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Scottish Home and Health Department, to consider this question in the light of the report of the Royal Commission on Medical Education and any other relevant information and to report to us. We shall ask for a report by the end of the year and we shall discuss this with the profession. The membership of the working group will be made known as soon as possible.

MINISTRY OF HEALTH

Scientology

Mr. G. Johnson Smith asked the Minister of Health, in view of the representations he has received concerning the potentially harmful activities of scientologists in this country, what action he proposes to take; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. K. Robinson: During the past two years, Her Majesty's Government have become increasingly concerned at the spread of scientology in the United Kingdom. Scientology is a pseudo-philosophical cult introduced into this country some years ago from the United States and has its world headquarters in East Grinstead. It has been described by its founder, Mr. L. Ron Hubbard, as "the world's largest mental health organisation".

On 6th March, 1967, scientology was debated in the House on a Motion for the Adjournment, when I made it clear that my right hon. Friend the Home Secretary and I considered the practice of scientology to be potentially harmful to its adherents. Since the Anderson Report on Scientology (published in 1965 in the State of Victoria, Australia), coupled with the evidence already available in this country, sufficiently established the general undesirability and potential dangers of the cult, we took the view that there was little point in holding another inquiry.

Although this warning received a good deal of public notice at the time, the practice of scientology has continued, and indeed expanded, and Government Departments, Members of Parliament and local authorities have received numerous complaints about it.

The Government are satisfied, having reviewed all the available evidence, that

scientology is socially harmful. It alienates members of families from each other and attributes squalid and disgraceful motives to all who oppose it; its authoritarian principles and practice are a potential menace to the personality and well-being of those so deluded as to become its followers; above all, its methods can be a serious danger to the health of those who submit to them. There is evidence that children are now being indoctrinated.

There is no power under existing law to prohibit the practice of scientology; but the Government have concluded that it is so objectionable that it would be right to take all steps within their power to curb its growth.

It appears that scientology has drawn its adherents largely from overseas, though the organisation is now making intensive efforts to recruit residents of this country. Foreign nationals come here to study scientology and to work at the so-called college in East Grinstead. The Government can prevent this under existing law (the Aliens Order), and have decided to do so.

The following steps are being taken with immediate effect:

(a) The Hubbard College of Scientology, and all other scientology establishments, will no longer be accepted as educational establishments for the purposes of Home Office policy on the admission and subsequent control of foreign nationals;

(b) Foreign nationals arriving at United Kingdom ports who intend to proceed to scientology establishments will no longer be eligible for admission as students;

(c) Foreign nationals who are already in the United Kingdom, for example as visitors, will not be granted student status for the purpose of attending a scientology establishment;

(d) Foreign nationals already in the United Kingdom for study at a scientology establishment will not be granted extensions of stay to continue these studies;

(e) Work permits and employment vouchers will not be issued to foreign nationals (or Commonwealth citizens) for work at a scientology establishment;

(f) Work permits already issued to foreign nationals for work at a scientology establishment will not be extended.

My right hon. Friend the Home Secretary and I have amassed a considerable body of evidence about the activities of the cult in this country, in particular its effects on the mental health of a number of its clients, and its treatment of those

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who attempt to leave the movement or who oppose it in any way. We shall continue to keep a close watch on the situation and are ready to consider other measures should they prove necessary.