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B-149151, Jul. 20, 1962

Number: B-149151

Date: 1962-07-20

B-149151, JUL. 20, 1962

TO MISS D. W. HOUSER, AUTHORIZED CERTIFYING OFFICER, DEPARTMENT OF STATE:

YOUR LETTER OF JUNE 8, 1962, REFERENCE AUD/M, ENCLOSED REIMBURSEMENT VOUCHER, STANDARD FORM 1129, SUBMITTED BY GENEVIEVE E. WARD, CLASS A WHICH WAS ADMINISTRATIVELY SUSPENDED FROM DO VOUCHER NO. 5120, J. F. CANNON, SYMBOL 3000 PAID MAY 1, 1962, ON THE BASIS OF DECISIONS OF THIS OFFICE, 37 COMP. GEN. 360; B-115132, JUNE 17, 1953; AND B-131611, MAY 24, 1957. VIEW THEREOF YOU EXPRESS DOUBT AS TO WHETHER THE ENCLOSED VOUCHER SHOULD BE CERTIFIED FOR PAYMENT.

IN A MEMORANDUM DATED MAY 9, 1962, FROM MR. CHARLES F. HAWKINS, CHIEF, FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT BRANCH OF THE EXECUTIVE STAFF FOR EDUCATIONAL AND CULTURAL AFFAIRS SUBMITTED WITH YOUR LETTER OF JUNE 8, 1962, AN EXPLANATION IS OFFERED AS TO THE USE OF TWO TYPES OF CARDS INVOLVED. IS EXPLAINED THAT THE "CARDS OF INTRODUCTION" ARE ISSUED TO FOREIGN GRANTEES FOR THE PURPOSE OF INTRODUCING THEM IN VARIOUS PLACES THROUGHOUT THE UNITED STATES AND IN ASSISTING THEM IN CASHING THEIR PER DIEM CHECKS. THE "THANK YOU FOR HOSPITALITY" CARDS ARE SENT TO MANY SPONSORS THROUGHOUT THE UNITED STATES WHO ASSIST IN THE EDUCATIONAL EXCHANGE PROGRAM WITHOUT REMUNERATION. THE USE OF THESE CARDS INSTEAD OF LETTERS SAVES CONSIDERABLE TIME AND CLERICAL HELP WHICH WOULD BE REQUIRED TO TYPE "THANK YOU" LETTERS TO THE VARIOUS PERSONS HELPING FOREIGN VISITORS. THE MEMORANDUM FURTHER ASSERTS THAT THESE CARDS ARE NOT CALLING OR GREETING CARDS AS COVERED IN OUR DECISIONS REFERRED TO BUT SERVE A USEFUL PURPOSE IN ADMINISTERING THE EDUCATIONAL EXCHANGE PROGRAM THROUGHOUT THE UNITED STATES. YOU ASK TO BE ADVISED AS TO WHETHER THE ENCLOSED VOUCHER MAY BE CERTIFIED FOR PAYMENT.

QUESTIONS CONCERNING THE EXPENDITURE OF PUBLIC MONEYS FOR CALLING CARDS AND GREETING CARDS HAVE BEEN PRESENTED TO THIS OFFICE AND ITS PREDECESSOR, THE COMPTROLLER OF THE TREASURY, FOR MANY YEARS. IN CONSEQUENCE THEREOF DECISIONS HAVE BEEN RENDERED BY THE ACCOUNTING APPROPRIATED FUNDS ARE NOT AVAILABLE FOR THE PURCHASE OF CALLING CARDS AND FOR GREETING CARDS. THE REASON ASSIGNED FOR SUCH HOLDINGS IN THE CASE OF CALLING CARDS AND GREETING CARDS IS THAT THE CARDS ARE PERSONAL IN NATURE AND, THEREFORE, ARE NOT CHARGEABLE TO PUBLIC FUNDS IN THE ABSENCE OF SPECIFIC AUTHORITY BY STATUTE. IN ADDITION SUCH PRINTING OF CARDS BY COMMERCIAL CONCERNS WAS HELD TO BE IN VIOLATION OF THE REGULATIONS OF THE JOINT COMMITTEE ON PRINTING WITH RESPECT TO PRINTING WITHIN THE EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENTS AND AGENCIES. SEE 20 COMP. DEC. 248; 7 COMP. GEN. 481; 12 ID. 565; 37 ID. 360; B-115132, JUNE

THE CARDS IN QUESTION WHILE DENOMINATED AS "CARDS OF INTRODUCTION" AND "THANK YOU FOR HOSPITALITY" CARDS ARE ACTUALLY CALLING AND GREETING CARDS RESPECTIVELY. THE "CARDS OF INTRODUCTION" ARE CALLING CARDS ISSUED TO THE FOREIGN VISITING

STUDENT WITH HIS NAME ADDED AT THE TIME OF ISSUANCE OF THE CARD TO HIM. THE CARD SERVES THE PURPOSE OF INTRODUCING THE BEARER TO ANYONE TO WHOM THE CARD IS PRESENTED. THIS IS A PRIMARY FUNCTION OF A CALLING CARD. THE "THANK YOU FOR HOSPITALITY" CARDS CONTAIN ON THE THIRD LINE THE WORD "GREETINGS" AND THE MESSAGE CONTAINED IS NOT UNLIKE ANY ORDINARY GREETING CARD. FOR THESE REASONS WE CAN FIND NO SUBSTANTIAL BASIS FOR CHARACTERIZING THESE CARDS AS OTHER THAN "CALLING CARDS" AND "GREETING CARDS" WITHIN THE MEANING OF THOSE TERMS AS USED IN OUR DECISIONS CITED ABOVE AND PARAGRAPH 18 OF THE PRINTING AND BINDING REGULATIONS OF THE JOINT COMMITTEE ON PRINTING.

WE HAVE EXAMINED CAREFULLY THE PROVISIONS CONTAINED IN THE CURRENT AUTHORIZING LEGISLATION, THE MUTUAL EDUCATIONAL AND CULTURAL EXCHANGE ACT OF 1961, APPROVED SEPTEMBER 21, 1961, PUBLIC LAW 87-256 75 STAT. 527, 22 U.S.C. 2451 ET SEQ. NOTHING WAS FOUND THEREIN WHICH AUTHORIZES, UNDER THE EXCHANGE PROGRAM, EXPENDITURES OF THIS NATURE. IN THE ABSENCE OF SPECIFIC STATUTORY AUTHORITY WE MUST ADHERE TO THE LONG ESTABLISHED RULE PROHIBITING THE CHARGES OF EXPENSES OF PRINTING CALLING CARDS AND GREETING CARDS FROM APPROPRIATED FUNDS. ACCORDINGLY, FOR THE REASONS STATED ABOVE, THE VOUCHER WHICH IS RETURNED HEREWITH, MAY NOT BE CERTIFIED FOR PAYMENT.