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Influence of the United States

Excerpt from a website created by the Library and Archives Canada which provides an overview of Canadian Confederation.



Comments in brackets are not part of the original document. They have been added to assist the reader with difficult words.

After the American Civil War, British authorities in London feared reprisals against British colonial territories by the victorious Northern states. Since Great Britain had openly supported the South, their fear was well founded. The dangers of this war also stirred Loyalist sentiments in Ontarians. Protecting Canada West from American influence meant protecting British traditions and institutions in North America.

The threat of attacks by Fenians also motivated London to reorganize the political status of its North American colonies. If the United States considered Canada a sovereign country rather than a British colony, the Fenians might be less inclined to continue their attacks.

The issue of the North-Western Territory also played a significant role in Canada West's desire to politically restructure British North America. Some members of Ontario's political leadership believed that the territories west of the province were rightfully theirs. Political restructuring was an ideal opportunity to claim them.

Library and Archives Canada. "Canadian Confederation" (Accessed March 7, 2012) <http://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/confederation/023001-3100-e.html>

