

How cult deals with its critics

By HENRY STANHOPE

The Minister of Health, who announced the Government's plans to clamp down on the cult of scientology yesterday, must consider himself in imminent danger of a "noisy investigation".

"Noisy investigations" were recommended to scientologists by their guide and mentor, Mr. Lafayette Ron Hubbard, a Nebraskan, two years ago as one way to deal with the cult's growing number of critics.

"You find out where he or she works or worked—doctor, dentist, friends, neighbours, anyone—and phone 'em up and say: 'I am investigating Mr./Mrs. ——— for criminal activities and he/she has been trying to prevent Man's freedom and is restricting my religious freedom and that of my friends and children, etc. . . ."

" . . . Just be noisy—" advised Mr. Hubbard, a former prolific science fiction writer. "It's very odd at first but makes fantastic sense and works".

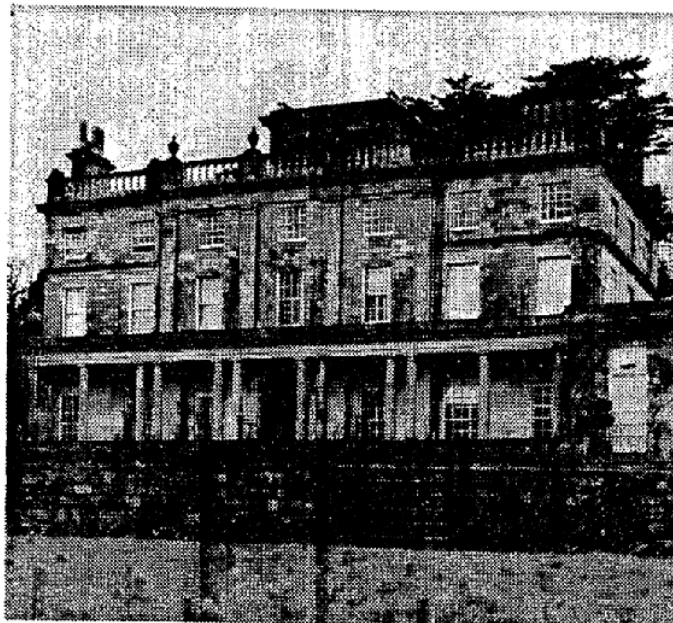
Mr. Hubbard wrote a pamphlet last year in which he claimed that on every occasion that they had "investigated" the background of a critic, they had found crimes for which that person could be imprisoned.

He wrote: "Politician A stands up on his hind legs in a parliament and brays for a condemnation of scientology. When we look him over we find crimes—embezzled funds, moral lapses, a thirst for young boys—sordid stuff."

The cult has certainly had enough critics on whom to practise since it was founded by Mr. Hubbard in or about 1952 in the United States.

It did not move its headquarters to Britain until 1959, when Hubbard and his wife Mary Sue set up in Saint Hill Manor, East Grinstead, with its 30 acres of grounds, including parkland, swimming pool and lake.

From these lush pastures it directs its activities in its faraway branches in America, Australia



Saint Hill Manor: headquarters in 30 acres of parkland.

(except Victoria), Canada, South Africa, New Zealand, and elsewhere. There is a London organization based in the Tottenham Court Road area, a centre for "advanced courses" in Edinburgh, and all are kept in touch through their own periodical bulletin, *The Auditor*.

What scientology is or even claims to be is not so easy to define precisely, though in *The Auditor* they have boasted of being "the largest mental health organization in the world".

The most searching inquiry into their activities was conducted by Mr. K. V. Anderson, Q.C., in Victoria, Australia, after concern had been expressed at the harm it might be causing, particularly to mental health. His report was published in 1965.

His preface stated unequivocally: "Scientology is evil; its techniques evil; its practice a serious threat to the community, medically, morally and socially; and its adherents sadly deluded and often mentally ill."

He went on to define it as a "delusional belief system, based on fiction and fallacies and propagated by falsehood and deception". Its practitioners, medically unqualified, practised "dangerous (hypnotic) techniques" and not only administered the wrong treatment but also poisoned people's minds against orthodox medicine, he said.

Domination over the minds of students and staff, he found, was achieved by "security checks" in which subjects were questioned intimately while an "E-meter", an electrical gadget, measured his answers on a dial.

So searching and so damning was the Anderson Report that in Britain the Minister of Health announced in an adjournment debate on scien-

tology in the Commons last year that he thought no further inquiry in this country was necessary. The Anderson Report had clearly established the cult's dangers.

The blasts against the movement have continued from time to time. A *Daily Mail* investigation alleged that Mr. Hubbard's oft-used title of "Doctor" was "self-invented, self-bestowed—a Doctor of Scientology."

Only last week at a planning inquiry at East Grinstead a solicitor claimed that people at a local school for maladjusted and autistic young people could not go out for fear that they would be approached by scientologists, and the work of the school was being threatened.

But the cult has still expanded. They have recently established a sea organization, comprising three ships, reported to be "floating colleges" for advanced courses. Mr. Hubbard is believed to be on board one now.

At its worst the cult can sound sinister, at its best, slightly risible. The following is a Hubbard sample dialogue for his flock as a guide to how their critics can be exposed, which is included in his 1967 pamphlet:—

George.—Gwen if you don't drop scientology I'm going to leave you.

Gwen.—(savagely).—George! What have you been doing?

George.—What do you mean?

Gwen.—Out with it. Women? Theft? Murder? What crime have you committed?

George (weakly).—Oh, nothing like that.

Gwen.—What then?

George.—I've been holding back on my pay. . . .

Mr. Hubbard should know by now that his critics are not quite as malleable as that.