

How Does He Do It?

# Gerald Smith Making Michigan Politics Pay

By THOMAS L. STOKES

DETROIT, Oct. 8—Gerald L. K. Smith, apt pupil of the late Huey Long of Louisiana, is still talking himself into a living here in Michigan, making politics pay.

Georgia finally rid herself of Gene Talmadge. Gerald, the stocky, bushy-haired, shouting politico-evangelist, is one of the last of the clan of demagogues of the Huey Long-Talmadge stripe. He is worth a glance as a symptom of a disease of American democracy which, in the hard days to come, may recur if the country is not on guard.

Since he is a candidate for the U. S. Senate, some people here think the Senatorial Campaign Investigating Committee might bestir itself and find out how Gerald is financed, aside from the contributions he takes up from his audiences.

We see him on the platform here, sweating from his oratorical workout, as he takes a look into the hat into which his audience of the moment has dumped its offerings. He pokes around the bills and coins with his beefy paws.

## MAKES TWO COLLECTIONS

Scowling over the audience, he asks:

"Is that all there is?"

He waves his hand scornfully.

"Send it around again."

While the hat is going around again, he keeps up a constant chatter to loosen the pursestrings of his admiring and docile followers. They rolled up 112,000 votes for him—not enough—in his attempt to win the Republican senatorial nomination, and now they are being implored to support him as an independent "sticker" candidate in the November election.

Nobody is worried that he will be elected.

## WORRIES REGULARS

But he is a source of some

tion, and Homer Ferguson, the Detroit judge who was chosen as Republican candidate on the heels of his investigation and prosecution of gambling rackets in this city which involved many city, county and police officials.

Each camp is worried about the number of votes Gerald will draw.

Gerald has seized upon the dilemma to which Michigan, the auto state, is peculiarly sensitive, and blandly promises:

"Tires for everybody."

## KEEPS CROWDS JOLLY

He repeats that, and as the hat goes around again he gives out with something like this:

"It's up to you common folks out there to finance this movement. When you listen to a radio program, you don't pay for it. The advertisers pay for it. When you pay 3 cents for a newspaper, that doesn't cover the cost of the paper it's printed on. The advertisers pay for your paper.

"But I can't do that. How would it sound for me to say in my speeches, 'Up With Ex-Lax!'"

The crowd roars, and chips in.

It is a commentary on Gerald that it is generally assumed here that somebody is financing his senatorial campaign for a purpose, and that there is something more in it for him than the contributions he begs out of his audiences.

He has moved from one game to another since leaving the ministry several years ago and teaming up with Huey Long.

## APPROPRIATES MOVEMENT

When Huey died Gerald appropriated the "Share-the-Wealth" movement. Then he joined up with Dr. Townsend in the old-age-pension crusade, in that alliance of Townsend-Coughlin-Smith which got behind Bill Lemke of North Dakota in 1936 in an independent presidential campaign with the single motive of beating President Roosevelt.

Gerald got big ideas that year, and before the campaign was over he stepped out boldly for himself and announced in an interview—which he later re-

tracted—that he was out to head a fascist movement to take over the Government, with big New York money behind him. Doc Townsend denounced him and kicked him out, for that.

He showed up out here a few months later with his so-called Committee of One Million, and began to rant against the CIO, with which the big auto companies were having their troubles at the time. Later he shifted to an anti-war campaign.

## USED FOR NUISANCE VALUE

Who paid Gerald in those years?

It is common talk about Detroit that "industrial interests" were keeping him for his nuisance value against organized labor. The FBI has investigated him, and probably knows.

He operates a closed corporation. He is chairman of the Committee of One Million, his wife is vice chairman, and one Barnard A. Donovan is secretary-treasurer. Nobody has been able to find out that this organization is incorporated anywhere, as Gerald says it is. To handle finances he created another organization, the Federation of Americanization of Michigan.

Its books have never been audited. No reports have ever been made. Gerald says blithely that he writes to every contributor and tells him what he does with his offering. His list of supporters in Detroit "will read like a duplicate list of contributors to the Community Chest from top to bottom," he says.

He has a headquarters here, with a number of employes getting out his literature. It is not listed in the telephone book, nor is his home telephone.