Herald saw little to recommend the Russian territory.

> The country itself can never be a populous one, and consequently can not be a commercial one. The entire tract is an isolated one . . . We would never build forts or navy yards there. No coal fields are to be found there.[99]

However, after further reflection and new information, the Herald admitted that reports made it evident that "the utility of Russian-America has been underestimated."[100]

Very few newspapers in the Far West region of the country openly opposed the acquisition of the Russian colonies. Only one of those researched for this study did so, although others undoubtedly viewed the matter similarly. Most journals in the West, including all the major ones, favored the cession enthusiastically, while a few with largely local interests ignored the question. One which denounced the purchase based its position on the issue of the presumed value of the Russian colonies. The Montana Post of Virginia City described the territory as "useless" because it was a "region of icebergs and Esquimaux".[101]

A second point on which newspapers based their opposition to the acquisition of the Russian colonies was their belief that the purchase price exceeded the real value of Russian America and that the subsequent

cost of occupying, maintaining, governing and defending the territory would make the price exorbitant and place a financial burden on the United States for an indefinate span of years. Nearly fifty percent of the publications which rejected the treaty addressed this issue. The Worcester (Mass.) Spy, for instance, charged that "the acquisition will bring neither wealth, people, nor power; but on the contrary will be a drain upon the treasury, in compelling the support of a complicated government establishment at a vast distance from the only people concerned in its support."[102]

The New York Tribune immediately focused on the future costs which occupation of Russian America would entail. In an editorial published on April 1, Greeley wrote:

> The tendency of Republics is to expand beyond the limit of economical control. To the already vast domain embraced within our jurisdiction, it is proposed to add a territory sparsely inhabited by Indians and traders. This will involve the establishing at once of a Territorial Government, the building of forts, arsenals, Government offices, the employment of troops and ships of war, and the paying of a legion of public officials, good mainly for drawing their salaries. Nobody will pretend that for many years this territory will begin to pay expenses. It is to cost us Seven Millions of Dollars in hard cash . . . It is a luxury we are in no condition to afford.[103]

A Southwestern newspaper, the San Antonio (Texas) Daily Express viewed the matter similarly, describing the purchase as a "monstrous extravagance". "It is not the seven millions of dollars it costs to make the treaty good", the editor wrote, "but the millions it will cost to take care of it until some remote period, ages hence, it will be needed for emigrating our overcrowded communities." It was a poor location on which to spend such funds, the Express argued. It would have been wiser to use those monies on boring artesian wells on the prairies, helping the railroads or protecting the frontier against the Indians.[104] This self-interest can also be discerned in a West Coast journal, the Red Bluff (California) Independent, which argued that the money would have been wisely invested

if it had been used to pay the passage of men and women to the West to settle and develop the lands already owned by the United States. The editor of the Independent calculated that seven millions spent on such a project, using the New York to San Francisco route via Panama, at the estimated fare of eighty dollars for second class rates, would have permitted the American Government to deposit 87,500 souls on the Pacific Coast. The West Coast needed population, the Independent stated, not "Seward's 'big thing on ice'".[105]

The Daily Commercial of Wilmington, Delaware, was also concerned about the cost of the cession but for a different and more calculating reason. Its editor had no special project upon which he prefered to have these funds used, but he suggested that it was foolish and wasteful to pay a high price for lands which the United States inevitably would acquire more cheaply or at no cost at all.

> If this were our last chance and the lowest offer likely to be made, we might urge its acceptance, but with our excellent prospect of getting it for nothing when we may need it, surely the better plan is to apply our seven millions to objects more urgent.[106]

Most of the Mid-Western newspaper opponents of the treaty discussed the cost problem. The Cincinnati Daily Gazette, which carefully refuted all the arguments used by advocates of the purchase, rested its basic objections to the cession on the idea that the territory was not worth seven million dollars. Russian America was not worth defending; the country did not require a naval depot there; the nation did not lack coastline on the Pacific; seven millions was too much to spend merely to displease England and also too much only to demonstrate our warm regard for Russia. "We fail to see anything that we are to get for our seven millions," the Gazette explained. But it was the future costs of the territory which particularly worried the editor, because:

> we do see where we shall at once begin to multiply this investment, to continue through all time. Indeed the chief recommendations given by the Administration for this acquisition, are of things that only involve the expenditure of money without returns. Unless they can offer something better than they have presented, we shall be unable to see the brilliancy of this strategic achievement.[107]

In Indianapolis, the Daily Journal argued that the United States could not afford to pay the required price for Russian America. "No revenue, in any form" was seen as coming from those lands, and "spiting England at the expense of $7,000,000" was considered foolishness. "The money", the editor wrote, "can be used to better advantage. And Whether it can or not," the Journal continued, "we are enough in debt to make it prudent not to raise such a sum at all."[108] The Daily Sentinel of Milwaukee also viewed the cost of the Russian territory as excessive, because the editor did not believe that the revenues of the area would ever repay the investment. He generously calculated that the net earnings of the producing population of Russian America equaled $600,000 per annum based on 30,000 people at $20 each. Taxes would be exceedingly onerous, the Sentinel suggested, if fifty percent of those earnings or $300,000 were realized by the Government. However, the interest on $7,000,000 at six percent was $420,000 annually, and the total cost each year would equal or exceed the $600,000 income of the territory if its defense involved an expense of merely $180,000 per annum. Actually, the Sentinel concluded, "If we make the experiment we shall probably find it costing us fully a million a year."[109] In a later article, the Sentinel revised its estimates, and the editor now calculated that "Doolittle Territory is going to cost us $800,000 a year by way of interest on the original investment, and four or five millions more for defense".[110] The Daily Herald of St. Joseph, Missouri, agreed with this assumption concerning the future costs for the Government which the acquisition would entail. "We can not possibly

hold that tract without great expense and increased governmental duties", the Herald asserted. "In war and peace we must defend it, and protect every inhabitant."[111]

The third major issue which press opponents of the treaty urged upon their readers can be defined simply as anti-expansionism or the contention that the United States already possessed enough land for its population for many years to come. There was nothing original about this argument, for it had been used by the enemies of every territorial addition which had been made by the country since independence. However, this thesis applied to the purchase of Russian America might have seemed to have a better chance of acceptance than it had enjoyed in earlier episodes of national expansion, because it was more difficult to demonstrate that the country required the Russian lands for its people or any other pressing reason. But this obviously made little difference to the American public or their Congressmen, for this position was no more persuasive than any other in convincing them to reject the treaty.

New England opponents of the purchase seemed especially concerned about the implications of this new American expansion which they viewed as unnecessary. The Portland (Maine) Transcript regretted the cession, observing that the "alacrity with which the Senate ratified the treaty . . . proves that the doctrine of 'manifest destiny' still exerts a controlling influence upon the minds of our statesmen."[112] The Providence (Rhode Island) Journal, which originally had approved the acquisition, expressed some reservations on the subject in an article printed on April 20.

> Our greed for territory is inordinate. We have already more than we can use, more than we can people, and vastly more than cultivate and develop. We are always in danger of confusing BIGNESS with greatness, as if a nation was rich or

> strong, or wise or prosperous, according to its territorial magniturde. Great territory is as often a source of weakness as of strength. But besides all this, such an expansion brings a fearful strain on our institutions.[113]

Hartford's Conneticut Courant feared the effect which the annexation would have on the United States, because, the editor explained, it "changes the whole theory of our government by engrafting upon it a colonial system, and forms a precedent full of danger for our institutions." The territory bought from Russia would never become a state, the Courant assured its readers, but would "always remain a province - a thing unknown to our history."[114] Although the editor of the Courant correctly recognized that the annexation of large, non-contiguous Russian American represented a departure for the United States, his understanding of the American political structure was not as astute. As Earl Pomeroy has shown in a study on American territorial government, the relationship between the federal government in Washington and the territories was indeed a colonial system.[115]

The New York Tribune also attacked the treaty on the basis of anti-expansionism. "We have more territory than we want," Horace Greeley wrote, as proved by the nation already owning "hundreds of millions of acres which the end of the century will not see tilled." The country had no use for the Russian lands, Greeley argued. Arizona and New Mexico were examples of areas recently acquired which had proved valueless, and Russian America, being more remote than those desert wastes, would be still more costly to own and worthless. The Tribune also expressed outrage that the Russian colonies might be purchased as a means of our maneuvering Great Britain. Such an idea, Greeley stated, "ought to condemn the whole project. We have no occasion to be dealing in impertinences. If we want a quarrel with that power, we can have it any day

without going to the North Pacific for a pretext." Finally, the Tribune fretted that the treaty signified a new relationship between Russia and the United States, one contrary to American traditions and the nation's best interests. "We cherish a hearty good will toward Russia," Greeley admitted, "but we are utterly opposed to being drawn into any sort of alliance with her other than commercial and peaceful. This treaty," he warned, "will prove a dangerous precedent and a stimulus to further entanglements."[116] Another New York journal, the Sun, put the expansion issue more simply, however, merely asking "Have we not already more territory than we can develop within the next hundred years?"[117]

In the South, several newspapers discussed the expansion issue in their editorials attacking the purchase of the Russian colonies. The Charleston Mercury, for instance, in an article printed on April 19, charged that this new acquisition would weaken the country because it would expand the empire beyond its limits that could be administered effectively by the central government at Washington. Furthermore, the Mercury was certain that Russian America would never know freedom while under the despotism of Republican leaders.[118] In Augusta, Georgia, The Daily Press could see no reason for obtaining the Russian territory when so much land was already available in the United States.[119] In a reference to the reconstruction situation in the neighboring states, the Louisville (Kentucky) Daily Democrat observed that it was "comfortable to see the ease with which we annex countries that never belonged to us, compared with the difficulty we have in uniting again a dissolved Union."[120] The San Antonio Daily Express, finally, also argued that the United States had enough land to satisfy the needs of its people.

> When we think of the thinly settled condition of the Southern states, the vast amount of room in the great West, and

> the splended domain of lands lying in virgin solitude even in this state, the purchase of Russian snow-banks seems a piece of extravagance.[121]

Mid-Westerner editors did not seem to be as concerned about the issue of expansion as had Eastern and Southern journalists. Perhaps closer proximity to the frontier and a more recent pioneer past gave them greater tolerance for the concept of national growth even if they did not approve of this particular act of expansion for other reasons. Nevertheless, some newspapers in the area did mention the issue. The Chicago Republican noted that "The greed for territory is so strong in the American mind that it would be almost insane to expect the temptation of such an acquisition . . . to be successfully resisted."[122] The Milwaukee Daily Sentinel mused that perhaps the purchase had been arranged because "Seward was envious of John Bull, who boasts an empire on which the sun never sets, and wished Brother Jonathan to be able to boast a republic in which the ice never melts."[123] In St. Joseph, Missouri, the Daily Herald stated its opinion that the new expansion was unwise, because:

> As at present advised . . . we believe it is our policy to concentrate, solidify our powers, develop our resources, and permit emigration to overflow our present gigantic area, before seeking new kingdoms, inviting greater responsibilities, and perhaps exciting the apprehensions of foreign powers.[124]

A fourth and final reason for opposing the purchase of Russian America which proved important to some editors can be defined as antagonism to the Johnson Administration. Many newspapers ridiculed the cession and their comments may have indicated strong hostility to Seward and the President, but only a few journals made an issue of the connection between the treaty and the men who sponsored it. In general, the acquisition of Russian America did not openly become a partisan matter either in the Senate or the American press. Some editors, however, led not surprisingly by Horace Greeley, could not resist striking at the Johnson Administration

by criticizing the purchase of the Russian colonies.

On April 1, the New York Tribune launched its diatribes against the treaty by accusing the President and Seward of "various attempts to cover up . . . failures at home by a stroke of foreign policy." But these had all failed miserably, Greeley rejoiced. Nevertheless, Seward apparently had not been deterred, for now he had presented the country with a treaty for the acquisition of Russian America. "The collapse of the President's home policy is so total and so disastrous", the Tribune concluded from this, "that attention must be diverted elsewhere at any cost. Russian America is a good way off and so a good place on which to fix the public eye."[125] In an editorial published on April 9, Greeley continued his attacks on Seward and especially his lobbying for the treaty, noting that "Mr. Seward's geographical discoveries continue to be telegraphed over the country, and every man who has known another man who has ever been in Russian America is produced to give a description of the country." If one were to believe the nonsense provided to the press by the Secretary of State, the Tribune advised, it would not be called:

> Russian America, but Utopia. On paper it is a wonderful country; on ice it is what is generally called a big thing.
>
> But the rose colors in which Mr. Seward drapes his telegrams will fade . . . The poor settler who goes to Sitka . . . . will find that his fields are ice fields, and need to be cultivated with snow plows. We have heard of people going to Russian America, but never heard of anybody staying there, except those who were frozen in the snow, nor is it probable that the enthusiasm of the Secretary of State will result in his immigration.[126]

The Cincinnati Daily Gazette interpreted the cession similarly to the views of the Tribune. On April 4, the Gazette observed that:

> For a long time JOHNSON and SEWARD have been searching for some stroke of foreign policy which would cover their disgrace at home. At length the treaty for the purchase of Russian-America is offered as the veritable achievement which is to cover their reign with a blaze of glory.[127]

In San Antonio, Texas, the Daily Express also saw the cession as an evasion of the more important problems of the nation. "In the purchase of a slice of Russia lying for the most part amid arctic snows," the editor remarked, "it seems Mr. Seward and the President expect to accomplish a sort of Napoleonic ruse; directing the eyes of the people a long way off from their palpable short-comings."[128] However, as in the case of the other press objections to the acquisition of Russian America, ridicule and charges of political obfustication had no appreciable effect on the Senate nor apparently on the American people. If the criticisms of the newspaper community were at all valid and their warnings timely, the Senate did not seem interested, if they even heard them at all.

IV

Among the myths concerning the purchase of Russian America which had gained credibility by the close of the nineteenth century was the belief that the American press and people had almost universally opposed the treaty. This misconception has stubbornly persisted until the present and had appeared repeatedly in major studies and texts,[129] despite two works by Virginia Hancock Reid and Richard E. Welch, jr., which have proved this view of editorial reactions to be inaccurate. However, these reassessments have themselves required reavaluation because they were based on samples that were too limited to be representative of the newspaper community in 1867. The current study, drawn from a broader geographic spectrum, may come closer than any previous attempt to revealing the attitude of the American press on the acquisition of the Russian colonies. It is based on a survey of seventy-six newspapers from twenty-nine states, the District of Columbia and two territories. It represents all sections

of the country except the Rocky Mt. region, and includes eleven publications from New England, seventeen from the Middle Atlantic States south to and including Washington, D.C., fifteen journals in the South, nineteen from the Mid-West, and fourteen from the Far West.[130]

From the evidence gathered for this study, it is possible to draw three conclusions regarding the press response to the purchase of Russian America. First, it is clear that American newspapers neither decisively supported nor strongly opposed the treaty. Instead, this survey of seventy-six journals shows that thirty-two (42%) advocated the cession, twenty-four (31%) opposed it, and twenty (26%) remained neutral or ignored the issue. Because it was difficult to determine the viewpoint of a few papers, these statistics are not suggested as being precise. More research might alter these findings slightly. It might be helpful to examine publications from the Western territories, the eight scattered states not covered in this study and the six which received scant attention. However, such a study would not be likely to change the present results significantly. Even if one conceded that further evidence would prove the level of press support to have been somewhat higher, the most generous conclusion which is indicated by the current sample still seems to be that only a bare majority of the newspaper community, if indeed that many, approved the purchase of Russian America. Even if one eliminated from consideration those publications which expressed no opinion on the subject, it appears that only about fifty-seven percent of those which did adopt an editorial position on the issue supported Seward's acquisition. Therefore, it seems clear that the American press as a group did not take a strong stand for or against the treaty. Nevertheless, a favorable reaction to the cession certainly was the most popular one in comparison to the other two options, opposition and no opinion.

A second conclusion indicated by the present study is that geographic location exercise a decisive influence on the position towards the treaty taken by newspapers in at least two sections of the country. In the Far West, if one includes only the thirteen journals from Navada, California, Oregon, and Washington territory, support for the purchase was sixty-one percent of the total and one hundred percent of those which announced an editorial stand on the question. In the South, where this survey covered fifteen newspapers, not a single publication approved the cession, and sixty percent took no specific position. Further research certainly might reveal editors on the Pacific Coast who opposed the acquisition, and it would find publications in the South who approved it. The Welch study, despite its faulty criteria for judgement in many cases, has proved this latter statement to be true. Nevertheless, additional evidence would not be likely to alter the basic conclusion that those West Coast newspapers which announced an editorial policy on the purchase of Russian America overwhelmingly favored it, and that Southern journalists either strongly disapproved the cession or even more decidedly ignored it.

There are probably several reasons for the particular reactions of editors in these two sections of the country. In the Far West, the purchase was urged especially to acquire the resources of Russian America, for the heightened opportunity to obtain British Columbia and from general interest in expansion. These were understandable concerns for citizens who lived on or near the Pacific Coast. They could be expected to know more about the real value of the Russian colonies and to anticipate that they would benefit commercially from their addition to the national domain. Trade with the Russian colonies through San Francisco and Portland had revealed to the West Coast residents something of the potential of that region. The resources of British Columbia were well known and

many Americans lived there also. Consequently, it would be natural for residents of the Pacific States to be interested in seeing the United States eventually annex that English colony. Finally, as recent products of American expansionism themselves, people in the Far West generally could be expected to be favorable to the idea of manifest destiny. In fact, it is difficult to conceive of any important consideration which would have persuaded many citizens on the West Coast to oppose the purchase of Russian America, for the potential benefits of the acquisition for them must have far outweighed whatever possible negative results might have been perceived.

In the South, the opposite forces from those at work in the Far West seem to have been present: remoteness, lack of any obvious commercial interest, and little inherent predisposition for expansionism. No section of the country was further from the new possession than the South, and few people in that war revaged area could expect to derive much financial benefit from its acquisition. With its economy in ruins, its slave system outlawed, its old motives for territorial extension gone, the South might naturally have less interest in manifest destiny than other sections, especially when such expansion came in a location so far removed. The fact that opposition views in the South focused on the belief that Russian America was valueless and that further expansion of the nation was unwise seems to support these conclusions. Finally, Southerners could be forgiven for being more concerned about the problems of their own area and the Reconstruction policies of the central government than with the addition of distant territories to the United States. It must have seemed an extravagance to many in the South that the administration in Washington would spend millions to acquire land of dubious value when such funds were needed more desparately in their own section

for rebuilding and development.

As for the newspapers across the nation, but especially those in the South and the Far West, which ignored the purchase, there were probably two basic reasons. Twenty journals took no stated position on the treaty. Of these, thirteen were daily publications, but nine of them were located in the South, while seven were printed weekly, five of them being in the Far West. Consequently, it can be assumed that general disinterest in the cession in the South governed the lack of response found among Southern newspapers, while the local nature and concerns of those five Western journals may provide the explanation of their indifference to the issue.

The third and final conclusion that can be derived from this study is that the reasons used by the press to justify the purchase and the arguments advanced in opposition to it were similar to those heard in the Senate of the United States during their debates on the treaty on April 8 and 9, 1867, and in the Committee on Foreign Relations earlier.

There were, however, some differences in emphasis. Editors who supported the cession, for instance, stressed the resource value of the Russian possessions and especially the fisheries, the possibility of acquiring British Columbia, and manifest destiny sentiments as the most important points favoring the treaty. The Senate, on the other hand, seemed to emphasize the political and economic interests of the West Coast primarily, and they did not place much faith in reports of latent wealth in Russian America, although they did display some interest in the fisheries. They may not have specifically mentioned the issue of British Columbia, but it clearly lay beneath the surface of debate. But on the matter of expansion and manifest destiny, both the press and the Senate seemed to concur enthusiastically.

There is little reason to believe that the newspaper community influenced the Senate on these issues and no possibility that the reverse was true. Sufficient time had not elapsed between the announcement of the treaty and its acceptance by the Senate for the opinion of the press to have been heard in Washington except for the initial reactions of papers in major Eastern cities. Few Senators were likely to be persuaded by such fragmentary reports to vote for something which they did not fundamentally favor in any case. Consequently, it seems possible to conclude that a degree of unanimity existed between the press and the Senate on the purchase of Russian America. Further, it appears that expansionism was the most common factor. Perhaps this suggests that the American interest in manifest destiny had not been dulled by the Civil War, as was once argued by historians, but was in fact still strong and assertive, as Walter LaFaber has more recently suggested, provided expansion could be carried out with minimal cost and little risk of international complications. In that respect, the purchase of Russian America for $7,200,000, an acquisition which no other nation could fairly oppose, was a bargain indeed. For this reason, as well as others, the Senate and the American press approved its acquisition.

Chapter IV

FOOTNOTES

[1]There have been two previous investigations of the American press reaction to the purchase: Virginia Hancock Reid, The Purchase of Alaska: Contemporary Opinion, (Long Beach, California: Press-Telegram Printers, 1940); and Richard E. Welch, Jr., "American Public Opinion and the Purchase of Russian America", American Slavic and East European Review, XVII (December, 1958) pp. 481-494. Neither of these examinations of the question, however, has really been adequate. Reid's analysis was based on thirty-six newspapers, half of which represented the Pacific Coast. Welch's article, which considered forty-eight journals, concentrated too heavily on a few Eastern cities, such as Boston, New York, Philadelphia, and Washington, D.C., and the Southern port of New Orleans. These five cities accounted for twenty-five of the newspapers he researched.

Welch concluded that the old view held by historians, that the American press nearly all opposed the treaty, was not true. Second, he found that a majority of the press favored the purchase. Third, he determined that neither "Political allegiance or geographic location was usually decisive" in molding their opinion. Finally, he stated that the major reasons for press support were, in descending order of importance, economic benefits, expansion of power and dominion and the opportunity to acquire British Columbia, and friendship with Russia. (pp. 493-494).

The research on which the author's dissertation is based shows Welch to be wrong on points two and three, but to be correct on his first conclusion as well as in his designation of the main motives for press support, although there is little basis for his third reason. Welch's errors seem to stem from two basic causes: (1) an inadequate sample which barely mentions the West Coast, skims the Mid-West, and ignores major areas of the Northeast and South; and (2) a faulty assumption upon which he assigned a number of papers to the category of support. Welch concluded that if a newspaper published the favorable press releases eminating from Washington, D.C., this indicated approval of the treaty. Those are worthless criteria. Because information on Russian America was so limited, the national press depended heavily on the dispatches which originated in the capital for much of their material on the Russian colonies, for reports on the Senate's deliberations and letters commenting on the treaty. Much of this information was provided by the State Department, which made available only the most favorable descriptions of the new territory. For many newspapers, it was a choice of using these colored reports or having nothing on the subject to print. The New York Tribune published nearly all the letters and reports released by the State Department, but Horace Greeley, the editor, gave them little credance and he vociferously opposed the treaty. Therefore, it is a mistake to conclude that the mere publication of such material indicated anything significant when not accompanied by an editorial. The author has taken this position in the present study. He has assumed, in nearly all cases, that the failure of a newspaper to comment editorially on the purchase indicated either indifference to the issue or at least indecisiveness. Such journals have been placed in the category labeled No Opinion. See below, Table II.

Despite the weaknesses in the Welch article, it remains the best study in print, and it has been valuable as a means of measuring the results presented in this dissertation and for comments on and excerpts from fourteen newspapers not included in this study. A few of these papers will be mentioned when passages quoted by Welch are sufficient to determine if his designation of support or opposition is a proper one. In other cases, however, his conclusions on this point are worthless.

[2]For comment on these letters and a discussion of Seward's attempts to circulate them to the press, see Chapter Three, Section III.

[3]The question of what American scientists actually knew about Russian America at that time of the purchase has never been explored adequately. Newspapers and Senators used a variety of sources to gather information, but these authorities have never been examined and compared with current knowledge of Alaska to determine what Americans might have known in 1867 and how accurate that data might have been. This topic has proved to be beyond the scope of the current study, but its inclusion was originally contemplated.

[4]For the Roche article in its original form, see: Alfred R. Roche, A View of Russian America, in connection with the present war, (Montreal: J. Lovell, 1855). Extracts from Roche's work appeared in the Journal, Providence, Rhode Island; the Baltimore American and Commercial Advertiser; the Boston Evening Journal; and the Detroit Free Press.

[5]For the Bushnell letter see: Springfield Republican, Springfield, Massachusetts; Boston Evening Journal; National Republican, Washington, D.C.; and the Daily State Register, Des Moines, Iowa. It is not known what Bushnell's claim to speak with authority on Russian America might have been, but his opinion must have been important to some people if it was printed in at least four newspapers.

[6]Philadelphia Inquirer, April 2, 1867; New York Times, April 3 and 8, 1867, in dispatches from Washington, dated April 2 and 7, 1867; and Cincinnati Commercial, April 4 and 7, 1867, in dispatches dated April 3 and 6, 1867.

[7]The Daily Union, Sacramento, California, April 9, 1867. See also the issue of April 2, 1867.

[8]The Daily Alta California, San Francisco, California, April 3, 1867.

[9]San Francisco Bulletin, April 3, 1867.

[10]Detroit Free Press, April 6, 1867.

[11]New York Times, April 10, 1867.

[12]Ibid, April 1, 1867.

[13]New York Herald, April 1, 1867.

[14]New York World, April 2, 1867.

[15]San Francisco Alta California, March 31, 1867.

[16]St. Paul Pioneer, St. Paul, Minnesota, April 10, 1867.

[17]Daily National Intelligencer, Washington, D.C., April 5, 1867.

[18]New York Times, April 2, 1867.

[19]The Press, Philadelphia, Pennsylvannia, April 1, 1867.

[20]Rochester Daily Democrat, Rochester, New York, April 8, 1867.

[21]Cincinnati Commercial, April 9, 1867.

[22]New York Times, April 11, 1867.

[23]The Alta California, San Francisco, April 5, 1867.

[24]Portland Oregonian, April 2 and 19, 1867.

[25]Puget Sound Weekly Gazette, Seattle, W.T., April 8, 1867.

[26]Detroit Free Press, April 2, 1867.

[27]Boston Herald, April 11, 1867, as quoted in Richard E. Welch, "American Public Opinion and the Purchase of Russian America", p. 484.

[28]Boston Advertiser, April 6, 1867.

[29]Boston Daily Evening Transcript, April 3, 1867.

[30]The Argus, Albany, New York, April 4, 1867, an enclosure in a letter from John V. L. Pruyn to Seward, April 8, 1867, Seward MSS.

[31]New York Times, April 12, 1867, from an article entitled "Our New Pacific Naval School".

[32]Philadelphia Inquirer, April 8, 1867; and Philadelphia Press, April 11, 1867.

[33]National Intelligencer, Washington, D.C., April 5, 1867.

[34]Ibid, April 9, 1867.

[35]Sacramento Daily Union, April 1, 1867, p. 1.

[36]Alta California, San Francisco, April 5 and 13, 1867, the latter date in an article entitled "The Late Purchase From Russia - A Few Errors Corrected".

[37]San Francisco Evening Bulletin, April 1, 1867, in an article entitled "Our Acquisition of Russian America".

[38]Portland Oregonian, April 2 and 19, 1867.

[39]Boston Herald, April 11, 1867, as quoted in Richard E. Welch, "American Opinion and the Purchase of Russian America", p. 484.

[40]The Argus, Albany, New York, April 4, 1867, an enclosure in a letter from John V. L. Pruyn to Seward, April 8, 1867, Seward MSS.

[41]New York Times, April 14, 1867, in an article entitled: "The Russian Treaty - Coal and Wood for the Pacific Coast".

[42]National Intelligencer, Washington, D.C., April 9 and 15, 1867.

[43]Sacramento Daily Union, April 1 and 2, 1867.

[44]San Francisco Bulletin, April 3 and 8, 1867.

[45]San Francisco Alta California, March 31, 1867.

[46]San Francisco Daily Dramatic Chronicle, April 10, 1867, in an article entitled: "Extending the Area".

[47]Portland Oregonian, April 2, 1867.

[48]Puget Sound Weekly Gazette, Seattle, W.T., April 8, 1867.

[49]Salt Lake Telegraph, Salt Lake, W.T., as reprinted in the San Francisco Bulletin, April 11, 1867.

[50]St. Louis Times, April 10, 1867, as reprinted in House of Representatives, 40th Cong., 2nd Sess., Ex. Doc. 177, Part I, p. 36.

[51]Chicago Evening Journal, April 1, 1867.

[52]Chicago Tribune, April 1, 1867.

[53]The Detroit Free Press, April 2, 1867.

[54]The Cincinnati Commercial, April 9, 1867.

[55]Bangor Daily Times, Bangor, Maine, April 13, 1867, as quoted in Virginia Reid Hancock, The Purchase of Alaska: Contemporary Opinion, p. 27.

[56]The Rochester, Daily Democrat, Rochester, New York, April 8, 1867.

[57]New York Herald, March 31, and April 1 and 11, 1867.

[58]New York Times, March 31, 1867.

[59]New York World, April 1, 1867.

[60]New York Evening Post, April 1, 1867.

[61]United States Railroad and Mining Register, Philadelphia, April 6, 1867, Seward MSS.

[62]The Baltimore Sun, April 1 and 10, 1867.

[63]National Intelligencer, Washington, D.C., April 5, 1867.

[64]San Francisco Daily Alta California, April 3 and 5, 1867.

[65]San Francisco Bulletin, April 1, 1867.

[66]Portland Oregonian, April 2 and 19, 1867.

[67]The Puget Sound Weekly Gazette, Seattle, W.T., April 8, 1867.

[68]Chicago Evening Journal, April 1, 1867.

69 The Cincinnati Commercial, April 1, 1867.

[70]Ibid., April 9, 1867.

[71]Portland Daily Eastern Argus, Portland, Maine, April 16, 1867.

[72]New York Times, April 1, 1867.

[73]Ibid., April 11, 1867.

[74]Philadelphia Inquirer, April 2, 1867.

[75]Daily National Intelligencer, Washington, D.C., April 9, 1867.

[76]Daily National Republican, Washington, D.C., April 6, 1867.

[77]San Francisco Evening Bulletin, April 1, 1867.

[78]San Francisco Daily Alta California, April 5, 1867.

[79]Sacramento Daily Union, April 2nd, 1867.

[80]Frank A. Golder, "The Russian Fleet in the Civil War", AHR, XX (July, 1915) pp. 801-812; Benjamin F. Gilbert, "Welcome to the Czar's Fleet", California Historical Quarterly, XXVI (March, 1947), pp. 13-19; and Gideon Welles, Dairy of Gideon Welles, vol. I, p. 301. It was Golder who first refuted the story current during the Civil War that the Russian ships had come to America to express the Czar's solidarity with the Union cause. Golder demonstrated, as Sumner had suspected at the time, that the Russian vessels were seeking a neutral port in which to await the possible outbreak of a European war over the Polish Rebellion of 1863.

[81]Philadelphia Inquirer, April 11, 1867.

[82]Baltimore Sun, April 1, 1867.

[83]Chicago Tribune, April 1, 1867; and San Francisco Evening Bulletin, April 1, 1867.

[84]The U. S. Railroad and Mining Register, Philadelphia, April 6, 1867, Seward MSS.

[85]New York Herald, April 1, 11 and 29, 1867.

[86]New York Tribune, April 8, 1867.

[87]New York Tribune, April 9, 1867.

[88]New York Tribune, April 11, 1867.

[89]New York Post, April 8, 1867.

[90]New York Sun, as quoted in the Daily Times, Ottawa, Canada West, April 4, 1867.

[91]Worcester Spy, Worcester, Massachusetts, April 2, 1867.

[92]The South, for the purpose of this study, is defined as that area of the nation which includes the States which seceded from the Union in the Civil War plus the Border State of Kentucky.

In footnote no. 1 of this chapter, the author discusses the Robert E. Welch article, "American Opinion and the Purchase of Russian America", which examined the press reaction in the United States to the treaty with Russia. Welch researched only ten newspapers from the area defined above as the South, and four of these were from New Orleans. He concluded that only one of this group was decidedly opposed to the purchase, while he found that at least eight supported it. However, four of the latter were seen by the author, and it is clear, based on the reasons cited in the footnote mentioned above, that Welch had no valid grounds for making such designations. Three of the remaining four which he labeled as advocates of the cession seem to be genuinely favorable as seen by the quoted material he provided. Nevertheless, it still seems reasonable to conclude that Welch was in error concerning the attitude of the Southern press to the acquisition of Russian America, and that few Southern newspapers, a minority, announced their approval of the treaty in an editorial.

[93]Louisville Daily Democrat, Louisville, Kentucky, April 10, 1867.

[94]San Antonio Daily Express, San Antonio, Texas, April 23, 1867.

[95]La Tribune de la Nouvelle-Orleans, New Orleans, Louisiana, April 3, 1867, as quoted in the original French in Robert E. Welch, Jr., "American Opinion and the Purchase of Russian America", p. 491. Translated by the author.

Among other Southern newspapers who opposed the purchase and questioned the value of the Russian lands were the Augusta (Georgia) Daily Constitutionalist, the Augusta Daily Press, and the Little Rock Daily Arkansas Gazette.

[96]Indianapolis Daily Journal, Indianapolis, Indiana, April 2, 1867.

[97]Chicago Republican, April 10, 1867.

[98]Milwaukee Daily Sentinel, Milwaukee, Wisconsin, April 3 and 12, 1867.

[99]Daily Morning Herald, St. Joseph, Missouri, April 7, 1867.

[100]Ibid., April 16, 1867.

[101]Montana Post, Virginia City, Montana Territory, April 6, 1867.

[102]Worcester Spy, Worcester, Massachusetts, April, 1867.

[103]New York Tribune, April 1, 1867.

[104]San Antonion Daily Express, San Antonio, Texas, April 23, 1867.

[105]Red Bluff Independent, Red Bluff, California, as reprinted in the Portland Oregonian, June 11, 1867, under "City", p. 3.

[106]Wilmington Daily Commercial, Wilmington, Delaware, April 4, 1867, p. 1.

[107]Cincinnati Daily Gazette, Cincinnati, Ohio, April 4, 1867.

[108]Indianapolis Daily Journal, Indianapolis, Indiana, April 2, 1867.

[109]Milwaukee Daily Sentinel, Milwaukee, Wisconsin, April 6, 1867.

[110]Ibid., April 12, 1867. The reference to the new territory as "Doolittle Territory" refered to the Senator from Wisconsin, James R. Doolittle, who had voted for the treaty on both of the crucial votes.

[111]Daily Morning Herald, St. Joseph, Missouri, April 7, 1867.

[112]Portland Transcript, Portland, Maine, April 20, 1867, p. 22.

[113]Providence Journal, Providence, Rhode Island, April 20, 1867.

[114]Conneticut Courant, Hartford, April 13, 1867.

[115]Earl S. Pomeroy, The Territories and the United States, 1861-1890: Studies in Colonial Administration, (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1970), reprint of a 1946 edition published by the University of Washington Press.

[116]New York Tribune, April 1, 1867.

[117]New York Sun, as quoted in the Daily Times, Ottawa, Canada West, April 4, 1867.

[118]Charleston Mercury, Charleston, South Carolina, April 19, 1867.

[119]The Daily Press, Augusta, Georgia, April 6, 1867.

[120]The Louisville Daily Democrat, Louisville, Kentucky, April 10, 1867.

[121]San Antonio Daily Express, San Antonio, Texas, April 23, 1867.

[122]Chicago Republican, April 10, 1867.

[123]Milwaukee Daily Sentinel, Milwaukee, Wisconsin, April 3, 1867.

[124]Daily Herald, St. Joseph, Missouri, April 7, 1867.

[125]New York Tribune, April 1, 1867.

[126]Ibid., April 9, 1867.

[127]Cincinnati Daily Gazette, Cincinnati, Ohio, April 4, 1867.

[128]San Antonio Daily Express, San Antonio, Texas, April 23, 1867.

[129]See: Harold Underwood Faulkner, American Political and Social History, 6th ed., (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., 1952), p. 546; Foster Rhea Dulles, The United States Since 1865, (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1959), p. 157; Robert H. Ferrell, American Diplomacy: A History, (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1959), p. 137; J. G. Randall and David Donald, The Civil War and Reconstruction, (Boston: D. C. Heath and Co., 1961), p. 650; Thomas Bailey, A Diplomatic History of the American People, 7th ed., (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1964), p. 366; Samuel Eliot Morison, The Oxford History of the American People, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1965), p. 706.

[130]See Table II, above.

Chapter V

H E M M E D I N:

The Reaction in the Crown Colony of British Columbia to the Purchase of Russian America

"The people - disgusted, disheartened, and all but ruined - are loud in their expression of a preference for the stars and stripes. The sentiment is heard at every street corner - at social gatherings - in business circles - at the theatre - in the saloons - in all places . . . and the feeling is growing and spreading."

Daily British Colonist, Victoria, April 29, 1867.

"As for Annexation, it is a myth - a delusion; and the men who persist in forcing its agitation upon us are no friends of the Colony."

Daily British Colonist, Victoria, May 27, 1867.

The peaceful and voluntary cession of Russian America to the United States - a remote, sparsely populated, largely sub-arctic wilderness of uncertain value, containing little arable land and oppressed by a climate that repelled most men - would not appear to be a transaction calculated to excite much interest or envy among other nations or designed to threaten another power. To a certain extent, however, the transfer of the Russian colonies to American control had precisely that intent, both on the part of the St. Petersburg regime and, apparently, of the government in Washington. The focus of these intrigues was Great Britain and her possessions in North America, particularly her Crown Colony on the North Pacific coast, now flanked by Washington Territory to the south and the new American lands to the north. Edged tightly against a vast and violent sea by towering mountains which seemed to swallow its scattered mainland settlements, and isolated from the nascent Dominion of Canada by hundreds of miles of fortress-like escarpments, empty plains, dense forestlands and muskeg swamps, British Columbia occupied an unenviable position in the spring of 1867, when the world learned that Yankee expansion had begun again.

The primary thrust which had placed that British colony in this situation had originated with Imperial Russia, a major military and political rival of Great Britain in several corners of the globe. In the course of discussing various rationales for a potential sale of Russian America, the councellors of Czar Alexander II had considered carefully the possibility that the cession might lead to difficulties between England and the United States and perhaps to the annexation of British Columbia by the American Republic. Edouard de Stoeckl, Russian Minister to Washington, had written, in 1860, that "If the United States should become the owner

of our possession, British Oregon would be crowded on the northern side and on the southern side by the Americans and would escape with difficulty from the aggressions of the latter."[1] Prince Gorchakov, Minister of Foreign Affairs and a principal advisor to the Emperor, had suggested, on the eve of the decision to sell Russian America, that the anticipated effect of the cession on British Columbia might be sufficient reason to justify the sale.[2] Certainly, the Imperial Government had much to gain by the expulsion of Great Britain from the shores of the North Pacific, and quite probably that desire became a factor in the ultimate determination of the Czar to cede his North American possessions.

As for the United States, it is evident that many leaders in government and the press recognized that the purchase of Russian America threatened British Columbia and, indirectly, Great Britain. Relations between England and the United States had been strained for some years. British policies during the Civil War, the unresolved and vexatious Alabama Claims, and the encouragement given by Her Majesty's Government to the creation of a Canadian confederation, considered by some Americans as a violation of the Monroe Doctrine and by others as an impediment to American control of the continent, all contributed to the creation of widespread Anglophobia in the United States. Consequently, a territorial acquisition which might do injury to Great Britain and might defeat her designs for Canada would be greeted with enthusiasm by many Americans and would be considered by some as a desirable purchase for that reason alone. Senator Charles Sumner had alluded to this in his famous speech advocating Senate approval of the treaty, and the issue had been mentioned by other Senators as well. A large proportion of the American press had discussed the anticipated effect of the cession on the English colony of British Columbia, and many journalists hailed the treaty accordingly. Later, in the summer of 1868,

during the debates in the House of Representatives on the bill to appropriate funds to pay for Russian America, the subject of British Columbia and its relation to the purchase received heavy emphasis. Thirty-one members delivered an address on this act or had their opinions read into the record. Twelve aimed their remarks entirely or partially at the topic of the British colony. Others, who did not specifically mention British Columbia, encompassed that area when they exulted over the American destiny to possess the entire continent, which the purchase of Alaska had brought closer to fruition. Finally, there is evidence that Secretary of State William H. Seward entertained ideas similar to those heard in the halls of Congress and read in American newspapers regarding the British Pacific colony, and it seems clear that he made tentative moves in the direction of acquiring that English possession for the United States.[3]

If the sale and purchase of Russian America was intended partially to compromise British Columbia and to lead to its eventual annexation to the United States, the question naturally arises as to whether those threatened actually recognized the challenge. Did the residents of British Columbia interpret the American acquisition of Alaska as an attempt to lure them or pressure them into the Republic? If they did identify the cession in this manner, how did the people of the colony react to this realization; what was the effect of the purchase on British Columbia? Before probing for possible answers to these questions, it first seems necessary to attempt a brief analysis of the economic and governmental situation in the British colony on the eve of the cession, for the response of British Columbians certainly would be influenced by the state of colonial finances, the political climate and prospects for the future.

I

The most serious problem confronting the people of British Columbia in the spring of 1867 was a local economic depression which had drained strength and confidence from the colony for several years. The economy of the colony was based on the exploitation of staple products, especially gold mining on the mainland. Since the first rush to the gold fields on the Fraser River in 1858, British Columbia had derived its major income, growth and vitality from mining and various related and supportive activities. Earlier, the colony had been the quiet Pacific headquarters of the Hudson's Bay Company, and more recently a British naval station had been located there as well. Its population had consisted of fur hunters, a few farmers near Fort Victoria, some coal miners at Nanaimo, naval personnel at Esquimault and agents of the Company. Settlement had been confined almost exclusively to Vancouver Island, with the mainland left largely to the Indians, trappers and the few whites and mixed-bloods who resided at the scattered posts maintained by the Hudson's Bay Company.

The gold rushes, however, had changed the atmosphere and direction of the colony completely, attracting thousands of transient miners and an ambitious commercial class to provide supplies and services for the mining areas. These merchants broke the mercantile monopoly of the Hudson's Bay Company, and the miners and their mushrooming settlements opened the mainland and threatened to destroy the fur trade. As the easy placer washings gave out along the Fraser, to be followed in time by new strikes at other locations in the colony, the population of British Columbia and its prosperity ebbed and flowed with the seasons of excitement and disillusionment. But by 1867, the yield from the gold mines had been declining for three years, and with it local business, population and confidence had

diminished also. The approximate value of the gold exported in 1864 had been set at $3,735,580. In 1865, the total fell to $3,491,205; in 1866, it sank to $2,662,106, a decrease in production by nearly one-third since 1864. Furthermore, only two-thirds of the total was shipped by colonial banks and subject to the 10% export tax. The remainder left the colony in private hands, avoiding all excises, which reduced still further the already diminished colonial revenues.[4]

As a result of the drop in gold production and the consequent decline in general prosperity, people began to emigrate from the colony. While only rough estimates are available, the population listed at 13,624 non-Indian inhabitants in 1861, had fallen to 8,631 in 1866.[5] As miners left to seek golden opportunities elsewhere, many of the merchants who had served as their suppliers closed their doors and shipped southward too. Those who remained bemoaned these losses of men and talent and the damage done to the colony by their departure. The British Colonist, the leading colonial newspaper and the only local journal to be distributed throughout the colony, commented in its June 5, 1866, issue that the loss of each able-bodied single man was a blow valued at several hundreds of dollars to the country, while "the loss of a family in our present condition can scarcely be computed." On January 16, 1867, the editor of the Colonist wailed: "All leaving for other parts - mark! not by choice, but by the stern decrees of necessity, unable longer to make a living here."[6] As the population decreased and business experienced a general depression, government revenues fell. Total income from various taxes, duties, licence fees and land sales produced $859,645 in 1865, but in 1866 the returns had fallen to $434,799. Although expenditures were reduced by more than one half, from $1,028,110 to $455,763, a deficit was still the result, as had been the case for six straight years by 1866. The debt of the combined

colony of British Columbia and Vancouver Island in 1866 totaled $1,406,777, an increase from $30,440 in 1860.[7]

Other commercial activities had not been capable of providing alternate employment for the large number of miners and merchants who had been forced to leave, nor had these businesses been capable of replacing the lost revenues or stimulating new prosperity. The fur trade on the mainland was in decline also, and the number of men who could be used was strictly limited in any case. Coal production at Nanaimo, which employed 200 miners in 1867, was restricted by a dirth of available markets; and no commercial fisheries, despite potentially rich resources, had been opened by 1865. Finally, agriculture, which had commenced during the Hudson's Bay Company era to supply the fur trade, had responded slowly to the demands of the mining boom and began to expand only in the late 1860's. Although the number of acres under cultivation steadily increased along with production and farm population generally in these years, much of the food for the colony still had to be imported from the United States.[8]

The Government of British Columbia could do little to combat the depression, as the drop in revenues and the large public debt severely restricted the options available to the administration. Furthermore, the Government was neither popular or democratic, which fact encouraged outspoken opposition. The Governor, Frederick Seymour, former chief executive of the mainland colony before the union of British Columbia and Vancouver Island in 1866, did not provide strong leadership. Judge Howay, late dean of British Columbian historians, characterized him as "a drifter, not a builder,"[9] and as "a well-meaning, easy-going mediocrity who seems to have owed his position to family influence in Great Britain."[10] Seymour administered the colony with the aid of a number of appointed officials and a Legislative Council composed of twenty-three members, only nine of whom

were elected by the people. The remainder, appointed by the Governor, were accused by their critics of voting too often as Seymour wished rather than in the best interests of the colonists. In addition, most of these officials had come from the British Isles, and this caused a social cleavage between them and those colonial leaders who had been born in North America.[11] To make matters worse, the Home Government gave little aid and comfort to the Government or colony of British Columbia. Dominated by the "Little England" spirit, Her Majesty's ministers took as the keystone of their policies the intention that the colonies should cost the British Treasury nothing. Thus, the colonists could expect no relief for their financial problems in the homelands. Many in the colony groaned over the burden of taxes paid to support a government thought to be inefficient, wasteful, top-heavy with beaurocrats and opposed to change of any fundamental type. The British Colonist complained in March, 1867, that:

> Politically we are tied hand and foot; deprived of an adequate representation, we are the laughing-stock of our neighbors, and the object of contempt of our own countrymen. We have scarcely a voice in our own affairs, and what little we have has been powerless to prevent the voting of a sum of money for a Government utterly beyond our power to pay.[12]

Another problem which worried men with strong British or Canadian sentiments in the months preceding the purchase of Alaska was the heavy commercial dependence of British Columbia on the United States and the fact that Americans composed a sizeable segment of the colony's population. American miners had flocked to British Columbia during the gold rushes, and Yankee capital had facilitated the rapid growth of colonial commerce during those years. Merchants in San Francisco, Portland and Puget Sound still supplied much of the colony's requirements in food, clothing, mining equipment and miscellaneous items. More than sixty percent of the products imported into British Columbia came from the United States, while

approximately one half of all the colony's exports were landed there. Trade with Great Britain, on the other hand, accounted for only about thirty percent in both categories.[13] American money circulated freely in the colony at par; United States postage stamps were required for most mail leaving the colony regardless of destination, a practice which Governor Anthony Musgrave, successor to Seymour, described as "never heard of" and "undignified" for a British colony.[14] But there was little choice. British Columbians depended upon American ships and merchants to bring them most of their imports, news and mail, and to handle much of their export volume. Clearly, the United States was the principal trading partner of British Columbia, which existed in large part due to American sufferance and commercial cooperation.

Any solution to the several problems facing the people and Government of British Columbia would have to include finding new and considerable sources of investment capital and large numbers of permanent settlers. Four courses of action seemed possible in 1867: independence from Great Britain, continued existence as a Crown Colony, annexation to the United States, and union with the new Dominion of Canada. The first two options, however, were not feasible. Independence would not be likely to attract the money or people so necessary to recover from the current depression, and there seemed little prospect that British Columbia had the strength to survive long as a sovereign entity. On the other hand, prolonging the status quo did not appear destined to lead to any substantial change in the aloof attitude of the Home Government or bring either immigrants or development capital. Thus, the only viable alternatives were annexation to the United States, which probably offered the best, immediate, financial prospects, or confederation with Canada, a possibility made speculative by the hundreds of miles of wastelands which separated British Columbia from

the nearest settlements of the new Dominion. The choice which the Government and citizens of British Columbia would make in the next several years would be crucial to the future of Canada and to the British position in North America, as well as to their own destinies. Early in 1867, the future seemed to lie with Canada, despite a small annexation movement which had appeared the previous fall. On March 18, 1867, the Legislative Council approved unanimously the resolution of the Hon. Amor De Cosmos calling on the Governor "to take such steps, without delay, as may be deemed by him best adapted to insure the admission of British Columbia into the Confederation . . . being confident . . . they are expressing the views of the Colonists generally."[15] But the totally unexpected news of the purchase of Russian America by the United States cast doubt upon this decision and raised the discussion of annexation briefly to a level of high intensity. For a long moment, until the shock of events wore off, the fate of British Columbia seemed to hang in the balance.

II

The initial reaction of the people of British Columbia to the cession of Russian America to the United States was one of mild surprise and perhaps a slight uneasiness, although some expected the colony would derive some commercial benefit as a result of the change of masters in the North. News of the treaty raced across wires strung not two years earlier to arrive in Victoria on the night of April 1, 1867. This communique found only a small spot in the April 2 issue of the Daily British Colonist, whose editor, David William Higgins, reserved comment until the following day. Although he admitted to some disquietude concerning the political implications of the cession, he suggested that:

> From a commercial point of view the establishment of a colony of energetic, go-ahead people - who would open the mines of latent wealth that are represented to abound there, and would improve and then turn to account every other advantage that the land may possess, would certainly prove beneficial to us; . . .[16]

Thereafter, save for the faithful reporting of dispatches received from the Eastern States, Canada and England, the Colonist made no additional remarks on the affair for nearly a fortnight.

Another important colonial publication, the British Columbian of New Westminster, the editorial organ of John Robson, member of the Legislative Council and determined advocate of responsible government and confederation with Canada, proved even slower to take editorial notice of the purchase of Alaska. Like the Victoria paper, this journal printed the latest dispatches, but not until late in the month did the Columbian comment on the subject, when it leveled a blistering broadside at the British and the Americans.

The Victoria News, a newcomer to the publishing world, could see little practical value in the new acquisition for American enterprise, describing the region as "bleak and desolate", but the editor, James E. McMillan, foresaw the possibility of problems arising between the United States and England over the matter, complications which he believed both Russia and the American Government had intended.[17] But many Victorians apparently recognized, according to a despatch received by Secretary of State from U. S. Consul in Victoria, Allen Francis, that the new American territory possessed important resources, especially the fisheries. The purchase had taken them by surprise, Francis determined, and "It may have created distrust, but I do not think enmity."[18] The Colonist further reflected this uneasiness in its comment on the cable despatch from England reporting the remarks made in the House of Lords by the Duke of

Buckingham, Secretary of State for the Colonies.

> John Bull, in America, is being hemmed in by Brother Jonathan in a manner much more forcible than agreeable; and if the Duke of Buckingham really stated, as reported that the cession of the Russian territory to the Americans is a matter of indifference to Her Majesty's Government, he was either ignorant of the subject on which he spoke, or the Home Government is trying to rid herself of her Colonies.[19]

Governor Seymour, in a despatch to the Colonial Office, dated April 17, informed the Duke of Buckingham that the cession had caused "considerable excitement," with the resident Americans hailing the event by flying their national flag. However, he explained, the English felt "somewhat despondent as to their future condition." Seymour believed that in peacetime it would "be rather advantageous to us, to have the United States on both sides of British Columbia," as Victoria would be "sort of half way port between San Francisco and Sitka." However, by using the term "time of peace," the Governor implied that in the event of war with the Americans, the colony might find itself in an untenable position. Further, he noted "That there is fear no doubt that having the United States North and South of us will tend to strengthen the American sympathies felt by a considerable number of persons in Victoria." Finally, Seymour came to the main thrust of his dispatch, a theme which he would stress in subsequent communications. The Governor recognized the potential propaganda value which the American cession might have with the Home Government. British Columbia suffered from numerous economic woes, which monetary support from London could alleviate. Thus, he proposed that "It really could be good policy and good economy if some pecuniary assistance was granted, . . . showing in some manner that Her Majesty's Government feel some sort of interest in this far portion of Her dominions." His efforts were to no avail, however, because the officials of the Colonial Office, after discussing the merits of Seymour's dispatch, decided against

his request.[20]

On April 23, Consul Francis forwarded to the State Department a petition signed by "all the resident Americans of Victoria praising the purchase of the Russian territory and testifying to its value. In despatching this document, Francis added a comment which provided another hint of the wariness existing among the colonial citizens. He stated that "for the people of these colonies," the acquisition had:

> if possible, still further paralyzed their hopes and prospects, - and the people, those claiming to be loyal subjects included, are now urging with great unanimity annexation to the United States, as their only salvation, - as the only means of retrieving the colonies from their present embarrassment and decline. The spirit of annexation, with the exception of the officials and a solitary Press in the colonies favoring Confederation with the Canadas, is general and earnest.[21]

Subsequent events would indicate that the feeling for annexation attributed by the U. S. Consul to the populace of Victoria was not as unanimous as he maintained. He probably had conversed mainly with the American element, whose opinions hardly could be considered representative. Nevertheless, it seems reasonable to assume that some support for union with the United States did exist in British Columbia at this time. Given the current economic and political situation in the colony and the excitement caused by the sudden American thrust in the North, some citizens of British Columbia, at least in Victoria, must have wondered aloud if annexation did not hold brighter prospects than the <u>status quo</u> or confederation. The temper of the colony over the next several weeks suggests that this indeed was the case and that Francis had judged the spirit of the moment more accurately than at first might be suspected.

A letter addressed to Seward from W. Carey Johnson, an attorney in Oregon City, Oregon, offers additional evidence of the existence of a genuine annexation sentiment in British Columbia in late April, 1867, as

a result of the purchase of Alaska. Writing under the date of April 29, following his return from a business trip to Victoria to examine "the books and archives of the Hudson's Bay Company," Mr. Johnson explained that he had been present in that British community at the time of the cession of Russian America and had tried to determine the local reactions, especially among the "leading public and business men of the colony," several of whom he personally approached on the subject. He had found that:

> all the Irish, Germans, and other naturalized subjects of Her Majesty were most decidedly in favor of annexation to the United States. The English and Scotch are extremely careful not to say or do anything which might subject them to the imputation of disloyalty. But if the matter could be so arranged that an expression could be called for with the consent of Her Majesty's Government, I have no doubt that a majority - of Englishmen and Scotchmen, resident in the colony would vote directly in favor of annexation to the United States.[22]

Although this statement of Victorian annexationist feeling may have been overdrawn, it is also partially convincing. If Johnson had been in Victoria to examine the records of the Hudson's Bay Company, which appears likely,[23] it seems reasonable to conclude that as an attorney he might have had access to "leading public and business men," some of whom he may have known as friends. In that case, they might have confided to him, as an interested American, their private reactions to the purchase of Alaska and their opinion of the situation in British Columbia, attitudes which they might not have wished to express in public.

On the evening of April 24, with Victorians still discussing the new American acquisition, the telegraph, for the second time in less than a month, brought disturbing news, an apparent confirmation of what many already may have feared. From New York, with a dateline of April 18, came the following item:

> It is rumored that negotiations are pending with England for the purchase of the western portion of British Columbia, including Vancouver Island. The only difficulty in the way of that consummation seems to be that Seward insists on turning in the Alabama claims as payment, to which Lord Stanley, Foreign Secretary demurs.[24]

Reactions to this startling cable in British Columbia came swiftly and encompassed a variety of emotions. Some were incredulous and even amused, and they rejected the story as a rumor or wishful Yankee thinking. Others were alarmed or angry at the affrontery of the proposal, but apprehensive, perhaps, that it might be true. A third group greeted the message with enthusiasm and apparently determined to speed the project with a local agitation for annexation. As for the colonial press, their discussion of the cession of Russian America suddenly received greater emphasis, for the transfer of the northern territory to the United States had assumed a new and menacing dimension. It was the journalists, furthermore, who brought into the open the debate over annexation. If the American acquisition of Alaska had planted in British Columbia the seeds of interest in a union with the United States, the rumored attempt to purchase the colony from Great Britain made the idea bloom.

The Colonist lost no time in venting its opinion of the Yankee proposal, publishing on the very day of its announcement a sharp and angry editorial which raised the issue of annexation and flailed the British Government for the crisis. "We were not unprepared for the report," the editor wrote in his April 25 leader, for the cession of the Russian territories had given the Americans an almost overwhelming command of the Pacific coast. British Columbia had been "hemmed in on the north and the south," and was nearly defenseless from attack by the United States. This situation stemmed not only from the purchase of Russian America, he continued, but from the "extraordinary indifference and apathy" of the Home

Government to the difficulties of the colony. Such treatment, editor David Higgins asserted, was:

> alienating the affections of the colonists from Great Britain and causing them to cast their eyes across (sic) the imaginary line that divides them from their Anglo-Saxon brethren, . . . Is it any wonder that a transfer of the Colony to the United States under the arrangement proposed would be hailed with satisfaction by most of our people?

These sentiments might be regretable, he concluded, but "The failure of British institutions on the Pacific," if that should transpire, would be entirely the fault of Her Majesty's Government.[25]

The British Columbian, the mainland rival of the Colonist and an acid critic of Victoria and Vancouver Island affairs in general,[26] discovered in the rumor of the American offer sufficient cause to make its first editorial comments on the cession of the Russian territory as well as to attack the "little squib" which had arrived by telegraph on April 24. In his April 27 column, John Robson conceded the cleverness of "friend Seward," but wished him to know that British Columbia could not be bought. The news admittedly had tested colonial loyalties, but "while some believed, others scoffed . . . (and) all indignantly protested against being sold-transfered to a foreign power like so many slaves." The editor confidently assured his readers, however, that Great Britain would not dispose of her Pacific colony, for "to do so would be to hand over the key to her American possessions to a rival power - to cast away the keystone of that magnificent confederated Empire" then being erected in North America. Such a step would be "the beginning of the end to British power upon this continent, . . ." Robson credited British leaders with too much perspicacity to commit such a blunder. As for the new American acquisition, the Columbian bluntly stated that Great Britain "ought to have had Russian America - might have had it for the taking during the Russian War. But

now, through our supineness, it has fallen into other hands." Nevertheless, the editor believed the cession might work to the advantage of the colony afterall. The present threat to British Columbia might awaken England to the value of its Pacific colony, "long neglected and little appreciated," and lead at last to assistance in its development from the Home Government.[27]

In its April 29 issue, the Colonist focused again on British culpability and on the annexation spirit. "On all sides," editor Higgins stated, "it is agreed that Great Britain has treated her Pacific colony with shameful, inexcusable neglect - a neglect that . . . has resulted finally in the utter prostration and almost irretrievable ruin of every interest within its borders." Citizens of British Columbia, he alleged, had been denied representative institutions, forced to pay for an outrageously large Civil List, taxed higher than any other colony, loaded with uncontracted debts, and "subjected to every species of insult and extortion that it is possible to inflict upon a free people." Such were the present conditions, the Colonist declared, that many would approve any change in government that held out hope of relief, and "they would welcome Annexation to the United States in preference to continuing in a state of wretchedness and poverty." In making that statement, the editor claimed to speak for:

> nine out of ten men in the Colony. . . . The sentiment is heard at every street corner - at social gatherings - in business circles - at the theatre - in the saloons - in all places . . . and the feeling is growing and spreading.

Nevertheless, Higgins assured his readers that British Columbia would not be sold; but he could not resist commenting that "it would result most advantageously" for the colony if it were. But annexation was not the solution to the colony's woes, the Colonist stated. "We believe that

Confederation with the Eastern Provinces is the only course that will preserve the loyalty of this people or save the country from falling into a condition of hopelessness from which it may not emerge during the lifetime of men now living."[28]

The idea of annexation, however, could not be stilled so easily. The Victoria News, which had a pro-annexationist reputation before the cession of Russian America, now became its outspoken proponent.[29] Shortly after the arrival of the British Columbia purchase rumor, the News had asked:

> Is it any wonder, . . . that the people generally would hail with satisfaction, if not loud demonstrations of joy, such a change as that which would be wrought by a transference of this country from the dominion of Great Britain to that of the United States? . . . Such is the character of the population we now have that every day only increases the desire of the people for such a change.[30]

James E. McMillan, editor of the News and former partner of John Robson in the Columbian until January, 1867, hammered on the themes of British neglect of the colony, the lack of a popular and responsible government, and the alleged benefits of living under the protection of the American flag.[31] The Nanaimo Tribune also found the idea of annexation appealing, describing the present association of the colony with Great Britain metaphorically as a "fast sinking ship" and the United States as a "gallant new craft, good and strong, close alongside, inviting us to safety and success."[32]

John Robson of the Columbian found in these pro-annexationist statements of the Island press ample opportunity to denounce his competitors and to contrast their "disloyalty" with the patriotism of the mainland. The reaction of his community, he wrote, "was what we should have anticipated, a decided preference for, and a determination to stick to, that glorious old flag, and those time-honoured and heaven-owned institutions

under which we were born, . . ." The colony may have been coldly neglected by England in the past, but one still could not smother the feelings of birth and nationality "under any circumstances." After wrapping himself warmly and self-righteously in the Union Jack, Robson proceeded to attack both the News and the Colonist for statements they had published concerning annexation. He compared and ridiculed the recent widespread support on the Island for union with Canada with the current fascination for union with the United States.

> Have these people, child-like, cast away the Federation toy for the hobby-horse of annexation so soon? Are they prepared to forego all the advantages and all the glory that they but the other day professed to be so confident of realizing from becoming a member of the Great British North American family? Or do these people imagine for a single moment that Queen Victoria is going to cast away one of the brightest gems of her diadem, especially when that one is indespensable to the completeness, the glory and the brilliancy of the rest?[33]

In a later issue, the editor of the Columbian chided his Nanaimo counterpart for following "in the wake of Victoria newspaperdom upon the question of Annexation to the United States of America." In taking such a stand, Robson asserted, the editor of the Tribune did "not represent public opinion in his own community. Nor do we believe for a moment that the predominating feeling in Victoria is in favor of annexation," he continued. Groups of speculators and political demagogues in that community might yearn for a connection to the Republic, but such selfish men did not speak for the majority who were loyal.[34] On one point, however, the Columbian and the Colonist essentially agreed, although neither would have admitted this readily. John Robson, like his competitor, David Higgins, believed that the solution to the problems of British Columbia lay in union with Canada, but the Columbian cautioned against haste in pursuing this goal, lest favorable terms be lost as a result. The Dominion of Canada needed British Columbia to complete the grand confederation, Robson explained.

"It may be the last, the finishing touch; but without it the structure is incomplete - cannot stand!" Therefore, the colony could afford to wait, "to gain admission upon terms which shall fully recognize the value and importance of this territory to the dominion, . . ."[35]

On Vancouver Island, in the meantime, the discussion of the cession of Russian America and the rumored attempt to buy British Columbia had descended into a name-calling contest between the Colonist and its local morning rival, the News. The latter accused the editor of the Colonist, with some justification, of being equivocal about annexation, while the Colonist denounced McMillan's journal for disloyalty.[36] By early May, the Colonist had ceased to speak apprehensively of annexation as a possibility or as something which many colonists desired. But its earlier ambiguity on this issue, its brief flirtation with the concept, had invited the barbs of both McMillan and Robson, although for opposite reasons. Further, the counsels of alarm and doom which had appeared earlier in the columns of the Colonist may very well have encouraged the annexation movement unintentionally. Recognizing, apparently, that his original position on this matter had left room for doubt, Higgins felt compelled to publish, on May 2, a statement that "the Colonist has not expressed itself in favor of annexation."[37] In addition, he proceeded to support his expressed preference for confederation with a large number of editorials during the next month, pointing out either the benefits of that course or the undesirable aspects of life in the United States.[38] The unusual volume of these articles, as well as their urgency and tone, suggests that the editor of the Colonist may have been attempting to purge his journal of all suspicion of sympathy for the unholy cause of annexation and, perhaps, to undo some of the damage his earlier alarmist articles may have engendered. This would indicate that the jabs of Robson

and McMillan had hit tender marks. Furthermore, by early May, no additional dispatches had arrived to confirm any negotiations for the sale of British Columbia. Most people in the colony, certainly including Higgins, must have realized by then that the telegram received on April 24 must have been merely a rumor afterall. Comments favorable to annexation must have become increasingly unpopular and inadvisable as the original anxiety dissipated and the conviction grew that the connection with Great Britain would be maintained.

The editorial emphasis of the Colonist during May and June also demonstrates that despite the position it had taken the issue of annexation was still alive. One journal, the News, was not content to allow the idea to be forgotten, for McMillan continued to plead the cause, apparently without much support among the local population. In addition to editorials urging union with the United States, the News also called unsuccessfully for a public meeting to ask for annexation, and later it proposed that a petition be drawn up to request the same objective.[39] Failing in these efforts, a representative of the News took ship for San Francisco late in May allegedly to seek funds from American businessmen to enable the poper to continue its publication and advocacy of annexation. Whether or not this was the intent of that journey remains conjecture, but the mere accusation of such a motive was sufficient to blacken the reputation of the News and its editor, if support for annexation had not done so already.[40] For whatever reason, lack of capital, failure of the trip to San Francisco or a drop in circulation, the News ceased publication in June, at least temporarily.[41] The reaction of the Colonist to this continued support for annexation indicated that the editor now felt secure in being on the "right" side of the question.

> As for Annexation, it is a myth - a delusion; and the men who persist in forcing its agitation upon us are no friends of the Colony. . . . The agitation of the Annexation question is doing us much harm. Every newspaper article advocating it is held up by our enemies on the mainland as another evidence of the disloyalty of the Islanders and their utter unworthiness . . . . This agitation must end - must be frowned down forever. . . . Why are our people told, day after day, that Annexation is possible if they will but ask for it? They have declined to ask for it: but have unmistakably decided in favor of Confederation.[42]

But still the hydra of annexation would not disappear. Governor Seymour, writing from Victoria in late June to the Duke of Buckingham, stated "That there is a systematic agitation going on in this town in favour of annexation to the United States." Financial support for the movement reportedly came from San Francisco, he continued, but nothing official had reached him as yet to confirm that allegation. The Governor described the question of annexation on the mainland as "involved", but he had been met "everywhere with alutes & other expressions of loyalty to the Government . . . ."[43]

Seymour's testimony to the continuation of an interest in union with the United States was swiftly seconded by the appearance of an annexation petition in Victoria early in July. After enumerating the grievances and woes which afflicted the colony, Her Majesty's "Most loyal subjects," emigrants "from various portions of Your Majesty's Kingdom and its dependencies," humbly submitted:

> Either, That Your Majesty's Government may be pleased to relieve us immediately of the expense of our excessive staff of Officials, assist the establishment of a British steam-line with Panama, so that emigrants from England may reach us, and also assume the debts of the Colony. -
>
> Or, That Your Majesty will graciously permit the Colony to become a portion of the United States, -

The authors of this petition vowed their loyalty to the Crown, but they clearly could see little possibility for relief from the Home Government,

for the document closed with the plea that the Queen do whatever "Your wisdom will deem proper for the speedy transfer of the Colony of British Columbia to the United States." U.S. Consul Allen Francis obtained a copy of this appeal and forwarded it to the State Department with the comment that "I have no doubt but it will receive the signatures of three-fourths of the loyal citizens of the Colony."[44]

Once again the American Consul probably had exaggerated the extent of the local interest in annexation, for there is no evidence to suggest that the petition met with much success. In its July 10th edition, the Colonist announced that such a document was being circulated "on the sly" by a broker who allegedly would receive a commission for each signature, but by the 13th, it was stated that the "Annexation petition has proved a complete fizzle."[45] How many people actually signed this appeal to the Queen and whether it was ever sent to Great Britain is not known. Governor Seymour presumably never saw the document, for his dispatches include no mention of it, and he had promised to forward any petition that might come to his attention.[46] In any case, it appears that this final feeble attempt to arouse public support for annexation achieved nothing significant. The failure of the Victoria News and the July petition, which its editor may have sponsored, removed the last published voice in the colony advocating union with the United States and signaled the effective end of the 1867 phase of annexation movement, which appears to have received its impetus from local reactions to the purchase of Alaska and the subsequent rumor of an American attempt to acquire British Columbia by including it in an Alabama Claims' settlement. Sentiment favoring annexation did not disappear entirely, however, for Governor Seymour's dispatches indicate that it continued to smolder beneath the surface during the fall of 1867 and it sputtered on fitfully through the years preceding the union of the

colony with Canada in 1871, even producing a second and more famous petition in 1869.[47]

III

A review of the four months which followed the announcement in British Columbia of the cession of Russian America to the United States suggests at least three basic conclusions regarding the reactions of colonial residents and their press. First, many in the colony clearly did consider the purchase as a threat to the future of British Columbia as a part of the Empire. References in the local journals to being "hemmed in" and to popular anxieties and anger, plus the apprehensions reflected in the dispatches of Governor Seymour and the American Consul Allen Francis describing colonial sentiments, strongly recommend this assessment. Such a response, however, could have been anticipated. As the focal point of the Russian inspired threat, the English citizens of British Columbia would be likely to sense keenly the precarious position into which the transaction had placed them. Having drunk, fought, gambled, mined gold and carried on all manner of business with the Americans, having depended on them for most of the colony's news and commercial connections with the outer world, the British Columbians knew the Yankee well enough to be alarmed by the prospects of having American territory on two sides of their meagerly populated, isolated and sprawling outpost of England.

Some even believed that this crisis had been contrived deliberately by the United States Government with the ultimate goal of forcing British Columbia into the American sphere. Such a conclusion was certainly reasonable, considering the well-known Yankee penchant for territorial expansion, the existence of a vocal minority in the United States who

advocated absorption of the British colony, and the activities of Fenian groups in the American West who occasionally threatened to march on British Columbia. Both the Victoria News and the British Columbian of New Westminster subscribed to this view of American duplicity; and in its editorial for May 16, the Victoria Colonist probably voiced the opinion held by many of the residents of Vancouver Island and the mainland.

> The expressions of the principal New York papers on the purchase of the Russian Possessions, explain the object held in view by the United States Government in acquiring them. That object was nothing more nor less than to hem in and enclose the British Possessions on the Pacific, and render them of little or no importance to Great Britain, and insure their easy conquest in case of war between the two nations.[48]

Another assumption apparently made by many in the colony concerned the belief that Great Britain had created the new problem facing British Columbia by failing to obtain Russian America when opportunities to do so had existed. The British Columbian took that position in its first editorial on the purchase on April 27, and the Colonist concured in its leader of May 16.

> Had ordinary precaution been taken, or sufficient interest manifested in the welfare of this Colony by our Government, the whole of the magnificent territory to the North of us would today be under the British flag; but the imbecility, ignorance or neglect of British statesmen has allowed a glorious opportunity to pass unimproved, and the colony of British Columbia, closely hemmed in by her coastal neighbour, has scarcely room left in which to draw a long breath.[49]

Presumably, these two journals refered to the missed opportunity provided by the Crimean War, in which a neutrality agreement had preserved the holdings of the Russian-American Company and the Hudson's Bay Company from attack. But some colonial residents may have been reflecting on another moment when the Russian holdings had seemed to be available. John Sebastian Helmcken, an elected member of the Legislative Council for Victoria in 1867, a former officer of the Hudson's Bay Company, and son-

in-law to the former Governor and Chief Factor James Douglas, wrote in his Reminiscences, composed in 1892, that "Governor Douglas told me that the British might have bought (the Russian territories), in fact a Russian agent had been here and offered to sell the HBCo or the government that coast strip of land. . . which the Hudson's Bay Co had leased from Russia for trading purposes."[50]

But regardless of how the threat of British Columbia had been created, one point seems clear. The residents of the colony recognized that the new American acquisition had altered the political and probably the economic geography of the Pacific Northwest to their detriment. The British Colonist summed up the new situation somewhat melodramatically but rather accurately by stating that:

> By it the United States virtually secures control of the coast, wrests from our grasp the Sitka trade, which was assuming vast proportions, . . . compels three hundred miles of British territory lying behind the thirty mile strip to pay tribute to a foreign power before the inhabitants can enjoy communication with the coast, and places the whole of Her Majesty's possessions on the Pacific in a position of a piece of meat between two slices of bread, where they may be devoured with a single bite.[51]

A second conclusion which can be drawn from a review of the four months following the cession of Russian America is that British Columbia witnessed a reaction which passed through three rather distinct stages, in which many did not discern the apparent peril until the second phase, marked by the announcement of the rumor regarding an American attempt to acquire the colony. The initial period of the local response was outwardly subdued, with the press giving the matter only minimum attention. What coverage the acquisition did receive from the colonial journals testified to a general feeling of surprise, a slight sense of foreboding and a decided impatience with Great Britain, but included no noticeable hint of alarm. No mention was made in these papers of annexation, either

as a threat or an opportunity presented by the purchase. On the contrary, it was thought possible that the colony might benefit commercially from the transfer of sovereignty in the northern territory. American ships sailing or steaming north to Sitka probably would call at Victoria for supplies or at Nanaimo for coal, and their return voyages very likely would bring them to Island ports again. Thus, in this first stage of the local response, until late in the month of April, the press viewed the purchase ambivilently.

Privately, however, British Columbians may have reacted more strongly to the news of the cession than did the editors of their newspapers. Governor Seymour, in his April 17 report to the Colonial Office, had described the English as "somewhat despondent as to their future condition" because of the purchase, which he believed would "strengthen the American sympathies of many in the colony." American Consul Allen Francis wrote to Secretary of State Seward, on April 23, that many who claimed loyalty to the Queen were "urging with great unanimity annexation to the United States."[52] Finally, the letter to Seward from Oregon attorney W. Carey Johnson, which described a widespread popular support for annexation in Victoria and deep disgust with the "Crown Colonial System," probably referred to the mood prevailing during the first phase of the reaction.[53] Although these three documents obviously do not constitute sufficient evidence, they do seem to suggest that some in the colony immediately interpreted the purchase of Alaska as a threat to British Columbia, while others just as swiftly concluded or hoped that the cession was but a preliminary to the annexation of the colony to the United States.

The second and most intense stage of the local reaction, which extended only two to three weeks, began with the publication, by the Colonist on April 25, of the rumored attempt of the American Government to

obtain British Columbia as a partial payment for the Alabama Claims. While many instantly rejected the story as unfounded, the remote possibility that it might be accurate shocked the most complacent out of their previous indifference to the cession of Russian America. For others the news must have been merely a confirmation of their worst fears regarding the purchase of Alaska. Certainly, an American effort to acquire British Columbia must have been anticipated, for not only would it further the Yankee dream of controling the entire continent, but possession of the British Colony would give the United States control of the entire Pacific Coast from the Mexican Border to the Arctic Ocean. Even the residents of British Columbia could appreciate the nationalistically appealing symmetry of such a compact seacoast.

The local press more than compensated for their earlier lack of interest in the purchase of Alaska with an outpouring of coverage in this second phase of the colonial reaction. The various journals responded to the rumor with outrage or alarm and focused considerable attention on the cession of Russian America, the Yankee designs on British Columbia, the ineptitude and indifference of the Home Government, the inefficiency and paucity of leadership in the colonial administration, and the possibilities of annexation as a solution to the manifold problems of the colony. The Victoria News, crying ruin and despair, argued for admission to the United States. The Colonist, reacting first with apparent panic, asserted that annexation was being discussed everywhere and was supported by "nine out of ten men in the Colony" who preferred such a course to "continuing in a state of poverty and wretchedness."[54] The Nanaimo Tribune found the idea of union with the United States attractive. But the British Columbian, although noticeably shaken by the news, refused to be swept along by the despair of the Island newspapers or by their sudden sympathy for annexation.

Editor John Robson chose instead to denounce those journals for their disloyalty and for bringing ridicule and ruin upon the colony by their criticism of everything concerning British Columbia. A brief but heated press war followed, with the editors of the News and Colonist of Victoria, the Tribune of Nanaimo, and the Columbian of New Westminster trading charges and counter-accusations about the statements and loyalty of their contemporaries. Much of the vehemence centered around their respective views on annexation, which perhaps testified to the importance of this issue in the public mind during that period.

By the latter part of May, however, confidence and calm had returned to British Columbia and the third phase of the colonial reaction commenced. Increasingly, it had become apparent that the report of an attempt by the United States Government to obtain the colony had been merely a rumor. Most local newspapers stopped sniping at the Home Government for its alleged neglect of colonial problems, and focused on the benefits of the British connection. The Colonist retreated from its assertion that annexation enjoyed the support of a large majority of the colony's citizens, and instead began to urge confederation with Canada as the only course which promised a bright future for British Columbia. All colonial newspapers except the News abandoned annexation as an issue worthy of serious discussion, referring to it rarely and only in juxtaposition to the superior advantages of a union with Canada. Clearly, enthusiasm for annexation to the United States had begun to wane by the final weeks of May, and the purchase of Alaska was no longer discussed by the press. The attempts of James E. McMillan, editor of the News, to call a public meeting and to produce a petition in support of annexation came to nothing, according to reports of his publishing rivals. Shortly thereafter, the News closed its doors. With its demise disappeared the last printed voice in the colony

still pressing for the admission of British Columbia into the Republic. Consequently, the circulation in July of a petition advocating annexation would appear to have been pre-destined to the negative reception which it did encounter. The failure of that final effort on behalf of annexation effectively terminated the immediate period during which the people of British Columbia reacted to the cession of Russian America.

In view of the total failure of the proponements of annexation to accomplish anything concrete during these months, it would seem tempting to credit most of the apparent support for this idea to the invention of the press, who might be accused of being swept along by their own rhetoric or influenced by a desire to increase their own circulation, creating an issue where none existed. After all, most of the evidence which testifies to a surge in the approval of annexation in British Columbia subsequent to the purchase appeared in local journals. However, additional corroborating evidence - the reports of Governor Seymour, American Consul Francis and Oregon attorney Johnson, all of which confirmed the appearance of an annexation spirit - and a reasonable reading of the temper of the colony in the spring of 1867, would seem to indicate that editorial invention was not necessary. Furthermore, it seems inherently improbable that several rival newspapers would have created either independently or in collusion an annexation movement from pure imagination, nor does it appear likely that the three above-named correspondents would have decided separately to falsify their accounts of the colonial reaction.

Therefore, the final conclusion recommended by an analysis of the first months following the treaty is that a widespread growth of interest in annexation and a serious, often emotional discussion of that idea as an alternative to confederation with Canada were genuine responses of the people of British Columbia to the sale of the Russian territory, at least

on Vancouver Island. However, it is apparent that this issue did not dominate colonial reactions until after the publication of the British Columbia cession rumor, when the press seized upon that news and made annexation the central topic of editorial debate. Before that moment, an increased sympathy for a union with the United States had been merely one of several repercussions of the purchase of Alaska. Consequently, the critical event for the people of British Columbia was not the announcement of the Alaska Treaty, but rather the report of the American attempt to obtain the English colony. The former development, while perhaps undesirable, could be ignored; the latter obviously could not be.

The burgeoning of annexationist sentiment in British Columbia in 1867 should not be considered unexpected under the circumstances. The mood of pessimism which seemed to pervade the colony on the eve of the cession, the depressed economic conditions which prevailed throughout the territory, the widely-felt popular discontent with the local government and the commonly-held belief that Great Britain cared little for her distant Pacific possession had prepared a fertile field for the rapid and healthy growth of an annexation movement. The heavy commercial dependence of the colony on the United States and the presence of a large number of American born residents made such a development all the more predictable. Furthermore, the idea of union with the Republic was not new to British Columbians, but had its roots in a meeting held in Victoria in the previous September, called to discuss the future of the Island colony. After the tumultuous and unproductive conclave dispersed, a rump session endorsed annexation with reservations, but by a small majority.[55] During the intervening months, not much had been heard from these dissidents. In the meantime, Vancouver Island and the mainland had been united by imperial decreee to form British Columbia; and in response to the annexation move-

ment of the previous fall, support for an eventual union of the new colony with emergent Canada in the East had materialized.[56] Commitment to this idea, however, the Legislative Council's advocacy of confederation notwithstanding, was still weak. The announcement of the purchase of Alaska and the rumored cession of British Columbia immediately rekindled a strong interest in annexation, as might have been anticipated. Caught in the emotions of the moment - anger at England, frustration about the economy and the unrepresentative colonial government, fear and envy of the United States, surprise at the sudden turn of events - a surge of support for annexation and all the imagined advantages which such a connection seemed to offer was a most natural reaction, even for natives of Great Britain, not to mention the hundreds of American and other foreign-born inhabitants who would not feel bound by sentimental attachments to a distant and neglectful Empire.

The wonder is that in 1867 annexationists accomplished so little and that the popular fascination with the idea dissipated so swiftly. Students of this period of British Columbian history generally have focused their attention on the 1869 phase of the annexation movement, debating and dissecting the famous petition and its 104 signatures far too much for the significance of the event, which scholars have concluded was inconsequential.[57] In doing so, they have neglected the one moment when annexationists may have had a genuine if limited opportunity to succeed. By 1869, it was already too late, regardless of the petition circulated that year. Confederation with Canada, while still two years hence, had become the most likely course for the future, especially since the Imperial Government had decided to compel the Hudson's Bay Company to sell its vast holdings in Rupert's Land to Canada, which would open to development the empty lands which separated British Columbia from the new Dominion. Furthermore, vacillating Governor Seymour, known for his coolness to union with Canada,

conveniently had died, and his replacement, Anthony Musgrave, was wholeheartedly committed to confederation.[58]

But in 1867, the future of British Columbia had not yet been so clearly revealed. Confederation was only a dream; Canada was remote, distant by hundreds of miles of Hudson's Bay Company lands; England clearly wished to reduce its responsibilities, perhaps its territories, in North America; the United States lay close by, wealthy, aggressive, attractive, confident and waiting. With the purchase of Alaska, the American Government seized the diplomatic initiative, and the news of Yankee designs on British Columbia must have struck many as only the next logical step in some grand scheme to block the confederation of Canada and to absorb the remaining British possessions in North America. This would explain the emotional reactions of British Columbians to that rumor. The report was outrageous; it was alarming; but it was believable. Psychologically, the moment for an annexation movement to appear could not have been more appropriate. There would never be a better time.

Fortunately for the future of Canada, no organized, imaginately-led group appeared to plead the cause of annexation and to take advantage of the brief opportunity which circumstances had provided; but this should not be taken as evidence that support for a union with the United States was small. Actually, we do not know the extent of the annexation movement nor who advocated it during its 1867 phase. Certainly, the Colonist exaggerated when it stated that "nine of ten" in the colony supported the idea, while the reports of American Consul Francis and attorney Johnson, which claimed that large majorities favored the principle, also must have been grossly excessive estimates. If such statements had been accurate, more would have been accomplished by the annexationists. On the other hand, the failure of the 1867 petition should not be considered indicative

or significant for at least three reasons. First, the originals have never been found, only the copy forwarded to Seward by Francis. It is not known how many signatures were obtained, but it would not be unreasonable to speculate that the number might have been as sizeable as that gathered on the 1869 petition, which was not large in any case. Second, backers of the 1867 document circulated their appeal in July, two months too late to benefit from the crest of the wave of interest in annexation which followed the British Columbia cession story. Third, the Johnson letter to Seward contains a very persuasive point concerning the willingness of British Citizens "to say or do anything which would subject them to the imputation of disloyalty."[59] Given the fact that support for annexation could be construed as treason, that such a stand could compromise one's business or social or political standing, and that by July it was probably too late to be effective, it seems unlikely that many in the colony with British backgrounds or status that depended upon the approval of the proper circles would have risked their well-being upon the futility of a petition. Consequently, no influential names are associated with the 1867 phase of the annexation movement, although Joseph D. Pemberton, former Colonial Surveyor and elected member of the Legislative Council from Victoria District in 1867, openly supported the idea in the early months of 1870 and may have favored such a union in 1867.[60] John S. Helmcken was suspected at the time of favoring annexation, but he always denied the allegation.[61] Nonetheless, it is certain that government officials and most prominent men opposed the idea, as might have been anticipated. Such leaders would have had little to gain by the absorbtion of the colony by the United States, but they would have had much to lose. The many appointed officials of the colonial government held their sinecures at the pleasure of the Governor and Her Majesty, and they could

expect nothing in exchange from the United States Government in the event of annexation. It is pertinent to note in this context that the appointed magistry of British Columbia, who composed the majority of the Legislative Council, opposed confederation as well from 1868 until 1871, until Governor Musgrave guaranteed them jobs or pensions if they but approved the confederation scheme.[62]

What, then, do we know of the annexation movement in 1867? Actually, we can be reasonably certain only that there was a brief but very real surge of pro-annexationist sentiment on Vancouver Island, which was sparked by news of the purchase of Alaska. Further, it seems very clear that the apex of support for this idea was reached immediately following the report of American efforts to obtain the colony, which produced a much more intense reaction in British Columbia than had the cession. Finally, it is obvious that pro-annexationist sentiment dissipated rapidly following the first weeks of May and that the movement could find few willing backers by early July. Beyond this, little can be said with assurance, save that the annexationists failed. Ultimately, this may have assured the Dominion of Canada a future, for it is difficult to imagine that nation surviving long as less than a transcontinental entity.

Chapter V

FOOTNOTES

[1]PRCA, Annex 6, Stoeckl to Gorchakov, 23 December, 1859/January 4, 1860. Translation by the author. For a more detailed discussion of the Russian motives in this regard see Chapter 2, part II, above.

[2]Ibid., Annex 13, draft of a memorandum, from Gorchakov, intended for Alexander II, December, 1866.

[3]For a detailed discussion of the views of Senator Sumner and the Senate see Chapter 3. For the opinions of American journalists refer to Chapter 4. The debates in the House of Representatives will be examined in Chapter 8. The activities and attitudes of Seward in this respect will be analyzed in Chapter 8, as well.

[4]Paul A. Phillips, "Confederation and the Economy of British Columbia," British Columbia & Confederation, edited by W. George Shelton, (Victoria: Morriss Printing Company for the University of Victoria, 1967), p. 61. This volume, published to commemorate Canadian Confederation, is the most thorough analysis of British Columbia at the time of the purchase of Alaska available in print. It includes articles on the major settlements in the colony, the economy, biographies of leading colonial politicians, an examination of the government as well as discussions of the issues and events leading to the union of British Columbia with Canada in 1871. The cession of Russian America was barely mentioned in this work, and its importance was completely overlooked. Also of value in providing a background for this period, but equally as devoid of recognition of the significance of the cession of Russian America, are the two standard histories of British Columbia: Margaret A. Ormsby, British Columbia: A History, student edition, (Vancouver: The Evergreen Press for MacMillan of Canada, 1971), Chs. 5-8. F. W. Howay, W. N. Sage, and H. F. Angus, British Columbia and the United States: The North Slope From Fur Trade to Aviation, (Toronto: The Ryerson Press, 1942), Ch. 8.

Values given here are in British Columbia dollars, which were officially set at $4.85 to the British pound sterling. American currency circulated freely in the colony at par. Paul A. Phillips, "Confederation and the Economy of British Columbia," p. 56; and Walter N. Sage, "The Critical Period of British Columbia History, 1866-1871," PHR, I (December, 1932), p. 430.

[5]Paul A. Phillips, "Confederation and the Economy . . .", pp. 58-59.

[6]Daily British Colonist, Victoria, British Columbia, June 5, 1866, and January 16, 1867.

[7]Paul A. Phillips, "Confederation and the Economy . . .", p. 62.

[8]Ibid., pp. 49, 52, 54-56 and 58.

[9]F. W. Howay, "The Attitude of Governor Seymour Towards Confederation," Proceedings and Transactions of the Royal Society of Canada, 3rd series, vol. XIV (Toronto: Copp-Clark Co., 1921), p. 34.

[10]F. W. Howay et al., British Columbia and the United States, p. 180.

[11]Ibid., p. 182: and Susan Dickinson Scott, "The Attitude of the Colonial Governors and Officials towards Confederation," British Columbia & Confederation, pp. 150-151.

[12]Daily British Colonist, Victoria, March 14, 1867.

[13]Paul A. Phillips, "Confederation and the Economy . . .", p. 60.

[14]F. W. Howay, et. al, British Columbia and the United States, pp. 184 ff. Musgraves's quote on p. 187.

[15]Walter N. Sage, "The Critical Period of British Columbia History, 1866-1871," p. 433. For a brief discussion of the early stages of the annexation movement, see: Donald 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), pp. 129-131.

[16]Daily British Colonist, Victoria, April 3, 1867, p. 2.

[17]Victoria News, as quoted in the San Francisco Daily Bulletin, April 12, 1867; and in the Daily Morning Oregonian, Portland, Oregon, April 19, 1867.

[18]NA, RG 59, "Dispatches from United States Consuls in Victoria, 1862-1906," Microcopy, T.-130, Reel 1, Francis to Seward, April 13, 1867.

[19]Daily British Colonist, Victoria, April 17, 1867.

[20]Public Record Office, Colonial Office, Original Correspondence - Secretary of State, C.O. 60, vol. 28, British Columbia, Despatches, 1867 April-Aug., pp. 79-84½, Seymour to the Duke of Buckingham, April 17, 1867, and appended minutes. This collection hereafter referred to as: PRO, C.O. 60/ vol. no.

[21]NA, RG 59, "Despatches from United States Consuls in Victoria, 1862-1906," Microcopy, T-130, Reel 1, Francis to Seward, April 23, 1867.

[22]NA, RG 59, "Miscellaneous Letters of the Department of State," Microcopy, M-179, Reel 256, W. Carey Johnson to William H. Seward, April 29, 1867, Oregon City, Oregon.

[23]Passenger manifests printed in the Portland Oregonian and the Victoria Daily British Colonist fail to mention the departure, arrival or return of any one by the name of W. Carey Johnson during the months of March and April, 1867. But such lists are far from all inclusive. Furthermore, it presupposes that Johnson travelled by a vessel such as the Fideliter, to which the press gave close attention. A lawyer by the name of W. Carey Johnson did live in Oregon City at the time of this incident. He was a partner in the firm of Johnson & McCowan, which advertised "particular attention given to contested land cases." A journey to Victoria to study the records of the Hudson's Bay Company from its period of occupation in the Oregon country seems a likely pursuit for an attorney engaged in disputed land litigations. The timing of this letter is probably incidental to the publication, a few days earlier, of the rumor of a scheme to purchase British Columbia. For information on Johnson, see: Oregon City Enterprise, January 19, 1867, under "Business Cards," p. 1, Microfilm, University of Washington Library. The Library has only this issue for 1867 and no additional ones until January, 1869, when Johnson was still advertised as a partner in the same law firm.

[24]Daily British Colonist, Victoria, April 25, 1867, under "Night Dispatches," p. 2. For a discussion of this rumor, its origins and the reactions of the American press, see Chapter 8.

[25]Ibid., April 25, 1867.

[26]Since the union of the Island and mainland colonies in November, 1866, a rivalry had developed between Victoria and New Westminster over the future seat of the colonial government. The Columbian spoke for local interests and those of the mainland in general who feared that the choice would fall on the larger Island community, which would inflict much financial hardship on land owners in New Westminster. Consequently, Robson lost no opportunity to use the Columbian as a vehicle to attack Victoria and question its suitability as a capital.

[27]British Columbian, New Westminster, April 27, 1867. The word "and" in parentheses, in the first major quotation in this paragraph, was inserted by the author for clarity.

[28]Daily British Colonist, Victoria, April 29, 1867.

[29]British Columbian, New Westminster, May 1, 1867, and the British Colonist, Victoria, May 2 and 4, 1867, for examples of articles accusing the News of this distinction.

[30]Victoria News, as quoted in the British Columbian, New Westminster, May 1, 1867.

[31]Victoria News, excerpts in the British Columbian, New Westminster, May 4, 1867.

[32]Nanaimo Tribune, as quoted in the British Columbian, New Westminster, May 18, 1867.

[33]British Columbian, New Westminster, May 1, 1867.

[34]Ibid., May 18, 1867.

[35]Ibid., June 1, 1867.

[36]Daily British Colonist, Victoria, May 2 and 4, 1867.

[37]Ibid., May 2, 1867.

[38]Ibid., More than half of the editorials published during May and early June dealt with these two topics. For pro-confederation columns, see: May 4, 20, 21, 23, 24, 27 and 28, and June 3 and 4, 1867. Three of these contrasted annexation unfavorably with confederation, May 20, 21, 27. For articles discussing problems in the United States, all from a negative viewpoint, see: May 13 (Congress), 14 (crime in New York), 15 (politics), 21 and 22 (a riot in Port Townsend, W.T.), 30 (negative effects on the U.S. of its refusal to renew reciprocity), and 31 (finances).

[39]Ibid., see letter to the editor, May 18, 1867, and an editorial on May 27, 1867.

[40]Ibid., May 22, 1867, p. 3 and two letters to the editor, May 23, 1867.

[41]PRO, C.O. 60/28, pp. 134-139, Microfilm, Frederick Seymour to the Duke of Buckingham, June 26, 1867, no. 7989, B. Columbia. The News may have recommenced publication later in the year, for it is mentioned as a pro-annexationist paper in a memorial dated January 29, 1868, addressed to the Governor-General of Canada from citizens of Victoria.

[42]Daily British Colonist, Victoria, May 27, 1867.

[43]PRO, C.O. 60/28, pp. 134-139,microfilm, Frederick Seymour to the Duke of Buckingham, June 26, 1867, no. 7989, B. Columbia.

[44]NA, RG 59, "Despatches from United States Consuls in Victoria, 1862-1906," Microcopy, T-130, Reel 1, Francis to Seward, July 2, 1867, note and enclosure.

[45]Daily British Colonist, Victoria, July 10 and 13, 1867.

[46]PRO, C.O. 60/28, pp. 134-139, Microfilm, Frederick Seymour to the Duke of Buckingham, June 26, 1867, no. 7989, B. Columbia.

[47]For an overview of the annexation movement in British Columbia, especially the later episodes and the 1869 Petition, see: Walter N. Sage, "The Annexationist Movement in British Columbia," Transactions of the Royal Society of Canada, 3rd series, vol. XXI (Toronto: Copp Clark, 1927), pp. 97-110, William E. Ireland, "The Annexation Petition of 1869", British Columbia Historical Quarterly, IV (October, 1940), pp. 267-287. William E. Ireland, "A Further Note on the Annexation Petition of 1869", British Columbia Historical Quarterly, V (April, 1941), pp. 67-72. Donald F. Warner, The Idea of Continental Union, pp.127-141.

[48]Daily British Colonist, Victoria, May 16, 1867. Victoria News, as extracted in the San Francisco Bulletin, April 12, 1867, and the Portland Oregonian, April 19, 1867. British Columbian, New Westminster, April 27, 1867.

[49]Daily British Colonist, Victoria, May 16, 1867.

[50]Provincial Archives, Victoria, British Columbia, John Sebastian Helmcken MSS., "Reminiscences", Vol. IV of the manuscript edition, p. 55. See also vol V. p. 69 for a further mention of the same story. The words in parentheses were inserted for clarity.

The overtures cited by Helmcken and mentioned to him by Gov. Douglas did, in fact, take place, but the British Government was not interested. For a brief discussion of this point see above, Chapter 1, section II.

[51]Daily British Colonist, Victoria, May 16, 1867.

[52]PRO, C.O. 60/28, pp. 79-84½, microfilm, Frederick Seymour to the Duke of Buckingham, April 17, 1867, no. 5839, B. Columbia. NA, RG 59, "Despatches from United States Consuls in Victoria, 1862-1906", Microcopy, T-130, Reel 1, Francis to Seward, April 23, 1867.

[53]NA, RG 59, "Miscellaneous Letters of the Department of State", Microcopy, M-179, Reel 256, W. Carey Johnson to William H. Seward, April 29, 1867, Oregon City, Oregon.

The timing of Johnson's observations in Victoria is open to question, but his comments probably concerned the period about or before April 25. The British Columbia purchase rumour was announced on that date, but it is unlikely that this event influenced his interpretation, for there does not seem to have been time for that. Writing from Oregon City on April 29, he could not have left Victoria later than April 25 or 26 and still have arrived at his home by the date of his note to Seward. Consequently it seems probable that his description of the sentiment in the port town concerned the feelings existing there earlier in the month, in the first stage of the reaction.

[54]Daily British Colonist, Victoria, April 29, 1867.

[55]Donald F. Warner, The Idea of Continental Union, pp. 129-130.

[56]Ibid.

[57]William E. Ireland, "The Annexation Petition of 1869," pp. 281-282, and "A Further Note on the Annexation Petition of 1869". See also: Donald F. Warner, The Idea of Continental Union, pp. 136-139; Margaret A. Ormsby, British Columbia: a History, pp. 243-244; F. W. Howay, et. al., British Columbia and the United States, pp. 199-200 and 205 ff.

William E. Ireland, late archivist of British Columbia and the principal authority on the annexation movement in that colony, has explained the accepted view of this incident as follows:

> Much has been written on the annexation movement in British Columbia and in the main its significance has been overplayed. It was primarily an expression of economic discontent . . . Within the colony it had a very precarious base for the leaders were for the most part foreign born, and it was confined almost entirely to Victoria for there is no evidence of a parallel movement on the mainland nor elsewhere on the island.

Ireland, "British Columbia's American Heritage, "Canadian Historical Association Annual Report, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1948), p. 71.

[58]F. W. Howay, "The Attitude of Governor Seymour Towards Confederation," p. 47; and Susan Dickinson Scott, "The Attitudes of the Colonial Governors and Officials Towards Confederation", pp. 145-148.

[59]NA, RG 59, "Miscellaneous Letters of the Department of State," Microcopy, M-179, Reel 256, W. Carey Johnson to William H. Seward, April 29, 1867.

[60]Walter N. Sage, "The Critical Period of British Columbia History", pp. 439-440.

[61]Donald F. Warner, The Idea of Continental Union, pp. 138-139.

[62]Susan Dickinson Scott, "The Attitude of the Colonial Governers and Officials towards Confederation", pp. 148-149.

Chapter VI

THE NORTHERN ASPECT:

Canadian Reactions to the Purchase of Russian America

"The Territory ceded, so far as is known, is of very little value to anyone. . . . The idea of anybody getting excited about this affair is simply ridiculous."

George Brown, Liber-Reform leader, editor, Toronto Globe, April 1, 1867.

"The immediate effect of the Russo-American treaty is plainly seen in the renewed eagerness of the American to annex Canada, and more particularly British Columbia."

Daily News, Kingston, Canada West, April 24, 1867.

"By that purchase the United States . . . sandwich British Columbia between California on the one side and this new purchase on the other, . . . so that the defense of our territory beyond the Rocky Mountains is almost impossible."

Hon. Joseph Howe, Nova Scotia, June, 1867.

"If the United States desire to outflank us on the West, we must accept this situation, and lay our hand on British Columbia and the Pacific Ocean. This country can not be surrounded by the United States - we are gone if we allow it - we should be in their hand when they choose to shut it."

Hon. Alexander T. Galt, speech, Lennoxville, C. W., May 22, 1867.

Canadians have long considered 1867 a crucial year in the history of their nation, but it proved to be a significant date for the British Empire as well. With the founding of the semi-autonomous Dominion of Canada, the British Government initiated a new policy for dealing with its most advanced colonies, a system which eventually evolved into the world-wide Commonwealth of Nations. In 1867, however, the future of Canada and the British position in North America seemed anything but secure. The purchase of Alaska by the United States, which preceded the inauguration of the Confederation of Canada by three months, threatened to thwart British and Canadian ambitions before the new venture had been fairly launched. As the Russian Government had hoped, the cession of their territories to the Americans had raised the possibility that the United States would annex the intervening English possessions; British Columbia and the Northwest Territories, the latter being the private preserve of the Hudson's Bay Company. William L. Morton, a distinguished Canadian historian, has written that if the absorption of Alaska had led to the purchase of the Northwest, Canada would have disintegrated and its "fragments" would have joined the "American union as best they might. The acquisition of the Northwest and British Columbia were therefore necessary to the completion of confederation and the creation of a Canadian nationality."[1] One could also speculate that the collapse of Canada in such a manner might have discouraged further experimentation by Great Britain with its novel concept of imperial relations.

Hindsight, however, tends to endow the historian with the keenest and most unnatural insights, an ability to discern realities not necessarily grasped by the residents of some past period being studied. From his mid-twentieth century vantage-point, Professor Morton can perceive correctly

the menace to the future of Canada inherent in the purchase of Alaska, but the danger may not have been so apparent to citizens of the emerging Dominion or to the leaders of their Government, who may not have developed the continental vision necessary to grasp the scope of the danger. This possibility suggests several questions regarding the cession of Russian America to the United States. Did Canadians recognize that the acquisition of the Russian colonies by the United States threatened the future of their new nation? Further, did they view the treaty as a menace to the position of the Empire in remote British Columbia, whose fate might decisively influence the eventual success or failure of Canadian Confederation? Finally, what action, if any, did the Canadian leadership recommend to guard against the loss of British Columbia to the United States?[2]

I

Initial reports of the American purchase of the Russian colonies arrived in the major centers of the Canadian and Maritime Provinces within forty-eight hours of the announcement of that treaty in the Senate of the United States. The first news of the event was published in various local newspapers as early as April 1, 1867, and in some instances, this intelligence was accompanied by editorial comment on this unexpected event. Consequently, the immediate reactions of the people of British North America perhaps can be analyzed most accurately by examining the attitudes expressed by their local journals. No other means of reflecting the popular will currently existed in much of that area. Queen Victoria had signed the British North America Act creating the Dominion of Canada on March, 29, 1867, but the official life of the new nation would not begin until July 1. In the interim, no effective central

government existed in the former Province of Canada (Canada East and Canada West), which could speak for its citizens. Its legislature had been prorogued in August, 1866, and it never met again, while its leaders had scattered widely, some remaining for a time in England following the successful completion of their efforts to bring about confederation. Only the legislatures in two Maritime Provinces, New Brunswick and Nova Scotia, were in session at the time of the American purchase of Alaska, and those bodies did not address themselves to this issue, as they were engaged in the problems of preparing their provinces and governments for union with the Canadas. Perhaps such administrations were not the appropriate vehicles for voicing an opinion on such a matter in any case. The views of the Canadian leadership, therefore, would not be known until they spoke out individually at a later time or until the subject arose during debates on other concerns in the first session of the First Parliament of the Dominion of Canada.

During the month of April, 1867, the majority of the editors of British North American newspapers commented in some manner on the purchase of Alaska. From a study of fifty representative journals from six provinces and the Red River colony in the Northwest Territory, several general observations can be made regarding the nature of the press reactions.[3] First a rather clear geographic pattern emerges with respect to the intensity of the editorial response and to whether or not publishers even dealt with the topic. Those provinces furthest removed from Russian America, such as Newfoundland and presumably Prince Edward's Island, demonstrated the least interest in the cession, while the provinces closest to the Pacific Northwest, Canada West and Canada East, showed the most curiosity and commented most often. Second, newspapers published in the four provinces committed to confederation showed a greater degree

TABLE III

Analysis of the British North American Press (49 Papers)[1]
(excluding British Columbia)

Province	Newfoundland			Pr. Ed. Island	Nova Scotia			New Brunswick			Canada East (Quebec)[2]			Canada West (Ontario)[2]			Sub-Totals			Totals
Type of Paper	d	s	w	w	d	s	w	d	s	w	d	s	w	d	s	w	d	s	w	
No. of Papers		5		1		11			6			12			14			49		49[3]
Daily	2				1			1			6			6			16			16
Semi-Weekly		1				7			3			5			1			17		17
Weekly			2	1			3			2			1			7			16	16
No Mention	1		1			1	1						1			1	1	1	4	6
No Opinion		1	1	1		1			1					1	1		1	3	3	7
Unimportant						2										1	0	2	1	3
Valueless	1			1		3	1			1	3	1		3	1	2	7	6	4	17
No Change						1				1	3	2		4		1	7	3	2	12
Danger to B.C.					1	1	1				4	1		5		2	10	2	3	15
Danger to Can.					1		1	2			1	1		2		1	4	3	2	9
Harmless											1	1		2			3	1	0	4
U.S. anti-G.B.					1		1	1	1		3	2		3	1	2	7	4	3	14
U.S. man. dest.					1	3	1				3	2		3		1	8	5	2	15
Fears Trouble in Europe								1	1		3	2		1	1	1	4	4	2	10
Fears secret treaty											3	1		2			5	1	0	6
Rus. anti-G.B.						1					2	1		2	1	1	4	3	2	9

Political Affiliations:[4]	NF.			PEI	NS.			NB.			CE.			CW.			Sub-Totals			Totals
Type of Paper	d	s	w	w	d	s	w	d	s	w	d	s	w	d	s	w	d	s	w	
No. of Papers		5		1		11			6			12			14			49		49
Anti-Confed.	1				1	3		1	1	1							3	4	1	8
Pro-Confed.	1		1	1		4	2		2								1	7	3	11
Conservative	2		1	1		4	1				2	1		3		2	7	6	4	17
Liberal-Reform					1	3					3			3		3	7	3	3	13
Bleu[5]											1	2			1		1	3	0	4
Rouge[5]												2					0	2	0	2
Independent		1	1				1		1				1			2	0	1	6	7

[1]Based on newspapers examined by the author.

[2]Canada West and Canada East were the political designations used before confederation for the present provinces of Ontario and Quebec respectively. The current names were not officially adopted until confederation occured on July 1, 1867. The terms Canada West and Canada East had been used since 1841 when the Union of the Two Canadas had been created by joining the earlier colonies of Upper Canada and Lower Canada (currently Ontario and Quebec respectively).

[3]The analysis covers 49 papers rather than the 50 journals actually researched. To save space on this Table, the Red River paper, The Nor'Wester, was excluded, because so few issues were seen that it was impossible to conclude anything about its position on the purchase or its political affiliation. Virginia Hancock Reid, in her work cited above, stated that the Nor'Wester was keenly interested in the purchase, but she did not explain its interpretation of the event.

[4]Designations based on information in P. B. Waite, The Life and Times of Confederation, Bibliographical Notes, pp. 334-338. In some instances, individual newspapers are given two classifications, such as Conservative - Anti-Confederate. Waite included information on the position of various journals vis-a-vis confederation only in the Maritime Provinces. Consequently, no attempt has been made by the writer to provide data on this in the Canadas.

[5]The terms "Bleu" (blue) and "Rouge" (red) were designations for the conservative (ultramontane) and liberal positions respectively in French Catholic Canada East. This split had long been a major one in the politics of that colony and had begun as far back as the period when the area had still been a colony of France before 1763 when colonial political and church leaders split over the issue of the ultimate control of the Church within New France. This basic split subsequently carried over into the British era as the conservative and liberal factions within the colony.

of concern about the treaty, while those which had rejected the pending union, Newfoundland and Prince Edward's Island, largely ignored the matter. Furthermore, the press in the two provinces most committed to the Dominion, Canada West and Canada East, reacted to the purchase more strongly than the journals printed in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick, where a sizeable anti-confederation sentiment persisted in 1867. This may indicate that in those areas which firmly approved the creation of the new Canadian nation, the American acquisition of Alaska was interpreted more often as a potential threat to the future of that emerging state. An analysis of Table III clearly suggests this conclusion. Third, as the foregoing might intimate, the reactions of the British North American press did follow political lines in some cases, despite the opinion of the editor of the Kingston, Canada West, Daily News, who observed, on April 3, 1867, that "In a matter of this kind, there being no room for party feeling, only independent views have been expressed."[4] While he seems to have been accurate in respect to both his own province and Canada East, there appears to have been a definate division of opinion in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick among the various newspapers based on their particular attitudes regarding confederation. Those publications which supported the imminent union tended either to ignore the cession or to treat it lightly, while those which opposed the Dominion generally focused attention on the imagined dangers to the new nation in the recent United States expansion. Perhaps the former wished to understate the potential damage done to confederation by the Russian-American treaty, while the latter may have hoped to use the anticipated difficulties as additional arguments against the impending Dominion.

The attitudes expressed by the British North American press towards the purchase of the Russian colonies by the United States can be divided

roughly into five categories. However, the reactions of most editors can not be classified neatly into only one of these groupings, for many of the writers examined the event from several aspects, while others changed their original opinion of the cession after further reflection. The latter occurence, furthermore, fit the pattern of response observed in the United States newspaper community, and seems to have been a reasonable manner in which to handle the subject editorially. The Yankee acquisition of Russian America was as unexpected in Canada as it had been in the Republic, and the British North American press hardly could be faulted for reacting immediately, as the occasion might seem to require, with an opinion that in time might require moderation.

One principal type of response consisted either of ignoring the event entirely or of merely publishing without comment one or more telegraph dispatches pertaining to the treaty. Thirteen of the fifty papers surveyed, approximately 25%, elected this course, with six of those choosing to print nothing whatsoever relevent to the cession. Examined geographically, four of the five journals from Newfoundland fell into this disinterested category, as well as the only newspaper included in the survey from Prince Edward's Island, and three of the eleven from Nova Scotia. The remaining five publications which ignored the acquisition were spread over the other three provinces. Analyzed by the frequency of their appearance, one discovers that this group consisted of six weekly, five semi-weekly and two daily papers. Obviously, the local nature of the weekly journals, their understandable primary concern with strictly regional matters, explains partially their decision to ignore the American expandsion. However, the greatest concontration of this attitude was centered in the Maritimes. This seems to suggest that a major reason for their lack of interest was geographic distance and isolation. Not only

were these provinces further from Russian America than the remaining British colonies on the continent, but Newfoundland, Prince Edward's Island and Nova Scotia traditionally had evidenced more concern for the affairs of the Atlantic World - especially Great Britain and the West Indies, - than for the problems of the interior regions of North America, particularly the western portions. This reasoning appears to be supported by the fact that, despite their natural tendency to focus on local issues, sixteen of the twenty weekly and semi-weekly publications in this survey from New Brunswick, Canada East and Canada West discussed the purchase of Alaska to the point of stating at least some opinion on the subject.

A second common manner of reacting to the cession was to treat the entire episode as an unimportant incident by describing the land acquired by the United States as valueless and by insisting that the impact of the territorial transfer on Canada and British interests would be negligible. Seventeen of the papers examined (33%) stated that the Russian colonies contained no resources of sufficient value to make possession of that northern region by the Americans worthwhile from a commercial viewpoint; although some of these journals did discern other motives for the purchase which might make the territory desirable for non-economic reasons. Twelve newspapers (c.25%) advised their readers not to be alarmed by the treaty because the transaction had abridged no rights previously enjoyed by citizens of British North America, despite flamboyant claims to the contrary in the American press.

The Toronto Daily Globe, one of the most prestigious papers published in the British provinces, edited by George Brown,[5] the influential leader of the Reform Party in Canada West, dismissed the entire event by asserting on April 1, that "The territory ceded, so far as is known, is of very little value to anyone. . . . The idea of anybody getting excited about this affair

is simply ridiculous."[6] Brown did note that the American Government had political motives for the purchase, but he considered these to be inconsequential. The Evening Reporter of Halifax, Nova Scotia, also reacted with disdain, stating that "The occupation of Russian America by the Americans is of little practical importance."[7] The purchase had been ill-advised, the editor suggested, because "the Americans before endeavoring to expand their territory would do well to give a little homogeneity and unity to their present distracted country" by first bringing the North and South together. Nevertheless, the Reporter continued, Canadians could rejoice over the cession if American possession managed to bestow upon the "semi-barbarous population" the benefits of civilization and religion which the Russians had denied them.[8]

The Perth Courier, Canada West, could discern little value in the ceded land, for it could "never be used for agricultural purposes." As for British American interests, the Courier declared that "It is a matter of indifference who owns the country, . . ."[9] The Montreal Herald expressed its joy that the Russian colonies had not been offered to Canadian leaders for the same $7,000,000, for its editor was convinced that either Mr. Brown or Mr. Cartier[10] "would have jumped at the chance" of buying it. In such an event, the Herald mused, most British American newspapers would have hailed the acquisition for the benefits it would bring to Canada. Thankfully, the editor of the Herald noted, "A kind Providence, which it is said keeps watch over fools, has fortunately put this piece of progress and aggrandizement out of our reach."[11]

Among the several British American journals which stressed the belief that the purchase had changed nothing pertaining to the rights of British citizens was the Quebec Gazette, which observed:

> that so far as the British nation is concerned, we fail to see what great difference it makes whether the uninhabited land ceded by Russia to the United States continues the property of the former or the latter. It neither adds to or diminishes from the territory of England. As before the purchase, so now after it, we hold all we owned and all that was worth holding.[12]

The Montreal Gazette carried this view further, advancing the theory that the fur and fish resources of the former Russian colonies, the only products of value found there, would not "be exclusively enjoyed by the American people." An earlier convention between England and Russia, the Gazette's editor incorrectly asserted, would remain in force and would give British citizens continued free access to these items. Thus, the United States would be saddled with the cost of maintaining their new possessions, but they would gain nothing by occupancy, because they would be unable to bar the British from their new lands. Consequently, the editor of the Montreal Gazette maintained that the event was one that "Canadian people may regard with perfect equanimity. It in no way interferes with their convenience, and deprives them of no right or privilege they have ever enjoyed."[13]

Despite such counsels of indifference, approximately half of the British American newspapers surveyed discerned aggressive intent on the part of the United States in the purchase of the Russian colonies. Some of these journals were genuinely alarmed by such designs, but others considered the American expansion to be both harmless in regard to British interests and normal behavior for their acquisitive southern neighbor.

A third type of attitude expressed by the press, therefore, viewed the transaction as intentionally hostile to Great Britain while being within the context of the customary aggressive expansion for which the Republic had become famous. Fourteen of the fifty papers examined in this study (c.28%) interpreted the purchase as an act aimed at injuring

Great Britain and her interests in North America, while fifteen of these journals assessed the treaty as but another step towards the realization of the United States objective of absorbing the entire North American continent, and one well within the stated scope of the Monroe Doctrine.

The Ottawa Citizen succinctly voiced the first of these viewpoints by describing the purchase as "a bold attempt to show unfriendliness to Great Britain, and the British American Colonies," because the territory obviously had "not been acquired on account of its intrinsic value."[14] The Hamilton, Canada West, Evening Times read the same motive into the treaty. Its editor asserted that "no one will question it is an unfriendly act upon the part of both Russia and the United States; and," he added acidly, "it may be regarded as a grateful return to England for her refusal to join France in her proposed attempt to secure the independence of the Southern Confederacy . . . ."[15]

In Canada East, where the dominant Roman Catholic majority tended to observe the activities of the American Government suspiciously and to interpret them negatively, the purchase of the Russian colonies proved to be no exception to this general attitude of distrust. The Quebec Morning Chronicle, describing the value of the territory as "triffling," considered the event to be:

> a transaction of very great importance. ... . (and) the most overt demonstration of an aggressive purpose towards Great Britain and her possessions on this continent that has yet been made. It is the plainest possible indication of a hostile policy, and of a settled purpose to acquire possession of the northern part of the continent. There has been no concealment indeed of this purpose on the part of the Americans.[16]

The French language paper L'Ordre of Montreal also evaluated the purchase as evidence of "a hostile attitude vis-a-vis England, . . ;"[17] while Le Pays, another organ of the French community in Montreal, declared that

the United States hoped "to drive the English from the Northwest, from Canada, from the Gulf of the St. Lawrence; . . ."[18]

In New Brunswick, the Major anti-confederation journals, while cognisant of the American intentions, reserved their major criticism for the British Government for permitting this situation to develop. The Morning Freeman of St. John described the event as being "of the most startling character," one which had "produced absolute consternation" at the British Embassy in Washington. "There was a time," the Freeman continued:

> when this would not have been done until Great Britain had been consulted, and its objections had been removed; but all that is changed now, and when, within one week, we hear that the Confederation Scheme has been consummated, and that Russia transfers her territories on this continent, we hear but two items of the same intelligence. . . and Great Britain, through fear, and in her anxiety to escape from the difficulties of her position, sets to work to prespare her territories for the annexation which she has rendered inevitable, but to which she does not wish to appear as party.[19]

The St. John Globe, New Brunswick's only daily and its leading journal, judged the cession to be "one of the most remarkable signs of the times." European powers had begun to withdraw from North America in the face of the might of the United States, "and it (was) evident that Great Britain would do the same." Her Majesty's Government, the Globe suggested, "would never send a man or fire a gun to prevent" its American colonies from being absorbed by the United States. According to the Globe, Samuel Leonard Tilley, leader of the pro-confederation part in the province, and R. D. Wilmot, his close associate, both interpreted the purchase in this manner.[20]

In Nova Scotia, both pro and anti-confederation newspapers considered the cession to be an indication of the United States' desire to occupy the entire North American continent and a sign that the concepts upon which the Monroe Doctrine was based had not been abandoned. The Morning Chronicle, the only daily publication in the colony and the principal organ supporting Joseph Howe, the acknowledged leader of the Anti-confederation

party and one of Nova Scotia's most influential citizens, declared that "the purchase of Russian America has startled English diplomats from their sleep; it has shown them that the Government of the United States is preparing to carry out the Monroe Doctrine to its full extent, . . ." The editor of the Chronicle rejected the "bravado" of Colonial authorities who ridiculed the cession as "foolishness", because underneath these men must realize that the acquisition was "the first move in the great game which Washington authorities are about to play for the possession of all North America."[21] The Halifax Sun, another anti-confederation journal, saw the United States as a nation "whose far reaching ambition aspires . . . to the absorption of this entire continent. The Americans make no secret of such an ultimatum," the Sun explained, "and their acquisition of this bleak, barren and fog enshrouded land seems a step in that direction."[22] The Reporter, an advocate of confederation, refused to be alarmed by the purchase or to attach much importance to the event, but it did admit that the transaction "gives an indication of the predominant idea among a large number . . . of Americans, that the Stars and Stripes should float over the whole continent in the course of time."[23]

The press of Canada East had little doubt that the ultimate objective of the United States exceeded the present acquisition. Even the Montreal Gazette, which generally ridiculed the purchase as worthless, admitted that "they wish to rule the whole of the North American Continent, and at present we are standing in their way."[24] The Montreal Witness, which did not find the cession immediately threatening, speculated that it might "be an indication that the Pan-American idea has taken possession of the American mind, . . ." In that case, its editor observed, "permanent peace cannot be expected between British America and the United States." If the Monroe Doctrine was "to be heartily embraced . . . and means employed to unite the

whole of North America, . . . under one flag, then indeed the significance of this purchase will be very great." the Witness concluded.[25] Finally, Le Pays, a representative of the French-Canadian press, voiced its concern for the future of European powers in North America.

> The United States wants to possess all North America, and they will succeed in doing it. The Monroe Doctrine, which rejects all European intervention on the American continent, will oppose, henceforth, all European possessions on the same continent.
>
> We are seeing today the opening of the dance, and the United States will make the capitals of the old world dance to the tune.[26]

A fourth perspective taken by many in the newspaper community of British North America, one related generally to the concerns expressed in the preceding category, focused on the belief that the annexation of Russian America was not only hostile to Great Britain and indicative of the continental designs of the United States, but that specifically it had raised a very real and very deliberate threat to the future of emergent Canada and to the Crown Colony of British Columbia. Nine of these journals (c. 20%) interpreted the cession as a menace to the Dominion, while fifteen (30%) insisted that the purchase would endanger British Columbia. Several others, while denying that the United States would achieve anything by such machinations, did agree that the Washington Government had arranged for the treaty with such expectations in mind.

"The object of the United States Government in obtaining this vast tract of sterility on the North Pacific shore . . . is quite manifest," the Hamilton Evening Times stated in its initial reaction to the treaty. "It is to confine the new Confederation . . . to the smallest limit . . . and to place a barrier between British America and the Pacific Coast. The territory is of no other earthly use to the United States; . . ."[27] However, as did several other Canadian journals, the Times later softened its

severe interpretation and decided that the acquisition was not, afterall, "a grave misfortune to British America," but merely a transfer of sovereignty between two nations, neither of which were friendly to British interests anyway.[28] The Ottawa Times, Canada West, although still uncertain of the validity of the cession reports, observed, on April 1, that if true "it is no favorable omen of future peace. Russian America," the Times went on, "can be of no immediate, and of very little remote, advantage to the United States, unless with the view to the annexation of the British Northwest Territories and the British Colonies on the Pacific, . . ."[29] By the following day, however, the editor had decided that despite the obvious malicious objectives of the United States, "it does not by any means follow that they will succeed in realizing them".[30]

A local contemporary, the Ottawa Citizen, recalled recent history to note the possible dangers of the treaty. Describing Russian America as a "comparative worthless piece of territory," the Citizen's editor pondered the possible arguments which Secretary of State Seward might have employed to convince a reportedly hostile Senate to accept the bargain. "It is conceivable," he suggested, "that those reasons had reference to the advantage which the United States would possess over England by getting hold of the territory. It is not improbable," the Citizen concluded, "that a similar difficulty to the Oregon boundary question may arise out of the acquisition."[31] It is not likely that many Canadians had to be reminded of the outcome of that particular episode. The Montreal Witness had foreseen this event in its initial reaction to the treaty on April 2. Although the editor of the Witness did not expect the cession to effect British America "in any way", it might stimulate "the United States to efforts to connect their separate dominions. . . . An ill-defined boundary line," he pointed out, "may . . . lead to disputes between fur hunters and gold

seekers, and even between the British and American Governments."[32]

The French language paper L'Ordre of Montreal described the new American expansion as "the natural consequence of the advent of our Confederation, . . . and a continuing menace to us."[33] Anti-confederation journals in the Maritime Provinces interpreted the event in the same manner, as an American retaliation for the creation of the Dominion of Canada.[34] But the Kingston Daily News, Canada West, came to a similar conclusion, commenting that "the purchase of Russian America . . . is a counterstroke, or intended as such, to the triumphant march of Confederation."[35]

The anti-confederation press of the Maritimes identified the cession as a menace to British Columbia as well as to the new Dominion. The Morning Freeman of St. John, New Brunswick, believed that the new territory would be of great value to the United States, because "It will give her the Western frontage of British America for hundreds of miles," and command of all but the British Columbian portion of the Pacific Coast. Henceforth, the Freeman continued, American lands "will . . . lie to the North and West of British America as well as to the South of it, and the work of absorbing the Provinces will be accelerated."[36] The Halifax Sun observed that possession of the former Russian colonies would cause the Americans to "want a way of communication by land, which would cut in two the long line of the Confederation, separating from the other portions of the Dominion the important one of British Columbia." The United States would try to obtain this connecting land through whatever means proved feasible, even overt aggression, the Sun's editor suggested, but "If force were attempted, it is within the limits of possibility that, at the end of the struggle, all the British possessions on the Pacific would fall into the hands" of the Americans.[37] The influential Morning Chronicle of Halifax took a similar position, outlining a gloomy future for the British possessions on the

Pacific Coast.

> By their purchase the Americans have secured fifteen hundred miles of additional coast line - half of which shuts in our territories from the sea; . . . and more, by hemming in British Columbia on both sides; and by obtaining possession of the rivers in their territory which British subjects have by treaty the right of navigating have secured an easy way of quarreling with the obnoxious New Nationality. One thousand additional miles of our Colonial frontier are thrown open to the encroachments of the Americans, who will, no doubt, worry British Columbia, and her allies as far as the Atlantic, into war, or an ignominious surrender of the whole Pacific coastline.[38]

The Kingston Daily News, Canada West, originally took an opposite view of the impact of the purchase on British Columbia, but time and additional consideration led to a marked alteration in the ideas printed by this important journal. Kingston was the home riding of John A. Macdonald, architect of confederation, leader of the Liberal-Conservative Party of Canada West and soon to be the first Prime Minister of the Dominion, a post he would hold almost continuously, but for a five year interlude, until his death in 1891. As one of two Conservative organs in Kingston and a consistent supporter of Macdonald's policies, the Daily News may have reflected rather well the thinking of its foremost citizen.[39]

In its initial reaction to the event, on April 1, the News confidently asserted that the cession "cannot shut us out from the Pacific while Vancouver's Island and British Columbia remain in our possession; and as for hemming us in, it gives us the opportunity of detaching the northern colony from the United States should there be any resort to hostilities between the United States and Great Britain."[40] Within two days, however, the boasting had diminished, as the editor of the News conceded the motives of the Washington Government. The Americans, he admitted, "imagined" that "British America . . . would inevitably drift into the American Union by the force of political annexation;" and he charged Seward "with having

taken both fair and foul means to hasten such an anticipated but nevertheless hopeless result. In such a light," the News concluded, "the acquisition of Russian America by the Yankees . . . is really a menace directed against our peace, our existence."[41] Within a fortnight, the editor no longer seemed certain about the future of the Pacific colonies, as he noted that "The acquisition of Russian America seems but to have whetted the popular appetite, and to have strengthened the idea of getting hold of the intervening country, at least on the Pacific side."[42] Following an additional week of reflection, during which the rumor of Seward's offer to buy British Columbia had circulated, the editor's assurance had disolved completely. In his April 24 leader, the spokesman for the News confessed that while there might be debate among Americans regarding the "economic value of Russian America . . . there is considerable unanimity in the view that with this northern territory a part of the United States, it is now highly desirable to complete the connection by land by the annexation of British Columbia," a goal which he fully expected the Americans to pursue. But the editor's newly aroused apprehensions did not end there. "We have to look to the integrity of our own and the Atlantic Provinces. The game that proved successful in British Columbia would be speedily repeated in Canada and New Brunswick."[43]

With this threat in mind, the Daily News urged measures which might frustrate the intentions of the American Government, advocating in particular, the speedy admission of British Columbia into the Dominion regardless of the obvious geographic and communication impediments which lay in the path of such a consummation. Accomplishment of this goal, the News advised, would "effectually undo the annexationist arrangements planned by Mr. Seward."[44] Other British North American journals also pressed for action by the new Dominion Government to counter the American menace, and

several suggested that the purchase of the Russian colonies might provoke Canadians into taking steps essential to the growth of a stronger union. The Ottawa Times argued that "If our statesmen are wise they will see (in the cession) additional reasons for pushing forward the colonization of the North-west Territory, and pushing the means of communication through the entire length of British America."[45] The Quebec Mercury pleaded the same cause, proposing that the people of Canada should use the American acquisition "as arguments for the extention of her railway system to the shores of the Pacific."[46] Such a road, the Mercury claimed, in words reminiscent of the expansionist credo of the United States, would "bring Canada into direct communication with China and all Eastern Asia." The construction of such a road, the Mercury confidently predicted, had been rendered "merely a question of time" by the Yankee purchase of the Russian territories.[47] Later, shortly after the formal commencement of the Dominion on July 1, the Toronto Daily Globe suggested that:

> The Union with British Columbia is our best answer to the boastings of Mr. Seward, and the best bulwark against the acquisition of Walrussia. Let us make a junction with the Pacific coast - let us establish a strong and equitable Government - and before many years the authorities at Washington will be very well pleased to sell us Walrussia for very much less than that which they have paid to the Russian Government.[48]

Considering that this advice presumably came from George Brown, editor of the Globe and a leader of the Liberal-Reform Party of the new Dominion, it may have been indicative of the position which that party would take henceforth on the issues of westward expansion and the admission of British Columbia. Furthermore, it may be significant that of the four newspapers cited above which supported the idea of expansion as a means of countering the American acquisition of Alaska, two were Conservative and two were Reform. This may have presaged wide-spread support from both major parties for these policies as a possible response to the cession.

Finally, as evidence of the pervasive conviction that the purchase of the Russian colonies was intended to compromise the Dominion and British Columbia, a number of newspapers which discounted the seriousness of the threat did admit that they saw such schemes as a principal motive behind the treaty. The Toronto Daily Globe, which counseled its readers, in its April 1 analysis, not to become excited about the affair, had no doubt that "The sole object of the United States Government . . . (was) the miserable advantage . . . of shutting off the northern portion of British Columbia from direct access to the Pacific Ocean." The Americans, George Brown continued, could be expected to make "themselves as unpleasant as possible to the bold pioneers who penetrate the northern regions of British Columbia."[49] The Quebec Gazette, which ridiculed the American enthusiasm over the treaty and discounted the reality of any danger to British Columbia, nevertheless urged the swift expansion of full rights to all the British communities in North America, so that "no Englishman will be tempted to renounce his fealty to Queen Victoria, and the seven millions of dollars spent in the purchase of a Russian province will not have the weight of a feather in deciding the fate of any loyal settlement or colony in British North America."[50] And even the Montreal Gazette, which mocked the pessimism of the British press and refused to regard the cession as a serious problem for the Dominion, did admit the probable inspiration for the treaty. "The purchase may, indeed," its editor confessed, "be intended . . . as an answer to the Canadian Confederation; but if so it is an answer which does not disconcert us in the least, . . ."[51]

The fifth and final category in the spectrum of reactions of the British North American press to the cession of Russian America centered on fears that the transaction might be more than a mere transfer of territory between two traditionally friendly nations. Ten of the newspapers in this

survey (20%) expressed the conviction that the Russian-American treaty signified that England and France could expect increased trouble in Europe from the regime of Alexander II, who had sold his North American colonies presumably to be freer to deal with the important issues of that continent, especially the vexatious Eastern Question. Six publications (12%) were apprehensive that the agreement between Russia and the United States might contain secret clauses which pledged the Washington Government to assist the czarist regime in various potential European crisises; while nine of the journals (18%) in this study interpreted the sale as a deliberate attempt by Russia to antagonize Great Britain.

The editor of the Halifax, Nova Scotia, Sun probably came closer than any of his British American press contemporaries to sensing one of the basic Russian motives for the sale of their North American territories. In a column published on April 8, the Sun surmised that Russian diplomats, "seeing the difficulty likely to occur between the two Anglo-Saxon nations, threw the territory down as a bone of contention, hoping to embroil England with the United States," leaving the czarist regime free to advance its interests in Europe to the injury of Her Majesty's Government. On one point the editor of the Sun was certain, "Russia looks with greedy eyes upon certain rich possessions of England, and would employ any and every means to gain possession of them."[52]

In Canada West, the Kingston Daily News, in its first response to the treaty, wondered if the Russian sale of its North American colonies had not been "a measure of preparation looking forward to a war with a great naval power, perhaps Great Britain or France, or the two combined." Considering the troubled state of the Eastern Question, such an interpretation seemed reasonable, the editor of the News added.[53] The Ottawa Times observed that the cession recognized "the warm friendship subsisting between the two

governments," one based on their "common lust for self-aggrandizement." However, the editor of the Times suggested, such mutual admiration hardly could explain the surrender of the Russian colonies to the United States "without its equivalent having been bargained for, either in the way of direct assistance to Russia in her Eastern project, or of making a diversion against England" while the Czar pursued his agressive schemes in Europe.[54]

But such suspicions, although plausible to the editors who advanced them, found wide acceptance only in Canada East, especially from the French language press. One half of the journals examined from this province, including three of the six published in French, subscribed to some portion of this "European complications-secret clauses" theory of motivation. In addition, Le Canada, the only paper printed in French from Canada West, apparently supported some of these views.

The Quebec Morning Chronicle, an English language paper, believed that the stimulus for the treaty was "exclusively a political one, to cement an understood alliance with Russia, . . ."[55] Le Courier du Canada addressed itself to a similar point, in its April 3 column, stating that the treaty would cause "a commotion in Europe" because it was "the symptom of a close union between Russia and the United States, a union that the western powers of Europe are interested in destroying."[56]

Le Journal de Quebec and Le Journal des Trois-Rivieres both focused on the probability that Russia had sold its territories in return for an alliance with the United States on the Eastern Question, but the latter was exceptionally bitter in its comments on the treaty. Describing Russia and the United States as "ambitious powers" with "despotic" objectives, the Three Rivers paper warned of the inherent dangers of such an entente.

> One can not help but ask with what objective did Russia concede to the United States its possessions on the American continent? Is it for some service rendered? Is it the

> indemnity for some damage, for some loss for which Russia would have incurred responsibility? No, it is nothing of the sort. Isn't it, on the contrary, to be able to count in some foreseeable time on the aid of the American Republic that they have shown their generosity? Isn't it in order to recover on the one hand what they have ceded on the other? This idea is very much to be feared. It is for all the great powers interested in finding a good solution to the Eastern Question to see to it. It is for them to foresee the dangers which would result from a war where the United States and Russia would agree to extend their domination to the detriment of the peace, prosperity, independence and liberty of the other nations.[57]

But perhaps the most exaggerated statement made on this topic came from the Canada West journal Le Canada, in a column signed "Minerve". The writer dismissed the idea that the cession had increased the United States danger to the English possessions, which "had never been taken seriously" in any case. But the implications for world peace were another matter. The cession was "a manifestation of Russian-American politics," he declared, "And a warning to the powers who are not disposed to submit to these two powers who menace the world with a despotism and a tyranny unheard of in history."[58]

This generally hostile attitude of the French-Canadian press to the United States and the purchase of the Russian colonies probably can be explained by two factors. First, the French community in British North America existed as a Gallic and Roman Catholic island in a sea of English and Protestant culture. Flanked on nearly every side by Anglo-Saxon communities dominated by the Protestant persuasion, the French in Canada East had maintained their identity by rigidly insisting upon their rights to their own language, schools and church. As a part of British North America, the French-Canadians had succeeded in preserving these essentials through stubborn intransigence, cultural and religious orthodoxy, and with the acquiescence of the British Government. However, few French leaders could have doubted the probable results of the submersion of their way of

life into the aggressive Protestant, democratic and English civilization of the United States via annexation or any other process. Consequently, the French-Canadian community of British North America understandably had been consistantly suspicious of any United States activities or policies which seemed to threaten the future of the privileged position they enjoyed under British protection. In addition, the heritage of ill-will which existed between the French of Canada and the Americans south of the international boundary extended back two centuries to the warfare, often undeclared, which had highlighted the history of the French Empire in North America in its relations with the English settlements to the south. The independent United States simply inherited the burden of this enmity. Therefore, the suspicion with which the Canada East and especially the French-Canadian press viewed the purchase of the Russian colonies by the United States derived more from the traditional hostility of that segment of the Canadian community to any activity of the American Republic which might influence the well-being of British America than from any particular distrust of the transfer of the Russian territories to the Washington Government.

A final possible cause of the French attitude towards the cession of Alaska, especially as it concerned their interest in the effect of the treaty on Europe, amy be related to the naturally greater interest of those people in the affairs of the Old World. In the nineteenth century, French-Canadian life tended to be highly local in focus, centered around and dominated by the Roman Catholic Church through the village priest. Frenchmen in British America tended to ignore events outside their own province which did not appear to threaten directly their particular way of life; but they did express some interest in the problems of Europe, especially as they concerned France and Great Britain. Therefore, it is not surprising to find the

French-Canadian press alert to the difficulties which the purchase of the Russian colonies by the United States might cause for the motherland, to which sentiment still tied them if politics did not, and for the nation which protected them in their special existence from the opposition of hostile English majorities all around them.

II

The opinions of the various nationally prominent leaders of the Dominion of Canada regarding the sale of Russian America to the United States are difficult to ascertain. Unlike the journalistic fraternity of British North America, the men who presumably would direct the destinies of the yet unorganized Dominion Government were under no immediate compulsion to comment upon the cession. A national administration would not exist officially until July 1, 1867. The first Cabinet had yet to be formed; and the initial national elections, to be followed by the convening of the First Parliament, were months away when news of the Russian-American treaty arrived. Furthermore, many of the prominent politicians of British America had journeyed to England the previous year to negotiate the confederation of Canada, and some did not return for weeks following the purchase of the Russian colonies. In the meantime, no appropriate body existed which legitimately could address itself to the issue in the name of the Dominion of Canada. Subsequently, by the time that the new nationality became a legal reality, it was no longer encumbant upon the leaders of the first administration, such as Sir John A. Macdonald and Sir George Cartier, to speak out on an event already three months past. Finally, perhaps because the elapsed time made any direct debate on the subject meaningless, the First Parliament of Canada never specifically discussed

the cession after it convened for its initial session in November, 1867.

Nevertheless, it is possible to determine to some degree the attitudes of these new Canadian leaders to the American acquisition of Alaska, for they did comment on the event in various ways through the Canadian press, in occasionaly speeches to their constituents on subjects not necessarily germaine to Russian America, and in remarks made in debate on peripheral topics during sessions of the Parliament of Canada. Citizens of the new Dominion were not unmindful of the importance to their future of westward expansion beyond the Great Lakes into the Northwest Territories and British Columbia, and many of their political spokesmen were especially sensitive to this requirement. It was generally in the context of a discussion of these topics that these leaders spoke out on the American purchase of Alaska.

The importance to British North America of the eventual political disposition of the Russian colonies on that continent had been recognized by some Canadians long before 1867. Twelve years earlier, Alfred R. Roche, a minor civil servant in the Government of Canada and an ardent advocate of westward expansion, had published a tract in which he described the geography and resources of Russian America, criticized the neutrality agreement between the Russian fur company and the Hudson's Bay Company which had saved those possessions from seizure during the current Crimean War, and urged their annexation to forestall their eventual cession to the United States. Evaluating these Russian colonies as "the most desirable which we could wrest" from the Czar, Roche argued that "the greatest misfortune, which could happen to us in that quarter, would be, to allow (them) to fall into the possession of France or the United States; . . ."[59] Roche was convinced that Russia deliberately had chosen not to develop its holdings in North America in recognition of the fact that they could not be held

against a hostile power, and he believed that an understanding existed between the United States and the czarist regime for the former to acquire the Russian territories at some future time to prevent them from being seized by Great Britain. Anticipating one of the arguments which some Canadian newspapers would employ in 1867, Roche suggested that "embroiling England and France in a war with America, together with the receipt of several millions, sterling, from the latter, would be a very acceptable-compensation to Russia for the loss of her possessions upon this continent."[60] Of the greatest concern to Roche, however, was the threat to the British colonies of an American occupation of that land, "for so soon as it should fall into the hands of the Americans," he warned, "the latter would commence those encroachments upon the British possessions in its neighborhood, . . ."[61] Given the apparent generous circulation of this tract, it is probable that some of the men destined to lead the new Dominion in 1867 were familiar with Roche's views and may have subscribed to his distrust of the American presence in Alaska.

Among the leaders of the Dominion who discerned a menacing intent in the new American acquisition was D'Arcy McGee, chieftain of the Irish Catholic faction in Canada and a stout proponent of confederation, whose advocacy of that idea had been essential to its acceptance in Canada East. Writing shortly after the purchase, from Paris, France, where he had stopped on his way to Rome apparently to seek a papal sanction for confederation, McGee warned that:

> the people of all Canada have much reason to look with suspicion on the sudden and unaccounted for acquisition of Russian America by the United States. The secret history of that acquisition must as yet remain unknown; but the motive is obvious enough. . . . To us, it is directly, an attempt to outflank our fellow countrymen on the Pacific: . . .

But the noted Irish orator expressed his confidence that the Americans would fail in their objectives, for he believed that the purchase "must

have . . . the effect of hastening the Union of our countrymen there" in British Columbia into the Dominion.[62]

Another prominent Canadian politician who spoke on the cession of Russian America during the interim between the announcement of the treaty and the commencement of the Dominion Government was Alexander Tilloch Galt. As a leader of the Liberal-Conservative Party and spokesman for the Protestants of Canada East, the principal voice of the railroad interests in Canadian politics and one of the earliest advocates and a leading architect of the federation of British North America, the Hon. Mr. Galt enjoyed great influence in the pre-Dominion days of 1867. In a speech delivered at Lennoxville, Canada East, on May 22, 1867, at a banquet in his honor, the former finance minister of Canada stressed his committment to confederation as the only means by which the nation could escape annexation to the United States. He concurred with the recently published views of D'Arcy McGee on the cession, and added that "I for one look upon the acquisition of Russian America by the United States as their answer to the arrangements we have been making to unite among ourselves." The duty of all Canadians, he continued, was to press for the admission to the Union of British Columbia, which was appealing for such communion at that very instant. This was imperative, he explained, because:

> There is only one way in which a policy of agression can be met. If the United States desire to outflank us on the West, we must accept this situation, and lay our hand on British Columbia and the Pacific Ocean. This country can not be surrounded by the United States - we are gone if we allow it - we should be in their hand when they choose to shut it.[63]

George Brown, editor of the Toronto Globe and chieftain of the Liberal-Reform Party, who had scorned the Russian-American treaty originally as being unimportant, by mid-summer was advocating the same policy as McGee and Galt, his political opponents. "The Union with British Columbia" he saw as the "best answer" to the American ambitions.[64]

One of the principal opponents of confederation, Joseph Howe of Nova Scotia, addressed himself to the issue of the cession in a series of speeches in his home province during the late spring and early summer of 1867. The eminent Nova Scotian interpreted the event as "a diplomatic slap in the face" for England, which had made "the hold of Great Britain upon this continent . . . more precarious, while the difficulties of the Confederacy are proportionately increased." Eager to use the unexpected development as an argument against confederation, Howe stressed the "sandwiching" of British Columbia by California and the new acquisition, which rendered the defense of British "territory beyond the Rocky Mountains . . . almost impossible." His poor grasp of Pacific coast geography was matched by his unrealistic predictions for the sparkling commercial future of the new American possession. Surrounded by such opulence, Howe asked how British Columbia could be persuaded to enter the Dominion. However, the dogged opponent of confederation concluded, "the worst feature of this transaction is the internal evidence it bears of the intimate relations between Russia and the United States, out of which may grow political enterprises that no man can foresee."[65]

As for John A. Macdonald, soon to be the first Prime Minister of the Dominion and the dominant political figure in Canada in 1867 and for many years to come, his views are more difficult to determine. His long advocacy of confederation and his subsequent labors in support of the admission of British Columbia into the Canadian union and the cementing of that bond through a trans-continental railroad, make it quite clear that he envisioned a Dominion stretching from the Atlantic to the Pacific. Consequently, it would be reasonable to argue that he must have been sensitive to real or potential threats to such a dream. The United States purchase of Russian America and the later rumors of an attempt to buy British Columbia well

might have appeared to be such a menace, but apparently Macdonald never admitted this publicly. However, some indication of his probable reaction to the cession can be deduced from various statements that he made on other issues.

In a letter written in 1865, in reference to his support for Canadian expansion into the Northwest Territories, he explained that "I would be quite willing, personally, to leave that whole country a wilderness for the next half-century, but I fear if Englishmen do not go there, Yankees will . . ."[66] Clearly, Macdonald was conscious of the potential of American rivalry for control of the West, and he could have interpreted the purchase of Alaska as a gambit by the United States Government aimed at such an objective. The best clue to this in the weeks following the cession can be found in an editorial printed in the Kingston, Canada West, Whig, the "acknowledged organ" of the future Prime Minister, according to John Robson of the British Columbian. The article in the Whig attacked the American designs on British Columbia and the schemes of annexationists in general, declaring that:

> the natural order of things, . . . is for the entire stretch of British territory, from the Atlantic to the Pacific, to form one chain of united colonies, . . .Confederation has in reality given the death-blow to annexation, and the sooner Americans perceive the fact the sooner will they cease to waste their patience in expecting these colonies to be absorbed into the American union. But this agitation for the absorption of British Columbia, strengthened by the Russian acquisition, inculcates the sppedy performance of a duty by Canadians. Clearly it will become the Parliament of the Dominion to facilitate as rapidly as possible the admission of British Columbia into the Confederation.[67]

Although this statement may not have been from the pen of the Liberal-Conservative Party leader, the British Columbian considered it to be very significant nevertheless. "Coming from such a source," Robson explained, "the above may fairly be presumed to be the sentiments of the ruling party

in Canada,"[68] and, it might be added, probably a good reflection of the thinking of that party's chieftain, John A. Macdonald.

Another source of information useful in assessing the reaction of Canadian Government leaders to the purchase of Russian America can be found in the speeches made by members of the House of Commons on the subject of the future disposition of the Northwest Territories, then under the jurisdiction of the Hudson's Bay Company. Early in the initial session of the First Parliament of Canada, the Commons and the Senate debated and endorsed a Joint Address to Queen Victoria, praying for the incorporation of the Northwest Territories and Rupert's Land into Canada. Among the arguments used by proponents and opponents of this measure, one finds the United States acquisition of the Russian colonies referred to often, both specifically and obliquely, as evidence of American designs on the British Northwest. Some speakers used this to illustrate the need for swift action in obtaining control of the Hudson's Bay Company lands, while others saw in the cession proof that Canadian ambitions in this respect were hopeless in the face of American expansionism. Still others, reluctant participants in a Dominion Government of which they disapproved, lost no opportunity to use the cession of Alaska to disparage the British North American confederation by implication.

During the course of a speech on November 8, 1867, Joseph Howe, the unrecalcitrant Nova Scotian, abandoned his primary subject long enough to comment on the Northwest Territories and British Columbia as they had been influenced by the American acquisition. The thrust of his comments indicate that he had not changed his opinion as expressed in the stock address he had been delivering the previous summer. "British Columbia," he still maintained, "might have been made something as a British colony before it was flanked on both sides by the United States, but with California on one

side, and the newly acquired possessions of the Republic, what hope had they of being able to maintain it?"[69] Later, on the opening day of debate on the question of the Northwest Territories, December 4, 1867, the Hon. Mr. Howe returned to the attack by denouncing the "stupidity" of England evidenced by her neglect of the interests in her North American possessions. Among other examples of British duplicity, he cited "Russian America, which overshadowed us, not like a summer but a winter cloud," which "had been handed over to the United States without a word of remonstrance from Great Britain."[70]

George Cartier, co-leader of the Liberal-Conservative Party with Macdonald and chief spokesman for that faction in Canada East, used the purchase of Russian America in another context. In urging the measure before the Commons, Cartier refered to the probable costs of buying the Northwest Territories from the Hudson's Bay Company, and he asked how the honorable members could "grudge the paltry sum of five or six million dollars to extend this Dominion to British Columbia," when the United States had paid so recently a larger sum for the Russian possessions. "The policy of the United States," he continued, "adopted on their becoming a nationality, had been the acquisition of fresh territory - . . . If such a policy was necessary for them, it would also be necessary for us," Cartier concluded.[71]

The Minister of Public Works, William MacDougall, also mentioned the American example in pressing for approval of the purchase of the Northwest Territories. If the United States would pay "enormous sums for regions of ice, how much more would they give for this fertile tract," he asked. Despite "the blighting effects of the great war hanging over them, with an enormous debt and a burdensome taxation," the Americans "did not hesitate in purchasing even ice fields, in their desire for expansion." Canada

either must expand or contract, MacDougall asserted, and the "incorporation of the Northwest, British Columbia and Vancouver's Island" were necessary components of the former course of action.[72]

For Sir John A. Macdonald, expansion into the Northwest must come quickly or it might be too late, for the Americans clearly had designs upon the region. "If offered to the United States, the recent purchasers of a tract of ice-adjoining," the Prime Minister questioned the members, "could we doubt that they would consent to pay for it an amount equal to the whole debt of Canada four times over?" Only the recent American Civil War had prevented the Northwest from falling to the United States already, Macdonald believed.[73]

Other speakers who approved the Joint Address focused on the same need to annex the Northwest Territories so as to forestall probable American efforts in the same direction. Few mentioned the cession of Russian America specifically, but that event nevertheless cast a shadow of apprehension over the entire debate, as one member after another spoke of the necessity for haste or reminded his fellow legislators of the American threat. It seems clear, in fact, that the overwhelming support that this appeal to the Queen received in both the Commons and the Senate, especially in regard to the dispatch with which the issue would be pressed in the future, was due largely to the widely-held belief that Canada must expand in anticipation of the United States. This theme runs throughout the debates, and the stimulus for this fear must have been the recent purchase of Russian America and the subsequent, resultant rumor of an attempt to buy British Columbia. Several speakers, including the Prime Minister, had mentioned the American Civil War in a context that suggested their dismay that the Washington Government would launch into territorial expansion so soon after such an exhausting struggle. This unexpected

occurence apparently signaled to Canadian leaders that the United States was once more in the market for new territory, and it seems to have convinced many that the completion of the Dominion by the annexation of the Northwest Territories and the admission of British Columbia, regardless of the cost, must be pursued without delay. The stakes of the game were very high, and procrastination might be disastrous to the future of Canada. "If we did not take this step," warned the Hon. R. A. Harrison, member from Ontario, "our opportunity would be lost. British Columbia and Vancouver's Island would ere long be cut off from us by the efforts of the United States, and where would be that British Empire on this continent that we had hoped to see established. This march in civilization and power we must take now or never, . . ."[74]

III

The preceding analysis of the attitudes held by political leaders in the new Dominion of Canada is admittedly limited, but it does seem possible, in conjunction with the more thorough examination of the British North American press reactions, to venture some concluding yet tentative observations regarding the Canadian response to the purchase of Russian America by the United States. First, it appears clear that many Canadians, perhaps even a majority, found the news of the cession disturbing, even threatening, for one or more reasons. Because the names of such men as John A. Macdonald, Cartier, MacDougall, Galt, McGee and Howe are associated with this viewpoint, as well as a sizeable portion of the more influential newspapers, it seems that this was the predominant position taken by those "voices" which presumably molded Canadian opinion. It is true a large percentage of the press discerned no reason to be concerned about the new

American acquisition, choosing either to ignore the matter altogether or to treat the development as unimportant. But these papers tended to be weekly, local and rural, and it may be assumed that they were not representative of the general public and particularly did not reflect the thinking of the better informed, more thoughtful and urban segments of the population.[75] Consequently, it appears that the most significant reaction in Canada was that which interpreted the purchase with suspicion.

Second, those who were disturbed by the cession tended to see it as an actual or intended menace to Canadian and British interests. While some discovered in the event potential danger to the future of the Dominion, more were concerned with the implicit threat to British Columbia and the British position in North America in general. Many clearly recognized the connection between the ultimate fate of British Columbia and that of Canada, particularly in respect to the opportunity of the Dominion to pursue westward expansion to the Pacific. Therefore, citizens of British Columbia were not unique in their interpretation of the Russian American treaty as an act designed to compromise that English colony. Canadians merely saw in addition that the destiny of their new nation might hinge upon the outcome of the contest for control of the lands west of the Great Lakes, which included British Columbia.

Finally, it would appear that the response of the principal spokesmen of both major parties in the new Dominion, as well as the editors of a number of important journals, was to support the immediate annexation of the Northwest Territories and the admission of British Columbia to the Dominion as the best means of forestalling what seemed to be obvious American designs on these lands. It is not possible to state definately that the purchase of Alaska and the subsequent rumored attempt of the United States to obtain British Columbia hastened the Canadian acquisition

of the former Northwest Territories, nor can it yet be asserted that these events impelled the Dominion government to press for a swift union with British Columbia, but these seem to be probable consequences. Considerably more research must be done on these topics before more concrete conclusions can be reached. However, such an investigation might reveal that the purchase of the Russian colonies by the American Government, an acquisition which in the United States had clear anti-British and anti-Canadian overtones, actually encouraged rather than discouraged the completion of confederation by the absorption of Rupert's Land and British Columbia, ensuring for the Dominion a trans-continental destiny and a greater chance for an independent existence. If that should be the case, the purchase of Alaska would have produced an effect far different from what was intended by William H. Seward, the American Secretary of State.

Chapter VI

FOOTNOTES

[1]William L. Morton, The Critical Years: The Union of British North America, 1857-1873, The Canadian Centenary Series, (Toronto: McClelland and Stuart Limited, 1964), p. 224.

[2]The conclusions presented in this and the next chapter of this study, regarding Canadian and British reactions to the purchase, are largely tentative, for with the exception of Canadian press opinion, it has not been possible for the author to examine the evidence sufficiently. Time and money limitations have made research trips to Ottawa and London impractical, and they would be necessary to pursue the depth of investigation required for a detailed study of these topics. In the matter of the newspapers of Canada, however, I have been able to view 48 representative publications from Canada West, Canada East, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia and Newfoundland, and further research in this area would be unlikely to produce a significant change in my conclusions.

Only two partial studies of foreign reactions to the purchase of Alaska have been attempted to date. Virginia Hancock Reid, The Purchase of Alaska: Contemporary Opinion, sampled attitudes towards the treaty in the American Government, the press and the House of Representatives, as well as foreign opinion, which she examined briefly in Chapter IV, pages 35-50. While useful as a starting point and for the appendixes which include extracts from a number of newspapers, this slim volume certainly does not exhaust the subject. Dr. Reid's work reviewed the editorial opinion of only one contemporary journal from British Columbia, one from Canada, one from the Red River Country, thirteen from the British Isles (two being Irish) and two from Jamaica. She studied no European papers directly, only the several extracts from these journals published in the English press. Another source, also of limited use is: Joseph Tarnovecky, "The Purchase of Alaska: Backgrounds and Reactions," an unpublished PhD dissertation, McGill University, Montreal, Canada, 1968. Mr. Tarnovecky's study, while more thorough than Ms. Reid's in regard to the foreign press attitudes, suffers from shallow analysis and a rather rambling presentation. His beginning review of Russian explorations and discoveries seems to have little connection with his later concentration on press reactions to the purchase. The latter area of his work, while the most useful portion of his dissertation, especially in regard to foreign reactions, is limited by his concentration entirely on the press and his ignoral of foreign government reactions.

[3]This section on the British North American Press, exclusive of British Columbia, is absed on an examination of fifty newspapers as detailed below in Table III, p. 252. The bulk of this research was conducted at the University of British Columbia Library, which has among its holdings a large microfilm collection of Canadian newspapers from the 1860's. However, only one journal each from Prince Edward's

Island and the Red River Colony was available at the time when this research was undertaken. Furthermore, the representative from the latter area, the Nor'Wester, was of little assistance because the collection contained so few issues for that period. Consequently, it is impossible to say much concerning the attitudes of the newspaper community in those two regions, but the assumption can be made that the reaction to the cession in Prince Edward's Island was similar to that in Newfoundland, a neighboring province. Neither community approved the confederation plan of 1867; both were equally isolated from the remainder of the British North American colonies and they tended to exhibit more concern with their local problems and the affairs of Great Britain than with those of the American continent. Their interest in the purchase of Alaska may have been mutually passive.

The statistical analysis of the British North American press found in Table III is admittedly a rough survey of the various attitudes found in the fifty journals included in this study. While in some cases the opinions of the individual editors were easy to identify, in other instances the editorials concerned with the treaty were ambiguous on certain points. In the latter situation, it was necessary for the writer to base some conclusions on implications, rather than entirely on explicit statements. Therefore, this particular tabular summary makes no presumption to complete accuracy, but is intended only as a foundation upon which the various generalizations made below in the discussion of the British North American press can rest.

[4]The Daily News, Kingston, Canada West, April 3, 1867.

[5]George Brown, as editor of the Globe, became one of the outspoken leaders of the Reform Party movement in Canada West after the union of the two Canadas in 1841, which he consistently opposed. He was a major advocate of westward expansion into the Northwest Territories, and a reluctant supporter of confederation. He served briefly in 1864 and 1865 in the union ministry of Canada which worked to arrange the confederation of British North America, after which he retired from active political life. He continued to edit the Globe, however, and he hovered like a gray eminence over the Liberal-Reform Party of Canada until his death in 1880.

[6]The Daily Globe, Toronto, Canada West, April 1, 1867.

[7]Evening Reporter, Halifax, Nova Scotia, April 2, 1867.

[8]Ibid., April 11, 1867.

[9]The Perth Courier, Perth, Canada West, April 4, 1867.

[10]George Etienne Cartier, knighted in 1867, had emerged as the foremost leader of the French-Catholic Bleu or Conservative Party in Canada East during the latter period of the Union of the two Canadas, 1841-1867. He became a close associate of John A. Macdonald of Canada

West, and with him organized the Liberal-Conservative Party which became the majority political force in Canada before and after confederation. With Macdonald he was one of the architects of confederation and largely responsible for winning support for that idea in Catholic Canada East. He became the number two man in the first ministry of the Dominion Government, and in truth the fragile confederation depended on the union of followers of Macdonald and Cartier.

[11]Montreal Herald and Daily Commercial Gazette, Montreal, Canada East, April 4, 1867.

[12]Quebec Gazette, Quebec, Canada East, April 8, 1867. Also available, printed in full, in Virginia Hancock Reid, The Purchase of Alaska: Contemporary Opinion, Appendix II, pp. 102-104. Ms. Reid is in error concerning the date of this editorial, which she incorrectly cites as April 5, 1867.

[13]Montreal Gazette, Montreal, Canada East, April 10 and 29, 1867.

[14]The Ottawa Citizen, Ottawa, Canada West, April 27, 1867.

[15]The Evening Times, Hamilton, Canada West, April 1, 1867.

[16]The Morning Chronicle, Quebec, Canada East, April 3, 1867. The word in parentheses was added by the author for clarity.

[17]L'Ordre, Montreal, Canada East, April 15, 1867. Translation from the original French by the author with the assistance of Mr. Jack Cousins, Chairman of the Language Department, The Charles Wright Academy, Tacoma, Washington. Mr. Cousins kindly checked all translations of French-Canadian journals.

[18]Le Pays, Montreal, Canada East, April 9, 1867. Translated from the origianl French by the author with the assistance of Mr. Jack Cousins.

[19]The Morning Freeman, St. John, New Brunswick, April 2, 1867.

[20]St. John Globe, St. John, New Brunswick, April 2, 1867.

[21]The Morning Chronicle, Halifax, Nova Scotia, April 25, 1867. Reprinted in the Novascotian, Halifax, April 29, 1867. The editor of the Chronicle was Charles Annand, brother of William Annand, member of the Nova Scotia legislature and the close associate of Joseph Howe. All three opposed confederation.

[22]The Sun and Advertiser, Halifax, Nova Scotia, April 8, 1867.

[23]Evening Reporter, Halifax, Nova Scotia, April 11, 1867.

[24]Montreal Gazette, Montreal, Canada East, April 29, 1867.

[25]The Daily Witness, Montreal, Canada East, April 3, 1867.

[26]Le Pays, Montreal, Canada East, April 2, 1867. Translated from the original French by the author with the assistance of Mr. Jack Cousins.

[27]Hamilton Evening Times, Hamilton, Canada West, April 1, 1867.

[28]Ibid., April 3, 1867.

[29]The Ottawa Times, Ottawa, Canada West, April 1, 1867.

[30]Ibid., April 2, 1867.

[31]The Citizen, Ottawa, Canada West, April 27, 1867.

[32]The Daily Witness, Montreal, Canada East, April 2, 1867. Also available in an extract published in the Daily Morning Chronicle, Washington, D.C., April 12, 1867.

[33]L'Ordre, Montreal, Canada East, April 15, 1867. Translated from the original French by the author with the assistance of Mr. Jack Cousins.

[34]The Morning Chronicle, Halifax, Nova Scotia, April 25 1867; The Novascotian, Halifax, April 29, 1867; and the Morning Freeman, St. John, New Brunswick, April 2, 1867.

[35]The Daily News, Kingston, Canada West, April 24, 1867.

[36]The Morning Freeman, St. John, New Brunswick, April 2, 1867.

[37]The Sun and Advertiser, Halifax, Nova Scotia, April 8, 1867.

[38]The Morning Chronicle, Halifax, April 25, 1867. Reprinted in the Novascotian, Halifax, April 29, 1867.

[39]P. B. Waite, The Life and Times of Confederation, p. 126. Waite does not claim that the News spoke for Macdonald, only that it supported him politically and editorially. The main organ of Macdonald was the Kingston Whig, according to the British Columbian, July 6, 1867. Copies of this paper, however, were not available to this researcher, and Waite did not mention the journal in his study largely based on the Canadian press.

[40]The Daily News, Kingston, Canada West, April 1, 1867.

[41]Ibid., April 3, 1867.

[42]Ibid., April 17, 1867.

[43]Ibid., April 24, 1867.

[44]Ibid., April 24, 1867.

[45]The Ottawa Times, Ottawa, Canada West, April 2, 1867. The words in parentheses were inserted by the author for clarity.

[46]The Quebec Mercury, Quebec, Canada East, April 3, 1867.

[47]Ibid., April 4, 1867.

[48]The Daily Globe, Toronto, Ontario, July 12, 1867, extract published in the Daily British Colonist, Victoria, British Columbia, September 9, 1867. Since the beginning of the Dominion, Canada West had officially been designated as Ontario, and Canada East as Quebec.

[49]The Daily Globe, Toronto, Canada West, April 1, 1867.

[50]The Quebec Gazette, Quebec, Canada East, April 8 and 22, 1867.

[51]The Montreal Gazette, Montreal, Canada East, April 29, 1867.

[52]The Sun and Advertiser, Halifax, Nova Scotia, April 8, 1867.

[53]The Daily News, Kingston, Canada West, April 1, 1867.

[54]The Ottawa Times, Ottawa, Canada West, April 1, 1867.

[55]The Morning Chronicle, Quebec, Canada East, April 10, 1867.

[56]Le Courier du Canada, Quebec, Canada East, April 3, 1867.

[57]Le Journal des Trois-Rivieres, Three Rivers, Canada East, April 5, 1867.

[58]Le Canada, Ottawa, Canada West, April 4, 1867.

[59]Alfred R. Roche, A View of Russian America, in connection with the present war, (Montreal: J. Lovell, 1855), p. 7. Apparently, this pamphlet received a rather wide circulation, for it was cited by several United States newspapers as an authority on the resources of Russian

America in that nation's discussion of the cession in 1867. Among those which specifically referred to Roche as a source were: The Providence Journal, Providence, Rhode Island; the Detroit Free Press, Detroit, Michigan; The Baltimore American and Commercial Advertiser, Baltimore, Maryland; and the Boston Evening Journal, Boston, Massachusetts. Others probably used Roche as an authority but did not credit him for the information. Furthermore, one Canadian journal, the Quebec Gazette, also mentioned the report in its editorial on the treaty. Consequently, it can be assumed that a number of Canadians as well as Americans were familiar in 1867 with the arguments advanced by this early Canadian expansionist.

Alfred R. Roche, in 1857, was a clerk in the office of the Commissioner of Lands, and as an acknowledged authority on the western territories was sent to London with the Chief Justice of Canada, William H. Draper, in 1857, to represent Canada before the Select Committee on the Hudson's Bay Company, which was deliberating the future of that firm's holdings in Rupert's Land. See: Alvin C. Gluek, Jr., Minnesota and the Manifest Destiny of the Canadian Northwest, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1965), pp. 121-122; and W. L. Morton, The Critical Years, pp. 26, 31 and 34.

[60]Ibid., pp. 59-60.

[61]Ibid., p. 61.

[62]Excerpt from a letter of the Hon. D'Arcy McGee, Paris, France, no date, as published in the Montreal Gazette, Montreal, Canada East, May 18, 1867. Montreal East was the home Constituency of McGee.

[63]Excerpt from a speech by the Hon. Alexander Tilloch Galt, Lennoxville, Canada East, May 22, 1867. Sherbrooke, Canada East, was the home riding of Mr. Galt.

[64]The Toronto Globe, Toronto, Canada West, July 12, 1867, as reprinted in the British Columbian, New Westminster, British Columbia, September 9, 1867.

[65]Excerpt from a speech by the Hon. Joseph Howe, Nova Scotia, no date, as printed in the Alta California, San Francisco, California, June 30, 1867.

[66]John A. Macdonald to Edward Watkin, March 27, 1865, (private), Macdonald Papers, Public Archives of Canada, as quoted in P. B. Waite, The Life and Times of Confederation, p. 307 and footnote.

[67]The Whig and Statesman, Kingston, Canada West, no date, as reprinted in the British Columbian, New Westminster, British Columbia, July 6, 1867.

[68]The British Columbian, New Westminster, British Columbia, July 6, 1867.

[69]Joseph Howe, speech in the House of Commons, November 8, 1867, House of Commons Debates, 1866-1870, MCF, Reel 4, University of Washington Library.

[70]Joseph Howe, speech in the House of Commons, Canada, December 4, 1867. Ibid., p. 65.

[71]Sir George Cartier, speech in the House of Commons, Canada, December 4, 1867, Ibid., p. 65.

[72]Hon. William MacDougall, in a speech given in the House of Commons, Canada, December 6, 1867, Ibid., p. 74.

[73]Sir John A. Macdonald, in a speech in the House of Commons, Canada, December 9, 1867, Ibid., p. 82.

[74]Hon. R. A. Harrison, in a speech in the House of Commons, Canada, December 5, 1867, Ibid., p. 69.

[75]For the purposes of this conclusion, it was assumed that daily and semi-weekly journals would be the most important and most widely read. Of these, approximately three-quarters of the daily papers saw some reason to be concerned by the purchase of Russian America, as did nearly two-thirds of the semi-weekly press reviewed for this study. On the other hand, only about one third of the weekly journals found cause to be disturbed by the event. It would seem reasonable to assume that the latter would have a local influence only and would represent a smaller proportion of the Canadian population.

Chapter VII

NOT A MATTER OF INDIFFERENCE:

Reactions to the Purchase of Russian America in Great Britain

"The question of the cession of that portion of America to the United States is one likely to cause great feeling and possibly considerable excitement; but it will not be allowed to have undue weight in the minds of Englishmen - for I cannot myself think that the cession . . . is likely to have any such overwhelming influence upon the progress of the colonies sprung from English blood which have been established on that side of the world. . . ."

The Duke of Buckingham,
the House of Lords, April 2, 1867.

Certain czarist advisors who counseled the sale of Russian America expected the cession to compromise and outflank England's position in British Columbia, to lead to the annexation of that colony to the United States and perhaps to threaten the British grasp on the remainder of their North American possessions as well. At the very least, they believed that the transfer of the Russian territories would infect the relations between the United States and Great Britain, already poisoned by various events connected with the American Civil War, with additional suspicion and envy. Although the maximum expectations of the Russian leaders were not fulfilled, the purchase in fact did produce some of the desired goals.

As demonstrated in earlier chapters, the possible political impact of the cession on British Columbia in particular and English interests in North America in general was apparent to many people. Residents of that remote British colony recognized the danger to their political future represented by the Russian-American treaty, and many editors and numerous government leaders in the emerging Dominion of Canada identified a potential threat to their own nationality as well as to that of British Columbia. The American press and probably many United States Senators quickly drew similar conclusions. But these reactions were not crucial.

The fate of British Columbia, the most likely focus of tension between the two Anglo-Saxon nations, rested ultimately upon two conditions; first, the willingness of the Washington Government to press its geographic and economic advantages in the Pacific Northwest, maintaining the momentum achieved through the purchase of Russian America, by persuading or forcing the British Government to withdraw from its isolated colony; and second, the peaceful acquiescence of Her Majesty's Government to such coercions. War for such an objective was unthinkable for the United States Government and the majority of Americans, considering the charged political climate

of the nation, the vivid memory of the bloody Civil War and the stakes involved in such a gamble. Only negotiation could have achieved the annexation of British Columbia, if it could have been arranged at all. The bargaining would have to be initiated by the United States and be palatable to the British Government.

The fact that British Columbia maintained its connection to the mother country and subsequently joined the Canadian Confederation should not be construed, however, as evidence that the United States Government was blind to its opportunities and did nothing to obtain the result which some Russians and numerous American expansionists hoped for. Actually, the Johnson Administration, particularly in the person of the Secretary of State William H. Seward, considered making an offer to Great Britain to purchase British Columbia. What Seward probably never knew, however, was that influential members of the British Government anticipated such an American initiative and might have been willing to entertain a reasonable proposition, believing that the eventual loss of the colony had become a distinct possibility as a result of the cession of Russian America.

I

Great Britain, in 1867, appears to have been vulnerable, politically, philosophically, and militarily, and Her Majesty's Government might have yielded British Columbia to the United States peacefully. A minority Conservative Government, the third ministry of the Earl of Derby, had governed the country since mid-1866. No clear majority party existed in Parliament. On domestic issues the nation was sharply divided. The Conservative Party leadership, Derby in the House of Lords and Benjamin Disraeli in the House of Commons, was fighting to push through the Parliament the

controversial Reform Bill of 1867, an act which would alter the franchise more radically than the proposals of the Liberal Party reform legislation defeated in 1866 through the efforts of the same Tory Party which now was advocating even more drastic changes in the electoral laws.

Engrossed in domestic matters, the Government had little energy for foreign problems and a limited appreciation of the momentous changes occuring in Europe in any case. Since the death in 1865 of the truculent Lord Palmerston, the dominant figure in British foreign policy since the 1830's, England generally had held itself aloof from the internal problems of the continent. The laissez-faire philosophy which dominated British thinking in trade was influencing English attitudes towards their foreign relations. Long committed to the concept of maintaining a balance of power in Europe, England now found itself confronted with unification movements in progress in Germany and the Italian peninsula which would upset the old power structure, but which the British Government was helpless to prevent even if its leaders could have convinced themselves it was necessary to do so.[1] England's army was simply too small and scattered to intervene effectually in those events, and its powerful navy was not the appropriate weapon to interpose decisively in such developments.

As for the overseas possessions and committments of Great Britain, the Government's policy was aimed at reducing its responsibilities. The idea of colonies had been in disrepute in some circles for years, and the rise of the "new imperialism" was a development of later decades. "Little Englandism" prevailed. Colonies were seen as economic, political and military burdens which repaid the mother country poorly, with "prohibitive tariffs and ironical allegiance."[2] It was believed to be the nature of colonies to seek independence eventually from their mother countries. Benjamin Disraeli had concluded in 1852 when he referred to the "wretched

colonies" which "will all be independent in a few years and are a millstone around our neck."[3] Herman Merivale, an officer in the Colonial Office during this period, wrote in 1870 that "the object of our statesmen had been two fold: to encourage the colonies to prepare for independence for their own sake, and at the same time to relieve the people of this country from the share they formerly bore in contributing towards their administration and defense."[4]

The British North American Act, passed by Parliament early in 1867, had encountered little opposition in the Lords or Commons. Although Canadians did not receive independence, it was obvious to many that Parliament would have granted total separation if the British subjects of North America had wished it.[5] Alexander T. Galt, a Canadian delegate to the London Conference which had decided the future of British North America, wrote to his wife in January, 1867, that he believed England wanted to set Canada adrift. "I am more than ever disappointed", he lamented, "at the tone of feeling here as to the Colonies. I cannot shut my eyes to the fact that they want to get rid of us . . . ."[6] Lord Russell, a leader of the Liberals in Parliament, stated clearly that the Government hoped only to please the British Americans, even if they "should desire to separate and form an independent nation, . . ."[7] Thus, Canada remained within the British Empire only because the Canadians chose that course, not from any attempt of England to hold them against their will. As for British Columbia, the unwillingness of the British Government to relieve the economic distress of that colony seems to be further evidence of the desire of Her Majesty's Government to be relieved of its overseas committments.

On the other hand, Great Britain stood ready in spirit to defend her colonies from foreign aggression. Whether or not British power was sufficient to protect her far-flung responsibilities was, however, another

matter. Although sentiment tied the English to their colonies and pride dictated their determination to defend them, the British Government certainly understood the realities of shielding her most remote possessions. Consequently, in view of the domestic concerns of England, her retrenchment in foreign affairs, the prevailing attitude towards her colonies, the small size of her army and the global demands on the navy, a determined defense of British Columbia would seem to have been unlikely. Furthermore, considering the grumblings of discontent in that colony and the talk of annexation, the proximity of the United States to that possession, the proven military power of the Yankee Republic and England's dearth of allies, it seems reasonable to conclude that 1867, following the cession of Russian America, was a most appropriate time for a tactful but firm American approach to the subject of the acquisition of British Columbia. Her Majesty's Government apparently was expecting such a move.

II

News of the purchase of Russian America reached England on Sunday, March 31, 1867, and appeared in the telegraphic column of the London Times and other papers on the following day.[8] The announcement caught the British Government unprepared, for no word of the negotiations had been received from their legations either in Washington or St. Petersburg. Later on April 1, during a question period in the House of Commons, Mr. Edward Watkins asked Lord Stanley, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, if official word had been received confirming the story reported in the Times. Stanley had to reply that no information had arrived, but added that the Foreign Office had wired the Minister to Russia for clarification.[9] Editorial notice of the treaty began to appear in British newspapers on

April 2nd, and the tone of some comments suggests that many Englishmen viewed the event with anxiety. That the Government was cognizant of this attitude can be seen in a statement made in the House of Lords on April 2, by the Duke of Buckingham and Chandros, Secretary of State for the Colonies. In response to a request for information from the Earl of Clarendon, the Duke still could not confirm the news, but he stated that:

> The question of the cession . . . is one likely to cause great feeling and possibly considerable excitement; but I trust it will not be allowed to have undue weight in the minds of Englishmen - for I cannot myself think that the cession or purchase, if it be so, of the territory in question by the United States, is likely to have any such overwhelming influence upon the progress of the colonies sprung from English blood which have been established on that side of the world as at first sight appears to be imagined.[10]

This assessment of the situation, more evasive than persuasive, became the official position of the Government concerning the issue. Except for Lord Stanley's acknowledgement of the negotiations in the Commons on April 4, the leadership did not refer to the subject again in Parliament.[11] Publicly, the Government adopted a stance of studied indifference to the cession, and some pains were taken to reinforce this view with interested foreign powers. Sir Arthur Buchanan, British Minister to Russia, in a despatch dated April 4, reported a conversation with Prince Gortchakov, the Czar's Minister of Foreign Affairs, regarding the sale of Russian America. The Prince had assured Buchanan that the cession had been arranged purely for economic reasons and had involved no political motives. If the English representative believed this he did not say so, but he did remark to Gortchakov that:

> it might have been considered a friendly act on the part of the Russian Government if she had afforded Her Majesty's Government or the Government of Canada an opportunity of purchasing the territory which had been sold, but that their not having done so, was materially unimportant as I felt sure it would not have been bought.[12]

This statement of the British position clearly pleased Buchanan's superiors, for Lord Stanley replied in an April 16 despatch that "H. M. Government approves the language you held in your convn. with Prince Gorchakow (sic), . . . you were quite right in saying that if the Territory had been offered for sale to this Country it would not have been bought; . . ." The Foreign Secretary agreed also that it would have been common courtesy for the Russian Government to have broached the subject with the British Government before concluding an agreement with the Americans.[13]

Despite the hint of pique in this exchange, Stanley and Buchanan had expressed accurately the probable British response to any Russian offer. In view of the current British distaste for colonies, it seems unlikely that Her Majesty's Government would have considered seriously an opportunity to buy the Russian possessions. It might have been a generous gesture to have purchased them for the Canadians, who did not have the funds or authority to acquire the colonies independently, but would not have been in harmony with the tone of English thought at that time of retrenchment. Furthermore, because the cession of Russian America almost certainly did have anti-British overtones, it is improbable that the Russian Government would have offered the lands to Great Britain.[14]

If the intelligence from St. Petersburg concerning the purchase did not seem threatening, the news from Washington warned of future difficulties for Great Britain. Sir Frederick Bruce, Her Majesty's Minister to the United States, regarded the American Government with suspicion, believing that its leaders deliberately sought political advantage by encouraging anti-British sentiments among the public. On the eve of the cession, in a despatch commenting upon resolutions recently passed in Congress opposing the Canadian Confederation, he observed that:

> An agressive foreign policy, particularly where Great Britain is concerned, affords the best if not the only ground on which the Republicans and the Administration can meet, . . . No opportunity will be omitted of creating difficulties in the North American Provinces . . . and it will depend mainly on the financial condition of the United States and on the union and determination of the Provinces not to be coerced by this arrogant neighbor, whether a contest will be ultimately avoided.[15]

Consequently, the cession of Russian America was interpreted immediately by Bruce as an attempt to embarrass Great Britain. In a communique dated April 2, he reported that Stoeckl, the Russian Minister to Washington, had assured him that the transaction had been motivated solely by the minimal value to Russia of the ceded territory, the high cost of policing and defending it and a desire to avoid future complications with the United States. The British representative, however, was not convinced. On the contrary, Bruce believed that the United States and Imperial Russia had agreed to assault the foreign interests of Great Britain, "the opponent common to both". He thought it reasonable to assume that:

> the object of Russia is to provide the means of neutralizing the efforts of Great Britain in the event of antagonism in the East. The United States will find means of evading a settlement of the questions arising out of the late war with Gt. Britain, they will base claims for the cession of British Columbia or other territory as satisfaction for what Mr. Seward calls the political wrong and material injury done to the United States by the recognition of Confederates as belligerents, and there will be an understanding between the two powers as to the proper period for carrying simultaneously their projects.

Such a policy, Bruce concluded, would meet with general approval from the American citizenry, for whom, he suggested, after having forced the French to evacuate Mexico, it remained only "to humiliate Great Britain to complete the self satisfaction of this people."[16]

The dual themes of the cession and the Alabama claims especially fascinated the British minister, for he mentioned them and their probable impact on British Columbia in several subsequent dispatches. On April 8, including the Alabama question, would be employed as "an opening for picking

a quarrel with us, when convenient, with a view of at least driving us off the Pacific Coast of N. America."[17] A week later, after the treaty had been approved by the Senate, Bruce returned to this topic, remarking that "the cession of the Russian possessions will certainly increase the desire of the U. States to gain possession of British Columbia and of the continuous line of the Pacific Ocean."[18] Particularly suspicious, the British minister explained, were the two "Reports on the Fisheries and Reciprocal Trade with the Colonies" recently submitted to Congress, in which the author, Mr. Darby, had argued, somewhat incongruously, for the acquisition of British Columbia as a means of satisfying the Alabama claims. Bruce believed this concept had been inserted with the full approval and perhaps insistence of Secretary of State Seward with a view to preparing the American public for such a proposal.

Despite the efforts of the Russian Minister and President Andrew Johnson to assure Bruce that the Russian American treaty had no secret intent, the English representative held to his original interpretation of the event. Stoeckl tried a second time, immediately following Senate passage, to convince his English colleague that Russia's only objective was to rid itself of a burdensome possession.[19] Bruce, on his part, reflecting the official policy of his government, replied that although one could expect to hear diverse comments from the British public, he did not doubt that Her Majesty's Government would understand the real intent of the treaty to be in conformity with Stoeckl's explanation.[20] Despite this tactful response, Bruce still did not believe the Russian Minister, nor apparently did he accept the repeated assertions made by President Andrew Johnson during a late April interview that the purchase had "no political significance."[21] Obviously, the British representative had convinced himself of the likelihood of trouble between the United States and England over the

future of British Columbia, and no amount of denials by the Americans or Russians would dissuade him from this conclusion.

The reaction of the English people and press to the purchase of Russian America by the United States generally seems to have been less pessimistic than that of Sir Frederick Bruce. Understandably, it is not possible to learn whatever the average Englishman thought of the cession, and it is certainly probable that many did not know of the event or did not care about it if they did. But if the response of the British press, especially that of London and Manchester, can be taken as an example of the attitudes held by those who did concern themselves with the news, then a broad range of reactions was heard in the marketplaces, streets and homes of Great Britain. A sampling of the positions taken by these journals indicate that some editors viewed the cession with alarm, while others tended to agree more with the official position taken by the British Government, finding the transaction to one of little significance for Great Britain or the Empire. Most, however, agreed that the intent of the United States in acquiring the Russian colonies was to threaten British Columbia and Canada, although some assessed that menace as negligible.

Initially, the news of the purchase may have produced excitement in London among the general public and members of the government as well, especially in respect to the impact of the sale on the distant colony in the North Pacific. A special correspondent to the Chicago Tribune, apparently an Englishman, in a letter dated April 2, 1867, reported that "For the last few days nothing has been so much talked of amongst politicians as the supposed development of a plot of the United States against the rule of Great Britain in British Columbia." The treaty, he explained, was seen by many as the first step by the United States towards the occupation of the whole of North America. Some people described the event as

the beginning of "an era of aggression against which it will be useless for England to contend." Investors, like Mr. Edward Watkin, M.P., deeply interested in Canadian railroad schemes, and the Hudson's Bay Company, were said to be concerned about the effect of the transaction on their holdings and committments. While the author of this correspondence did not rule out the possibility that the cession would have the consequences feared by many, he believed that the agitation he had reported was premature.[22]

The London Times took approximately the same position on the matter, recognizing the cession "as an event of considerable importance" but refusing to share the concern which reports had attributed to the British diplomats in Washington. Clearly, the immense territory added to the United States by the purchase, whatever its resources in ports and fisheries, could not be supposed to have increased significantly the wealth of that nation, the Times observed. The importance of the development lay in the reaffirmation of the "mysterious sympathy which has long existed between Russia and the United States," and the establishment of "a Republican instead of a 'Cossack' Power on the north-western frontier of the Confederation." There was nothing to be gained, the article continued, in denying the probability that the Russian colonies had been purchased "with a view of asserting the claim of the United States to supremacy on the North American Continent." In the opinion of the editor, the creation of the Canadian Confederation had "awakened a groundless, but not quite inexplicable, jealousy in the United States," which had interpreted the new union as evidence of a British policy of expansion in North America. Consequently, the Times concluded, "it is not impossible that the purchase of Russian America is intended as a sort of counter-demonstration against our supposed aggressive tendencies."[23]

Nevertheless, the editor of the Times opposed the idea of protesting

the treaty, because it had been an act entirely within the sovereign power of the United States and Russia to arrange. Furthermore, regardless of the possible intent of the cession, the position of Great Britain had not been altered. The Americans had purchased only what Russia had possessed, and English territory and British Columbia's access to the sea had not been reduced at all. As for the Yankee dream of possessing the continent of North America, the purchase had not furthered that objective, the Times asserted. As for Canada, the editor stated, "We retain our hold . . . more to please the Canadians than ourselves". Although England would never imitate Russia and sell Canada to the United States, he continued, the Government would "be happy to make it independent as soon as it pleases, and leave it to choose its future destiny for itself," hinting obviously that even a subsequent, willing annexation to the United States would be acceptable. In regard to British Columbia, the Times reminded its readers that the colony already was closer to California than to any British possession and had a population largely composed of Americans. If such factors were destined to lure the colony into the American orbit, the acquisition of Russian America merely would hasten the process by a year or two. Consequently, the editor recommended that Englishmen should:

> without shutting our eyes to the possible consequences of this unexpected transaction, forbear to fasten upon it a hostile construction, or to insist upon rights and interests which are incapable of being maintained.[24]

The Manchester Guardian viewed the purchase more pessimistically. Marvelling at the secrecy with which the cession had been arranged and struck at the improbability of the transaction, the editor could conceive of only one explanation. Certainly, the United States, with serious problems confronting it in the reconstruction of the South, separated from its new territory by hundreds of miles, could not have obtained these

"savage hunting grounds and wild coast . . . for the sake of any positive advantage" which they might confer. Furthermore, the sale of the colonies by Russia, "a power not devoid of ambition of its own, and very far from needy," could not have had a monetary motive, considering the small sum for which it was relinquishing its tenure. In fact, the Guardian suggested, if Russia actually had been seeking the best financial reward, the territory would have been offered to Canada as well, in hopes that bidding between the two North American states would have substantially increased the final sale price. Therefore, the editor concluded, there was "no room for rational doubt" as to the proper interpretation of the event. The United States was manifestly displeased about the creation of the Canadian Confederation, and the purchase had been effected so as to "hem in" the new state and "to exercise a formidable restraint upon its prosperity and expansion." It had been dictated, the Guardian stated, "by hostility to the consolidation of our power in that part of America which unquestionably belongs to us, and probably by an ulterior view to the assertion of the claim of the United States to the whole of the continent." In this objective, the Russian Government had willingly and maliciously cooperated. "Whatever else it may be the duty of the English Government to do," the editor warned, "they will be without excuse if they do not know henceforth that they have to deal with a combination of eager and unscrupulous enemies."[25]

Other British journals also viewed the purchase with suspicion and with concern for imperial interests. The London Morning Post, a Conservative party organ, took a position contrary to the official interpretation of the Tory Government, and assessed "the treaty as an insult to England, as an act of hostility, a challenge, . . ."[26] The editor observed that the acquisition of Canada had long been an objective of American politicians,

who had "schemed and plotted for this purpose." He predicted that the United States Government would soon begin to complain about the problems created by the existence of British territory between the new American possession and the bulk of the Republic, and the British Government probably would be approached soon about the sale of those lands.[27]

The London Free Press, in referring to the treaty, observed that "it is from a political and territorial aspect that the matter becomes of great importance." While the Czar retained control of his American colonies, a balance of power existed on the continent among England, the United States and Russia. But with the new purchase, the American Government had achieved "an overwhelming preponderance." What results this new situation might produce were not easy to foresee, the Free Press admitted, but "Every foot of ground gained by the United States is a menace to other nations," especially England.[28]

The majority of the influential British newspapers, however, while they conceded the possibility that the cession would lead to the loss of English possessions in North America, perceived the Russian-American bargain as a matter of little importance, for these journals were not committed to the maintenance of the Empire. The London Economist, a leading financial publication, suggested that "The possession of Russian America does not constitute a new inducement for the Union to conquer Canada, but it does offer a new inducement for the Americans to tempt Canada into annexation." The Economist clearly expected such an undertaking, for success would make the United States "masters of a continent." As for the Canadians, the editor believed that the cession would reduce their reluctance to join the American Republic.[29]

The London Daily News admitted that the American acquisition would "No doubt . . . increase the difficulty of treating British Columbia as a

British Colony," because the population included so many Americans. But such an event "need give no concern", the editor suggested, for "Every colony must follow the law of population and if at any time the people of British Columbia want to become American citizens they will find it easy to do so." Commenting on the suggestion made by some that Russia first should have offered the colonies to England, the News remarked that Her Majesty's Government was not in the market for new possessions. The territory had been obtained:

> by its natural purchaser, a great progressive Power, of whose advances we cannot complain, so long as they are achieved by legitimate means. The importance of this transfer lies in the fact that it is so completely in the natural order of events; . . . and there is nothing in it to excuse an attempt to make it the ground of a factitious excitement in this country.[30]

According to the Pall Mall Gazette, the treaty was not a question which Englishmen needed to "approach with any considerable perturbation." There was nothing in the cession which was likely to alter the English position in North America or the relations between Great Britain and the United States. It had been a good acquisition for the Americans, and it merely reenforced their dominance on that continent. "It does not and cannot amount to a threat, as some people seem to think", the editor assured his readers. Although the purchase probably constituted a protest against the Dominion of Canada, it was equally a reminder to the British Government that the United States eventually intended to absorb all of North America. The Gazette viewed this prospect with equanimity, because whatever the American plans might be for that continent, Great Britain would be "helpless against any serious attempt to carry (them) into effect." Obviously, the editor was suggesting that what could not be prevented should not be opposed or a subject for undue concern.[31]

But if principal voices of the press tended to concur with the

Government's public stance of indifference, many Englishmen persisted in interpreting the treaty as a menacing development, as the Times admitted in a long article in its April 9, edition. Expressing surprise that its countrymen still would be discussing the territorial transfer, the Times essentially restated its position as outlined in its April 2 analysis, and observed that whatever the cession might presage, "we cannot hinder the matter if we would, and . . . we need not if we could." If the Americans intended the purchase as a counter-move to the Confederation of Canada, as an anti-British gesture, the attempt had been successful, for the news had created a "sensation" and had caused the Government to busy itself with telegrams, inquiries, discussion in Parliament and public statements "by Ministers with all due gravity, reserve, and deprecation."[32]

Regardless of the Government's projection of unruffled activity and the official statement of indifference made by the Duke of Buckingham, there are indications that Her Majesty's Government did indeed interpret the purchase of the Russian colonies as an event of great significance, one that might lead to the exclusion of England from British Columbia, a withdrawal to which some officials apparently were resigned. A clue to this attitude can be found in the correspondence between Alexander Grant Dallas, former Governor of Rupert's Land for the Hudson's Bay Company (1862-1864), and John S. Helmcken, late of the same firm and a member of the British Columbia Legislative Council in 1867. Dallas, who had access to the leadership of the Company, contacts in the financial world and friends in the Government, was in an optimum position to judge the reactions of the power establishment in Great Britain. In a letter dated May 14, 1867, he wrote to Helmcken that "The cession . . . is taken very quietly, and there is a feeling in high and influential quarters that the U.S. might as well have B. Columbia also."[33] Although he admitted that there would be a party to oppose such

a development, Dallas did not convey optimism. In a later communication, he commented on the existence of a large party "even amongst members of Government in favor of letting you be absorbed by the US". Dallas did observe, however, that the country at large was not prepared for such an occurence.[34]

Further evidence which suggests that Her Majesty's Government did not view the cession of Russian America with disinterest can be found in the minutes which officials of the Colonial Office appended to the dispatches of Frederick Seymour, Governor of British Columbia. In the remaining months of 1867, the news from that distant possession and from the British representative in Washington generally was not encouraging. The annexation movement which had surfaced in the colony shortly after the announcement of the treaty, the continuing dissatisfaction of the citizens of that remote community with their government, the colony's financial problems and word of the energetic preparations being made by the Americans to occupy their new territory, all tended to cast a pall of pessimism over the Colonial Office regarding the future of British Columbia.

As explained in an earlier chapter, Governor Seymour, hoping to persuade the British Government to provide some relief for the depressed economy of British Columbia, repeatedly referred in his communiques to the annexation sentiment in the colony and his belief that it was being encouraged by the local financial distress and by the unfavorable comparisons one could make between the exertions of the United States to extend dominion over their new lands and the disinterest shown by the English in their colony on the Pacific. Although the Duke of Buckingham and his associates obviously tired of this harping on a subject which apparently made them uneasy, they did recognize that the American acquisition had complicated the situation in British Columbia.

Reacting to a July dispatch from Seymour outlining the state of the colony's finances, Sir Frederick Rogers, Permanent Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies, admitted that high taxes, the current recession, and the lack of assistance from the home Government would probably "cause the American population of these colonies to press for annexation". Such a movement, he suggested, could become "irresistible" except at a cost in excess of the value of British Columbia to the Empire. He opposed monetary support of the colony, because, he warned, "if the Colonists ever find the annexation threat satisfactory in extracting money from us, they will plunder us indefinately by it." Ultimately, Rogers concluded, "I suppose the question to be . . . is B.C. to form part of the U.S. or of Canada; and if in our interests to promote the latter alternative what . . . is likely to facilitate or fan the ccz for it."[35] Sir Charles Bowyer Adderley, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies, was more pessimistic and more pointed in his comments on Seymour's report. He concluded that "It seems to me impossible that we should long hold B.C. from its natural annexation." However, he suggested that Seymour should be instructed to delay this eventuality as long as possible to preserve an opportunity for Canada. Nevertheless, he advised, "I think our U.S. Minister should keep his ears open for any overtures of equivalence in exchange of this territory. . . ."[36]

At approximately the same time that Seymour's financial analysis of British Columbia arrived at the Colonial Office, a disturbing dispatch arrived at the Foreign Office from Sir Frederick Bruce, Minister to Washington. He enclosed an article from the New York Times which discussed the "condition and prospects of British Columbia." Commenting that he did not know if the information correctly portrayed the situation in that colony, he was confident that "the article describes accurately enough the desire of

a large part of the population to obtain possession of Columbia so as to remain without a rival on the Coast of the Pacific." Additionally, Bruce explained that a considerable portion of the Western population of the States also desired the annexation of the Red River country. If that region was not occupied soon by British settlers, the minister observed, American squatters from Montana would cross the border and seize the lands, and the Hudson's Bay Company and Canadian authorities would find them nearly impossible to control. The most threatening news, however, concerned remarks made recently by Secretary of State Seward to an American capitalist in a conversation at which Bruce was present. Seward had urged the American businessman to buy up the rights of the Hudson's Bay Company so as to obtain the best route for a northern line of communication between the Atlantic and the Pacific. In such an event, Bruce pointed out, Seward certainly did not "contemplate . . . that the line between the Lakes and Vancouver's Island will remain in any hands but those of the U. States."[37]

The Foreign Office considered this communique important enough to pass on to the Colonial Office, with the notation that the danger of American squatters to the Red River and Saskatchewan had long been anticipated. Consequently, the Canadian Government had been "urged to lose no time in dealing with the question of the Hudson's Bay Territory.. . ." Sir Frederick Rogers, for the Colonial Office, concurred with this emphasis, which he described as the "paramount" issue for Canada. Sir Charles Adderley approved this view also, and the Duke of Buckingham called it the "chief point of concern to impress the Canadn Govt & whoever is to take Sir F Bruce place", for the news of the sudden death of the British Minister to Washington had just arrived.[38]

Shortly on the heels of this exchange, came a note from the Charge D'Affaires at Washington, Edward Thornton, reporting on American efforts to

acquire the Danish possessions of Iceland and Greenland. He referred to a study of the resources of those islands drawn up by Robert Walker for Secretary of State Seward, in which the former urged their purchase for the reason that "by it the U.S. would flank British America on the North and West, as they have already done so on the Arctic & Pacific by the acquisition of Alaska, . . ." Through this process, Thornton suggested, Walker believed that British America could be persuaded to "peacefully and cheerfully" enter the American Union.[39] What reaction this information produced in the Foreign and Colonial Offices is not known, but it certainly did nothing to ease any anxieties already felt by leaders of Her Majesty's Government. However, more threatening news regarding British Columbia was already on the way; once again the source was Governor Seymour.

During the summer months of 1867, the American Government had been making preparations to occupy Russian America and to have those lands formally transferred to the jurisdiction of the United States. The planning included, for instance, the dispatch of a coastal survey party to explore the shores and islands of the new possession, the assigning of troops to garrison the territory, the gathering of naval vessels in San Francisco to convey these soldiers and various officials to Sitka for the formal transfer ceremonies, and an investigation of the best means to supply and maintain the forts to be occupied in the former Russian colonies by the designated army units. Gradually, as summer ebbed into fall, an increasing number of ships began to appear in the harbor of Victoria, Vancouver Island, bound for Sitka. Late in September, vessels appeared loaded with troops and equipment for the garrisons to be stationed in the new American territory. Governor Seymour dutifully reported these events to the Colonial Office, but he also seized the opportunity to comment on the impression being made on the people of British Columbia by these American

efforts.

In a communication dated September 24, Seymour complained to his superiors that six American warships rode at anchor in Victoria harbor, carrying numerous American officers, all of whom he had to entertain. British Columbia, he observed, with its small and dispersed population, many of whom were aliens, occupied a position similar to that of a territory in the United States. But there the comparison ended, because the American Government energetically had commenced to garrison the "miserable territory" it had bought recently from Russia and to develop its "meagre resources", while England continued to show little interest in its possessions in the same area. This situation, Seymour asserted, was causing some in the colony to regret their "connection with a far distant country which does, . . . but little for them." He closed this letter with a plea for some financial relief for British Columbia, suggesting that at least the Home Government could assume the responsibility for his salary.[40]

A day later, the Governor returned to the same theme in a dispatch marked "secret", which accompanied another gloomy assessment of the colony's economic status. "Troops are being poured into Alaska", he exaggerated, while the citizens of British Columbia, conversely, had been forced to bear large expenses for their own defense. "I deeply regret," he wrote to the Duke of Buckingham,

> this pecuniary difficulty at a time when the Americans are making such energetic efforts to improve their recent purchase to the North of us. I fear the annexation feeling prevalent in Victoria will be stimulated by the contrast of the total self-reliance imposed upon us and the absence of all assistance from Home.[41]

In case his point had not been made clear, Seymour stressed the issue again in a letter to the Duke written on September 28. In the conclusion of this report he stated that:

> Our Republican neighbors are now sending military garrisons to the territory recently purchased from Russia and I can assure your Grace that the colonists are beginning to contrast not over favorably the manner in which they are treated by the Imperial Government with that accorded by the authorities at Washington to the remotest citizen of the United States.[42]

Sir Frederick Rogers, Permanent Under Secretary of State, responded to this last mention of the American efforts and the reaction of British Columbians by acidly commenting that:

> I really think that this harping on the practise of the U.S. sh[d] be stopped. "The remotest citizen of the U.S." is liable to be taxed by the Central Govt & therefore has a right to protection or aid from the Central Govt. But the Colonists of B.C. wd. repudiate with one voice the right of Parlt to tax them for Imperial purposes, & have no right to claim aid from the Imperial Treasury.[43]

Although Seymour tactlessly had overdone his attempt to goad his superiors into action, he obviously had managed to strike a sensitive nerve in the Colonial Office on the issue of financial support for the Empire, and perhaps his repeated reference to the rapidly changing political situation in the Pacific Northwest had caused genuine uneasiness as well.

The most threatening aspect of the American endeavors on behalf of their new possession, however, was not the coming and going of troopships or the northward flow of men, money and supplies. Rather, it was the implications of the mission of two United States Army officers who appeared in Victoria in late September, 1867. Brevet Lieutenant-Colonel Robert N. Scott and Assistant Quartermaster, Brevet Major James T. Hoyt had been assigned by the commander of the Military Division of the Pacific, Major General Henry W. Halleck, to investigate two problems connected with the impending American occupation of the former Russian colonies. Lieutenant-Colonel Scott had been given the task of gathering information on the "numbers, locations, character, disposition, whether hostile or friendly toward White Settlers" of the Indian tribes which inhabited the border

regions between British Columbia and the new lands purchased by the United States. In addition, he was to inquire into the character of the natives who lived along the Stikeen River and to report on the measures taken by the Government of British Columbia to maintain peace between these Indians and the Whites in the area, with the object of a "cordial cooperation" between the American and British authorities on this matter. Finally, Scott was to determine whether a military post would be desirable near the mouth of the Stikeen, which the British used as a major access route to the interior of their possessions and where the Hudson's Bay Company had built Fort Simpson.[44] Major Hoyt's orders directed him to determine the best means of supplying the troops who would be stationed in the ceded possessions "with the usual rations of fresh meat." Two methods had been suggested by American planners: shipping cattle and sheep from San Francisco or driving them overland from Oregon, Washington Territory or British Columbia. The latter possibility, unbelieveably impractical in hindsight, clearly was preferred by the United States Government if it proved to be a feasible route and the cost was not more than that of sending the animals by ship from California. Consequently, Hoyt had been asked to inquire into the prices of live beef and mutton in the three areas mentioned, to determine if the Government of British Columbia would require duties to be paid on such stock if it passed through that colony, if Indian troubles could be expected during such a transit, and if a practicable route for such a drive existed "via Fort Simpson or elsewhere to the new Territory." But the request which loomed as the most dangerous aspect of the American fact finding mission was Hoyt's instruction to find out "whether a Military Escort will be permitted to accompany such animals through British Territory, without special authority from the Home Government on application" of the United States Secretary of State.[45]

Seymour immediately forwarded the information concerning the American officers' mission and copies of their orders to the Colonial Office, where they were received in mid-November, 1867. Because this intelligence directly bore upon relations between the United States and Great Britain and involved questions of sovereignty in British Columbia, the Duke of Buckingham immediately instructed Sir Frederick Rogers to pass duplicates of the dispatch and its enclosures to the Foreign Office. In the accompanying note, Rogers stressed only one aspect of the task of the American officers, that involving the supply of fresh meat to the troops to be established in the former Russian colonies.[46] Apparently, this matter was recognized to possess great significance for the future of the British possessions in the Pacific Northwest. A study of the legal, diplomatic and practical implications of the American requests immediately ensued.

In a letter addressed to Mr. T. F. Elliot, Senior Clerk of the Colonial Office and Deputy Under Secretary for the Colonies, Governor Seymour expressed his opinion concerning the tasks assigned to the American officers. As for the question of building a military post near Fort Simpson, he advised Elliot that "I shall discourage in every possible way the establishment of an American force just opposite one of our principal trading posts & opposite the river richest in fish . . . that we possess. . . ." Regarding the problem of supplying the American troops with fresh meat, the Governor did not seem to view the project with alarm. He observed that it would be cheaper to drive the herds overland from Puget Sound than to ship them from San Francisco, and the enterprise would "be a benefit to Victoria." Certainly he would expect that "security would be given for the exportation of a corresponding number of beasts" as were imported. In any case, Seymour notified Elliot that he would delay on this question for the present. Finally, the Governor suggested that Her Majesty's Government

seize the opportunity provided by the American requests to negotiate a more advantageous boundary line in the area of the Portland Canal, the water course which separated the United States and British possessions at the southernmost point. Failing this, Seymour suggested, in a fine piece of prognostication, the area might "become a second San Juans" dispute.[47]

Sir Charles B. Adderley, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies, approved of Seymour's suggestion concerning the boundary question, but he specifically focused on the San Juan question itself rather than some future potential difficulty involving the Portland Canal. He observed that the American requests for favors regarding their new purchase might provide "a good opportunity to come to terms about S Juan". Also, the Yankee activity would make the Hudson's Bay Company more "amenable," he believed, referring probably to the problem of obtaining that firm's acquiescence to a surrender of Rupert's Land. "No more fur bearing can go on near Yankee go ahead", Adderley asserted. As for the Duke of Buckingham, he agreed that the American inquiries might be dealt with simultaneously with the problem of the San Juan Islands, and he directed that the idea be forwarded to the Foreign Office.[48]

Lord Stanley responded to the question of the American overtures in a note to the Colonial Office dated December 9, written by H. Hammond, Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs. Stanley saw no grounds on which Her Majesty's Government could object to the erection of a United States military post near Fort Simpson. As for the matter of supplying the American soldiers with fresh meat, the Foreign Minister stated that "common courtesy" demanded that facilities for the transport of cattle be offered to the United States Army, independently of any commercial benefit which British Columbia might derive from this activity. Finally, he wished that Seymour be instructed to cooperate with the American authorities on matters

concerning Indian affairs, and that he be given discretion to arrange any minor boundary adjustments he deemed necessary.[49] In addition, Lord Stanley sought the legal opinion of the Queen's Advocate, Mr. Travers Twiss, concerning the obligations towards Great Britain which the United States might have inherited from Russia through the purchase treaty.

The reply of Mr. Twiss and the Foreign Minister's instructions were dispatched to Governor Seymour.[50] Various minutes appended to notes which passed between the Colonial and Foreign Offices reveal clearly the apprehension with which the Colonial Office viewed the American request regarding the supply of its troops. The future of British Columbia seemed to hang in the balance. Adderley and Rogers agreed that "common courtesy" required that permission be granted to the United States Army to transport cattle through the colony, and both concluded that the details of this arrangement should be left to the discretion of Governor Seymour. However, Adderley was uneasy about the question of escorts for the animals. Rogers could not understand why armed guards would be necessary, "But", he concluded, "I suppose the cattle drovers will be armed - such constitutes a body capable of protecting themselves & their property." In any case, he warned, the Governor should be cautioned that "the passage of cattle across B.C. should not be made the pretext for sending backward and forwards bodies of armed men - a habit . . . inconvenient everafter either to permit or to prohibit." The Duke of Buckingham agreed with this assessment of the danger, and a warning to that effect was sent to Seymour. The image of American soldiers crossing British territory, exercising a practically unlimited authority while doing so, must have conjured up visions for the Duke of the inevitable loss of British Columbia, for he commented gloomily "It's the beginning of the end, but it can't be helped."[51]

The dispatches sent to Governor Seymour in late December, 1867, and

early January, 1868, which authorized cooperation with American officers on the issues raised in September, merely confirmed the main features of the policy to which the Governor, unable to await approval of this step from London, already had acceded provisionally in October. In a letter to Lieutenant Scott, Seymour offered what assistance he could in the investigation of the Indian population residing in the border region about which the Americans were especially concerned. He sent Scott letters of introduction to several police magistrates and encouraged him to stop at Fort Simpson.[52] To Major Hoyt, he wrote that the United States would:

> find us good neighbors and . . . we will do all we can to make this a useful half way house between your Northern and Southern Possessions.
>
> Subject to the consent of the Secretary of State in London I shall be prepared to give orders for the admission, duty free of any cattle that may be required for the support of the United States Troops in your new Territory of Alaska.[53]

Significantly, Seymour did not grant permission to the United States to escort cattle with armed guards, for such a concession, although implied perhaps from his note to Major Hoyt, was too important and would set too much of a precedent for the Governor to assume the full responsibility himself. Such a decision had to await the reply of the Colonial Office to his September dispatches. However, Seymour probably approved of the extention of such rights to the Americans because he believed that it was essential to the economy of British Columbia that the United States be persuaded to use the colony for the transit of supplies to Sitka and other northern posts. As he explained to Buckingham in a November dispatch, the entrance of cattle duty free "may very fairly be conceded. Were it not, the steamers chartered by the United States would go direct from Puget's Sound for their cattle and thus inflict an injury on Victoria and its neighborhood."[54]

While officials in the Colonial and Foreign Offices pondered the American requests in November and December, three letters arrived from Washington,

from Charge' d'Affaires Francis Clare Ford, that must have added to the pessimism which seemed to pervade the thoughts of the Duke of Buckingham, but which also held out a ray of hope. In the first of these notes, the British Charge' reported that on November 25, Representative Cadwalader C. Washburn of Wisconsin, an opponent of the Johnson Administration, had introduced into the House a resolution condemning any further purchases of territory by the United States Government. The proposal was approved by a vote of 93 to 43.[55] Although this particular maneuver of the anti-Administration forces had been aimed at the pending treaty with Denmark for the purchase of the islands of St. Johns and St. Thomas, it certainly must have been encouraging news to the Colonial Office, for it seemed to suggest that Congress would not approve any attempt by the United States Government to buy or coerce Her Majesty's Government out of British Columbia. However, on the morrow of the receipt of this information came a dispatch from Ford relating that Representative George F. Miller, another opponent of the Johnson Administration, had presented to the House on November 30, a resolution calling for "the purchase and annexation to the United States of America, of British Columbia, including Vancouver Island, provided the same can be accomplished upon such just and honorable terms as may be satisfactory to both Nations."[56] The fact that this resolution had been referred to the Committee on Foreign Affairs, where it probably would be tabled and ignored, was not likely to be much comfort to the Duke of Buckingham. Apparently, the American Congress opposed only certain territorial acquisitions, and perhaps British Columbia did not fall into that category. Finally, late in the month, Lord Stanley received another letter from Ford which reported a conversation which the Charge' had held with Secretary of State Seward on December 8, in which the latter had hinted that the question of the Alabama Claims might be amicably resolved by trading all or part of

them for territorial considerations. Obviously, that meant British Columbia.[57] Here it was at last, exactly the type of move that the late Sir Frederick Bruce had anticipated from the first announcement of the cession of Russian America. Stanley certainly must have passed this information on to the Duke of Buckingham, and perhaps this intelligence was but one of the factors he bore in mind when he concluded, in reference to the proposed escort of American cattle through British Columbia by armed soldiers, that it was "the beginning of the end."

III

The Duke of Buckingham's fears for the future of British Columbia were not realized. The colony remained attached to the Empire, and it joined the Dominion of Canada in 1871, assuring that growing confederation a trans-continental destiny. No overt American threat to British Columbia ever materialized as a result of the purchase of Russian America, and there is no evidence that the United States Government ever made a formal offer to buy the colony from Great Britain.[58] Nevertheless, those English Leaders and journalists who perceived a menace to British possessions in North America and especially to British Columbia should not be considered alarmists. In 1867, the danger seemed real enough.

It has not been possible in this study to arrive at definitive conclusions regarding the British reactions to the American purchase of the Russian colonies. The evidence examined here has been too limited to permit anything more than a tentative assessment of the question. More British newspapers must be studied. Nothing is known of the attitude of the Prime Minister, the Earl of Derby, or his colleague in the Commons, Benjamin Disraeli. Little more is available on the opinion of Lord Stanley,

the Foreign Minister. And what of William Gladstone, Liberal Party leader, and the Queen and others who tended to mold British public opinion? However, one cannot discount the importance of the viewpoints of such men as the Duke of Buckingham, his colleagues in the Foreign Office, ambassadors such as Sir Frederick Bruce and Sir Arthur Buchanan, and officers of the Hudson's Bay Company, nor can one ignore the reaction of such leading journals as the London Times, the Manchester Guardian, the London Post and the Economist. These men and these newspapers all interpreted the cession of Russian America to the United States as contrary to the best interests of Her Majesty's Government and dangerous to the future of British possessions in North America. It is possible that their reaction was typical of a sizeable segment of the publishing community and of the Government leadership. But we do not yet know this; only further research can decide this issue. One thing is certain, however, concerning the British response. Contrary to the attitude conveyed officially by the Duke of Buckingham on April 1, the acquisition of the Russian colonies by the United States was not a matter of indifference to Great Britain.

Chapter VII

FOOTNOTES

[1]K. B. Smellie, Great Britain Since 1688: A Modern History, (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1962), p. 205.

[2]Ibid., p. 198, a phrase attributed to the economist John E. Cairnes in 1860.

[3]Alfred LeRoy Burt, The British Empire and Commonwealth from the American Revolution, (Boston: D. C. Heath Co., 1956), p. 444.

[4]Ibid., p. 444

[5]William L. Morton, The Critical Years, p. 214.

[6]Alfred LeRoy Burt, The British Empire . . ., p. 455.

[7]William L. Morton, The Critical Years, p. 214.

[8]The London Times, April 1, 1867.

[9]Question Mr. Edward Watkins, Answer Lord Stanley, House of Commons, Monday, April 1, 1867, Hansard's Parliamentary Debates, 3rd series, CLXXXVI, (London: Cornelius Buck, 1867) p. 910.

[10]Question the Earl of Clarendon, Answer the Duke of Buckingham, House of Lords, Tuesday, April 2, 1867, Ibid., p. 980.

[11]Ibid., p. 1108

[12]Otto J. Klotz, Hudson's Bay Company, "Certain Correspondence of the Foreign Office and the Hudson's Bay Company", copies from the original documents, London, 1898, microfilm, Library of Congress, Washington D.C., Sir Arthur Buchanan to Foreign Office, April 4, 1867.

[13]Ibid., Lord Stanley to Sir Arthur Buchanan, April 16, 1867.

[14]C. Ian Jackson, in an article published in the Pacific Historical Review, has suggested that the Hudson's Bay Company actually was given an opportunity to buy part of Russian America in 1865, specifically the Stikine territory which had been leased to the British firm since 1838. Jackson based this contention largely on a memorandum dated January, 1865, submitted to the British firm during negotiations concerning the extention of the lease arrangements. British trade in the lisière had been

hampered by competition from illicit petty traders. In an attempt to counter this interference and secure a continuation of the lease, the Russian agent sent to London to negotiate, A. Rutkovski, proposed that the Hudson's Bay Company be given "exclusive possession of the whole trade in the Territory, either by a Lease . . . or by purchase of the Territory."

Mr. Jackson described the suggestion of a sale "At the minimum . . . as a piece of wishful thinking by an individual who was well aware that the project was not feasible." On the other hand, he observed that "it might be seen as a deliberate hint which the Hudson's Bay Company might take up if it chose."

Clearly, Mr. Jackson is hinting at more than the evidence or an understanding of Russian strategic policies in the 1860's can support. He does not assert that the sale offer originated with the Board of the Directors of the Russian American Company; apparently there is no evidence that it did. But more importantly, the Russian firm could not have made such a move without the approval of the Czar, and the available Russian documents do not contain the slightest hint that the Emperor was considering such a course during the 1860's. In fact, it is extremely improbable that the Russian Government would have entertained seriously the sale of its possessions, nor any portion of them, to Great Britain, the nation which above all others stood out as the principal opponent of czarist ambitions in the Near East and Asia. It appears more likely that Mr. Jackson's first suggestion is the correct interpretation, that the idea of the sale originated solely with Rutkovski, who was experiencing difficulties in arranging a lease renewal with the Hudson's Bay Company. Perhaps he expected his tantalizing tender would ease the path to a new agreement. The fact that the English company ignored the suggestion may have been as much the result of their belief that the offer had no substance as it was the consequence of a declining interest in the trade of the Russian area, no doubt a real factor, as argued by Mr. Jackson.

C. Ian Jackson, "The Stikine Territory Lease and Its Relevance to the Alaskan Purchase", PHR, XXXVI (August, 1967), pp. 289-306.

[15]Public Record Office, Foreign Office, F.O. 5, vol. 1106, Sir Frederick Bruce to Lord Stanley, March 30, 1867, from a collection of photostats held in the Library of Congress.

[16]PRO, F.O. 115, vol. 465, No. 102, Sir Frederick Bruce to Lord Stanley, April 2, 1867, marked "confidential".

[17]Ibid., Bruce to Stanley, April 8, 1867.

[18]Ibid., Bruce to Stanley, April 16, 1867, no. 112, "Confidential".

[19]Ibid.,

[20]PRCA, Annex 29, Stoeckl to Gorchakov, April 7/19, 1867.

[21]PRO, F.O. 115, vol. 465, Bruce to Stanley, no. 116, April 30, 1867.

[22]Chicago Tribune, Chicago, Illinois, April 26, 1867, a letter published under "Special Correspondent to the Tribune," dated London, April 2, 1867. The writer's use of the first person plural pronouns "we" and "ours" in referring to the British attitudes and actions strongly suggests his English citizenship.

[23]The London Times, April 2, 1867, p. 9, col. 1.

[24]Ibid.

[25]The Manchester Guardian, Manchester, England, April 2, 1867.

[26]The Morning Post, London, England, as reported in the New York Times, April 19, 1867.

[27]The Morning Post, London, England, April 2, 1867, p. 3, as quoted in Joseph Tarnovecky, "The Purchase of Alaska: Backgrounds and Reactions," pp. 184-185.

[28]The Free Press, London, England, as quoted in the Daily Morning Chronicle, Washington, D.C., April 12, 1867.

[29]The Economist, London, England, as quoted in the San Francisco Bulletin, May 13, 1867, under "Details of Eastern News", and in the Oregonian, Portland, Oregon, June 6, 1867.

[30]The Daily News, London, England, April 2, 1867, excerpt printed in the appendix to Virginia Hancock Reid, The Purchase of Alaska: Contemporary Opinion, pp. 87-88.

[31]Pall Mall Gazette, London, England, April 4, 1867, as printed in Ibid., pp. 88-91.

[32]The London Times, April 9, 1867, p. 9, col. 3.

[33]Alexander Grant Dallas to John S. Helmcken, London, May 14, 1867, "John S. Helmcken MSS," Provincial Archives, Victoria, British Columbia.

[34]Dallas to Helmcken, London, May 24, 1867, Ibid, underlined words were so stressed by Dallas.

[35]Minute of Sir Frederick Rogers, appended to Seymour to Buckingham, July 15, 1867, No. 90, PRO, C.O. 60/28. Note dated September 16, 1867.

[36]Minute of Sir Charles B. Adderley, September 17, 1867, appended to Ibid.

[37]PRO, F.O. 115, vol. 466, Sir Frederick Bruce to Lord Stanley, Washington, August 30, 1867, no. 223.

[38]PRO, C.O. 60/30, H. Hammond, Foreign Office to Sir Frederick Rogers, Colonial Office, September 21, 1867, "9358 Br Columbia"; Foreign Office minute, 23 September; Colonial Office minute by Rogers, 24 September; minute by Adderley, 25 September; and minute by the Duke of Buckingham, 27 September; pp. 160½ - 161½.

[39]PRO, F.O. 115/477, Edward Thornton to Lord Stanley, September 28, 1867, no. 302, marked "confidential".

[40]PRO, C.O. 60/29, Seymour to Buckingham, Victoria, September, 24, 1867, pp. 207-210.

[41]Ibid, Seymour to Buckingham, Victoria, September, 25, 1867, marked "secret", pp. 221-222.

[42]Ibid, Seymour to Buckingham, Victoria, September 28, 1867, no. 131, pp. 266½-268. Also: Arthur N. Birch MSS, "Despatches from Governor Seymour and Administrator Birch to the Colonial Office", vol. 5, Canadian Archives, G series, no. 356, part 2, p. 560, Library of the University of British Columbia, Vancouver, B.C.

[43]Ibid, PRO source, minute of Sir Frederick Rogers, appended.

[44]PRO, C.O. 60/29, Seymour to Buckingham, Victoria, September 25, 1867, with enclosure of the instructions of Lt. Col. Scott, pp. 230-240.

[45]Ibid, with enclosure of the instructions of Major James Hoyt.

[46]Ibid. The note from Seymour to Buckingham is found on pp. 230-23½, with the enclosures from Hoyt and Scott on pp. 232-240. Note from Rogers to Rt. Hon. E. Hammond of the Foreign Office, dated November 20, 1867, pp. 231-231½. Minute of Duke of Buckingham concerning the forwarding of this material to the Foreign Office, p. 230½.

[47]PRO, C.O. 60/30, Seymour to Elliot, Victoria, September 24, 1867, pp. 172-174.

[48]Ibid, Minute of Adderley, November 11, 1867, and minute of Buckingham, November 24, 1867, pp. 175-175½.

[49]PRO, C.O. 60/30, 12113 B. Columbia, H. Hammond, Foreign Office, to Sir Frederick Rogers, Colonial Office, December 9, 1967, pp. 183-184½.

[50]In a note dated the "Temple", December 26, 1867, Twiss stated that the United States were bound by the articles of the Anglo-Russian Treaty of 1825 regarding the boundary terms only, specifically Articles III & IV, but that the clauses dealing with fishing rights, commerce and navigation did not cover responsibilities which would now devolve upon the American Government by virtue of its treaty of cession with Russia. See: Ibid, Twiss to Hammond, Temple, December 26, 1867, copy, p. 195-196.

[51]Ibid, minutes of Adderley, Rogers and Buckingham, dated January 1, 9 and 17, 1868, pp. 192-198½.

[52]PRO, C.O. 60/29, Seymour to Scott, Victoria, October 4, 1867, enclosure in Seymour to Buckingham, New Westminster, November 22, 1867, British Columbia No. 147, marked "received C. O. Feb. 3, 1868", pp. 428-437½.

[53]Seymour to Hoyt, Victoria, October 4, 1867, enclosure in Ibid.

[54]Ibid.

[55]PRO, C.O. 60/30, Ford to Lord Stanley, Washington, December 2, 1867, no. 60, an enclosure in H. Hammond to Sir Frederick Rogers, Foreign Office, London, December 16, 1867, B. Columbia 12278, pp. 187 ff.

[56]PRO, F.O. 5, Vol. 1109, Ford to Lord Stanley, Washington, December 4, 1867, no. 63. See also: Congressional Globe & Appendix, 40th Congress, 1st sess., 1867-1868, p. 813.

[57]Charles Francis Adams MSS., "Diary of Charles Francis Adams", entry for December 24, 1867, Massachusetts Historical Society, Boston. Adams was the United States Minister to Great Britain in 1867, and he made this particular entry following an interview with Lord Stanley.

The author is deeply indebted to his father, Herbert W. Neunherz, for the research of Adams Diary which he conducted in 1974.

[58]See below, Chapter 8, Section II, for a discussion of the American moves to acquire British Columbia in the months following the purchase of Russian America.

Chapter VIII

SEALING ONE BARGAIN, SEARCHING FOR ANOTHER:

Ratification, Occupation, and the Inquiry into the Availability of British Columbia

I

While the treaty for the purchase of Russian America lay before the United States Senate, Thaddeus Stevens, the influential chairman of the House Committee on Appropriations, assured Edouard de Stoeckl, the Russian Minister, that the very day the House reconvened he would urge the voting of the money required to fulfill the terms of the cession, which he confidently expected the Senate to approve.[1] But the matter did not prove so simple to arrange.

Congress returned to Washington for a short session which began on July 3, 1867, and extended through July 20, but Stevens ignored his earlier promise and nothing was done to appropriate the $7,200,000 provided for in the treaty. In fact, although the House met again in November and the Fortieth Congress began its Second Session on December 2, the House did not vote the funds required to complete the purchase of Russian America until July, 1868, more than fifteen months after the Senate had consented to the cession and approximately three months beyond the limit established for the payment by Article VI of the treaty. During those months, the United States Government officially occupied and garrisoned its new territory, American citizens and adventurers from British Columbia began to settle, organize and exploit it, czarist troops withdrew, Russian civilians left the area in large numbers, the Russian American Company ceased its occupations there and liquidated its holdings, and relations between the Russian and American Governments were strained by the delay in making payment.

When the appropriation bill (H.R. No. 1096) finally did come before the House in the summer of 1868, the debate may have been only rhetoric. In the months since the Senate's adoption of the treaty, America's hold

on the former Russian possessions had probably become so complete as to make defeat of the bill and the return of the lands to Russian jurisdiction impossible. Nevertheless, the passage of the appropriation bill was not accomplished easily. Opponents of the treaty or the Johnson Administration or both confused the issue with a constitutional question which had been argued before during earlier territorial acquisitions by the American Government. Others asserted that Alaska was worthless or that its future administration and protection would entail large outlays of scarce funds, and some spoke against further expansion of the nation as dangerous and unnecessary. These were not new arguments. Some had been heard in the Senate and all had been debated in the American press. Finally, a number of Congressmen clouded the process by asserting an old claim against the Russian Government on behalf of the widow of Captain Benjamin W. Perkins. They hoped to withhold payment to Russia until this case had been adjudicated or to extract the amount of the claim from the funds due Russia for Alaska. Despite these objections and obfustications, the appropriation passed the House on July 14, 1868, by a vote of 113 to 43, with 44 Representatives not voting.[2] Among the latter, according to the estimate of Nathaniel P. Banks, the Chairman of the Committee on Foreign Affairs and the man who guided the bill through the House, "28 would have been in the affirmative" and perhaps only 11 opposed.[3] Thus, the potential margin of victory may have been three to one. The whole distasteful exercise, which may have included the bribery of certain reluctant or opportunistic Congressmen, did no honor to the American political system. Stoeckl, accustomed to the sometimes glacial workings and pettiness of the American Government, was left exhausted and disgusted by the ordeal. He wrote to Gorchakov late in the summer:

> I can not give you an idea of the tribulations and disagreements that I have had to endure before finishing this affair. I urgently need a rest of some months. Do not tell me to stay here because there is no place for me elsewhere, but let me have the opportunity to breathe for a time in an atmosphere purer than that of Washington and then do with me what you wish.[4]

Although passing the appropriation is an important and somewhat involved part of the total story of the purchase of Russian America, full discussion here would exceed the intent of this dissertation: the examination of the Russian reasons for selling, the American reasons for buying, and especially the immediate reactions to that event in the United States, British Columbia, Canada and Great Britain. The basic outlines of the House consideration of the appropriation and the alleged bribery that may have accompanied its passage have been treated adequately, although not exhaustively, by other scholars, and do not require repetition here. Some facets of the tale, the Perkins Case for instance, have never received a thorough published examination.[5] However, there remain only two aspects of the developments in the United States after April, 1867, which seem relevant to the focus of this study and are necessary to complete threads already partly woven: the process of occupying the new territory as Americans reacted to the reality of a new possession within the national domain, and the response of the American Government to the new situation in which the purchase had placed British Columbia.

II

The Senate's acceptance of the treaty on April 9, 1867, set in motion the planning and steps which would lead to the formal transfer of Russian America to the United States on October 18, 1867. Although Secretary of State Seward soon became the leading Administration advocate of an early transfer, at first he proved cautious in pursuing any action which could be interpreted by the Russians as premature and overzealous. According to

Julius E. Gilgard of the Coast Survey, Seward had counseled him against an immediate reconnaisance of the new territory because "it would be inadvisable, and in bad taste, to do anything before the treaty has been ratified in St. Petersburg, and the ratifications exchanged."[6] Consequently, although some preparations for a survey of Russian American waters were made in April and May, and some general planning for the transfer as well, open activity on these matters had to wait for the Czar to sign the treaty.

According to Article VII of the convention, the exchange of ratifications had to be completed in Washington within three months of the signing of the treaty on March 30, 1867, or by June 30. With little time to spare and thousands of miles to travel, Waldemar Bodisco, First Secretary of the Russian Legation, left Washington on April 19 with a copy of the treaty.[7] He arrived in St. Petersburg on or before May 11, to learn that the Emperor was in Moscow and would not come back until Tuesday, May 14.[8] Alexander must have signed the treaty soon after his return to the capital, because on May 15, Stoeckl was able to notify Seward that the convention had been ratified and Bodisco was departing immediately for the United States.[9]

Bodisco did not actually leave St. Petersburg until May 22, but another swift passage across Europe and the Atlantic brought him to New York on June 17, where Stoeckl was awaiting him.[10] On the evening of June 19, at the request of Seward, who pleaded the need to be absent from Washington from June 21 until after June 30, Stoeckl travelled to the American capital for the formal exchange of ratifications on the following day, Thursday, June 20, 1867.[11] After the ceremonies were completed, President Johnson officially proclaimed the treaty, and Stoeckl cabled the news to his government along with Seward's request that the Russian commissioners be "sent at once" to carry out the transfer. Steamers would be waiting for them at San Francisco.[12] The State Department paid for this telegram,

which suggests that Seward had abandoned his policy of caution in regard to Russian America. The Secretary of State could now press agressively for a quick occupation of the territory by American authorities, because Russian America officially belonged to the United States. The transfer would only be a formality; the former Russian colonies would feel the effects of their new status before that event occured.

One of the first changes, the selection of a new name for Russian America, was already in progress by late June. Even as the treaty lay before the Senate in April, newspapers had begun to seek new titles for the region. Terms such as "Walrussia", "Polario" and "Frigidia" were suggested by press opponents, as well as "Johnson's Polar Bear Garden" and "Seward's Icebox". The Milwaukee Daily Sentinel referred to it as "Doolittle Territory".[13] The New York Times mentioned "Sitka", "Knitchpek" (the native name for the Yukon River), and "Behring".[14] Julius E. Hilgard thought "Walrussia" a good joke, but preferred "Youkon" himself.[15] The Supreme Court agreed on the name "Arctic", according to a comment by Justice Chase.[16] Louis Agassiz suggested "Behringia".[17] Others proposed a name which would honor President Johnson, or perhaps the Russian Emperor, such as "Alexandria". "Russiana" and "Sewardsland" were also possibilities.[18]

Senator Charles Sumner has been credited with proposing the name "Alaska", the term generally adopted by the end of summer, 1867.[19] He closed the printed version of his famous speech before the Senate by suggesting that because the natives on the Aleutians referred to the mainland as "Alaska", meaning "Great land", "we, too, should call this 'great land' Alaska."[20] However, it is not known whether he actually mentioned this idea in his actual address in April. Others had suggested the name also, as could be expected. The long peninsula which thrust into the North Pacific, whose geologic extension was the Aleutian archipelago, was already

named Alaska. The San Francisco Bulletin used that term on April 1, in referring to the island off the coast of that peninsula, and the Philadelphia Inquirer, on April 17, suggested "Aliaska".[21] Julius E. Hilgard, who assisted Sumner in his research for the published speech, used the word "Alaska" in a letter to the Senator dated May 18; and in another, sent on May 25, Hilgard informed Sumner, in regard to the new map of the territory which would be published with his speech, that "I have ventured to put the name Alaska, proposed by you on it, as I have no doubt it will be generally adopted."[22] Major-General Halleck, at the same time, had written to Seward proposing the very name as the designation for any military district or department that might be established in the former Russian colonies. He mentioned as well that he had seen the term "Aliaska" on several maps of the area published since the purchase.[24] It is not certain, therefore, who should be honored for bestowing the name Alaska. It may be Sumner, but the word seems to have been used before his speech and the accompanying map were published. In fact, it was probably that official, Coast survey produced map, rather than Sumner's speech, which fixed the name Alaska on those northern lands.

While Seward waited for the exchange of ratifications, quiet planning for a coastal survey of the new American territory began. The Secretary of State well understood the importance of obtaining current information on the Russian possessions before the appropriation bill was submitted to the House of Representatives; his labors in winning the approval of the Senate had convinced him of that. Sumner also recognized this need in his published speech.[25] On April 10, Seward wrote to Professor Joseph Henry of the Smithsonian Institution to inquire if that organization could conduct "a survey of the resources of Russian America . . . for the use of the several branches of the Government, so that a report upon the subject

may be communicated to Congress at the opening of the Session in December next?"[26] In his reply, dated April 17, Henry ignored the primary question, but he offered to use the large holdings of the Institution to prepare a "general report" on Russian America. If he was considering a Smithsonian expedition, he did not mention it.[27]

Seward apparently turned next to the United States Coast Survey for a commitment to mount an exploration of the new territory, for by early May, Hilgard and Benjamin Peirce, his superior, were busy with preparations. Hilgard welcomed the project as an opportunity to enhance the prestige of the Survey. George Davidson, a specialist on the Pacific Coast and a former student of Alexander Bache, the late head of the Survey, was the first choice of both Hilgard and Peirce to head the expedition to Alaska, but Commodore John Rodgers, currently at the Boston Navy Yard, but formerly with the North Pacific Exploring and Surveying Expedition, was also under consideration.[28] Hilgard preferred Davidson because in his "competent hands", the explorations would "be productive of much credit to the Coast Survey and to the officers executing it."[29] Davidson was somewhat reluctant to accept the position because he believed himself physically unequal to the task and professionally not capable of conducting the astronomical work which he, not others, considered the most important aspect of the proposed expedition.[30] Nevertheless, Peirce was able to overcome Davidson's objections and to persuade him to take the command.[31]

Planning for the expedition quickened after the news arrived on May 15 that the Czar had ratified the treaty.[32] Hilgard especially spent much of his time on this matter, although the scientific details were left to Davidson.[33] Hilgard was able to persuade Hugh McCulloch, Secretary of the Treasury, to permit the use of the Revenue Cutter Lincoln, already scheduled to go to Sitka on customs business, to carry the survey party and

to be at its disposal after finishing its affairs at the old colonial capital. This arrangement particularly pleased Hilgard because, he wrote to Peirce, "the Coast Survey will be at no expense for running the vessel, which will be a great saving to us."[34] Although the Smithsonian provided ideas for the explorations and perhaps suggestions for members of the party, as an organization it abandoned any plans it had for a separate survey of Alaska at that time. Hilgard received that news with special delight. "It would suit me perfectly to have it so", he wrote to Peirce. "In this way all credit of the enterprise would be consolidated in the Coast Survey."[35]

A variety of people had ideas as to what aspects of the Alaskan environment should be investigated. Hilgard, Peirce, Secretary of State Seward and the Smithsonian all made suggestions. Together these proposals created an impossible task for Davidson, if the lack of sufficient time for exploring had not already made his burdens heavy. He was instructed to visit the most important islands as far west as Unalaska, find prospective coaling stations and good harbors, search for coal and gold, explore the fishing resources, look for timber and agricultural potential, "ascertain the number, character, settlement and social conditions of the inhabitants", and to inquire into the local systems of government and justice.[36]

Command of the Treasury Department portion of the expedition was given to Capt. W. A. Howard of the Revenue Service, who was given instructions by the Secretary of the Treasury to cooperate with the Davidson survey and to establish United States customs control in Alaska.[37] Captain J. W. White of the Revenue Service, was in command of the Cutter Lincoln, then undergoing repairs at the Navy Yard in San Francisco in preparation for its cruise in the North Pacific. Howard left for the West Coast early in June, crossed the Isthmus, and arrived in San Francisco early in July, where the

survey party was making final preparations. On Sunday, July 21, 1867, with the season for northern exploring expeditions already well advanced, the Lincoln cleared San Francisco and sailed north to Alaska.[38]

While the United States Government made plans to explore and occupy the new possessions, some of its citizens were devising schemes to exploit or settle the territory. No sooner had the Senate approved the treaty than Americans across the nation, especially inhabitants of the West Coast, were dreaming of ways to build their futures or fortunes in Alaska. Some had an eye for the main chance, while others were simply naive. Their ideas ranged from the possible to the absurd. The Alta California, in an article printed on April 20, described the air in San Francisco as "full with rumors of enterprises towards our northern coast which shall bring us immediate and extraordinary gains." But, the editor warned, "let us not, by any action, blindly or rashly undertaken, bring upon ourselves the disheartening effects which will surely result from a succession of magnificently failing enterprises." Instead, the Alta advised using the current year for careful preparations for an earnest effort at opening Alaska in following season.[39] Some might heed this reasonable counsel, but others were willing to risk everything to be among the first to enter this newest American frontier. In doing so, they were only following the example of the many thousands of their rootless, restless, speculating countrymen who had preceded them into other frontiers in earlier years with other acquisitions of territory. There would be fewer adventurers this time.

One of the first ventures aimed at Alaska was announced in San Francisco papers on April 12, the intended sailing of the steamship Oriflamme to Victoria and Sitka on June 1, 1867.[40] Those interested were advised to book passage and freight space at the offices of the California, Oregon and Mexico Steamship Company. The Bulletin hailed the news and seemed certain

that the vessel would have "a full cargo and list of passengers" by the departure date.[41] The advertisement ran daily, but the responses apparently were not numerous enough, and the Oriflamme was eventually replaced on the proposed run by the smaller Montana.[42] The latter vessel apparently did not sail to Sitka either.

In Philadelphia, a group calling itself the Russian American Pioneer Association organized in April to plan for the emigration of its members to Alaska "with the intention of Settleing (sic) and making permanent homes for the Citizens of the United States." They applied to Seward and the State Department for assistance and information. They received some of the latter.[43] In June, Charles O. Ferris, spokesman for a collection of sixteen families, wrote to Seward from San Francisco to ask "what enducements through your kinde influance our Government will Offa us if any" to "Emmagrate and Settle in one of the Bays to the Southard of Bherrings Straits". While waiting for a reply, Ferris promised to work to find more individuals who would resettle in Alaska.[44]

Among others interested in the new territory was P. P. Ripley of West Randolph, Vermont, who offered to buy the new American possession from the Government for $10,000,000 to be paid over thirty years.[45] A Mr. W. F. Stewart of California, an ex-editor and author, proposed that the state government buy one of the Alaskan islands for a penal colony.[46] The persistant Richard M. Chapell of New London, Conneticut, wrote the Secretary of State three times that summer and fall of 1867, twice to get permission to send ships to the Alaskan islands to pursue seal fishing, and finally to ask about preemption rights in the new territory. Failing to get seals, he would take land.[47]

One well-organized, ambitious venture fostered by the purchase of Russian America was the North Pacific Fur Company, incorporated early in

June, in San Francisco. Its stated objectives were trade and commerce on the North Pacific Coast and islands, shipping of various types, mining, buying and selling real estate, manufacturing of woolen, cotton and other goods, wharfing and wharehousing. The firm was capitalized at $1,000,000 divided into 10,000 shares at $100 each. Among the members of this corporation were: J. Mora Moss, president of the American Russian Commercial Company (the ice company); Ben Holladay, former stagecoach entrepreneur; William C. Ralston, one of the founders of the Bank of California and soon to be its president; and Lloyd Tevis, associated with the Southern Pacific Railroad and later president of Wells, Fargo & Co.[48] Later in the month, Moss was elected president of the new company, and Tevis became the treasurer.[49] However, despite adequate funding and the prestige of influential names, the North Pacific Fur Company lost out in the race to succeed the Russian American Company in the new territory to later arrivals on the scene, William Kohl and Hayward M. Hutchinson, whose original company would eventually become the basis for the Alaska Commercial Company.[50]

Americans were not the only ones seeking business and real estate opportunities in the former Russian colonies. Victoria merchants arrived in Sitka ahead of their American rivals. The shipping columns of the British Colonist list several vessels which cleared for Sitka or returned from that port during April and May, including the Hudson's Bay Company steamer Otter.[51] On May 30, the steamer Fideliter departed Victoria with seventy tons of freight and twelve passengers. Among these people were "Captain" William Kohl, reputedly the owner of the Fideliter and later a partner in the firm of Hutchinson and Kohl, and Patrick O'Dwyer and David Shirpser, all Victoria merchants.[52] Some of these men claimed town lots, allegedly with the encouragement of Governor Prince Maksutov, and O'Dwyer

and Shirpser also erected stores and reported a profitable business.[53] As other ships arrived in the coming weeks, from the States and Victoria, more town lots were claimed in anticipation of the extension of preemption rights to the new territory. One correspondent, writing under the name "Carlow", reported, after the arrival of the survey vessel Lincoln, that:

> Town lots have gone up several hundred dollars and no more lots are to be pre-empted. Parties who came here in schooners are talking of jumping lots. They believe might is right. Those who recorded lots and left will have them jumped. I am afraid there will be blood spilled about these same lots.[54]

Captain W. A. Howard, the customs officer commanding the Lincoln, reported that the citizens of Sitka were "being annoyed by a set of unprincipled scoundrels calling themselves Americans from Victoria, who are taking up claims by staking lots throughout the town, including even the Governor's garden, and the church and church property." Prince Maksutov denied having given permission for this land rush, stating that he had nothing to do with the matter. Such people, he explained were responsible to their Government.[55]

William Kohl, in the meantime, apparently was warmly received in Sitka, and it may have been at this time, if he had not already been acquainted with the Russian Governor through earlier dealings, that he established the relationship which enabled him and associates later to buy out the major holdings of the Russian American Company after the transfer. Kohl returned to Victoria on the Fideliter on July 9, but Shirpser, O'Dwyer and others remained in Sitka.[56]

The pressure of these American and foreign commercial activities, and the unusual legal status of the former Russian colonies, forced the United States Government, early in the summer of 1867, to attempt to extend American customs regulations over the new territory before transfer had been completed. Between the Czar's ratification of the sale of Russian America in May, and

the official occupation of the area by American authorities in October, the region existed in a legal twilight zone, with Russian law prevailing in theory, but the land now belonged to the United States. Governor Maksutov, for instance, held the view that the country was the property of the United States from the day of the Czar's ratification and that the raising of a flag would be only a meaningless ceremony. Consequently, he busied himself mainly with the affairs of the Russian American Company.[57] On the other hand, Captain Howard had been expressly informed in his instructions, dated June 4, to adhere strictly to rules agreed upon between the Russian Minister and the American authorities, because "the ceded territory is yet subject to the exclusive domain of Russia".[58] The appearance of a customs agent of the United States might clarify the question of authority somewhat, but his powers would be limited until the actual transfer by the very nature of his confused legal and isolated geographical position.

A telegram to Secretary of State Seward from Ben Holladay, soon to be associated with the North Pacific Fur Company, and Senator John Conness of California, may have alerted American authorities to the need for the presence of customs agents in Alaska. Their cable, dated May 15, inquired if American citizens had the right to send merchandise to Sitka on the pending voyage of the Oriflamme.[59] Coming from the senior Senator from California, this request could not be easily ignored, and perhaps Seward recognized the potential problems raised by the question. Furthermore, Seward was anxious to establish an American presence in the area, as evidenced by his eagerness to arrange the transfer. Seward first sought the approval of the Secretary of the Treasury, who promised to send instructions to customs agents in San Francisco.[60] Next the Secretary of State returned to the Russian Minister for his cooperation, arguing that since the Czar had ratified the treaty, it would be permissable to allow the

entrance of American goods to Sitka. Stoeckl agreed with the proposal.[61] He telegraphed the Russian Consul in San Francisco, Martin Klinkowstroem, to advise him that American ships must now be admitted to the former colonies and that "any merchandise or provisions must be allowed to be landed free." The Consul was ordered to forward this information to the Russian Governor, "by the first opportunity".[62] With this, Seward was able to reply affirmatively to Conness and Holladay, on May 22, that:

> The Russian consul at San Francisco is authorized to give documents securing privileges to vessels conveying merchandise and provisions to Sitka, and without waiting official occupation; but vessel must be furnished with proper papers by collector San Francisco.[63]

These various cables were published late in May in the San Francisco paper and late in June in Victoria.[64]

The Secretary of the Treasury, however, was not satisfied, because the instructions sent to Klinkowstroem were not sufficiently explicit in explaining which vessels would be admitted to Alaskan waters. Another exchange of notes and a second cable from Stoeckl to the Russian Consul in San Francisco removed the obscurity. Klinkowstroem was ordered to inform the Russian Governor that:

> the privileges conferred by my telegram of the 22d. instant are to be conceded only to merchandise arriving in American vessels under special permit from a United States Collector of Customs and landed under the personal control of an American agent.[65]

This clarification satisfied McCulloch and he telegraphed instructions to the United States Collector of Customs at San Francisco, John F. Miller.

> Clear for Sitka under certified manifests countersigned by Russian Consul, domestic goods not taxable, and others foreign and domestic on which all duties and taxes have been paid: But no others and no arms, ammunition or ardent spirits.
>
> Send by first vessel either Lieutenant Calvin L. Hooper, or Lieutenant Geo. W. Moore to remain at Sitka, until relieved, and Superintend discharge of cargoes.[66]

Additional information was forwarded to the Collector at San Francisco

early in June, explaining that any vessels arriving at Sitka from foreign ports would be required to proceed to a port of entry within the United States to pay duties before the goods could be landed in Alaska. If the United States agent at Sitka encountered difficulties in this matter, he was instructed to seek assistance from the Russian Governor, but he was warned not "to interfere actively himself."[67]

These regulations, if they had been enforced by an American agent with the cooperation of Governor Maksutov, might have put an end to the activities of the Victoria merchants. However, there is no indication that such an agent was sent to Sitka before Captain Howard left for that port on the Lincoln late in July. Apparently, neither Hooper nor Moore preceded him. Howard found upon his arrival that the land rush was still in progress, and he also discovered that "a number of small vessels freighted with Liquors, arms, ammunition and Foreign Merchandise" were trading with the Indians contrary to American customs regulations. He complained of this to Prince Maksutov, who pleaded helplessness because he had no armed ships at his disposal. Howard believed, however, that the failure of the Prince to enforce the laws was the result not of indifference to American interests, but rather to a desire not to offend the new owners, including the professed and real citizens of the United States. Howard could see no solution to the problem until the transfer had occured, at which time he promised to seize and destroy all illegal liquors, to send away all American vessels dealing in arms and spirits and to capture those of foreign nations and send them to larger ports for ajudication. Finally, lacking other regulations, Howard declared his intention to consider Alaska an Indian reservation as far as concerned liquor until instructed otherwise.[68]

Captain Howard's suggestion may have fallen on sympathetic ears when his dispatch reached San Francisco. In a telegram to Major-General

Edward Davis Townsend, Adjutant-General of the Army, dated September 2, Major-General Halleck of the Division of the Pacific requested that "President declare by proclamation the newly acquired territory to be Indian Territory in order to prevent the introduction of ardent spirits among the Indians there."[69] Acting Secretary of War, U. S. Grant, forwarded the proposal to Seward, who replied by suggesting delay.[70] In the meantime, a permanent customs agent for the new American territory had been appointed, William S. Dodge, who received notification of his position by letters dated August 15. He accompanied the commissioners assigned to carry out the transfer to San Francisco in late September, and he apparently went north to Sitka with the party of Bvt. Major-General Lovell H. Rousseau, the American official charged with accepting the territory on behalf of the United States.[71] Consequently, the former Russian colonies, in spite of American efforts to avoid this situation, remained largely a commercial "no-man's land" between the ratification of the treaty by the Czar and the transfer of the area to the American officials in October.

Planning for that transfer and for the American assumption of control over the ceded territory had begun in May. Not the least of the questions to be decided was who would be the United States commissioner to whom the Russians would surrender their authority. The appointment apparently was considered desirable and prestigious, measured by the number of willing candidates. Julius E. Hilgard, ever alert for ways to enhance the prestige of the Coast Survey, told Commodore John Rodgers that he intended to recommend that the chief of the pending Alaskan coastal survey party be charged with receiving the transfer. Rodgers, although a candidate for the leadership of that expedition, disagreed, explaining in a letter to Seward that "the Admiral on station would be the proper person", because:

> The Russian flag I presumed would be saluted when down and ours when hoisted -
>
> The Russians may give fetes: the Admiral is supposed to have the means of entertainment he is accustomed to receive honors and to return them. He is invested with high military title which the Russians understand better than civil titles. He is on the spot furnished with all the means of carrying out any prescribed (word obscured) guns - suite - means of entertainment - and high rank.[72]

Hilgard thought better of his idea, he informed Rodgers, and there is no indication he suggested Davidson for the honor. Penurious as well as glory seeking, perhaps Hilgard was dissuaded when he learned it might cost the Coast Survey some extra money.

On May 21, Seward received another suggestion for the post of American commissioner. Secretary of the Treasury McCulloch offered the services of Captain W. A. Howard, who had been assigned to go to the new territory on customs business. The Secretary considered the captain "well qualified, by enlarged experince and capabilities".[73] A few days later, Seward recommended to Edwin M. Stanton, Secretary of War, that Major General Henry W. Halleck, commanding the Division of the Pacific or Major General Irwin McDowell be given the assignment. The former seemed an especially good choice because of the location of his headquarters in San Francisco.[74] The decision, however, was delayed for a time, perhaps because the ratifications had not been exchanged and the Czar's commissioners had not left Russia. The question came up again early in July in the Cabinet and Stanton and Seward backed Halleck for the position. Gideon Welles opposed the idea, but he said nothing during the meeting. Later, he approached the President and advised against Halleck, whom he did not like or think very capable. Instead, he suggested Bvt. Major General Lovell H. Rousseau, who was scheduled to be posted to the Pacific Northwest in any case.[75] Who made the final decision and when is not clear, but by

August 3, Rousseau had been notified of the arrival of the Russian commissioners and ordered to Washington.[76] This selection proved politically unpopular with some, however. Rousseau had indiscreetly become involved in open criticism of the manner in which Major General Phillip Sheridan was commanding the military district of Texas and Louisiana, and the Radical Republicans wanted him removed from his position as commissioner in retaliation. But President Johnson refused to be moved by their clamor, and Rousseau went to Alaska as planned.[77]

Among the other questions to be considered in preparing for the transfer were how large a military force would be required in the new territory, where they would be stationed, how and what supplies would be obtained, how to establish good relations with the Indians and what special demands might be made upon the Navy. Major-General Halleck was one of the first to concern himself with several of these problems. In a telegram dated May 20, 1867, he recommended that troops should be sent to the new territory in June or July if the area was to be occupied at all that year. He also suggested that soldiers should be sent to four posts, with one company assigned to each: New Archangel, Cook's Inlet, Kodiak Island and Onalaska Island. No more troops could be spared from service in his military region, Halleck concluded.[78] He followed the cable with a longer report on May 22, in which he revised his estimates to five companies of soldiers, still to be sent to four posts, the reasons for each he detailed. Halleck also warned about the problem of Indian relations. The native tribes, he explained, "are warlike and of a character far superior to those of Oregon, California, Nevada, and adjacent countries." The policy of the Russian and British fur companies, Halleck continued:

> has kept these Indians at peace with and friendly to the whites. But should our Indian system, with its treaties, annuities, agents, frauds and peculations, be introduced there, Indian wars must inevitably follow, and instead of a few companies for its military occupation, as many regiments will be called for, with the resulting expenditure of many millions of dollars every year.[79]

Secretary of War Stanton forwarded a copy of Halleck's cabled report to Seward, who replied that he expected the Russian commissioners to arrive shortly after the exchange of ratifications and that they might be able to leave San Francisco by July 25. Consequently, the Secretary of State believed it would not be necessary to send troops to Alaska before the actual transfer, for they could go north with the commissioners. Seward added that the Secretary of the Navy, Gideon Welles, would have a suitable ship ready to convey these officials to Sitka, and transports for the troops would probably also be available.[80] Indeed, Welles wrote the same day, May 25, to Rear Admiral Henry K. Thatcher, commanding the North Pacific Squadron, advising him that transports for the military force to occupy Alaska would probably be required along with naval vessels to cruise the waters of the new territory.[81]

All waited on the arrival of the Russian commissioners, however, and they seemed in no hurry to leave Russia. Stoeckl apparently was under pressure from Seward to speed the process, and he dispatched a note to Gorchakov on June 27 complaining that "I regret infinitely that they have not yet sent our commissioner whose immediate presence in our colonies appears to me an urgent necessity." The Americans were quick in such matters, he informed the Foreign Minister. Since the exchange of ratifications had occured, they considered Russian America to be United States territory and were considering sending troops there soon. Stoeckl also wrote on this problem to Reutern, the Minister of Finance.[82] On July 4, the Russian Minister received a cable from Reutern stating that the commissioner was leaving that day, by which probably was meant July 3.[83]

The Russian Commissioners, Captain of the Second Rank Alexis Pestchouroff, representing the Russian Government, and Captain Theodore Koskul, representing the Russian American Company, arrived in New York on July 30, where they were met by Stoeckl.[84] The Russian Minister immediately notified Seward, who was vacationing at his home in Auburn, N.Y., and the Secretary of State informed the President and had Brigadier General Rousseau (Bvt. Major General) contacted in New Orleans. That officer replied on April 3, that he would leave at once for Washington.[85] Seward returned to the capital on August 6, but it appears that the Russian Commissioners and perhaps Stoeckl remained in New York.

When Rousseau arrived in Washington, apparently by August 7, he was given his official commission as United States representative to receive Russian America, instructions to be followed in the transfer of the territory, and a flag to be used in the ceremonies. He then proceeded to New York to make arrangements to sail to the West Coast. Unable to depart on August 21, as he had intended, he made arrangements to travel instead with his Russian counterparts.[86] In the meantime, Seward had received an offer from the Pacific Mail Steamship Company of free transportation for the Russian Commissioners from New York to San Francisco. Informed of this proposal by Seward, Stoeckl quickly accepted.[87] Pestchouroff and Rousseau departed New York on August 31, and arrived in San Francisco on September 22, on the Company's steamship "Sacramento", having left Panama on September 8.[88] Koskul had gone on ahead, probably leaving on August 21, and he arrived in San Francisco on September 13.[89]

While the Commissioners arranged for their transportation and travelled to the West Coast, final preparations went ahead for the transfer and occupation of Russian America. General Grant, Acting Secretary of War, concerned over the lateness of the season, wrote to Seward on August 14,

to ask him to learn what facilities for housing troops existed at Sitka and other points, for plans to erect new buildings had been abandoned. Seward transmitted this request to the Russian Minister, and Stoeckl replied on August 20, that Sitka was the only location at which Russia had maintained a garrison, there being only eighty soldiers stationed at the post currently. The barracks, which would be turned over to the Americans at the transfer, would conveniently house from one hundred to one hundred and twenty men, the Russian Minister advised. As for the other points at which Russia had stationed four or five soldiers, these could not be easily transferred to the Americans before winter. Some provisions could be obtained from the warehouses of the Russian American Company - breadstuffs, butter, sugar, tea and saltfish - but the American Government would have to obtain other supplies, especially fresh meat and coffee, from alternate sources.[90]

Based apparently upon this information, the decision was made to send only two companies of troops to Alaska with the transfer party, rather than the four originally proposed by Major-General Halleck in May. The units designated to be stationed at Sitka were Battery H, 2d Artillery, and Company F, 9th Infantry. In addition, Halleck detailed two officers, Bvt. Major James T. Hoyt, Assistant Quartermaster, and Bvt. Lieutenant Robert N. Scott, U.S. Army, to investigate the problem of supplying the troops in Sitka with fresh meat and other provisions and to study the Indian population on the border between British Columbia and the new American possession.[91] Some alterations were also made in the normal rations for the troops who would be stationed in Alaska, with molasses, dried fruit and pickles being added.[92] Earlier, on August 17, Secretary of the Navy Welles sent orders to Rear Admiral Thatcher to prepare the U.S.S. Ossipee or some other vessel to carry the commissioners from San

Francisco to Sitka for the transfer ceremonies.[93] Finally, in orders dated September 3, Halleck informed Bvt. Major General Jefferson C. Davis, Colonel in the 23rd Infantry, that he had been assigned to command the new Military District of Alaska, which would be attached to the Department of California, Military Division of the Pacific. Davis was instructed to proceed with his two companies to Sitka, where it was expected that he would arrived before the transfer party.[94]

At San Francisco, Davis loaded his troops onto the California, Oregon and Mexican Steamship Company's John L. Stevens, which had been especially refitted for this run to Sitka. The 271 enlisted men and their officers, accompanied by carpenters, blacksmiths, farriers, and five laundresses, with a cargo of supplies and livestock, including sheep, cows, mules, steers, calves, pigs, poultry, two horses and a pony, after several false starts, finally departed San Francisco on September 26, 1867. This "Noah's Ark" was followed the next day by the U.S.S. Ossipee, carrying the Russian and American commissioners and their parties.[95] The United States "invasion" of the former Russian America was about to begin in force.

The formal transfer of Russian America to the United States, towards which so much activity during the summer and early fall had been directed, took place at Sitka, on October 18, 1867, shortly after 3:00p.m., in front of a mixed audience of tactlessly cheering Americans and understandably restrained Russians. With thundering cannons, the lowering of the Russian ensign, the raising of the American flag and the utterance of a few simple sentences, the former Russian colonies officially passed under the control of the United States. The ceremonies were brief. With similar dispatch the Americans settled into their new domain. Within a few weeks, enterprising Americans, typical frontier "boomers", had organized

a town government, elected their first municipal officers, and made plans to request territorial status for this immense wilderness upon whose rugged face Sitka could only claim to be a wart of civilization. Mrs. Kinkead, wife of the first postmaster, was making plans to open a Sunday school and a public school, and she had organized a temperance society. The property of the Russian Government was turned over to American authorities, and the Russian American Company sold off its buildings, ships and stock of goods to businessmen from the States who had descended upon the small port hoping to profit from the demise of Russian commerce in Alaska. Some Russians elected to stay in the territory, as the treaty of cession permitted, but many others had begun to leave before the end of the year.[96] With the departure of Russian civilians, the employees of the Company and the remaining troops of the Siberian Line Battalions, the Russian presence in Alaska was rapidly and effectively being extinguished. By the close of the year, with a town government functioning, American soldiers settled into winter quarters and expectant American capitalists superceding Russian merchants, the grip of the United States on Alaska was growing steadily stronger.[97]

Another six months would pass before the House of Representatives would finally take up the question of the appropriation for the purchase of Alaska, six more months in which Americans could sink deeper roots and the Russians would continue to withdraw. Congress could have chosen to deny the funds to complete the terms of the treaty, but not without returning to Russia a tangled, perhaps ungovernable mess. By mid-July 1868, for the Americans to leave Alaska would have been far more complicated than occupying it. Seward probably foresaw such a predicament when he urged a speedy transfer of the territory in the summer of 1867. He could not have envisioned the length of the Congressional delay, but it is not

unreasonable to presume that he expected the payment to be voted after occupation. If Seward did not deliberately intend to create a situation in which the House did not have a graceful, diplomatic alternative to the appropriation, there certainly were Congressmen who believed he had schemed to that end.[98]

III

During the months between the purchase and appropriation, while Seward waited for the Congress to vote the $7,200,000, and while he urged immediate occupation of the territory, the Secretary of State also investigated the possibilities of acquiring British Columbia. Many people had seen that isolated English colony as a central issue in the purchase of Russian America by the United States; many believed the cession directly threatened that British possession. Some advisors to the Czar hoped to see it fall to the Americans. The United States Senate probably discussed the possibility; the Committee on Foreign Relations had done so. Many American newspapers saw the chance to acquire British Columbia as one of the major reasons for accepting Russian America. Certainly, the danger was felt in British Columbia, and many in Canada and England were pessimistic. Consequently, it would have been strange indeed if the American Government, especially Seward, an ardent expansionist, had been blind to the potential created by the purchase of Russian America.

William Seward, however, needed no such encouragement to arouse his interest in British Columbia. As Howard I. Kushner has shown, the Secretary of State had been fascinated since the 1850's with the idea of eventually annexing the entire Pacific Northwest to the United States.[99] Others in the American Government had similar expectation. Nathaniel P.

Banks, for instance, Chairman of the House Committee on Foreign Relations, introduced a bill on July 2, 1866, calling for the admission of all British North America to the Union as states or territories.[100] In February, 1867, on the eve of the negotiations for the treaty with Russia, Seward submitted to the Senate a report prepared by E. H. Derby on the question of reciprocity with British North America, in which this special agent raised the question of the annexation of those provinces in relation to the dropping of the Alabama Claims against England. The report also discussed a recently received petition from British Columbia seeking annexation to the United States.[101] In another discussion of the subject, Derby had been more specific.

> If Great Britain desires to propitiate this country after all that has occured, would it not be her true policy to cede us a portion of her remote territories, valuable to us, but of little value to her? Were she to cede us Vancouver's island and British Columbia, so important to our Pacific coasts, and so remote from England, and settled in great part by our own citizens, might she not easily bring our claims to a peaceful solution, and would not this be preferable to a specie payment for the ravages of cruisers?[102]

Derby was not the only one to connect the idea of acquiring British Columbia with the question of the Alabama Claims. John Bigelow, a close friend of Seward and recently returned from a diplomatic post, called at the Secretary of State's home on the evening of April 1, 1867, to "suggest that he (Seward) should buy the British possessions on the Pacific and pay for them with the Alabama Claims." According to Bigelow, Seward replied that "he had sounded the Government in that direction, but they - the British ministers - dared not."[103] Although no evidence of such an approach has come to light, it is not unreasonable that it occured unofficially with no records being kept of the conversation. The Daily National Intelligencer was also quick to connect British Columbia and the Alabama Claims after the purchase of Russian America. On April 5, the

editor wrote that:

> British Columbia may be in the diplomatic market, and a round sum, added to a relinquishment on our part of our Alabama Claims, might bring it into our possession. . . . Probably it has been thought expedient to prepare the negotiations for the acquisition of British Columbia by the purchase of Russian America.[104]

Public interest in the possibility of acquiring British Columbia in return for cancellation of the Alabama Claims began more than a week after the Senate had approved the treaty to purchase sian America. A Washington correspondent for the Boston Post te..graphed his editor on Monday, April 15, that another international land deal was being negotiated by the State Department. Later in the week, he claimed to have obtained further details which the New York Tribune reprinted on April 19. According to the Post's correspondent, Seward was attempting to buy all of British North America west of the longitude of the Mississippi River, with the Alabama Claims as part of the price. The British, the writer asserted, were holding out only for the retention of Vancouver's Island.[105] Despite the fact that no one in the Government confirmed the story, and no evidence has been found to indicate that any approach to the British had been made, the rumor spread rapidly because it was believable and expected. Even the denial printed in a Tribune letter on April 24, from its Washington correspondent, did not prevent the news from being published and discussed in newspapers across the nation and especially in British Columbia.[106] The story seemed so reasonable, in fact, that the Tribune, on April 25, confided that it had been learned:

> from high authority that the English Government can be easily reconciled to a parting with the Canadas and other British possessions in North America, whenever those provinces shall themselves make manifest their desire to separate from the mother country, whether for the purpose of annexation to the United States, or for setting up independent governments for themselves.[107]

Reaction to the rumor was greatest in British Columbia, where the news fostered a mood of pessimism and an annexation movement.[108] Numerous American newspapers took up the story and commented upon it. The Chicago Tribune acknowledged the likelihood of the negotiations, but the editor was not anxious to acquire British Columbia at that time. He could not "see the necessity of spending one dime for the territory", because its eventual annexation was "one of those inevitable things". "On the whole", the Tribune concluded:

> we think the acquisition of British American can be left to time. As fruit when ripe, if left along, will fall to the ground, so British America, when ripe for acquisition, must fall to the centre of the political gravity on this Continent.[109]

The San Francisco Bulletin stated that the public mind had been prepared for the story of the negotiations for British Columbia, because the purchase of Russian America had made such a move reasonable. The acquisition would be welcomed by citizens of the West Coast, the editor asserted, and it would be in the best interests of the people of British Columbia, who already had close economic ties to American ports. In a second article, the Bulletin stated that the British colony was suffering economic hardships under a distant government that cared little for its problems and could not defend it.[110] The editor of the Alta California also welcomed the news, and he confidently gloated that "Henceforth, the British Columbians must consider themselves as undeveloped Yankees - liable to be born again politically, at any moment." The land would be valuable to the United States, the Alta stated, and the price for the colony would be no "trifle". Nevertheless, the editor declared that:

> The acquisition of British Columbia is necessary to consolidate our empire on the Pacific, and it is, as we regard it, inevitable. It belongs to us by geographical position, by the affinities of blood, language, customs, and government, and by the irrevocable decrees of manifest destiny.[111]

Other newspapers featured articles on British Columbia and its possible acquisition throughout the summer and fall of 1867, but eventually it became obvious that the reports of negotiations had been only rumors. However, the response of many in the press had demonstrated that there was sympathy in the United States for the annexation of that British colony. Politicians were not blind to this interest and some spoke to the issue. In remarks made to citizens of Portland, Senator George H. Williams of Portland did not "hesitate in saying that the nation, to complete its symmetry, to fulfill its advancing destiny, must have British Columbia." This statement was greeted with applause, the Oregonian reported.[112] In California, Senator Cornelius Cole also had his eyes fixed on the English possession to the north. At a banquet in his honor at Santa Cruz, Cole remarked "We will have British Columbia in a few years." The crowd cheered. Continuing, the Senator declared that "the depredations of the 'Alabama' and other piratical vessels of the same stamp, must be paid for, and John Bull should be invited to cede British Columbia us."[113]

Cole made a personal attempt to push the idea of acquiring British Columbia when he returned to Washington in July for the summer session. He talked with Seward on July 18, for over one half of an hour, in which he asserted that nearly everyone in the English colony, with the exception of the British office-holders, favored annexation to the United States. The inhabitants were excessively taxed; they were dissatisfied with their government; the population was declining and the economy was nearly in ruins. Finally, Cole argued that the entire coast should belong to the United States for reasons of defense. Seward seemed unmoved by this harangue, and merely replied by recounting the current efforts of the Canadians to unite British North America. The Secretary did recognize, however, that the current inhabitants of the Rocky Mountain and Saskatchewan

areas were economically depressed and he did state that the small population of British Columbia could never control so vast a land. But if Seward was thinking of making an offer to Great Britain for the western portion of British North America, he gave Cole no indication whatsoever.[114]

Further support for the acquisition of British Columbia appeared late in November in the United States House of Representatives. Congressman George F. Miller of Pennsylvannia introduced a joint resolution for the "purchase and annexation of British Columbia, including Vancouver's Island". The proposal was read twice, referred to the Committee on Foreign Affairs, printed, and there it died.[115] In the Senate, on December 9, Senator Alexander Ramsey of Minnesota introduced a resolution which called for a renewal of reciprocity with Canada and for the cession "to the United States the districts of North America west of longitude 90°." His plan called for the United States to pay $6,000,000 to the Hudson's Bay Company to extinguish their claims to the Northwest Territories, to assume the public debt of British Columbia not to exceed $2,000,000, to aid in the construction of a Northern Pacific railroad from the western shores of Lake Superior to Puget Sound, and to divide the new territories into no less than three Territories "with all the rights and privileges of the citizens of the government of Montana Territory". Ramsey explained his effort as an attempt to avoid the annexation of the area by Canada, which he stated was about to essay just such an expansion in defiance of the alleged wishes of the people of the Red River region to join the United States. It was necessary, the Senator from Minnesota stated, that the United States make public its terms for the same territory. A brief discussion of the resolution followed, and when Senator James W. Grimes of Iowa objected to the proposal because he opposed a renewal of reciprocity, the resolution was held over under the rules.[116] But Ramsey

was not so easily deterred. On January 3, 1868, he reintroduced the same resolution, again calling for an investigation of reciprocity and the purchase of British Northwest America. Once more the proposal was tabled and printed.[117] It finally came up for debate on July 27, 1868, when Ramsey made a strong plea for reciprocity and the acquisition of British Columbia and the Hudson's Bay Company's lands. After some discussion, the resolution was adopted with minor modifications and referred, with the approval of Charles Sumner, to the Committee on Foreign Relations, as the proposal had requested.[118] It died there, when Congress adjourned for the summer.

Although Seward did nothing openly to seek the purchase of British Columbia during the summer and fall of 1867, he certainly was not oblivious to the comments of elements of the press and the attitudes of some Congressmen. If the Secretary was making any secret approaches to the British Government during this period, no evidence has been found to substantiate them. However, an episode which occured in the fall of 1867 apparently persuaded Seward to act.

In September, 1867, two American officers, Bvt. Lt. Colonel Robert W. Scott and Bvt. Major James T. Hoyt, had been sent by Major General Halleck to investigate the problems of supplying American troops in Sitka with fresh meat and to study the Indian tribes which resided on the border between British Columbia and the new American possession. During their studies of their separate assignments, these two officers visited "Victoria, Esquimault, and nearly all the settled portions of Vancouver Island." They stayed several days at New Westminster, travelled up the Frazer and finally "traversed the entire extent of the colony from the Southern boundary to the most northern point on the seacoast". During the approximately two months of their journey, they talked "with the citizens

of all classes, including Government officers, Legislators and other officials." Among the topics they discussed with the inhabitants, the two officers repeatedly talked about the possibility of annexation of the colony to the United States. When Scott and Hoyt returned to San Francisco in November, Major General Halleck was so impressed by their reports on the mood of British Columbians that he ordered these officers to detail their experiences for various authorities in the Government at Washington.[119]

The findings of Scott and Hoyt are lengthy and include a detailed analysis of the current economic and political conditions of British Columbia. Their immediate conclusion was that "we are satisfied beyond any question a large majority of the inhabitants (whites) of the colony are in favor of immediate annexation . . . to the United States." The sentiment was not confined only to the foreign element, the report stated, "but is entertained by the British subjects to the full extent above indicated." An especially telling point, in the opinion of the two officers, was their claim that residents of the colony repeatedly raised the issue spontaneously; Scott and Hoyt were bombarded with that topic of conversation.

> Even among the higher government and colonial officials we heard very candid expressions on the subject, to the effect that if it was for the best interests of the people, and their desire that the colony should be ceded to the United States, such a cession should be made; that some remedy for their present financial difficulties must be adopted, and if all else failed, annexation would undoubtedly be assented to by the mother country.

Hoyt and Scott admitted that a small class were vehemently combatting the idea and were denouncing all who spoke for annexation as disloyal. This caused many who favored a connection with the United States to remain silent.

Among the most enthusiastic for annexation, reported the two officers, were the Hudson's Bay Company people who saw a chance to enter the antici-

pated lucrative Alaska trade. Hoyt and Scott concluded by noting that an annexation petition earlier in the year had been blocked by opponents who had cried treason and disloyalty, charges which deterred many from signing. However, they predicted:

> We are thoroughly satisfied . . . that if the cession of the country to the United States was proclaimed as a fact, the rejoicings of that colony would be enthusiastic and general, and the dispondency which now pervades the people would give place to cheerfulness and hope.[120]

At the same time, Major General Halleck was sending his own report to Washington on the difficulties of maintaining legal authority in the disputed San Juan Islands. Among his solutions to the present problems, he listed as number four the extinction "by purchase and treaty the British claim to all territory west of the Rocky mountains." He advocated this course, perhaps after talking with Scott and Hoyt, by stating that the territory was of little value to Great Britain, that it could not be colonized by British subjects, that it was more valuable to the United States than England, that its transfer to American control would remove the present source of friction between England and the United States and tend towards a lasting peace, that it would reduce expenditures for defense in the area for both countries, and that it was desired by the people of British Columbia.[121] In another letter to the Adjutant General of the Army, dated four days later, November 22, Halleck discussed the fortifications of the Army in the Puget Sounds, but he advised against permanent new emplacements because he stated that "Our true policy on this coast is to acquire British Columbia and fortify the harbor of Esquimalt."[122] As if to support Halleck's contention, a report of the Office of the Board of Engineers, dated San Francisco, December 9, 1867, stated that:

> In fact, with the exclusion of Great Britain from this Coast, from which Power, in case of War, we would have the most to fear, it would probably become a question, whether, with the entire Coast in our possession, any fortifications would be necessary in these waters, . . .[123]

Seward, who received these various documents on January 24, must have been impressed with the strength of the views presented by Scott, Hoyt and Halleck, and he decided to investigate the situation further. On January 27, he sent a note in code to Secretary of War Stanton asking him to telegraph Halleck for his opinion on "what sum would be a reasonable purchase money for British Columbia, west of the Rocky Mountains" and for the basis for such an estimate.[124] Stanton dispatched the request, also in cipher, that very day, asking Halleck to "comply . . . as speedily as possible" and to reply in code.[125] Halleck may have been prepared for such an inquiry, for he had been similarly consulted while negotiations were in progress for the purchase of Russian America. Consequently, he must have received this telegram with great enthusiasm and probably with the assumption that the stories which had been circulated so long about the pending negotiations for the British colony were true. He replied to Stanton on January 28 by cable and in cipher.

> Intrinsic value of British Columbia west of the Rocky Mountains about equal to sum paid for Alaska; political value to the United States much greater, as its acquisition would save necessity of fortifications as military and naval establishments in Puget Sound, and would also give greater security to Alaska in case of war with a naval power. It would end present dispute in regard to boundaries and all probable cause of difficulty on this coast. Its value to us would therefore be much greater than to Great Britain. To us it is from ten (10) to fifteen (15) millions and perhaps more.[126]

In a follow-up report, sent by normal dispatch means, dated January 28, Halleck expanded on his telegraphic remarks, and suggested "I do not recommend that any money be actually paid for the cession; but the sum named be considered as, and made an offset to, our claims against Great Britain in the Alabama and other cases."[127]

The Secretary of State did not wait for Halleck's reply. On January 28, at the normal Tuesday Cabinet meeting, the subject of Alaska and

British Columbia was raised. Seward "expressed his views of the value of the latter" to the United States, and "thought we would ere long get it." He urged the members of the Cabinet to assist him "in the purchase" by receiving the new British minister to the United States, Edward Thornton, with reserve. Seward hoped negotiations over the Alabama Claims would soon be reopened, and all "grievances on both sides would be thrown into a heap and one would be taken out to balance another". In this manner, Seward hoped to "pay for Columbia with the Alabama Claims".[128]

There is no evidence that Seward pursued the matter further than the Cabinet meeting or that he discussed the issue with Minister Thornton. However, it seems more likely that he did so, but without success. Earlier, Seward had raised the question of British territorial cessions and the Alabama Claims with Thornton's predecessor, Francis Clare Ford, who had been Charge d'Affaires since the sudden death of Sir Frederick Bruce in the previous September. On December 8, during a meeting at which Ford and Seward reviewed the Alabama Claims case, the Secretary of State rejected with finality the idea of arbitration of the dispute. However, he told Ford that there was "one way in which perhaps the obstacles in the path of a settlement might be removed." All the problems between the two nations could be "piled up together and made the subject of a general negotiation." To Ford, in his dispatch to Lord Stanley, this meant but one thing: British territory for American settlement of the dispute. Charles Francis Adams, the American minister to England, to whom Stanley confided this dispatch, interpreted Seward's hint in the same manner.[129] In any case, nothing came of this approach, and Seward had no better success in any conversations he may have had on the subject with Thornton. The attempt of the American Government to obtain British Columbia died aborning. The reason for this may be found in part in the attitudes on this question expressed in the

House of Representatives during their debates on the appropriation for the purchase of Russian America.

The ideas which advocates of the appropriation bill marshalled in the House to justify passage of the $7,200,000 generally were not new; most had been heard in the Senate or read in the press more than a year earlier. Alaska was rich in resources and richer still in potential; Russian friendship was too valuable to lose by refusing the payment; expansion of the national domain was extolled and the future of trade in the Pacific with Japan and China was repeatedly praised; and the need to please the Pacific Coast States who wanted Alaska was not forgotten. Supporters also urged the moral obligation of the country to pay a debt contracted, to deliver the funds for a land already occupied, to complete an arrangement from which the nation could not now withdraw. Opponents also used old rhetoric. The land was worthless; no one wanted it; the country could not use it; the price was too high; maintainence and defense of the remote colony would cost too much; the United States had land enough for generations; and the territory was not contiguous. The only new thesis which opponents stressed at great length was a constitutional issue. The House, they argued, was not bound to appropriate the purchase funds because a territorial acquisition requiring a payment did not fall under the normal treaty-making provisions of the Constitution. Consequently, those who urged defeat of the appropriation stated that the House had no obligation to appropriate the money because its consent had not been sought at the time the treaty was signed and accepted. But this theory was not really new, for it had been advanced unsuccessfully in each former purchase of territory by the United States. It was all to no avail, in any case, for the opponents lost overwhelmingly, and the fact that 37 of the 43 who voted in the negative on H.R. No. 1096 also voted for impeachment may

suggest that their objections to the treaty and the appropriation were more basic than the reason they cited at such length, with such erudition and so earnestly.[130]

The main issue of concern for our discussion, however, is none of the above motives, but rather the degree to which the Representatives on both sides of the appropriation question believed that British Columbia was a factor in the purchase and payment for Russian America. Both proponents and opponents of the money bill did indeed discuss the affect of the acquisition on that British colony. Thirty-one members of the House delivered one or more speeches during the debate on H.R. No. 1096, and thirteen dealt with the subject of British Columbia, either as a major point in their remarks or at least as an issue of lesser importance. Samuel Shellabarger, who opposed the appropriation, called the issue one which "seems to control the votes of the larger portion of members than any other".[131]

Among those who favored the money bill, the question of British Columbia was raised before debate began, by its inclusion in the conclusion of the Majority Report on H.R. No. 1096 presented by the Committee on Foreign Affairs. One of the benefits of the treaty with Russia was stated to be that "It encloses British Columbia within American jurisdiction south, west, and north."[132] In his speech innaugurating the defense of the appropriation, Nathaniel P. Banks, who had helped to author that Report, pointed to the difficult position in which British Columbia had been placed. With Americans now to the north and south, what opportunities could there be for British citizens "when Americans are in absolute possession of the commerce, trade, and fisheries which gave value to the land and seas of the North Pacific"? He asked what right England had to retain British Columbia against the will of its people?

> But a colony thrust in upon us on the Pacific by an arrangement unjust to this country, affecting its society and never satisfactory to its people, and which can not long exist, a colony which is restrained from coming to us by the active intervention of the parent Government, and is maintained upon considerations of foreign interest waiting for a moment when hostile demonstrations may be within its power, such a colony has not a natural existence, and can claim of us no consideration or support.[133]

During various speeches given by advocates of the money bill on July 1, British Columbia was mentioned by several. William Mungen of Ohio enthusiastically explained that by "this treaty we cage the British lion on the Pacific coast; we cripple that great and grasping monopoly, the Hudson's Bay Company," who for far too long had "monopolized almost exclusively the fur trade of North America" which "justly does belong to the American people."[134] Ignatius Donnelly of Minnesota, explained that he would vote for the bill because it was a necessary step in national expansion over "the entire domain of the North American continent." But the greatest importance of the purchase, Donnelly argued, was "the fact that it points the way to the acquisition . . . of that great and most valuable region, West British America". He continued:

> With our great nation on the south of this region, and our new acquisition of Alaska resting upon its northern boundary, British dominion will be inevitably pressed out of western British America. It will disappear between the upper and nether millstones. These jaws of the nation will swallow it up.[135]

Two other Representatives who spoke in support of the appropriation and mentioned British Columbia were Leonard Myers of Pennsylvania, and Green B. Raum of Illinois. In responding to criticism of the purchase which stressed Alaska's non-continuity, Myers agreed that "We do wish to be compact. The American sentiment is that we should have had British Columbia and Vancouver's Island" when negotiations were carried on over Oregon years before. Now there was a new opportunity, Myers asserted, if the House would only vote the appropriation and complete the treaty.

"Reject Alaska", Myers warned, "and there is scarcely a doubt that Russia . . . . would sell to England". If that were to occur, the Pennsylvania legislator predicted, British North America would become great and powerful. "The British North American possessions, now almost land-locked on the west, hold out little promise to settlers . . .. Give it this new outlet and you build up a permanent, because prosperous rival". Take Alaska, Myers concluded, and those British lands would eventually fall under "the starry flag".[136] Representative Raum, on the other hand, preferred the succinct simile to an extend discourse. "I say that Alaska from 54°40' to the frozen regions gives us a valuable portion of the Pacific Coast. The 5°40' now owned by Great Britain will drop into our hands like a ripe pear."[137] Finally, in a speech read into the record but not delivered on the floor of the House, Godlove S. Orth of Indiana extolled the extention of national dominion and bemoaned the former lost opportunity to gain all of Oregon.

> No Americans having a due appreciation of the interests of his own country will hesitate for a moment to say that we must own the British possessions on the Pacific, and having acquired the Russian possessions the inevitable tendancy will be, and that, too, within a comparatively short space of time, to give us those possessions. . . . In an evil hour we relinquished our right to this now British territory, for our title . . . was regarded by our citizens as clear and indisputable. This territory must sooner or later come again under our jurisdiction, . . .[138]

Opponents of the treaty also mentioned British Columbia, but usually in the context that the purchase of Alaska was not a proper means to obtain the acquisition of that English colony. Samuel Shellabarger, for instance, deplored Donnelly's colorful illusions to "upper and nether millstones". It was an unfriendly, dishonorable act to seek "by sinister and covert indirections" the annexation of British Columbia through the purchase of Alaska. "I say", Shellabarger concluded, "If the acquisition of British

America is to be open, fair, direct, honest, the acquisition cannot be aided by the fact that we own Alaska beyond it."[139] Also on July 1, Orange Ferris of New York asked if the purchase of Alaska was to become the base for filibustering against British Columbia. "Is that country on the one side, and Washington Territory on the other", to be the means to "crush" the intervening British possession? If so, Ferris lectured his colleagues, the process was immoral and courted disaster. England would not yield so willingly.[140]

In remarks made on July 7, Benjamin F. Loan of Missouri and Benjamin F. Butler of Massachusetts also noticed the interest of some Representatives in British Columbia. After recalling Donnelly's oft quoted illusion to millstones, Load observed "that since the birth of this nation the success that others have met with in grinding territory out of the British Government has not been" successful enough "to induce us to try that process on Great Britain". In fact, Loan asserted, if "we ever acquire British Columbia it will not be by the grinding process, but most likely we will buy it as we have done in the case of all our other acquisitions."[141] Butler, on the other hand, wasted no time on the Western British America issue. Although he had long favored the annexation of the Canadas and the Maritime colonies of England, as a provincial New Englander, he emphatically stated "I would not take to-day, as a gift, the British possessions lying without Canada."[142]

Others who opposed the appropriation for Alaska and also mentioned British Columbia were Thomas Williams of Pennsylvania, Shelby M. Cullom of Illinois, and Columbus Delano of Ohio. In addition to deriding the designs of many Americans on British Columbia, these speakers also focused on two of the principal reasons for the failure of the United States to succeed in obtaining the English colony on the Pacific. In remarks on

July 9, Congressman Williams observed that any attempt to squeeze Great Britain out of the Pacific Northwest as a result of the purchase of Alaska would mean "war, if it means anything, as one of the first fruits of this acquisition".[143] In a speech dated July 14, Representative Delano warned that the purchase of Alaska would stimulate a desire among Americans for the intervening British territory "to an extent that will not promote, if it does not disturb the peace of nations."[144] Earlier, in his speech on July 1, Orange Ferris had bluntly stated that any attempt to seize British Columbia would probably lead to war. "We want no war", Ferris urged, "least of all with that nation most powerful on the ocean, and with which we have the most complicated and extensive commercial relations."[145] Finally, Shelby Cullom took a different position, but one which probably lay very much at the heart of the lack of American assertiveness towards British Columbia. "I believe that we are destined to own and control the whole western continent", he explained, "but . . . we need not be in a hurry. When the fruit is ripe it will fall into our hands". By acquiring Alaska, Cullom assured those who read his speech, the United States assuredly would obtain Western British America.

> England is not blind. She knows too well that all that country in the course of time is bound to form a part of the American nation, and that when the time comes, when the American Government needs it, she will own it, either by purchase or conquest.[146]

But Cullom and many others were to be disappointed; the desirable "plum" never fell into American hands. On July 14, 1868, the House voted $7,200,000 to complete the purchase of Alaska, and the money was paid on August 1, 1868, to Stoeckl, as the representative of Russia delegated to receive the funds. With that event, the purchase of Russian America was completed, and with the close of debates in the House of Representatives, nothing more would be heard of the attempt to connect the annexation of

British Columbia to the acquisition of Alaska. Many Americans, including a number in the national government and the press, had hoped to obtain British Columbia while the momentum of expansion remained with the United States. However, for a variety of reasons, the unpopularity of the Administration, the open hostility of many Congressmen to further expansion, the internal political turmoil over Reconstruction, and the apparent unwillingness of William H. Seward to make a definite proposal on the subject to the British Government, the subject was apparently dropped, and British Columbia was left free to find its future with the Dominion of Canada in the next decade.

CHAPTER VIII

FOOTNOTES

[1]PRCA, Annex 28, April 7/19, 1867, Stoeckl to Gorchakov.

[2]The Congressional Globe, 40th Cong., 2nd Sess., vol 4, p. 4055.

[3]Seward MSS, Banks to Seward, July 15, 1868.

[4]Frank A. Golder, "The Purchase of Alaska", footnote 17, p. 424. Translated from the original French by the author.

[5]The best examinations of the passage of the appropriation can be found in: David Hunter Miller, "The Alaska Treaty", pp. 428-479; and Ronald J. Jensen, The Alaska Purchase and Russian-American Relations, (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1975), Chapter 6, pp. 100-121. For the bribery story, see: Miller, pp. 508-547; Jensen, Chapter 7, pp. 122-141; and earlier studies, William A. Dunning, "Paying for Alaska", Political Science Quarterly, XXVII (1912), pp. 385-398; and Reinhard H. Luthin, "The Sale of Alaska", Slavonic and East European Review, XVI (July, 1937), pp. 168-182. The Perkins Case has been dealt with in depth only in Miller's unpublished manuscript, where it is interwoven with other themes on pp. 480-547.

[6]National Archives, Record Group 23, United States Coast Survey, "Records of the Office of the Assistant in Charge, 1867-1876", Julius E. Hilgard to Benjamin Peirce, April, 1867. Hereafter, this collection is referred to as: NA, RG 23, ROAC.

[7]PRCA, annex 31, April 7/19, 1867, Stoeckl to Gorchakov.

[8]Ibid., Annex 32, April 28, 1867 (O.S.), Gorchakov to Stoeckl.

[9]NA, RG 59, "Notes from the Russian Legation", Microcopy, M-39, R4, Stoeckl to Seward, telegram, New York, May 15, 1867.

[10]PRCA, Annex 40, June 15/27, 1867, New York, Stoeckl to Gorchakov, no. 18. This note confirms Bodisco's arrival on June 17, and the exchange of ratifications on June 20.

[11]NA, RG 59, "Bureau of Accounts Records (State Department): Telegrams Sent by the Department of State, 1867-1868-1869," Boxes Nos. 1 and 2, Seward to Stoeckl, June 19, 1867.

[12]Ibid., Stoeckl to Gorchakov, telegram, Washington, June 20, 1867, sent from the State Department.

[13]The Milwaukee Daily Sentinel, April 12, 1867.

[14]New York Times, April 11, 1867.

[15]NA, RG 23, ROAC, Hilgard to Peirce, April, 1867.

[16]Ibid.

[17]Ibid., W. W. Cooper to Hilgard, April, 1867. Cooper was writing for Peirce.

[18]NA, RG 59, "Miscellaneous Letters", April-May, 1867. See: Henry R. Brinkerhoff, Kansas City, Mo., to Seward, April 15, 1867; David L. Seymour, Troy, N.Y., to Seward, April 16, 1867; Fr. Clerk, New York, to Seward, April 24, 1867; J. Q. A. Smith, Dover, N.H., to Seward, April 30, 1867; and Horace Silsby, Washington, D.C., to Seward, May 3, 1867.

[19]Hector Chevigny, Russian America, p. 242.

[20]HR 177, p. 189

[21]The San Francisco Bulletin, April 1, 1867; The Philadelphia Inquirer, April 17, 1867.

[22]Sumner MSS, Widener Library, Harvard University, Hilgard to Sumner, May 18, 1867 and May 25, 1867.

[24]NA, RG 59, "Miscellaneous Letters", Halleck to Seward, May 22, 1867, microcopy, M-179, R266.

[25]HR 177, p. 189.

[26]Seward MSS., Seward to Henry, Washington, April 10, 1867; and also NA, RG 59, "Domestic Letters", v. 75, Seward to Henry, April 10, 1867.

[27]NA, RG 59, "Miscellaneous Letters", microcopy, M-179, R256, Henry to Seward, April 17, 1867.

[28]NA, RG 23, ROAC, Hilgard to Peirce, May 13, 1867 and May 17, 1867.

[29]Ibid., May 13, 1867.

[30]Ibid.

[31]Ibid., Peirce to Hilgard, May 17, 1867.

[32]Ibid., Hilgard to Peirce, May 17, 1867.

[33]Ibid., Hilgard to Peirce, May 20, 1867.

[34]Ibid., Hilgard to Peirce, May 17, 18, 19, and 23, 1867, (4 letters).

[35]Ibid., Hilgard to Peirce, May 23, 1867, an addendum.

[36]Ibid., Hilgard to Peirce, May 17, 1867; NA, RG 59, "Domestic Letters", microcopy, M-40, R63, vol. 76, p. 595, Seward to Hugh McCulloch, June 11, 1867; Ibid., "Miscellaneous Letters", microcopy, M-179, R259, McCulloch to Seward, June 12, 1867. The quoted material is in the Seward letter; the mention of the Smithsonian ideas is made in the McCulloch letter. The Smithsonian instructions are included as an enclosure in that letter, and can be found in frames 0222-0225.

[37]NA, RG 59, "Miscellaneous Letters", microcopy, M-179, R259, J. K. Hailey, Asst. Secretary of the Treasury, to Seward, June 5, 1867, with enclosure, copy of orders to W. A. Howard from Hugh McCulloch, June 4, 1867.

[38]San Francisco Alta California, July 22nd, 1867, under "Shipping Intelligence".

[39]San Francisco Alta California, April 20, 1867.

[40]San Francisco Bulletin, April 12, 1867, and daily until May 25, 1867.

[41]Ibid., April 13, 1867.

[42]Daily British Colonist, Victoria, British Columbia, May 24 and 30, 1867, and June 3 and 7, 1867.

[43]NA, RG 59, "Miscellaneous Letters", Nathaniel R. Harris to Seward, April 21, 1867, and June 19, 1867, Philadelphia, microcopy, M-179, R256 & R 260. Seward's reply: "Domestic Letters", Seward to Harris, May 8, 1867, microcopy, M-40, R63, vol. 76, p. 256.

[44]Ibid., "Miscellaneous Letters", Charles O. Ferris to Seward, June 12, 1867, microcopy, M-179, R259.

[45]Ibid., Ripley to Seward, April 15, 1867, microcopy, M-179, R256.

[46]Daily British Colonist, Victoria, British Columbia, July 6, 1867.

[47]NA, RG 59, "Miscellaneous Letters", Chapell to Seward, May 22 and 30, 1867 and October 19, 1867. Seward's replies: "Domestic Letters", Seward to Chapell, May 25, June 6, and October 31, 1867. Microcopies: M-179, R258; M-40, R63, vol. 76, pp. 222 and 288-289, and vol 77, p. 296.

[48]San Francisco Alta California, June 7, 1867; and Daily British Colonist, Victoria, British Columbia, June 27, 1867.

[49]San Francisco Alta California, June 14, 1867.

[50]Frank H. Sloss and Richard A. Pierce, "The Hutchinson, Kohl Story", PNQ, LXII (January, 1971), pp. 1-6.

[51]Daily British Colonist, Victoria, British Columbia, April 27, May 1, 22, 24 and 27, and June 6, 1867, under shipping intelligence.

[52]Ibid., May 28, 29 and 30, 1867.

[53]Ibid., June 24, 1867, letter from David Shirpser to Colonist, June 16, 1867, two letters from O'Dwyer to Colonist, June 10 and 16, 1867. Also from O'Dwyer to an unnamed correspondent, printed in the Colonist, June 25, 1867.

[54]Ibid., September 19, 1867, "Letters from New Archangel", August 15, 1867.

[55]NA, RG 59, "Miscellaneous Letters", Howard to Secretary of the Treasury, Hugh McCulloch, Sitka, August 21, 1867, copy sent to State Department, microcopy, M-179, R266; also in HR 177.

[56]Daily British Colonist, June 24, 1867, in a letter to the Colonist, dated Sitka, June 16, 1867. Arrival of the Fideliter at Victoria was announced in Ibid, July 10, 1867.

[57]NA, RG 59, "Miscellaneous Letters", Howard to McCulloch, Sitka, August 21, 1867, copy to State Department, microcopy, M-179, R266.

[58]Ibid., J. K. Hailey, Asst. Secretary of the Treasury, to Seward, June 5, 1867, with enclosure, copy of orders to W. A. Howard from Hugh McCulloch, June 4, 1867, microcopy, M-179, R259.

[59]NA, RG 59, "Miscellaneous Letters", John Conness and Ben Holladay to Seward, telegram, May 15, 1867, microcopy, M-179, R257.

[60]Ibid., Hugh McCulloch to Seward, May 18, 1867, microcopy, M-179, R258.

[61]Ibid., "Notes to the Russian Legation", Seward to Stoeckl, May 20, 1867, microcopy, M-99, R82, p. 213; and "Notes from the Russian Legation", Stoeckl to Seward, translation, microcopy, M-39, R4.

[62]Ibid., "Notes from the Russian Legation", Stoeckl to Seward, translation, May 22, 1867, with enclosure of telegram to Martin Klinkowstroem, Russian Consul, San Francisco, May 22, 1867, microcopy, M-39, R4.

[63]HR 177, p. 14, telegram, Seward to Conness and Holladay, May 22, 1867.

[64]San Francisco Alta California, May 25 and 28, 1867, and Daily British Colonist, Victoria, British Columbia, June 2, 1867.

[65]NA, RG 59, "Miscellaneous Letters", Fred. Chase to R. J. Chew, State Department, May 27, 1867, with enclosure of copy of Stoeckl's telegram, microcopy, M-179, R258.

[66]Ibid., McCulloch to Seward, May 29, 1867, with enclosure of copy of telegram to Collector of Customs, San Francisco, May 29, 1867, microcopy, M-179, R258.

[67]NA, RG 36, Records of the Bureau of Customs, "Alaska File of Special Agents", McCulloch to Collector of Customs, San Francisco, June 4, 1867, microcopy, M-802, R1. Also: NA, RG 59, "Miscellaneous Letters", McCulloch to Seward, June 3, 1867, with enclosure, McCulloch to Customs Collector, San Francisco, draft, June, 1867, microcopy, M-179, R259.

[68]NA, RG 59, "Miscellaneous Letters", copies of letters sent to the Treasury Department by Captain W. A. Howard: Howard to Maksutov, Sitka, August 19, 1867; Maksutov to Howard, 9/20, August, 1867; Howard to McCulloch, Sitka, August 21, 1867, microcopy, M-179, R266.

[69]Ibid., "Miscellaneous Letters", copy, Halleck to Townsend, telegram, San Francisco, September 2, 1867, sent to the War Department, microcopy, M-179, R264.

[70]Ibid., "Domestic Letters", Seward to U.S. Grant, September 6, 1867, microcopy, M-40, R63, vol. 77, p. 67.

[71]NA, RG 36, Records of the Bureau of Customs, "Alaska File of Special Agents", McCulloch to Dodge, August 15, 1867, microcopy, M-802, R1. Daily Alta California, San Francisco, on September 23, 1867, lists Dodge and his wife as passengers on the "Sacramento" which arrived from

Panama on September 22, 1867. The Alta noted that Dodge was staying with General Rousseau's party at the Occidental Hotel. It is assumed that Dodge accompanied the General when he left for Sitka on the "Ossipee" on September 27, 1867.

[72]NA, RG 59, "Miscellaneous Letters", Rodgers to Seward, May 20, 1867, microcopy, M-179, R258.

[73]Ibid., McCulloch to Seward, May 21, 1867, microcopy, M-179, R258.

[74]HR 177, Seward to Stanton, May 25, 1867, p. 15.

[75]Gideon Welles, Diary of Gideon Welles, July 5, and 26, vol. III, pp. 128-129, 141-142.

[76]Andrew Johnson MSS., Rousseau to Johnson, telegram, New Orleans, August 3, 1867, microfilm, R41.

[77]Elihu B. Washburne MSS., Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Orville E. Babcock to Washburne, August 13, 1867. Babcock, soon to be the private Secretary of President Grant, accused Rousseau of "playing the dirty spy on Gen. Sheriden", and described him as a "low unprincipaled fellow". Andrew Johnson MSS., Andrew Johnson to Rousseau, August 21, 1867, including a note from Sheridan leveling charges against Rousseau, microfilm, R41, University of Washington Library. Ibid., Rousseau to General Grant, Secretary of War ad interim, August 22, 1867, copy, microfilm, R28.

[78]NA, RG 59, "Miscellaneous Letters", copy of a telegram, Halleck to Secretary of War Stanton, San Francisco, May 20, 1867, microcopy, M-179, R258.

[79]Ibid., Stanton to Seward, July 3, 1867, with enclosure of report from Major-General H. W. Halleck, San Francisco, May 22, 1867, to Bvt. Major-General E. D. Townsend, Assistant Adjutant General.

[80]Ibid., "Domestic Letters", Seward to Stanton, May 25, 1867, microcopy, M-40, R63, vol. 76, p. 216.

[81]Gideon Welles MSS., Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Welles to Thatcher, May 25, 1867.

[82]PRCA, Annex 41, Stoeckl to Gorchakov, June 15/27, 1867, translated from the original French by the author.

[83]NA, RG 59, "Notes from the Russian Legation", telegram addressed to the Russian Minister from Reutern, received July 4, 1867, at Willards, Washington, D.C,, 8:30 a.m. microcopy, M-39, R4.

[84]Ibid., "Miscellaneous Letters", Seward to Silliam Hunter, State Department, July 30, 1867, telegram, recieved at 1:00p.m. Hunter was asked to instruct Rousseau to come to Washington.

[85]Ibid.; also "Notes to the Russian Legation", Seward to Stoeckl, telegram, Auburn, N.Y., July 30, 1867; also Andrew Johnson MSS, Seward to Johnson, telegram, New Orleans, August 3, 1867.

[86]House of Representatives, 40th Congress, 2nd Session, Ex. Doc. No. 125, Seward to Rousseau, August 7, 1867, (Rousseau's commission); and Rousseau to Seward, Portland, Oregon, December 5, 1867, (report following Rousseau's return from Sitka).

[87]NA, RG 59, "Miscellaneous Letters", A. Wakeman to Seward, telegram, August 14, 1867; F. W. G. Bellows to Seward, August 14, 1867; both microcopy, M-179, R263. "Domestic Letters", Seward to Bellows, August 17, 1867, vol. 77. "Notes to the Russian Legation", Seward to Stoeckl, August 15, 1867, microcopy, M-99, R82. "Notes from the Russian Legation", Stoeckl, to Seward, August 3/15, 1867, microcopy, M-39, R4.

[88]House of Representatives, 40th Congress, 2nd Session, Ex. Doc. 125, Rousseau to Seward, December 5, 1867; Alta California, San Francisco, September 23, 1867.

[89]Daily Alta California, September 17, 1867.

[90]NA, RG 59, "Miscellaneous Letters", Grant to Seward, August 14, 1867, microcopy, M-179, R263; "Notes to the Russian Legation", Seward to Stoeckl, August 15, 1867, microcopy, M-99, R82; "Notes from the Russian Legation", Stoeckl to Seward, (official translation) New York, August 20, 1867, microcopy, M-39, R4.

[91]Special Orders, No. 152, September 3, 1867, Headquarters Military Division of the Pacific, to Scott and Hoyt. See their special instructions: copies in PRO, C.O. 60/29, Seymour to the Duke of Buckingham, September 25, 1867, Enclosures No. 1 and 2.

[92]NA, RG 94, Records of the Adjutant General's Office, "Letters Sent by the Office of the Adjutant General", Townsend to Halleck, August 21, 1867, microcopy, M-563, R33.

[93]Gideon Welles MSS., Library of Congress, Welles to Thatcher, August 17, 1867, vol. 79, p. 246; also in NA, RG 59, "Miscellaneous Letters", microcopy, M-179, R263.

[94]NA, RG 94, Records of the Adjutant General's Office, "Letters to the Adjutant General (Main Series)," Halleck to Davis, September 6, 1867, microcopy, M-619, R574.

[95]Daily Alta California, San Francisco, September 26 and 28, 1867; San Francisco Bulletin, September 26, 1867.

[96]On December 14, 1867, the Russian vessel Zanteza left Sitka with 168 passengers, bound for London. Most were probably Russians returning to their native land. On January 22, 1868, the Cyane departed with 69 soldiers of the Russian garrison. NA, RG 36, Records of the Bureau of Customs, "Records of the Collector of Customs at Sitka: Foreign entrances and clearances, October 24, 1867-July 10, 1867," items no. 8 and 18.

[97]For information on the first months of American occupation in Alaska, see: Ted C. Hinkley, The Americanization of Alaska, 1867-1897, (Palo Alto, California: Pacific Books, 1972), Ch. 1; Ted C. Hinkley, "The United States Frontier at Sitka, 1867-1873", PNQ, LX (April, 1969), pp. 57-65; United States Army, Alaska, The Army's Role in Building Alaska, USARAL Pam 360-5, April, 1969, Chs. 1 and 2; Frank H. Sloss and Richard A. Pierce, "The Hutchinson, Kohl Story"; Richard A. Pierce, "Alaska's Russian Governors: Prince D. P. Maksutov", The Alaska Journal, III (Winter, 1973), pp. 20-30; Richard A. Pierce, "Prince D. P. Maksutov; The Last Governor of Russian America", Journal of the West, VI (July, 1967), pp. 395-416; and Valerie Stubbs Mecutchen, "Alaska's First Star-Spangled Fourth", Journal of the West, VI (July, 1967), pp. 433-439.

[98]Among those in the House who accused Seward or the Administration of these motives, see speeches of: Orange Ferriss (NY), July 1; Dennis McCarthy (NY), July 7; Cadwallader C. Washburn (Wisc.), July 1; and Benjamin F. Loan (Mo.), July 7; The Congressional Globe, 40th Cong., 2nd Sess., volume 4, pp. 3666 (Ferris), 3807 (McCarthy, and 3808 (Loan); and volume 5, Appendix, p. 394 (Washburn).

[99]Howard I. Kushner, "Visions of the Northwest Coast: Gwin and Seward in the 1850's", The Western Historical Quarterly, IV (July, 1973) pp. 295-306.

[100]The Congressional Globe, 39th Congress, 1st Session, (Washington: Office of the Congressional Globe, 1866), p. 3548.

[101]United States Senate, 39th Congress, 2nd Session, Ex. Doc. 30, serial 1277, pp. 20-21.

[102]James Morton Callahan, "The Alaska Purchase and American-Canadian Relations," West Virginia University Studies in American History, Series 1, Diplomatic History, no. 2, (Morgantown, 1908), p. 19-20.

[103]John Bigelow, Retrospections of an Active Life, vol. IV, p. 58, dated "On the first of April".

[104]National Intelligencer, Washington, D.C., April 5, 1867.

[105]New York Tribune, April 19, 1867, reprint from the Boston Post, under the title "The Secretary Wants British Columbia."

[106]Ibid., April 24, 1867, in a letter dated Washington, April 23, 1867.

[107]Ibid., April 25, 1867, in a letter dated Washington, April 24, 1867.

[108]See Chapter 5, pp. 220ff.

[109]Chicago Tribune, April 22, 1867, article entitled "British Columbia".

[110]San Francisco Bulletin, April 23 and 25, 1867.

[111]Alta California, San Francisco, April 24, 1867.

[112]Portland Oregonian, June 4, 1867, under "City", p. 3.

[113]San Francisco Bulletin, June 18, 1867; also in Alta California, June 17, 1867.

[114]Cornelius Cole MSS., Note, dated July 18, 1867, Box 27, Folder 3.

[115]Congressional Globe, 40th Congress, 1st Session, p. 813.

[116]Ibid., 40th Congress, 2nd Session, p. 79; also Senate Misc. Doc. No. 4, serial 1319.

[117]Congressional Globe, 40th Congress, 2nd Session, p. 880; also Senate Misc. Doc. No. 22, serial 1319.

[118]Ibid., pp. 4505-4506

[119]NA, RG 59, "Miscellaneous Letters", copy sent to Seward by Edwin M. Stanton, January 24, 1868, original included in report from Halleck to Townsend, Adjutant General of the Army, November 18, 1867; actual report by Scott and Hoyt, dated November 20, 1867, San Francisco, to Bvt. Major General James B. Fry, Assistant Adjutant General, Military Division of the Pacific. Entire package of relevant documents found in M-179, R271.

[120]Ibid.

[121]Ibid., Enclosure, Halleck to Adjutant General of the Army, November 18, 1867, microcopy, M-179, R271.

[122]Ibid., Halleck to Adjutant General of the Army, November 22, 1867, marked "Confidential", microcopy, M-179, R271.

[123]Ibid., Office Board of Engineers, San Francisco, to Major General A. A. Humpreys, Chief Engineer, December 9, 1867, microcopy, M-179, R271.

[124]NA, RG 107, "Telegrams Received by the Office of the Secretary of War, July 5, 1866-March 31, 1869", Seward to Stanton, January 27, 1868, in cipher, received War Department 11:00 a.m., microcopy, M-473, R120, p. 445.

[125]NA, RG 59 "Miscellaneous Letters", copy, Stanton to Halleck, January 27, 1868, transmitting Seward's note, microcopy, M-179, R271.

[126]Ibid., copy, Halleck to Stanton, January 28, 1868, received at the War Department, January 29, 1868, 10:00 a.m. microcopy, M-179, R271.

[127]Ibid., copy, Halleck to Stanton, January 28, 1868, microcopy, M-179, R273.

[128]James G. Randall, edit., The Diary of Orville Hickman Browning, vol. 2, (Springfield: Illinois State Historical Library, 1933), p. 177.

[129]Charles Francis Adams MSS., "Diary of Charles Francis Adams", Massachusetts Historical Society, Boston, under date of December 24, 1867.

[130]For comparisons of the voting records, see: The Congressional Globe, 40th Cong., 2nd Sess., vol. 4, p. 4055, for the vote on H.R. No. 1096. For the impeachment, see: Michael Les Benedict, The Impeachment and Trial of Andrew Johnson, (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1973), pp. 83-84.

[131]The Congressional Globe, 40th Cong., 2nd Sess., vol. 5, Appendix, p. 379.

[132]U.S. House of Representatives, Report No. 35, 40th Cong., 2nd sess., serial 1338, (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1868), p. 35.

[133]The Congressional Globe, 40th Cong., 2nd Sess., vol. 5 and Appendix, p. 388.

[134]Ibid., vol. 4, p. 3659.

[135]Ibid, vol. 4, p. 3660.

[136]Ibid., vol. 4, p. 3662, speech of Leanard Myers, July 1, 1868.

[137]Ibid., vol. 4, p. 3813, remarks by Green B. Raum, July 7, 1868.

[138]Ibid., vol. 5, Appendix, speech written by Godlove S. Orth, Date July 10, 1868, apparently never delivered.

[139]Ibid., vol. 5 and Appendix, p. 379, speech by Samuel Shallabarger, July 1, 1868.

[140]Ibid., vol. 4, p. 3666, speech by Orange Ferris, July 1, 1868.

[141]Ibid., vol 4, p. 3808, speech by Benjamin F. Loan, July 7, 1868.

[142]Ibid., vol. 5 and Appendix, p. 402, speech by Benjamin F. Butler, July 7, 1868.

[143]Ibid., vol. 5 and Appendix, p. 490-491, speech by Thomas Williams, read into the record, dated July 9, 1868.

[144]Ibid., vol. 5 and Appendix, p. 454, speech by Columbus Delano, dated July 14, 1868, read into the record.

[145]Ibid., vol. 4, p. 3666, speech by Orange Ferris, July 1, 1868.

[146]Ibid., vol. 5 and Appendix, p. 474, speech by Shelby M. Cullom, dated July 10, 1868, read into the record.

CONCLUSION

There is a tide in the affairs of men,
Which, taken at the flood, leads on to
fortune;
Omitted, all the voyage of their life
Is bound in shallows and miseries.

Julius Caesar, Act IV, Scene III.

The purchase of Russian America by the United States in 1867 appears to have been largely a fortunate accident. Imperial Russia, which until late in 1866 had reluctantly determined to retain its North American possessions, decided to make one final attempt early in 1867 to sell them to a nation whose recent civil war and current political turmoil should have made them hesitant buyers. The United States, furthermore, had expressed little interest in owning the Russian territories before the treaty was negotiated and announced to an incredulous Senate and an equally surprised American public and press. The arrangement of this cession was the work of two men, Edouard de Stoeckl, Russian Minister, and William H. Seward, Secretary of State, who concluded the treaty rapidly amid great secrecy. Their achievement, however, would not have been possible if it had not served the deeper interests of both nations and especially the United States. Regardless of what Seward might arrange, the Senate could have withheld its approval and the American press could have raised a furor sufficient to have made passage of the convention extremely difficult.

The Russian reasons for selling their North American colonies had been largely formulated long before 1867. The possessions were considered a liability to the Empire. The isolated posts were impossible to defend and difficult to supply. Although there is reason to question the validity of their analysis, the Russian Government also believed that the possessions were financially of little value and that the Russian American Company was nearing bankruptcy. Finally, some Russian leaders saw the sale as an opportunity to remove possible future sources of difficulty with the United States, a chance to enhance the friendly relations which already existed between the two nations, and a means of threatening and perhaps eliminating the English Crown Colony of British Columbia which would be partially

encompassed by the American acquisition of the Russian possessions. The Russian decision to sell was made in the absence of external pressures; there was no urgency in their determination to abandon their colonies. Nevertheless, the Czar's choice, and it was his alone to make, was undoubtedly the correct one and timely. Another war with England or a gold strike within the Russian possessions would have made retention of the territory extremely difficult. Regardless of the actual financial well-being of the colonies and the Russian American Company, it was better to be paid to withdraw peacefully than to wait to be driven out without anything to soothe the departure.

As for the American motives behind the purchase, they are more complex and depend partially on to whom one refers. For Seward, an enthusiastic and vintage expansionist, the opportunity to acquire an additional portion of North America could not be rejected. The Secretary of State had long demonstrated an interest in the Pacific Northwest, and as Ernest N. Paolino has recently stressed, Seward had well-established credentials as an advocate of American economic penetration of the Pacific and Oriental markets. It is reasonable to conlude that the Secretary saw the purchase of Russian America as a step in that process.

The United States Senate, however, did not respond to the treaty with immediate enthusiasm. Stoeckl and others believed that the convention would have been rejected if a decisive vote had been taken at once; but perhaps much the same could be said of many treaties eventually adopted by the Senate after time had passed for sober reflection. Furthermore, few are the conventions which are voted on without submission to the proper committee and subsequent investigations and hearings being conducted. In any case, Seward and others lobbied aggressively for the treaty. The

Secretary of State solicited information from the Smithsonian and from individuals with practical experience in or knowledge of the Russian colonies. He released these favorable reports to newspapers through the Associated Press. Consequently, the newspapers community had little but laudatory material to use in describing the new purchase, for the wire service had little else to provide. The Senate Committee on Foreign Relations was divided in its support of the treaty, with Charles Sumner, its chairman and the leading champion of the cession in Senate debates, unenthusiastic. The appearance of witnesses provided by the Smithsonian may have helped to ease Sumner into his advocacy of the treaty. Because the debates in the Senate were held behind closed doors, it is difficult to know precisely which issues were discussed and which carried the most weight. It appears that some attention was given to reports of the valuable resources contained in Russian America, and others spoke of Russian friendship for the United States. But two considerations which seem to have weighed most heavily in the Senate were issues which had both an idealistic and pragmatic appeal. The West Coast wanted Russian America and their Senators hinted darkly of the damage which would be done to the Republican Party if the treaty were rejected. To practical politicians, that was a moving argument indeed. Charles Sumner had expressed his anxieties on this point during the meetings of the Foreign Relations Committee. There also seems to have been much talk of expansionism, and that was a theme that Americans and their representatives all understood and with which many sympathized. Russian America seemed a natural object for manifest destiny aspirations. Its acquisition removed another European monarch from a continent intended by the Almighty for republican institutions; its control would quicken the pace of American penetration of overseas markets; and its occupation might lead to the annexation of British

Columbia. That these ideas persuaded Senators to vote for the treaty there can be little doubt, for they either indicated their support for such concepts at the time of the Senate's deliberations or in later comments or speeches in public.

The American press is easier to analyze, for they published ample testimony to their opinion in numerous editorials on the purchase of Russian America. The most popular position taken by newspapers across the nation, with the exception of the Southern States, was support for the treaty. However, except in the Pacific Coast States and the Middle Atlantic States, the journalistic community was not overwhelming in their endorsement of the acquisition. Nationwide, only a plurality, albeit a very sizeable one, approved the cession. The majority of newspapers either opposed the treaty or ignored the event. The latter response was especially prevalent in the South and also in the newer and more sparsely settled areas of the Mid-West and Far West. The justifications for the purchase which appealed to press advocates were generally similar to those debated in the Senate. However, the most often mentioned were the real or potential resource value of the territory, general expansionism, the opportunity to acquire British Columbia, and the advantage which possession of the Russian colonies would give to the United States in the Orient trade.

The first may have been believed by some editors, but with little hard evidence to support claims of rich resources, this argument may have been largely for popular consumption. But the journals which stressed expansionism, the chance to obtain British Columbia, and the American economic penetration of Asian markets touched a central nerve in the nation's concept of its destiny. Much of the ramblings on these topics may have been old rhetoric, but such statements involved articles

of national faith.

Consequently, if one searches for a dominant theme in the American rationalization of its annexation of Russian America it would be difficult to find one more appropriate than old-fashioned expansionism or manifest destiny. This rationale was central to Seward, to the Senate and the American press. The Civil War had not dulled significantly the old faith. Expansion might be taking new directions, because the Pacific Ocean had placed a geographic limit on the original westering concept, and it might now include the penetration of distant markets and the possession of remote and non-contiguous regions, but the American belief in the justice of national expansion existed still.

This faith was precisely what the British North American colonies feared. British Columbia, sandwiched between Washington Territory to the south and the new American possession on the north, quickly recognized the delicate position into which it had been placed. Nevertheless, alarm was not the first reaction of the people or press of that crown colony. On the contrary, journalists focused on the potential economic benefits which could accrue to Victoria from the northward flow of American commerce. However, the publication of the rumor that the United States was attempting to purchase British Columbia through relinquishing all or part of the Alabama Claims dramatically changed the mood of the colony. The responses to this news ranged from despair over the survival of the British connection, to a movement to seek annexation to the United States, to disdain by some for anyone who would take the story seriously. Many residents reportedly expected the colony to be absorbed soon by the United States. However, within a month, calm had been restored, but the incident had exposed the vulnerability of the colony and the insecurity felt by many who lived in British Columbia.

The press in the British provinces soon to form the Dominion of Canada and many of their prominent politicians also viewed the American expansion with uneasiness. Although many discounted any threat from the purchase of Russian America, it is clear that a large portion of the newspaper community and some of the new nation's leaders believed that the treaty posed a direct and intentional challenge to British Columbia and was also a thinly veiled rebuff to the recently concluded plans for a confederation of the remainder of British North America.

Great Britain, despite its outward pretentions of calm and indifference, was also cognizant of the implications of the purchase of Alaska for English possessions in North America. Some newspapers in England believed that the cession had fatally outflanked British Columbia. Some officials in the Hudson's Bay Company and the principal leadership in the Colonial Office were indeed gloomy about the situation, and the latter seemed ready to accept the annexation of British Columbia by the United States. However, they anticipated an American initiative that never came, one which some in Great Britain thought would be irresistable.

Consequently, it seems that when the United States bought Russian America in 1867, there were many in British North America, Great Britain, the United States and some in Russia who expected this acquisition to be followed closely by a second expansion, the annexation of British Columbia. As one examines the story of the Alaska purchase, one repeatedly discovers discussion of the potentiality of the other acquisition. Therefore, there is not one major story of territorial expansion in 1867, there are two. The first was successful; the United States did buy Russian America. The second, the possibility of obtaining British Columbia, was a failure; it was never attempted.

One final question, therefore, remains in this account of American

expansion in 1867. Why did the United States not acquire British Columbia when so many expected such an event? A thorough answer can not be given here, because too little is known of Seward's intriguing with this project after his discussion of the topic with the Cabinet early in 1868. One could certainly cite again the toll of national problems: war-weariness, a large national debt, internal political dissention and hostility to further expansion as reasons for Seward's apparent failure to press the question with the British Government. On the other hand, these difficulties and these attitudes had not blocked the purchase of Russian America. Because British Columbia was also in the Pacific Northwest and contiguous to American territory, it is difficult to perceive a strong opposition arising to block the annexation of a region about which more was known than had been understood about the Russian colonies. The same justifications which had served to explain the purchase of Russian America should have been more convincing when applied to British Columbia. These assumptions, of course, were never tested, because the United States was never given an opportunity to debate the annexation of that British colony. The reason for this may be quite simple and may remove a bit of the luster from Seward's achievement in acquiring Alaska.

One very crucial fact about the purchase of Russian America should not be forgotten in assessing credit for the event. The United States bought the Russian colonies because Czar Alexander II decided to offer them to the American Government. It was Stoeckl who contacted Seward through an intermediary in February, 1867, to inform the Secretary of State that Russia could be persuaded to sell her North American possessions. Seward, regardless of what else he may have done to achieve the purchase, did not take the first step. If that initial approach had not been made by the Russian Minister, it is certainly conceivable that the acquisition of

Russian America would not have occured in 1867 or at any time over the near term. Therefore, a principal reason for the failure of the United States to obtain British Columbia in 1867 or 1868 may have been simply that neither Seward or anyone else in a position of authority in the American Government offered to buy that British possession. If no American official would make the approach, perhaps because no one suspected the British would listen seriously, it seems unlikely that any representative of Her Majesty's Government would initiate such discussion. Great Britain might be known as a collector of imperial possessions, but certainly she had no reputation as a peddler of such wares. If an opportunity to obtain British Columbia did exist in 1867 or 1868, something which has yet to be conclusively proven, the process would have required delicate negotiations which would have permitted England to withdraw from the Pacific Northwest with her dignity intact. No such approach or discussions apparently occured, and soon the best opportunity to acquire British Columbia would pass. Soon the confederation of that colony with the Dominion of Canada would make such a project academic, and the Americans would be able to add one more Canadian province to those which would surely one day drop "like ripe fruit" into the waiting arms of the United States.

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