

## Scientology civil fraud trial handed to jurors

Jurors in a civil fraud trial against the Church of Scientology and its founder, L. Ron Hubbard, began deliberating Wednesday afternoon after receiving legal instructions from Multnomah Circuit Judge Donald H. Londer.

The jury of five men and seven women retired for the day after 4 1/2 hours of deliberations and were scheduled to resume their work Thursday morning.

The suit involves more than two dozen representations made to a Portland woman, Julie Christofferson

Titchbourne, who said she relied on the statements concerning the background of Hubbard and the benefits from Scientology in deciding to become involved with the organization during nine months in 1975 and 1976.

Londer instructed the jurors that Hubbard and the church could not be held liable for damages for statements concerning religious beliefs or practices as a result of constitutional guarantees of freedom of religion.

The judge said the defendants could be held liable for statements made for

"wholly secular purposes" if jurors conclude that the statements were known by the defendants to be false or were made recklessly without regard to their accuracy and that Titchbourne relied on them.

Titchbourne seeks \$3.253 in general damages which was the amount she paid for Scientology courses and materials in 1975. She also seeks up to \$42 million in punitive damages against Hubbard, Church of Scientology of California and Church of Scientology Mission of Davis.