



# **Making Good: Law and Moral Regulation in Canada, 1867-1939. (Themes in Canadian History)**

*Carolyn Strange, Tina Loo*

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Young Canada was often portrayed as a virginal woman or as a healthy frontiersman, and the ideals of purity, industry, and self-discipline were celebrated as essential features of the Canadian identity. To ensure that Canadians lived up to this image, different levels of government passed a variety of laws and created an expanding range of institutions to enforce them. *Making Good* looks at the changing relationship between law and morality in Canada during a critical phase of nation-building, from Confederation to the onset of the Second World War. The authors argue that though the law played a significant role in giving Canada a moral cast, the law's homogenizing tendencies did not always meet with anticipated success, as values deemed 'good' by the government were constantly repudiated by those on whom they were imposed.

Strange and Loo examine both the major institutions which patrolled morality - the Department of Indian Affairs, the Ministry of Justice, and the North West Mounted Police - and the agencies that worked at local levels, such as police forces, schools, correctional facilities, juvenile and family courts, and morality squads. They also look at many fascinating acts of resistance to moral ordinances, showing that not all Canadians shared the same vision of goodness. Certain themes which run throughout the book include the concept of the internal threat to the foundations of national decency, the influence of the United States on Canada's moral order, and the regional discrepancies in the success of moral governance.

Through topics as diverse as gambling, marriage and divorce, and sexual deviance, *Making Good* shows that character-building was critical to the broader project of nation-building. The book will be a welcome addition to undergraduate courses in Canadian history, and will interest social historians; historians of Native peoples, the working class, and women; criminologists; and political scientists.

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