

inevitable slide down the inclined plane leading to annexation to or conquest by the United States;<sup>111</sup>

b.) maintained that the new constitution would provide better public administration;<sup>112</sup>

c.) congratulated their fellow citizens on having the rare opportunity to choose their destiny freely;<sup>113</sup>

d.) answered arguments from their opponents to the effect that enhanced military readiness would provoke attacks from potential enemies;<sup>114</sup>

e.) endured severe attacks from their opponents on alleged procedural irregularities and outright illegalities in their innovations;<sup>115</sup>

f.) and weighed the merits of invoking divine intervention on behalf of their efforts.<sup>116</sup>

Although the topics from which to choose are many and varied, I have selected two that seem particularly well suited to our present inquiry. The first revisits the troubling issue of recourse to the people to approve constitutional changes and the second examines the constructive use of ambition by statesmen.

One of the major strengths of the American Constitution is that it was approved by special conventions held in each of the states from 1787 until 1791. The delegates to these conventions were chosen by those who had the suffrage in accordance with the electoral laws of the several states at that time. Thus, the American Constitution came as close as late eighteenth century mores would permit to implementing the standard laid down in the Declaration of Independence that governments derive their just powers from the consent of the governed.

As we have seen, the Canadian Confederation did not enjoy a similar process of ratification, much to the chagrin of the opponents of confederation.

Despite the historical fact that the American Constitution was ratified by the people, James Madison, writing as Publius in The Federalist Papers, had some serious misgivings on the wisdom of submitting important questions to the people on a frequent basis.

Federalist 47-51 addresses the problem of how to preserve the regime of separation of