

The main facts advanced by the Swedes as grounds for their apprehensions were the violent Russian attacks on Finnish nationalism, the massing of Russian troops in Finland, the revelations of Russian espionage within Sweden, and the building of railways through Finland to the common border in the extreme north—railways that could bring no reasonable commercial or industrial advantages. The Swedes also saw an increase, rather than a decrease, of bitterness in Norway, although the separation had been accomplished without bloodshed and without the open interference of any third Power.

That all these factors tended to make the position of Sweden precarious in the extreme no one can deny. To make matters still worse, the relationship to Denmark seemed also to have taken a turn for the worse—perhaps because a Danish Prince had accepted the Norwegian Throne, and perhaps because of the known Danish friendliness toward Russia. At this juncture the Swedes appeared to be seized with a sense of utter isolation. But this sense produced no discouragement. Instead, it put them on their mettle and led to an outburst of fierce determination to preserve their country and their nationality at any cost. Reforms of every kind were started or hastened. The whole people seemed to undergo a process of rebirth. Physical and moral discipline became salient characteristics where not long before laxity of every kind had reigned. A period of feverish upbuilding followed, and not only material but also human resources were subject to this process. Nevertheless the Swedes felt compelled to look abroad for help. On this point I dare not speak with too much assurance, but I believe that the nation as a whole would have been most inclined to turn westward, and especially toward England, in this search.