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Medicolegal

'Scientology' Banned in Britian

Americans traveling to Great Britain to practice "Scientology," a group which claims to be "applied religious philosophy," have been barred by the British Ministry of Health.

Kenneth Robinson, minister of health, declared that "scientology is socially harmful." The government's action was taken on the basis of complaints—some of them raised in Parliament — about teachings of the group.

Followers of the group previously known as Dianetics and now calling itself the Church of Scientology, reportedly adhere to the ideas originated by L. Ron Hubbard, former science fiction writer. Hubbard's book, *Dianetics*, became a best seller in the 1950's.

Curb on Growth: The British health minister said there was no power under existing law to prohibit the practice of Scientology, but he said he could take steps to curb its growth.

"Its authoritarian principles and practices are a potential menace to the personality and well-being of those so deluded as to become its followers," he said.

Founded in U.S.: Scientology was founded in the United States as Dianetics by Hubbard, who moved his world headquarters to East Grinstead, Sussex, a London suburb in 1959. Reports say there are some 50 full-time Scientologists in East Grinstead and some 250 students.

The government reported that there have been complaints by friends and relatives of those involved in the Scientology program. It was charged that mentally disturbed or weak persons are taken into the group and taught to hate their families.

The British health ministry reported receiving some 65 letters of complaint from former Scientologists or others in late 1967, all urging government action.

Course for Children: The Dept. of Education and Science began its investigation after a course was offered for children, designed to teach them "communications." A spokesman for the Hubbard Assn. for Scientologists

International was reported to have replied that the course was intended to make shy children less afraid to exert their own personalities and to communicate with other children and grown-ups.

Publications of the group speak of its "message of total freedom for all mankind," and it calls itself the "most widespread self-betterment movement on earth today."

"Scientology is the route from human being to total freedom or total beingness," a publication says. "Dianetics was the route from aberrated to normal to capable human being."

Device Misbranded: The "Hubbard E. Meter," an electrical device used by the Founding Church of Scientology, Washington, D. C., was ruled to be a misbranded medical device by a federal court jury in 1967.

The Food and Drug Administration had ordered more than 100 of the devices seized in Washington, D. C., in 1962, and a U.S. district judge ordered destruction of the meters in July, 1967, following the jury ruling.

Government attorneys contended that false and misleading therapeutic claims were made for the devices and

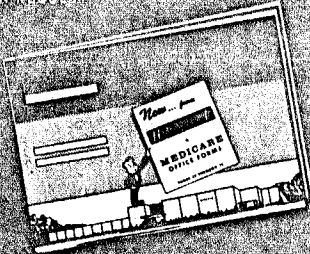
their only demonstrated effect was to measure skin resistance to electrical currents (*The AMA News*, July 24, 1967).

The FDA charged the devices were misbranded under the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act because of labeling claims that they were effective for diagnosis, prevention, treatment, detection, and elimination of the causes of all mental and nervous disorders.

Information on the number of Scientology members in the U.S. is unavailable, but a spokesman for the organization claimed there were "millions." The group says it has 20 main organizations throughout the world, with some 11 "centers" in the U.S. Headquarters for Scientology in the U.S. is in Los Angeles.

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