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Church Gets Back Books, E-Meters

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About 100 persons burst into applause yesterday as a rented truck drew up in front of 1812 18th St. N.W. and local followers of the Church of Scientology received back three tons of books and other materials seized by the government from them 10 years ago.

The ceremony represented the denouement of the longest case ever fought by the Food and Drug Administration. The Scientologists in effect won the case, successfully defending themselves against FDA charges of medical quackery by satisfying federal courts that the seized materials were religious paraphernalia.

Despite the largely favorable ruling, which was confirmed in March by three judges of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the

District of Columbia, the Scientologists had to pay the costs the government accrued on storing their things for 10 years of Nervous Tissue Storage Company of Washington, around the corner at 1701 Florida Ave. N.W.

A Security Storage officer declined to say what the government's bill had been or even to confirm that the materials had been stored there, but the Rev. Arthur Maren, a spokesman for the church, said the bill through 1970 totalled \$3,600.

What the Scientologists got back, somewhat yellowed with age, were 8,000 volumes of 13 different books, about 20,000 booklets and 55 E-meters.

The E-meters, made from tin cans and batteries, are used to measure electrical conductivity of the skin.

The FDA insisted they were phony medical devices banned under federal pure food and drug laws; the Church of Scientology said they were religious artifacts comparable to holy water.

The church said that another 25 to 30 E-meters seized in the raid on Jan. 4, 1963, were not included in the return shipment and remain unaccounted for.

In contrast to the drama of the seizure, which involved a team of deputized Baltimore longshoremen bursting into the converted town house that is the church, the return ceremony was a sedate affair.

Mr. Maren, speaking from a temporary podium on the church's front porch, referred mildly to the seizure and the legal struggle that followed as an example of

"the bureaucratic tendency to overreact in the name of the public good."

One of the books seized in the raid—and proposed for destruction by the FDA—was "Dianetics," by L. Ron Hubbard (a dominated best-seller lists in 1950, Mr. Maren pointed out. Hubbard, who now lives on an ever-cruising ship, is the founder of the Church of Scientology.

After the speeches were concluded, several black-garbed ministers of the church began to unload the cartons from the truck and carry them into the building.

The believers clustered on the sidewalk and in the street, smiled broadly at each other, then went inside the church to toast the occasion with champagne.



Followers of Church of Scientology carry boxes of books and E-meters while the Rev. Arthur Maren says a prayer. Sealed are the Rev. Arthur Maren and the Rev. Duke Sanders. U.S. government had seized materials 10 years ago.