

Plot to Steal the Seats of Liberal Candidates in 1896.

The circular of instructions sent out from the Conservative headquarters, King St., Toronto, in 1896 pointed out four methods of doing up the Grits as follows:—

- (1) *Slipping*—(i. e. calling out a ballot for the Tory candidate when it is in reality marked for the Liberal.)
- (2) *Switching*—(i. e. stealing ballots marked for the Liberal candidate, and putting into the ballot-box ballots marked for the Tory candidate.)
- (3) *Stuffing*—(i. e. polling votes of the dead and absent men with the connivance of both scrutineers.)
- (4) *Spoiling*—(i. e. by making a mark on the ballot marked for the Liberal candidate opposite the name of the Tory candidate with a piece of lead fastened under the finger nail.)

The extent to which the last method (Spoiling) was practiced was shown by the very large number of rejected ballots in 1896 as compared with other elections. The following table is taken from the official returns:—

					Number of Rejected Ballots in	
					1896	1900
Addington	-	-	-	-	181	32
Bothwell	-	-	-	-	167	37
Brant, South	-	-	-	-	165	32
Brockville	-	-	-	-	101	38
Bruce, East	-	-	-	-	133	38
Bruce, West	-	-	-	-	115	16
Cornwall and Stormont	-	-	-	-	103	42
Durham, East	-	-	-	-	59	6
Elgin, East	-	-	-	-	99	32
Essex, North	-	-	-	-	96	38
Grey, North	-	-	-	-	125	37
Hastings, East	-	-	-	-	79	25
Hastings, West	-	-	-	-	84	27
Huron, South	-	-	-	-	70	8
Kent	-	-	-	-	189	49
Kingston	-	-	-	-	215	33
Lambton, East	-	-	-	-	133	25
Lambton, West	-	-	-	-	70	19
Lincoln and Niagara	-	-	-	-	136	47
London	-	-	-	-	296	47
Middlesex, South	-	-	-	-	100	23
Muskoka and Parry Sound	-	-	-	-	175	58
Norfolk, North	-	-	-	-	114	accl.
Perth, South	-	-	-	-	129	14
Prince Edward	-	-	-	-	115	25
Russell	-	-	-	-	72	22
Simcoe, East	-	-	-	-	93	23
Victoria, South	-	-	-	-	78	29
Waterloo, South	-	-	-	-	164	28
Wellington, Centre	-	-	-	-	129	22
Wellington, South	-	-	-	-	101	33
Wentworth, South	-	-	-	-	304	50
Total for 32 Ridings					4190	951
Average					131	30