§ 1154. Intoxicants dispensed in Indian country

(a) Whoever sells, gives away, disposes of, exchanges, or barters any malt, spirituous, or vinous liquor, including beer, ale, and wine, or any ardent or other intoxicating liquor of any kind whatsoever, except for scientific, sacramental, medicinal or mechanical purposes, or any essence, extract, bitters, preparation, compound, composition, or any article whatsoever, under any name, label, or brand, which produces intoxication, to any Indian to whom an allotment of land has been made while the title to the same shall be held in trust by the Government, or to any Indian who is a ward of the Government under charge of any Indian superintendent, or to any Indian, including mixed bloods, over whom the Government, through its departments, exercises guardianship, and who ever introduces or attempts to introduce any malt, spirituous, or vinous liquor, including beer, ale, and wine, or any ardent or intoxicating liquor of any kind whatsoever into the Indian country, shall, for the first offense, be fined under this title or imprisoned not more than one year, or both; and, for each subsequent offense, be fined under this title or imprisoned not more than five years, or both.

(b) It shall be a sufficient defense to any charge of introducing or attempting to introduce ardent spirits, ale, beer, wine, or intoxicating liquors into the Indian country that the acts charged were done under authority, in writing, from the Department of the Army or any officer duly authorized thereunto by the Department of the Army, but this subsection shall not bar the prosecution of any officer, soldier, sutler or storekeeper, attache, or employee of the Army of the United States who barters, donates, or furnishes in any manner whatsoever liquors, beer, or any intoxicating beverage whatsoever to any Indian.

(c) The term “Indian country” as used in this section does not include fee-patented lands in non-Indian communities or rights-of-way through Indian reservations, and this section does not apply to such lands or rights-of-way in the absence of a treaty or statute extending the Indian liquor laws thereto.


Historical and Revision Notes

1948 Act


Section consolidates sections 241, 242, 244a, and 249 of title 25, U.S.C., 1940 ed., Indians. The portion of section 241 of said title which defined the substantive offense became subsection (a); the portion relating to the scope of the term “Indian country” was omitted as unnecessary in view of definition of “Indian country” in section 1151 of this title; the portion of section 241 of said title excepting liquors introduced by the War Department became subsection (c), as limited by section 249 of said title; the portion respecting making complaint in county of offense, and with reference to arraignment, was omitted as covered by rule 5 of the Federal Rules of Criminal Procedure; and the remainder of section 241 of said title was incorporated in section 1156 of this title.

Section 254 of title 25, U.S.C., 1940 ed., Indians, was omitted as covered by this section and section 1156 of this title. That section was enacted in 1934 and excluded from the Indian liquor laws lands outside reservations where the land was no longer held by Indians under a trust patent or a deed or patent containing restrictions against alienation. Such enactment was prior to the June 15, 1938, amendment of section 241 of title 25, U.S.C., 1940 ed., Indians, in which the term “Indian country” was defined as including allotments where the title was held in trust by the Government or where it was inalienable without the consent of the United States. This provision, by implication, excluded cases where there was no trust or restriction on alienation and thereby achieved the same result as section 254 of title 25, U.S.C., 1940 ed., Indians. That amendment also repealed the act of Jan. 30, 1897, referred to in section 254 of title 25, U.S.C., 1940 ed., Indians. Insofar as the reference in section 254 of said title to “special Indian liquor laws” included

Words “or agent” were deleted as there have been no Indian agents since 1908. See section 64 of title 25, U.S.C., 1940 ed., Indians, and note thereunder.

Mandatory punishment provisions were rephrased in the alternative and provision for commitment for nonpayment of fine was deleted. This change was also recommended by United States District Judge T. Blake Kennedy on the ground that, otherwise, section would be practically meaningless since, in most cases, offenders cannot pay a fine.

The exception of intoxicating liquor for scientific, sacramental, medicinal or mechanical purposes was inserted for the same reason that makes this exception appropriate to section 1262 of this title.

Minor changes were made in phraseology.

1949 Act

Subsection (a) of this section [section 27 (a)] substitutes “Department of the Army” for “War Department”, in subsection (b) of section 1154 of title 18, U.S.C., to conform to such redesignation by act July 26, 1947 (ch. 343, title 11, § 205(a), 61 Stat. 501 (5 U.S.C., 1946 ed., § 181–1)). Subsection (b) of this section [section 27 (b)] adds subsection (c) to such section 1154 in order to conform it and section 1156 more closely to the laws relating to intoxicating liquor in the Indian country as they have heretofore been construed.

Amendments

1994—Subsec. (a). Pub. L. 103–322 substituted “fined under this title” for “fined not more than $500” after “first offense, be” and for “fined not more than $2,000” after “subsequent offense, be”.

1949—Subsec. (b). Act May 24, 1949, § 27(a), substituted “Department of the Army” for “War Department”.

Subsec. (c). Act May 24, 1949, § 27(b), added subsec. (c).

Transfer of Functions

Functions of all other officers of Department of the Interior and functions of all agencies and employees of such Department, with two exceptions, transferred to Secretary of the Interior, with power vested in him to authorize their performance or performance of any of his functions by any of such officers, agencies, and employees, by Reorg. Plan No. 3 of 1950, §§ 1, 2, eff. May 24, 1950, 15 F.R. 3174, 64 Stat. 1262, set out in the Appendix to Title 5, Government Organization and Employees.