ELMO SMITH TAKES ON JOB FEW OTHER REPUBLICANS WOULD CONSIDER

PORTLAND (AP)—Elmo Smith walked quickly past the big machine in the woolen plant. He leaned forward a bit as he walked. The fingers of his right hand opened and closed, perhaps in impatience. His arms swung lightly. He looked to right, then left, as he came upon a corridor down which he turned, his steps swift.

Elmo Smith was looking for another voter.

He found him.

"I'd like to introduce myself," he said. "I'm Elmo Smith. What's your name?"

He got the name, shook hands and kept a smile on his tanned face as he went on, "I used to be governor. Now I'm running for the U.S. Senate. If you can help me in November, I'll appreciate it."

This was his speech; almost a set affair. He gave it in a soft voice and he leaned over, his head canted slightly to the right.

This went on again and again as he sped through a woolen factory, then through one supermarket after another.

Once in a while, when he saw two people together he varied his opening. "I'd like to meet you folks," he'd say. It was folksy, and quiet and smiling in a friendly way.

"You know, he's not a bad looking man, is he?" said a woman shopper after his greeting. "Looks better than his picture," was the reply as her companion glanced at a folder.

"The name is Smith. . .," it started out.

This was a mid-October day in the life of Elmo Smith, 50, the man who took on the job few other Republicans would tackle: Trying to win a U.S. Senate seat against a Neuberger.

He had decided to do it before Sen. Richard L. Neuberger died, and he went into the race against the senator's widow when death forced a change in the Democratic alignment.

His course at the start, he told a group of 50 women at a coffee hour, was difficult to chart. "My opponent," he said, "was both recently widowed and a woman of stature." He decided the way for him was to present the issues, then ask the people who could do the best job in meeting them.

He expects this year's decision will be in his favor. He is confident, but not cocksure.

Right now, he says, "I'm pretty well behind. I figure it will take to Nov. 1 to catch up. I'll be ahead by election day if I can meet enough people."

That is why he is in a hurry; why he moves swiftly.

He has been handshaking his way around Oregon since early spring. You can meet lots of people that way, he says, but adds "When you think there are 400,000, they add up pretty slow."

He has flown his own plane upwards of 24,000 miles, and his station wagon has traveled 14,000. He closed out last week in six towns in Douglas County in one day, and opened this week with handshaking and talks in five near Portland in a day.

This is the pace that he firmly believes is going to put him in the Senate.

This confidence in victory is not shared generally by observers, but the number who say he may have a chance is growing.

Last spring he was almost alone in thinking he could win. Gradually as his tanned face, his close-cropped grey hair and his swift gait became more and more familiar, he began to pick up converts to his optimism.

A workman in St. Johns confided he had voted for Adlai Stevenson four years ago to his wife's displeasure, said "Elmo's pretty well liked in St. Johns."

That is close to heresy. St. Johns is the Democratic stronghold of Portland.

"People forget," says Elmo when asked about this, "that I didn't lose as governor because of Portland. Democrats had a 34,000 edge and I lost there by only 14,000. It was the rural part of the state that beat me."

That was in 1956 when he was unseated by Democrat Robert D. Holmes.

Why does he think he can beat popular, vote-getting Maurine Neuberger, when he couldn't beat Bob Holmes, a man not too widely known? It's simple, he says. He allowed party leaders to chart his 1956 campaign—"I was to let McKay (Douglas McKay, senatorial candidate) be in front"—and also he was busy being governor. This year he is making a full-time job of it.

He expects to hammer away on his currently favorite themes that foreign affairs will determine the future of all of us.

He will stress, too, his view that Oregon is not getting enough federal return from its tax dollars.

Where does he stand in the political spectrum? "I tend to be conservative in personal life and in government," he says, "but I think I really steer a middle course because I have a basic human understanding.

"There are a lot of people in this state in the low income brackets. I know what it is not to have enough money for the next meal."

What else does he believe?

"We live in a changing world and face changing problems. . . In Oregon we are being drained of our taxes to support defense industries in other states. . . . We need to examine foreign trade to see if Oregon industries and products are being discriminated against."

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