

The Silence of Webster Davis. Although one may be unwilling to place much credence in charges of any sort levelled against prominent public men during a political campaign, the accusation brought against Mr. Webster Davis, the United States Assistant Secretary of the Interior, of having accepted a bribe from the Boers, is so persistently and circumstantially made, that it is to be hoped the accused will not remain silent. What is thought of the matter by some of his countrymen may be gathered from the following demand for an investigation made by the Minneapolis "Times":

"Webster Davis, of Missouri, may not be a personage of great importance, but Webster Davis, Assistant Secretary of the Interior, visiting the Boer Republic—on leave of absence and unofficially, to be sure—attracted some attention in the eyes of the world. If he accepted a bribe, as Story insists, and the law can reach him, he should be punished for the sake of this country's good name abroad. If he did not, he is entitled to every vindication known to the law. Instead of dismissing the charge with the poor defence that he could not have carried 400 pounds weight of gold out of the country, when he could have carried a check for \$125,000, or any other sum, very handily, he should endeavour to secure testimonials to his honesty and good faith from Adalbert S. Hay, consul at Pretoria; James G. Stowe, consul general at Cape Town, or John Hay, Secretary of State. He should make demand for the proof Mr. Story says reposes in the archives of the State Department. The country is entitled to the truth in this matter, and it is to be hoped Mr. Davis will not permit the case to be dropped on election day.

Crowds versus Ballots.

Canadian voters will find much to endorse in the arguments of politicians across the border, now in the midst of a presidential election, as to the value of great crowds at political meetings as an indication of sentiment in favour of the political celebrities who may be present at such gatherings. Of course, there are occasions when the feelings of a crowd towards a candidate for their ballots is made apparent in an unmistakable manner. Rotten eggs and disparaging epithets cannot be said to indicate that a political celebrity is regarded with favour by those who fling at him the eggs and abuse.

Yet, there is good reason for belief that when a candidate for parliament returns from a speech-making tour, the results are not, as a rule, commensurate with the exertion.

United States papers are giving instances of the folly of supposing that crowded meetings, even when orderly, mean tidal waves of sentiment and landslides of feeling in favour of a candidate, or the particular policy he may represent.

Mr. Bryan attracted tremendous crowds in 1896, and yet many of the localities where he was most hospitably received as a campaigner cast the heaviest pluralities against him. He had become a celebrity by reason of his dramatic capture of the presidential

nomination at Chicago, and people wanted to see him. Comparatively few votes could have been changed by his speaking tour, as the result showed.

Facts versus Fancies.

As evidence of the progress and prosperity marking the past four years in the United States, Republicans are relying largely upon facts and figures, and in this connection, much use is being made of banking comparisons illustrating the difference between 1896 and 1900. For Kansas, the State Bank Examiner claims that the wheat crop of 1897 enabled many farmers to free themselves from debt, the crops of the two following years were invested in farm machinery and improvements, and the proceeds of this season's crops will go into the banks. He says that last year Kansas farmers put money into the banks till the banks could loan no more, and refused to accept deposits, and the money of Kansas farmers went to Missouri banks. He believes the deposits in Kansas banks will reach \$35,000,000 before the end of the year, in which event the banks could stand withdrawals twice as great as in the panic of 1893 without calling in a loan, and still have a reserve 20 per cent. above the legal requirement. In Ohio, the deposits in the State banks are nearly 100 per cent. greater than four years ago, and the deposits in National banks have increased 66 per cent. The bank loans of eight Pacific Coast States and Territories are shown to have increased 63 per cent. since 1896.

In the face of such figures, Mr. Bryan may well find it somewhat difficult to persuade our neighbours that they are not really prosperous. At one of his recent meetings, he is reported to have said to those present:—"Facts and figures do not justify all this talk about prosperity. The farmer does not get his share of the profits." However, as this fanciful philosopher does not state what the farmer's share should be, but piously adjures him to thank God, and not the Republican party, for good crops, we prefer to rely upon the figures published by the banks of the country rather than upon Mr. Bryan's visions of securing a more equal distribution of wealth by fostering discontent among the masses, by inducing people to believe that they are not prosperous, by arousing envy of the wealthy class, and encouraging a feeling of hostility to capital on the part of labour.

We cannot help regarding this campaign with unusual interest, affording us, as it surely does, the opportunity of ascertaining to what extent a great nation can be lured away from the contemplation of facts and figures by one who is dealing in the tricks of his unsound imagination. Mr. Bryan is regarded by many as a demagogue, and his undoubted skill in picking phrases in which to array some of the regrettable facts of human life renders his appeal to the discontented and the envious a menace to the country he aspires to rule.