



COMPTROLLER GENERAL OF THE UNITED STATES  
WASHINGTON 25

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B-51145

September 11, 1945

Honorable Ralph E. Church,  
House of Representatives.

My dear Mr. Church:

Further reference is made to your letter of July 18, 1945, concerning the authority for developing the Standard Commodity Classification and the appropriations charged "for the cost of the personnel, publishing and printing."

With reference to this matter the Director of the Bureau of the Budget has reported as follows:

"Many agencies of the Government use commodity classification in their operations. Some use them in procurement, storage, inventory, disposal, and related Government supply operations, and others in the handling of information relating to production, imports, exports, and domestic distribution. In connection with these and related functions, a great many classifications were in existence at the beginning of the war. But, in spite of their availability, several agencies approached us for assistance in developing commodity classifications indicating that existing classifications did not meet their special purposes. The need for uniformity and comprehensiveness in classification became particularly urgent in connection with the allocation of materials, the priorities and limitations upon the production of commodities, and the procurement of commodities by our Government departments and by foreign countries through Lend-Lease. To expedite these various war programs, lists of commodities and detailed commodity information were required.

"The Standard Commodity Classification, which has been prepared on a cooperative interagency basis, was developed to meet the above-mentioned needs. The work has been done by a number of interagency committees including representatives from all Government agencies which have need for or interest in the development

of such a commodity classification. These committee members have assumed this work as a part of or in addition to their work in their respective agencies because of the need which these agencies have for a standard classification.

"In this connection, the Bureau of the Budget contributed approximately eight man-months time to this project in addition to the participation of two of its staff members on the four-man Steering Group of the technical committee, which worked continuously each half day for a period of four months and was primarily responsible for putting the classification into final form. The preparation of Volume II required approximately eight months work for two clerks, plus full time editorial and technical work of four professional staff members for a period of two weeks.

"The approximate total printing costs for the Standard Commodity Classification are \$16,260 for 24,456 copies of Volume I, and \$14,453 for 16,500 copies of Volume II. Of these amounts, \$8,788 for Volume I and \$10,423 for Volume II was paid by the War Production Board, as one of the sponsoring agencies of the project, because of its need for quantities of both volumes in its industry divisions. The remainder of the costs for both volumes was defrayed through sale by the Superintendent of Documents."

The matter of executive departments and agencies setting up coordinating committees for the purpose of compiling the Standard Commodity Classification for the use of each of such departments or agencies would not appear to contravene the provisions of 31 U.S.C. 673 or any other statute.

The cost of printing referred to by the Director of the Budget as having been borne by the War Production Board was paid from funds appropriated in the Urgent Deficiency Appropriation Act, 1943, 57 Stat. 432-433, 442, and the National War Agencies Appropriation Act, 1944, 57 Stat. 532-533, as the case may be, each of which includes a provision for printing and binding. As to that part of the cost of printing which was defrayed through sales by

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the Superintendent of Documents, Government Printing Office, attention is invited to Title 44, U.S.C. § 72, 72a and 79, which provide for the printing and the sale of additional copies of any Government publication by the Public Printer. Accordingly, there appears to have been no violation of law in the defrayal of the expense incurred for printing and binding the said publication.

Sincerely yours,

Comptroller General  
of the United States.