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SUBCHAPTER I—WEIGHTS, MEASURES, AND STANDARDS GENERALLY

§ 201. Sets of standard weights and measures for agricultural colleges

The Secretary of Commerce is directed to cause a complete set of all the weights and measures adopted as standards to be delivered to the governor of each State in the Union for the use of agricultural colleges in the States, respectively, which have received a grant of lands from the United States, and also one set of the same for the use of the Smithsonian Institution: *Provided*, That the cost of each set shall not exceed \$200.

(Mar. 3, 1881, No. 26, 21 Stat. 521; Feb. 14, 1903, ch. 552, §§ 4, 10, 32 Stat. 826, 829; Mar. 4, 1913, ch. 141, § 1, 37 Stat. 736.)

CHANGE OF NAME

Act Mar. 4, 1913, created Department of Labor, and renamed Department of Commerce and Labor as Department of Commerce.

TRANSFER OF FUNCTIONS

Act Feb. 14, 1903, transferred National Bureau of Standards from Treasury Department to Department of Commerce and Labor.

APPROPRIATION

A sum sufficient to carry out the provisions of this section was appropriated out of any money in the Treasury not otherwise appropriated by act Mar. 3, 1881.

DISTRIBUTION TO STATES

The Secretary of the Treasury was directed to cause a complete set of all the weights and measures adopted as standards to be delivered to the governor of each state for the use of the states by Res. June 14, 1836, No. 7, 5 Stat. 133, which provision was not incorporated into the Revised Statutes.

§ 202. Repairs to standards

Such necessary repairs and adjustments shall be made to the standards furnished to the several States and Territories as may be requested by the governors thereof, and also to standard weights and measures that have been or may be supplied to United States customhouses and other offices of the United States under Act of Congress, when requested by the Secretary of Commerce.

(July 11, 1890, ch. 667, § 1, 26 Stat. 242; Feb. 14, 1903, ch. 552, §§ 4, 10, 32 Stat. 826, 829; Mar. 4, 1913, ch. 141, § 1, 37 Stat. 736.)

CHANGE OF NAME

Act Mar. 4, 1913, created Department of Labor and renamed Department of Commerce and Labor as Department of Commerce.

TRANSFER OF FUNCTIONS

Act Feb. 14, 1903, transferred National Bureau of Standards from Treasury Department to Department of Commerce and Labor.

§ 203. Replacing lost standard weights and measures; cost

The Secretary of Commerce is authorized and directed to furnish precise copies of standard weights and measures, bearing the seal of the National Institute of Standards and Technology and accompanied by a suitable certificate, to any State, Territory, or institution heretofore furnished with the same, upon application in writing by the governor in the case of a State or Territory, or by the official head in the case of an institution, setting forth that the copies of standards applied for are to replace similar ones heretofore furnished, in accordance with law, which have been lost or destroyed: *Provided*, That the applicant shall, before the said standards are delivered, first deposit with the Secretary of Commerce the amount of money necessary to defray all expenses incurred by the National Institute of Standards and Technology in furnishing the same, which amount shall be covered into the Treasury of the United States to the credit of miscellaneous receipts as soon as the weights or measures are delivered for transportation into the hands of such persons as are designated by the officers ordering the same.

(Aug. 18, 1894, ch. 301, § 1, 28 Stat. 383; Mar. 3, 1901, ch. 872, § 1, 31 Stat. 1449; Feb. 14, 1903, ch. 552, § 10, 32 Stat. 829; Mar. 4, 1913, ch. 141, § 1, 37 Stat. 736; Pub. L. 100-418, title V, § 5115(c), Aug. 23, 1988, 102 Stat. 1433.)

AMENDMENTS

1988—Pub. L. 100-418 substituted “National Institute of Standards and Technology” for “Bureau of Standards” in two places.

CHANGE OF NAME

Act Mar. 4, 1913, created Department of Labor and re-named Department of Commerce and Labor as Department of Commerce.

Act Mar. 3, 1901, provided that Office of Standard Weights and Measures should thereafter be known as National Bureau of Standards.

TRANSFER OF FUNCTIONS

Act Feb. 14, 1903, transferred National Bureau of Standards from Treasury Department to Department of Commerce and Labor.

§ 204. Metric system authorized

It shall be lawful throughout the United States of America to employ the weights and measures of the metric system; and no contract or dealing, or pleading in any court, shall be deemed invalid or liable to objection because the weights or measures expressed or referred to therein are weights or measures of the metric system.

(R.S. § 3569.)

CODIFICATION

R.S. § 3569 derived from act July 28, 1866, ch. 301, § 1, 14 Stat. 339.

STUDY OF METRIC SYSTEM BY THE SECRETARY OF COMMERCE

Pub. L. 90-472, Aug. 9, 1968, 82 Stat. 693, authorized the Secretary of Commerce to conduct a program of investigation, research, and survey to determine the impact of increasing worldwide use of the metric system

on the United States; to appraise the desirability and practicability of increasing the use of metric weights and measures in the United States; to study the feasibility of retaining and promoting by international use of dimensional and other engineering standards based on the customary measurement units of the United States; and to evaluate the costs and benefits of alternative courses of action which might be feasible for the United States. The Secretary was directed to submit to the Congress such interim reports as he deemed desirable, and within three years after Aug. 9, 1968, a full and complete report of the findings made under the study, together with such recommendations as he considered to be appropriate and in the best interests of the United States. By its own terms, the Act expired thirty days after the submission of the final report.

§ 205. Metric system defined

The metric system of measurement shall be defined as the International System of Units as established in 1960, and subsequently maintained, by the General Conference of Weights and Measures, and as interpreted or modified for the United States by the Secretary of Commerce.

(R.S. § 3570; Pub. L. 110-69, title III, § 3013(c)(1), Aug. 9, 2007, 121 Stat. 598.)

CODIFICATION

R.S. § 3570 derived from act July 28, 1866, ch. 301, § 2, 14 Stat. 339, 340.

AMENDMENTS

2007—Pub. L. 110-69 amended section generally. Prior to amendment, section read as follows: “The tables in the schedule annexed shall be recognized in the construction of contracts and in all legal proceedings as establishing, in terms of the weights and measures on June 22, 1874, in use in the United States, the equivalents of the weights and measures expressed therein in terms of the metric system; and the tables may lawfully be used for computing, determining, and expressing in customary weights and measures the weights and measures of the metric system.”

SUBCHAPTER II—METRIC CONVERSION

§ 205a. Congressional statement of findings

The Congress finds as follows:

(1) The United States was an original signatory party to the 1875 Treaty of the Meter (20 Stat. 709), which established the General Conference of Weights and Measures, the International Committee of Weights and Measures and the International Bureau of Weights and Measures.

(2) Although the use of metric measurement standards in the United States has been authorized by law since 1866 (Act of July 28, 1866; 14 Stat. 339), this Nation today is the only industrially developed nation which has not established a national policy of committing itself and taking steps to facilitate conversion to the metric system.

(3) World trade is increasingly geared towards the metric system of measurement.

(4) Industry in the United States is often at a competitive disadvantage when dealing in international markets because of its non-standard measurement system, and is sometimes excluded when it is unable to deliver goods which are measured in metric terms.