Gerald Smith Storms Hotel, Seizes Hall

Firster's 'Putsch' Wins Him the Grand Ballroom

By Elizabeth Donahue
Staff Correspondence

CHICAGO, June 26.—Gerald L. K. Smith, who has made many minor noises for a long time, has finally staged a minor putsch.

Under the nervous nose of the Republican Party, Smith and 1500 followers—most of them wearing Bricker buttons—stormed the grand ballroom of the Stevens Hotel boasting, "We took this place by force and this is only the beginning."

Smith, disregarding threats of a damage suit by attorneys for the hotel, took over the ballroom for which he had neither contracted nor paid, and delivered a chant of hate which has so far proved the most turbulent event of the GOP convention.

Blow to Bricker

The prominence of Bricker forces in the Smith audience is regarded here as another kiss of death to the candidacy of the Ohio Governor. The Bricker press agents hastily denied that their candidate was in any way affiliated with the Detroit rabble-rouser. But the majority of the assemblage of old crones and aged men who stomped and screamed with Smith, wore Bricker's white buttons on their bosoms.

Sweating through his Summer suit, Smith lashed out at the hotel management and at the Republicans and the New Deal, and bellowed at his strong-armed men to "guard the doors against New Dealers and Dewey followers."

One of the hotel officials was evicted because he was suspected by a doorman of "being a New Dealer and a Dewey man."

Joseph McDonald, manager of the hotel, explained: "We had to let them hold the meeting or face a first class riot."

Smith had previously been denied use of a meeting place in both the Stevens and the Hotel Hamilton here.

Orchestra Routed

After Smith and his followers had settled themselves in the ballroom, the veteran "Nationalist" orator announced from the platform that he had been admitted "by courtesy of the Bricker headquarters" which forms a passageway to the ballroom.

An orchestra rehearsing for an evening reception for Gov. Dwight Green of Illinois had just struck the first chord of *When Irish Eyes Are Smiling* when the Smith horde poured into the big hall. The orchestra packed up its instruments and retired.

Although the hotel made no move to evict the squatters, Smith whipped his listeners into a frenzy claiming "the doors have been locked on us, the loud speaker has been cut off. If we are thrown out of here we will find another thousand people and take over the lobby."

As it became evident that hotel officials would not break up the meeting, Smith fumed and fretted over candidate Thomas E. Dewey and GOP Chairman Harrison Spangler.

"Dumb and stupid Harrison Spangler is responsible for this," he asserted. "Let's first find Spangler and then find out who denied us this room."

The audience yelled, "It was Churchill or Roosevelt." But Smith came up with the explanation "It was Tom Dewey, the candidate who runs sitting down."

McCormick Cheered

Col. McCormick and the Chicago *Tribune* got one of the biggest ovations. The spectators shouted themselves hoarse when the speaker roared: "I think we ought to take a few million internationalists on the seaboard and send them back where they came from when this war is over."

The cheers rose again when Smith disclosed that Sen. Robert Rice Reynolds (D., N. C.) and Chairman of the Senate Military Affairs Committee had sent him a wire saying: "God bless you Gerald and go ahead with it."

"If the GOP doesn't apologize for this business," Smith warned, "we will start a great new nationalist party and we'll get some one like Charles A. Lindbergh to run the country."

"These pot-bellied Republicans," he added, "don't do anything but sit around and hate Roosevelt."

After waiting for two and a half hours for Smith to conclude, the hotel officials politely asked him to wind up in 20 minutes. Smith agreed. The majority of the listeners retired to the Bricker headquarters to talk things over.