

A Freer Trade in Criminals: The Travails of Canadian Extradition Law, 1865-1883.
Bradley Miller, University of Toronto

At the time of Confederation, Canadian extradition law badly needed reform. During the American Civil War, the extradition of fugitives had been a source of legal scandal and diplomatic havoc. These concerns continued after the war with a long series of cases highlighting legal flaws and diplomatic divisions. By 1867, a powerful consensus was building in Canadian newspapers and law journals, and among jurists and politicians, in favour of greater extradition cooperation with foreign governments, primarily the United States.

But until 1883 it remained beyond the power of the dominion government to reform effectively extradition. In the absence of a new Anglo-American treaty, Canadian authorities attempted to reform domestic legislation, but throughout the 1870s and early 1880s, imperial authorities suppressed, delayed, and rewrote dominion law, bringing it into line with Britain's shifting policy. The long process of reform illustrated both London's continuing power over Canadian law and the connections between imperialism and international law in Victorian Canada