

Not Just Rolling the Dice; Gambling and the Law in 19th Century Canada

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It is clear, historically, that gambling in 19th century Canada was viewed as an illegitimate social activity that legislators sought to control. This paper raises questions about the role of the state in prosecuting gambling offences, with particular emphasis on issues of race and class. Based on an analysis of federal and provincial gambling legislation and case law, it argues that specific cultural meanings were positioned through these proceedings and that a particular social ordering was fundamental to the process of state expansion into the space of social activity during this period.