



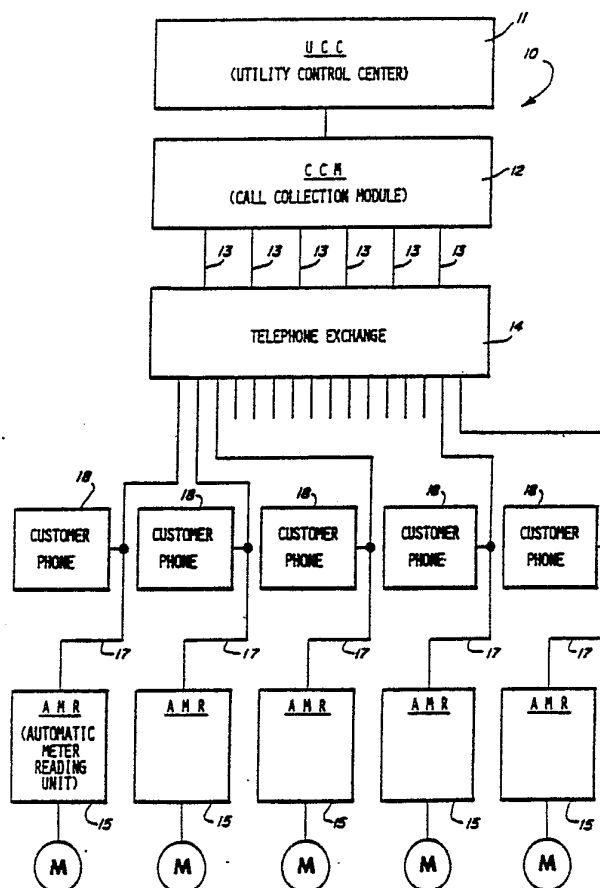
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(54) Title: AUTOMATIC METER READING SYSTEM

(57) Abstract

Automatic meter readers (15) are arranged for connection to customers' telephone lines (17) and for automatic dialing for transmission of meter data to a computer of a utility control center (11), communications being effected through a call collection module (12) which includes a plurality of call collection units connected to separate telephone lines (13) for handling of a large number of calls. Each meter reader (15) is battery-operated and includes a microprocessor which is powered up periodically for a short time interval to store data, to determine whether the number of power-ups since the last meter data transmission is such that a call to the utility control center (11) should be instituted, and to determine whether leakage, tamper or other conditions require an immediate call. An operator at the utility control center (11) can control and receive data from a very large number of meter readers (15) and readily obtain, display and print out a variety of types of data including cumulative consumption, peak rate and time-of-day data and data with respect to leakage conditions and tampering with a reader.



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AUTOMATIC METER READING SYSTEM

This invention relates to a meter reading system and more particularly to a meter reading system which uses customer telephone lines without requiring special equipment 5 in a telephone exchange or at a customer's facility and which operates with minimal interference with or annoyance of customers. The system produces accurate data as to the readings of water, gas and electric meters or the like, including peak rate and time-of-day data and it is easily 10 programmable and controllable to facilitate installation and to obtain and store, display and print-out meter data and various analyses of meter data. Operators at a central location can handle a great many readers, on the order of several tens of thousands or more, and the system is highly 15 reliable, efficient and economical. The effective cost per customer per month for equipment, installation, servicing and telephone line usage is minimized.

The priority of prior copending national application, U.S application Serial No. 876,896, filed June 20 20, 1986, is claimed, this application being a continuation-in-part thereof. The disclosure of said prior application is incorporated by reference.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

There are a great many prior art proposals for 25 using telephone lines for automatic reporting of meter and status data as well as for control of clocks and the time of telephone calls and the reporting of alarm conditions and other remote metering and control applications. In many of the proposals for using telephone lines, an interrogation 30 signal is sent from a receiving station to a reporting station to initiate the sending of a report, the receiving

-2-

station being either at a telephone exchange or being connected through a telephone line thereto. Such systems may involve ringing of the customer's telephone or the installation of special ring-suppress equipment at the customer's facility or, alternatively, special equipment at the telephone exchange.

In another type of system, a reporting station initiates the making of a report. For example, the Stonor U.S. Patent No. 3,098,123 discloses a system in which a pulse-dialing operation is automatically performed, followed by the sending of a message to report the condition at the reporting station. The Diaz U.S. Patent No. 3,357,011 discloses a system in which the call-in time is controlled by a clock at the reporting station, the clock being also usable to trigger periodically transfers of data to a local memory for later transmission to the receiving station upon command.

In addition to the Diaz patent, there are other systems in which calls are made periodically or at preset times, including the Breen U.S. Patent No. 3,046,339, the Jackson U.S. Patent No. 3,294,910, the Klein U.S. Patent No. 3,510,591, the Lindstrom U.S. Patent No. 4,056,684, the Bocchi U.S. Patent No. 4,086,434 and the Martin et al U.S. Patent No. 4,104,486. In the Klein system, call time data are sent to a station to be stored in a memory and to be compared with clock signals to make a call-back at a desired time. The Vittoz U.S. Patent No. 4,020,628 and the Emile, Jr. U.S. Patent No. 4,125,993 illustrate systems in which signals may be transmitted through a telephone line to regulate the frequency or set the time at a remote clock or watch.

The National Weather Service of the National Oceanic Atmospheric Administration of the U.S. Department of Commerce has been a leader in the development of automated systems using telephone lines for the reporting of meter data. In a paper entitled: "AUTOMATIC HYDROLOGIC OBSERVING SYSTEM" by J. W. Schiesl, presented at the International

-3-

Seminar on organization and operation of hydrological services, Ottawa, Canada, July 15, 1976, an "AHOS" system is described in which an Automatic Data Acquisition System (ADAS) includes a computer which operates on a standard 5 interrogation cycle to collect data. Periodically, once every six hours, the ADAS transmits the data to a receiving station or user such as a River Forecast Center or a Weather Service Forecast Office. The system is such that a user may have the capability to request a special interrogation cycle 10 which can be at optional intervals other than the standard cycles and to request the type of data to be reported when the ADAS reports in at the special requested time.

The computer and microprocessor technology, of course, developed very rapidly and since about the mid 15 1970's, microprocessors have been commercially available at relatively low cost to perform many complex functions. In addition, restrictions on the connection of equipment to telephone lines were removed in about the first half of the decade of the 1970's.

20 However, there has been no extensive use of telephone lines for automatic reading of water, gas and electric meters or the like. Those systems which have been used have been quite complicated and expensive and their use has been limited to special applications such as the 25 monitoring of the meters of large industrial users of electricity or the performance of surveys on a random basis.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

This invention was evolved with the general object of providing a practical, economical, 30 efficient and reliable system for automatically obtaining accurate readings and other data from water, gas or electric meters or the like, readily installed and operable with minimal interference or annoyance of customers.

A specific object of the invention is to provide a 35 system which is very efficient in the use of telephone lines and in which a single meter data receiving line or a small

number of lines can be used to reliably and economically obtain data sent from a large number of customers without requiring special telephone equipment at a customer's facility or in a telephone exchange.

5 Another specific object of the invention is to provide a versatile system in which a utility or municipality may readily select types of data to be obtained and the calendar days, days of week and/or times of day when data is obtained as well as select the types of data and the
10 format of storage, display or printing of data and analyses thereof.

A further object of the invention is to provide a system in which alarm indications are produced in response to conditions which indicate an improper operation or
15 malfunction of metering equipment and/or to conditions which are potentially destructive or unsafe.

Another specific object of the invention is to provide a system in which metering units are powered by batteries and in which current consumption is minimized to
20 obtain a long battery life so as to increase reliability and minimize maintenance expenses.

Important aspects of the invention relate to the recognition of the limitations and deficiencies of prior art proposals while taking into account the important real needs
25 of utilities and municipalities and their customers with respect to meter reading operations. The invention also takes into account the performance characteristics and costs of components which are available for processing of data and transmission of data over telephone lines. It provides a
30 system which is very efficient and economical with respect to costs of equipment, installation of equipment and operating and maintenance costs as well as the cost of telephone lines while performing extremely well and being very versatile with respect to satisfying needs.

35 In a system constructed in accordance with this invention, a large number of automatic meter readers (AMRs) are connected to customers' telephone lines. Each AMR is

arranged to call a utility telephone number at a certain time, e.g., at 1:12:20 AM on the 9th day of each month, to send meter data through telephone exchange equipment to a call collection module (CCM) having a memory for temporary storage of such meter data. The CCM may immediately send control data back to the AMR including, for example, call-back time data and data which controls time-of-day (TOD) and peak rate (PR) metering.

The CCM is arranged for bi-directional communication with a utility control center (UCC) which includes a computer with a keyboard, display and one or more disc drives and which is connected to a printer, other peripherals or a network. An operator of the UCC may enter control data of a "global" nature, appropriate for all AMRs and may also enter control data specifically applicable to an AMR as well as the customer's name and address and other identification or status data desired by a utility. Control data entered by the operator or generated by the UCC is sent to the CCM to be processed by the CCM and sent to an AMR for control thereof.

The system of the invention is thus similar to the aforementioned National Weather Service Systems but differs therefrom in that it has the CCM as an instrumentality which acts as a buffer and as an intermediate processor with respect to transmission of control data between the control data entry point at the UCC and an AMR. It also acts as a buffer and as an intermediate processor with respect to transmission of meter data between the AMR and the data storage, display and printing equipment of the UCC.

The provision of the CCM with its buffering and processing capabilities makes it possible to reduce the processing to be performed at the AMR and to use simpler reporting and processing components in the AMR. It thereby reduces the unit cost of manufacture of the AMR which is very important in a system which has a very large number of AMRs. In addition, it permits a great deal of flexibility and versatility with respect to the meter data which is

reported and with respect to the mode of reporting thereof.

Another important feature is that the CCM may be equipped to simultaneously receive and handle calls on a plurality of telephone lines and to take advantage of a
5 roll-over feature in which only one number is assigned to all lines and in which, if one or more lines are "busy", the call is directed by the exchange to the first non-busy line of the group. This feature increases the reliability of the system, minimizing the possible blocking of a call from one
10 AMR when a call from another is being processed. It is particularly advantageous when using WATS type lines which are economical to use when a large number of calls are received over one line and which have the advantage of avoiding any toll charges on the customer's line.

15 Many important features of the invention relate to the operation of the UCC. It is programmed in a manner such that control data are readily entered with a number of operations being automated to permit a very large number of AMRs to be operated from one station. For example, in
20 developing control data for the AMR of a new customer, the program will, if desired, automatically set a date and time for call-in by the unit, a number of options being available. The UCC is also programmed to facilitate control of the days and daily time periods or "windows" in which
25 time-of-day and peak rate accumulations are performed and it has many features relating to displaying and printing data which relate to various aspects of reported data and various aspects of the control data used in operation of the system. The UCC is also designed to facilitate an installation
30 transaction in which a telephone call may be made to a customer to send control data for initialization of the customer's AMR.

Additional important features of the invention relate to the construction and operation of the AMRs which
35 are battery-operated and which have components and circuitry such as to reduce the average power supplied by the battery. In one embodiment of a AMR constructed in accordance with

-7-

the invention, circuitry is provided to use power from the telephone line when the unit is dialing or in an off-hook condition. In this embodiment, the AMR may go off-hook in response each call on the line, to effect a checking
5 operation to determine whether a "demand" call is being made from the utility, which may be made for the purpose of effecting an installation transaction or to obtain data from the AMR. In each such checking operation, the modem and other circuits are energized and over a period of time
10 considerable energy is expended and it is desirable to obtain such energy from the telephone line, rather than from batteries.

In another AMR embodiment, a demand signal detector circuit is provided which is operative to detect a demand
15 signal of a certain form on the telephone line, such as a tone burst having a certain frequency and duration. In this embodiment, a modem need not be energized in response to each call on the line, but only in response to an actual demand call from the utility or when making scheduled
20 reports at monthly or other intervals. As a result, the modem may be battery operated and it is not necessary to draw power from the line to obtain a long battery life. The use of demand signal detector is also advantageous especially in combination with an isolation transformer and
25 protection circuitry and special features for transmission of signals from the line to the detector.

Another feature relates to the use of a microprocessor, which is advantageously provided in either of the aforementioned embodiments. A specific feature is
30 that the microprocessor is not operated continuously but is normally inactive in a low-power state. It is operated periodically for only very short time intervals and its average current consumption is very low. Other circuitry is operative at all times but with very low power consumption,
35 being limited in use to accumulating meter pulses for relatively short time intervals and for acting to power-up the processor in response to alarm conditions or incoming

telephone calls.

Another feature of the AMR units relates to the timing of periods between activation of the processor and the correlation thereof to call-back time control data to
5 obtain accurate control of call-back times. This feature is very important in enabling the system to reliably handle a large number of AMR units per telephone line.

Another feature relates to the detection of leaks through an arrangement which requires that in a relatively
10 long time period such as the time between monthly reports, there must be at least one time period of relatively short duration, two hours, for example, in which no flow is indicated. Otherwise, a leak indication is generated. This feature is particularly advantageous in water metering and
15 is capable of detecting conditions which might otherwise be detected only after severe damage has occurred.

A further feature relates to the transmission to an AMR of a control signal to place it in an inactivated mode, as when service to a customer has been discontinued
20 and when service to a new customer at the same location has not been started. If consumption occurs in the inactivated mode, the AMR operates to immediately send an alarm signal to the CCM.

Additional features relate to detection of freeze,
25 low battery and tamper conditions and operations in response thereto. In response to physical tampering, current meter data is immediately stored in an EEPROM or non-volatile memory and then a dialing operation is initiated to report to the CCM. If dial tone is not detected, due to cutting of
30 the line for example, the tamper report and meter data are reported when the wire is reconnected.

This invention has many other objects, features and advantages which will become more fully apparent from the following detailed description taken in conjunction with the
35 accompanying drawings.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

FIGURE 1 is a schematic block diagram of a meter reading system constructed in accordance with the principles of this invention;

5 FIGURE 2 is a schematic block diagram of an automatic meter reader of the system of Figure 1;

 FIGURE 3 is a schematic circuit diagram of telephone interface and power supply circuitry of the automatic meter reader of Figure 2;

10 FIGURE 4 is a schematic circuit diagram of modem circuitry of the automatic meter reader of Figure 2;

 FIGURE 5 is a schematic circuit diagram of dial tone detect circuitry of the automatic meter reader of Figure 2;

15 FIGURE 6 is a schematic circuit diagram of clock circuitry of the automatic meter reader of Figure 2;

 FIGURE 7 is a schematic circuit diagram of wake-up timer circuitry of the automatic meter reader of Figure 2;

20 FIGURE 8 is a schematic circuit diagram of meter pulse counter circuitry of the automatic meter reader of Figure 2;

 FIGURE 9 is a schematic circuit diagram of status register circuitry of the automatic meter reader of Figure 2;

25 FIGURE 10 is a schematic circuit diagram of reset and power control circuitry of the automatic meter reader of Figure 2;

 FIGURE 11 is a schematic circuit diagram of input/output decode circuitry of the automatic meter reader of
30 Figure 2;

 FIGURE 12 is a schematic circuit diagram of low battery detect circuitry of the automatic meter reader of Figure 2;

 FIGURE 13 is a structure chart illustrating the
35 operation of a microprocessor of the automatic meter reader of Figure 2;

FIGURE 14 is a flow chart illustrating operations performed upon receipt of a wake-up signal by a microprocessor of the automatic meter reader;

FIGURE 15 is a flow chart illustrating an "UP DATE TIME" operation performed by the microprocessor;

FIGURE 15A is a flow chart illustrating a modified "UP DATE TIME" operation;

FIGURE 16 is a flow chart illustrating an "ADD COUNTS" operation of the microprocessor;

FIGURE 17 is a flow chart illustrating a "START TIME SLICE" of the microprocessor;

FIGURE 18 is a flow chart illustrating a "SET NEXT ALARM" operation of the microprocessor;

FIGURE 18A is a flow chart illustrating a modified "SET NEXT ALARM" operation of the microprocessor;

FIGURE 19 is a flow chart illustrating a "TIME SLICER" operation of the microprocessor;

FIGURE 20 is a flow chart illustrating a "PHONE HANDLER" operation of the microprocessor;

FIGURE 21 is a schematic block diagram of equipment and components of a utility control center and Figure 22 is a schematic block diagram of call collection module of the system of Figure 1;

FIGURES 23-27 are flow charts illustrating the operation of the utility control center;

FIGURE 28 is a structure chart or tasking model of a master central processing unit of the call collection module shown in Figure 21;

FIGURE 29 is a structure flow chart or tasking model for one of three call collection units of the call collection module of Figure 21;

FIGURE 30 is a schematic block diagram illustrating a modified automatic meter reader;

FIGURE 31 is a flow chart corresponding to a right-hand portion of the flow chart of Figure 14 and showing a modified operation;

-11-

FIGURE 32 is a schematic diagram showing an arrangement for detecting open or short conditions of a meter switch;

FIGURE 33 a schematic diagram of circuitry of another preferred embodiment of AMR constructed in accordance with the principles of the invention;

FIGURE 34 is a schematic diagram of a frequency discriminator of a detector circuit shown in FIG. 33; and

FIGURE 35 is a schematic diagram of circuitry of the embodiment of FIG. 33, including a microprocessor, logic and memory circuits thereof.

DESCRIPTION OF A PREFERRED EMBODIMENT

Reference numeral 10 generally designates an automatic meter reading system constructed in accordance with the principles of the invention. The system 10 comprises a central processing station or utility control center 11, hereinafter referred to as the "UCC", and at least one call collection module 12, hereinafter referred to as a "CCM". Each CCM 12 is connected through one or more telephone lines 13 to telephone exchange equipment 14, six lines being shown. The system 10 further includes a plurality of automatic meter reading units 15 connected to meters 16, which may be water, gas or electric meters at customers' residences. Each unit 15 is referred to herein as an "AMR" and is connected to the exchange equipment 14 through a telephone line 17 which may be a non-dedicated line with a customer's telephone 18 connected thereto, as shown.

The system 10 is very efficient in receiving raw meter data in the form of electrical signals developed at the meters 16, processing of such data and developing highly useful output data for use by a utility or municipality with provisions for storing data as long as required. The output data may include, for example, meter readings obtained at predetermined times, time-of-day accumulation data ("TOD"), peak rate data ("PR") and leakage, tamper and malfunction

-12-

indications. The mode of operation is readily changeable or programmable from the UCC 11, and the system is such as to facilitate initial installation of AMR units, discontinuing service to one customer and starting service with another, 5 keeping track of the operational status of all units, making analyses of operations and the rendering of reports which may be printed or transmitted. The UCC equipment includes a computer keyboard and display and its construction and operation are described in detail hereinafter.

10 The system 10 is also advantageous in that it so operates as to be substantially "invisible" with minimal interference with the customer's use of telephone lines and it does not require any modification of the telephone exchange equipment or of the customer lines or equipment.

15 In operation of the illustrated system, each AMR 15 receives and processes raw meter data, continually developing and updating TOD and PR data as well as accumulated readings. At an assigned time, typically at a certain day of the month and during a night-time period when 20 the customer is least apt to be using the telephone, the AMR 15 goes to an off-hook condition and, if dial tone is detected, it proceeds to dial a telephone number corresponding to a line which is connected to the CCM 12. In one mode of operation, it waits for receipt of a carrier 25 signal from the CCM 12. In another, it waits for the expiration of a certain delay time. In either case, the AMR 15 then proceeds to apply signals to the telephone line 17, in an attempt to send data to the CCM 12, including identification and security data and status data as well as 30 the processed meter data.

The CCM 12 stores received data and processes it, making a security check and making a determination of new data to be sent to the AMR 15. Such new data are preceded by an acknowledgment character and may include security data 35 and the time for the next call-in by the AMR 15. If properly received, the AMR 15 responds with an acknowledgment character and security data. Then the CCM 12

-13-

may send another acknowledgment character and control data such as an exemption schedule for holiday days when TOD/PR data are not to be accumulated and/or data as to new "windows" or periods during each day when TOD or PR data are to be accumulated. After a final acknowledgment character from the AMR, both the AMR and CCM go to on-hook conditions.

Important features of the invention relate to the operation of the CCM 12 and particularly with respect to handling calls from a large number of the AMR units 15. By way of example, one CCM may handle calls from on the order of 60,000 AMR units each month on each line connected thereto. Such calls may be made during night-time hours when there will be minimal interference with use of customer telephones and when the loading of the telephone exchange is at a minimum. As a result, the time available for each call may be on the order of 20 seconds or less. In these circumstances, it is highly desirable that the time of each call-in be minimized to reduce the possible rejection of a call when two or more AMR units call in at about the same time. Also, of course, reducing the call-in time is desirable since it reduces telephone line charges.

As described in detail hereinafter, the CCM 12 stores control data which may include a telephone number of the CCM 12 and other data which might be classed as "global" data applicable to all AMR units and it also stores data corresponding to each individual AMR 15 such as its serial number and data as to the day of the week, month or quarter in which it is to report. Such control data can be changed from the UCC 11. However, at the time of call-in from any AMR 15, the CCM 12 is in a condition to quickly determine, from data stored in its memory, the control data to be sent to the AMR 15 which has initiated the call. Thus no communications with the UCC are required in handling a routine scheduled report from an AMR and the time required for handling each scheduled report is minimized.

Another feature of the CCM 12 is that it is equipped to simultaneously receive and handle calls on a

-14-

plurality of telephone lines, the illustrated CCM being connected to six lines. With this feature, it is possible to take advantage of a "roll-over" operation which is available in most if not all telephone exchanges, in which only one telephone number is assigned to a group of lines and in which if one or more lines of the group are "busy" when a call is made to the assigned number, the call is directed by the exchange to the first non-busy line of the group. The ability to simultaneously process multiple calls is very important in avoiding the possible blocking of a call from one AMR 15 when a call from another AMR 15 is being handled or when a call is accidentally or maliciously made to the assigned number by a source other than an AMR 15.

These and other features of the CCM 12, as well as associated features of the UCC 11 and the cooperation of the UCC 11 and the CCM 12, are described in detail hereinafter.

AMR UNITS 15

Figure 2 is a schematic block diagram of one of the automatic meter reading units 15. Each unit 15 includes telephone interface and power supply circuitry 20, connected to "tip" and "ring" telephone line terminals 21 and 22 and connected to battery terminals 23 and 24. Circuitry 20 operates to develop a signal on a "PHONE" line 25 when a ring signal is detected on the telephone line and it includes a solid state hook switch operable to an off-hook condition in response to a signal applied thereto on a "HOOKSW" line 26. It also develops "+V" and "+VT" voltages on lines 27 and 28 which supply operating voltages to various circuits of the AMR 15. The +VT voltage on line 28 is developed from the telephone line voltage in the off-hook condition and is applied directly to circuits which are operative in the off-hook condition. The +V voltage on line 27 is applied to other circuits and is developed through a regulator from the battery voltage in the on-hook condition and from the +VT voltage in the off-hook condition, battery

-15-

current being minimized. These and other features of the interface and power supply circuitry 20 are described in detail hereinafter in connection with Figure 3.

A modem circuit 30 is provided having an input 5 connected through a line 31 to the tip terminal 21. When operative as a modulator, the circuit 30 responds to digital signals applied on a "TXD" line 32 to send frequency shift modulated signals out on the telephone line. When operative as a demodulator, it detects the existence of a carrier 10 signal on the telephone line to develop a signal on a "CARDET" line 34 and in response to a frequency shift modulated signal on the telephone line, it develops a corresponding digital signal on a "RXD" line 35. A disabling "squellch" signal is applied thereto at certain 15 times, through a "SQT" line 36.

The AMR 15 also includes a dial tone detect circuit 37 which responds to a dial tone signal on line 31 to develop a signal on a "DIALTON" line 38. Circuit 37 as well as the modem circuit 30 are energized only in the off-hook 20 condition from the +VT line 27 and do not draw battery current.

Additional circuits of the AMR 15 are provided for registering meter pulses and monitoring conditions and are energized at all times, normally from the battery, such 25 circuits having very low current consumption. These include a clock circuit 40; a wake-up timer circuit 41 which responds to clock pulses applied thereto through a line 42; a meter pulse counter 43 which responds to meter pulses applied from a meter terminal 44; a status register circuit 30 46 which has inputs connected to the "PHONE" line 25 and to terminals 47 and 48 which are connected to switches for detection of tamper and freeze conditions; and a reset and power control circuit 50. A random access memory portion of a micro-processor 52 is also energized at all times, in both 35 a "sleep" condition and a power-up or active condition. However, other circuits, including the main processing circuitry of the microprocessor 52 and serial input-output

-16-

circuitry associated therewith, are operative only in the power-up condition which is established periodically for short intervals to store accumulated data, or to make a scheduled report or in response to incoming calls or tamper
5 conditions.

Ordinarily, in the absence of a tamper alarm and except when a scheduled report is due, the microprocessor 52 is operated to the power-up condition periodically, e.g., every 5 minutes, in response to a signal applied through a
10 "RESET" line 53 and developed by the reset and power control circuit 52 in response to a signal applied through a "TIMEOUT" line 54 from the wake-up timer 41. The microprocessor 52 then increments a 5 minute interval register, adds the meter count from the preceding 5 minutes
15 to a total count register, adds counts to or updates time-of-day and peak rate registers, as appropriate, and then returns to the sleep condition.

When a scheduled report is due, the microprocessor 52 initiates an operation in which a signal is applied
20 through the "HOOKSW" line 26 to the circuitry 20 to establish an off-hook condition and to then wait for a signal on the "DIALTON" line 38. Then a pulse-dialing operation is performed, through signals on the "HOOKSW" line 26, to dial the number of the CCM 12 and the microprocessor
25 52 then waits for a signal on the "CARDET" line 34. Then the microprocessor 52 applies a squelch signal to the modem 30 through the "SQT" line 36 and it then proceeds to apply signals through the "TXD" line 32 to the modem 30, to cause the modem 30 to send FSK modulated signals to the CCM 12 and
30 thereby send data thereto. Then the microprocessor 52 monitors the "RXD" line 35 from the modem 30, for receipt of an acknowledgment character and data from the CCM 12. After data is sent back and forth in this way to effect a complete scheduled report transaction, the microprocessor 52 operates
35 to set the wake-up timer 41, makes a final phone/tamper check and then returns to the sleep condition.

The scheduled report transaction is set forth in

-17-

more detail hereinafter, along with other transactions which include an installation transaction performed when initially installing an AMR 15; a demand reading transaction which may be initiated by a request or demand call from the CCM to the AMR, as when stopping service to a customer who is moving or when starting service to a new customer at the same location; an emergency report transaction initiated in response to a tamper or other alarm condition; and a "brainwash" transaction usable through a call from the CCM to place an AMR 15 in a pre-installation condition.

Whenever any call is made to the customer's line, a signal is developed on the line 25 and is applied to the status register circuit 46 which, in turn, applies a signal through a "PHONAL" line 55 to the reset and power control circuit 50. The microprocessor 52 is then activated to determine whether the call came from the CCM 12 and, if so, to make an appropriate response, according to whether an installation transaction, a demand read transaction, or a "brainwash" transaction is indicated.

An eight line data bus 56 is provided for transmission of data between the microprocessor 52 and the wake-up timer 41, meter pulse counter 43 and status register 46. A signal is sent on a "RDLOCNT" line 57 to read the least significant 8 bits of data from the meter pulse counter 43 and a signal is sent on a "RSTCNT" line 58 to reset the meter pulse counter 43. Similarly, read and reset signals are sent to the status register through "RDSTAT" and "RSTSTAT" lines 59 and 60, the signal on line 59 being also applied to the meter pulse counter 43 and being used to read the most significant 3 bits of data from the meter pulse counter 43. The wake-up timer 41 is loaded with a predetermined count by applying a signal on a "LDTIMER" line 61. The signals on lines 57-61 are developed by an input/output address decoder circuit 62 which is connected to address lines of the microprocessor 52 through lines 63-65.

A program memory 67 is connected to the data bus 56

-18-

and to address lines of the microprocessor 52 and a non-volatile but programmable EEPROM memory 68 is connected to input/output ports of the microprocessor 52. As shown, terminals of the memory 68 are connectable through jumpers 5 69 and 70 to ground and to a terminal of the microprocessor 52, jumpers 69 and 70 being optional and being installed for a 128X8 EEPROM and being removed for a 16X16 EEPROM.

In response to a tamper condition, the status register circuit 46 immediately sends a signal through a 10 "TAMPAL" line 72 to the reset and power control circuit 50 which applies a reset or "wake-up" signal through line 53 to the microprocessor 52. The microprocessor 52 then operates to immediately store certain key data in the non-volatile memory 68 and also operates to attempt to make a telephone 15 call to the CCM 12 to report the tamper condition.

The AMR further includes a low battery detector 74, the output of which is connected through a line 75 to the processor 52 monitored following time-outs of the wake-up timer 41, the low battery condition being then reported.

20 Telephone Interface and Power Supply Circuit 20

FIGURE 3 is a circuit diagram of the telephone interface and power supply circuits 20. A pair of voltage-protection diodes 81 are connected in series between the tip and ring terminals 21 and 22 which are connected to 25 the input of a diode bridge circuit 82 which has a grounded output terminal 83 and an ungrounded output terminal 84. Terminal 84 is connected to the input of ring detect circuitry which includes the Zener diode 85, a conventional diode 86 and a resistor 87 connected in series between 30 terminal 84 and a circuit point 88, circuit point 88 being connected to ground through a Zener diode 89, a capacitor 90 and a resistor 91 in parallel and also being connected through two cascaded Schmitt trigger circuits 92 and 93 to a reset input of a counter 94. When an AC ring voltage is 35 developed between the terminals 21 and 22 which has a peak value substantially greater than the limit voltage of Zener

-19-

diode 85, a reset signal is applied from trigger circuit 93 to the counter 94 which then begins counting clocking pulses which are applied through a line 96. The clocking pulses may be applied at a 1Hz rate and after a certain number of 5 pulses (6 pulses for example), an output signal is developed on the "PHONE" line 25. After nine pulses, a signal is developed on a line 97 to inhibit clocking of the counter 94.

The output terminal 84 of the bridge rectifier 82 10 is also connected to the emitter of a transistor 100 having a collector connected to ground through a line loading resistor 101. The base of the transistor 100 is connected through a resistor 102 to the terminal 84 and also through a resistor 103 to the collector of a transistor 104 which has 15 a grounded emitter and which has its base connected to the "HOOKSW" line 26. When line 26 is brought high, transistor 104 conducts to cause conduction of transistor 100 and to develop a low impedance between terminals 21 and 22 such as to establish an off-hook condition while also developing a 20 DC voltage across the line loading resistor 101. The voltage developed across resistor 101 is applied through diode 106 to a circuit point 107 which is connected to ground through a capacitor 108, a Zener diode 109 and a second capacitor 110. Circuit point 107 is also connected 25 to the input of a voltage regulator 112 which has an output terminal connected directly to the "+VT" line 28 and also connected to the input of a second voltage regulator 114 which has an output terminal connected to the "+V" line 27 which is connected through a filter capacitor 115 to ground.

30 A second input of the regulator 114 is connected through a diode 116 to the battery terminal 23 and the regulator 114 operates as a selector to develop the "+V" voltage on line 27 either from the output of the regulator 112 or from the battery terminal 23, whichever is higher. By way of 35 example, the battery voltage may be approximately 5 volts and the regulator 112 may operate to develop a voltage 5.48 volts in the off-hook condition. The output voltage of

-20-

regulator 112 is controlled by a reference voltage developed by voltage-divider resistors 117 and 118, the junction between resistors 117 and 118 being connected to a reference voltage input of regulator 112 and being also connected to a filter capacitor 119 to ground.

For pulse-dialing, the transistor 100 is controlled through the transistor 104 from the "HOOKSW" line 26 and the combined capacitance of the capacitors 108 and 110 is sufficient to operate during pulse-dialing to maintain a voltage at the input of the regulator 112 which is substantially higher than the desired regulated output voltage thereof. Thus, no battery current is drawn during either the off-hook condition or during pulse-dialing.

Modem Circuit 30

The modem circuit 30 is shown in Figure 4 and, as shown, it includes a standard integrated circuit 120 which has "TXD", "CD", "RXD" and "SQT" terminals, respectively connected to the lines 32, 34, 35 and 36. A "VCC" terminal is connected to the "+VT" line 28 and through a filter capacitor 121 to ground, the line 28 being also connected through a resistor 122 to a "TLA" terminal and also to an "ORG" terminal to set the modem at an "originate" mode. A crystal 124 is connected to the modem 120 for timing control. The line 31, which is connected to the tip terminal 21, is connected through a capacitor 125 to an "RXA" terminal which is connected through a resistor 126 to a second "RXA" terminal and to a "TXA" terminal. In addition, capacitors 127-131 and resistors 132 and 133 are provided which are connected to terminals as shown and which have values such as to obtain optimum operation especially with respect to attack/release times.

Dial Tone Detect Circuit 37

FIGURE 5 shows the circuitry of the dial tone detect circuit 37 which includes an integrated circuit 136 connected to resistors and capacitors to operate as a low-

-21-

pass filter in detecting a dial tone signal, usually a continuous tone made by combining frequencies of 350 Hz and 440 Hz. Such resistors and capacitors include resistors 137, 138 and 139 and capacitors 140 and 141, connected as shown. A supply voltage input terminal is connected to the "+VT" line 28 which is connected to a filter capacitor 142 to ground. An input terminal of the filter 136 is connected through a resistor 144 to the output of an operational amplifier 145 which has a minus input connected through a resistor 146 to its output and through a resistor 147 to ground and which has a plus input connected through a resistor 148 to the +VT line 28 and through a resistor 149 to ground. The plus input is also connected through a coupling capacitor 150 to the line 31 which is connected to the tip phone line terminal 21.

An output terminal of the integrated circuit 136 is connected through a resistor 152 to the plus input of an operational amplifier 153 which is operable as a peak detector, the output thereof being connected through a diode 154 to a circuit point 155 which is connected to the minus input thereof and which is connected through a capacitor 156 to ground. Circuit point 155 is connected through a resistor 157 to a plus input of an operational amplifier 158 which is operable as a threshold or level detect circuit, the minus input terminal being connected to a voltage divider which is formed by resistors 159 and 160 connected between ground and the +VT line 28. A capacitor 161 and a resistor 162 are connected in parallel between the plus input of amplifier 158 and ground. When the peak amplitude of a dial tone signal exceeds a certain level, the amplifier 158 develops a signal on the "DIALTON" line 38.

Clock Circuit 40

The clock circuit 40, as shown in Figure 6, comprises an integrated circuit 166 which includes a 14 stage binary divider driven by an oscillator circuit which is connected to a crystal 167, a resistor 168 being

-22-

connected in parallel with the crystal 167 and a pair of capacitors 169 and 170 being connected between the terminals of crystal 167 and ground.

A divide-by-32 signal, developed at the output of a fifth stage of the counter chain in circuit 166, is applied through a line 172 to the reset and power control circuit 50 to clock a shift register thereof, as hereinafter described. A signal at the oscillator frequency, which may be 1.2672 MHz, for example, is applied through a line 173 to the microprocessor to provide the clock signal thereto. In addition, a divide-by-8192 signal is developed at the output of a thirteenth stage of the counter chain and is applied through a line 174 to the input of the first of two cascaded counters 175 and 176. Each of the counters 175 and 176 includes divide-by-2 and divide-by-5 sections, such sections being connected as shown and being operative to develop a signal on the line 42 which has a frequency of 0.5172 Hz in the illustrated embodiment. Also, a 1.0344 Hz signal is developed on line 96 for application to the telephone interface circuits.

Wake-up Timer 41

The 0.5172 Hz signal on line 42 is applied to the input of the first of two cascaded programmable four-stage binary counters 179 and 180 which are connected to the eight line data bus 56. The "TIMEOUT" line 54 is connected to the output of the second programmable counter 180 and the "LDTIMER" line 61 is connected to control inputs of both counters 179 and 180 to control loading of the counters with data on the data bus 56 and to cause development of the signal on the line 54 at a time-out time corresponding to the applied data.

Ordinarily, except when a scheduled report is due, a count of 155 is loaded into the counters from the data bus 56 and a time-out occurs after slightly less than 300 seconds at which time the microprocessor 52 is powered up to add counts to various registers and to re-load the counters

179 and 180 and then return to the sleep condition. When a scheduled report is due in the next 5 minutes, a count of less than 155 may be entered into the counters 179 and 180 and other operations are performed as hereinafter described.

5

Meter Pulse Counter 43

As shown in Figure 8, the meter pulse counter 43 comprises three cascaded four-stage counters 182, 183 and 184. The input of the first counter 182 is connected to the output of a Schmitt trigger circuit 186, the input of which is connected to the meter pulse input terminal 44 and also through a capacitor 187 to ground and through a resistor 188 to the +VT line 28, filtering and de-bounce functions being performed. The "RSTCNT" line 58 is connected to reset inputs of all three counters 182, 183 and 184. Three four-stage buffers 190, 191 and 192 are provided between the counters 182, 183 and 184 and the data bus 56. Buffers 190 and 191 are controlled from the "RDLOCNT" line 57 and are used to read the least significant eight bits of the accumulated meter pulse count to the data bus 56. The buffer 193 is controlled from the "RDSTAT" line 59 and is used to read the three most significant bits of the accumulated meter pulse count to the data bus 56, while simultaneously reading 'phone, tamper and freeze status information to the data bus 56. It is noted that only the first three stages of the counter 184 and the first three stages of the buffer 192 are utilized in the illustrated embodiment so that there are a total of 11 stages in the meter pulse counter. A count capacity of 2048 is sufficient for the purposes for which the unit is designed.

30

Status Register 46

As shown in Figure 9, the status register 46 comprises a four-stage buffer 194 connected to the "RDSTAT" line 59 and to the data bus 56. Only three stages of the buffer 194 are used. One stage is connected to the terminal 48 and through a capacitor 195 to ground and through a

-24-

resistor 196 to a +VM line 198 which is connected to the reset and power control circuit 50. The terminal 48 is connected to a switch of a freeze detector unit, the switch being normally closed but being opened when the temperature drops below a certain value, close to the freezing temperature. During each wake-up time, the reset and power control circuit 50 applies a voltage to the +VM line 198 to apply signal to the freeze detect stage of the buffer 194 and a read signal is then applied through the "RDSTAT" line 59.

The other two operative stages of the buffer 194 are connected to outputs of two flip-flops 201 and 202 which have set inputs connected through a resistor 203 to the +V line 27 and which have reset inputs connected to the "RSTSTA" line 60. The clock input of the flip-flop 201 is connected to the "PHONE" line 25 while the clock input of the flip-flop 202 is connected to the terminal 47 for connection to a normally open tamper switch which closed open in response to a tamper condition. Terminal 47 is connected through a resistor 204 to the +V line 27. Flip-flops 201 and 202 operate as edge triggered flip-flops to be set in response to detection of a ring signal and development of a corresponding signal on the "PHONE" line 25 or in response to a closed condition of the tamper switch. Second outputs of the flip-flops 201 and 202 are connected to the "PHONAL" line 55 and to the "TAMPALM" line 72 to immediately initiate operation of the reset and power control circuit 50 in response to an incoming telephone call or a tamper condition.

30 Reset and Power Control Circuit 50

Referring to Figure 10, the circuit 50 includes a transistor 208 which is controlled by a flip-flop 209 to be rendered conductive and connect the +V line 27 to the +VM line 198 and to supply operating voltage to the program memory 67 and the non-volatile memory 68 and to also supply voltages for freeze detection and low battery detection.

-25-

Normally, the flip-flop 209 is in a set condition and the transistor 208 is non-conductive. Flip-flop 209 may then be reset when a flip-flop 210 is set by a "TIMEOUT" signal on line 54, a "TAMPAL" signal on line 72 or a "PHONAL" signal on line 55.

An output of the flip-flop 210 is connected to reset inputs of two cascaded flip-flops 211 and 212 having clock inputs connected through the line 172 to the output of the fifth stage of the divider chain of the clock circuitry.

10 A gate circuit 213 is connected to an output of the flip-flop 212 to apply a reset signal to the flip-flop 210 after 32 clock pulses at the 1.2672 MHz rate. Then a gate circuit 214 applies a signal through a trigger circuit 215 to the line 53 to bring the line 53 low and to apply a reset

15 signal to the microprocessor 52 for initiating operation thereof. After completing a processing operation and just before power-down, the processor 52 develops a signal on a line 216 which is connected to the clock input of the flip-flop 209, flip-flop 209 being then placed in a set

20 condition to discontinue conduction of the transistor 208 and to prevent continued application of the +VM voltage to the memory and other circuits.

An initial power-on reset conditioning operation is performed, when a battery is installed, by circuitry

25 including a pair of trigger circuits 217 and 218 connected to the set input of flip-flop 210 and enable input of flip-flop 211, the input of circuit 217 being connected through a capacitor 220 to ground and being connected to the +V line 27 through the parallel combination of a resistor

30 221 and a diode 222. The lines 25, 54 and 55 are connected to the clock input of flip-flop 210 through OR gates 223, 224 and 225, connected as shown.

Input/Output Decode Circuit 62

The decode circuit 62 includes an address decoding

35 integrated circuit 230 which has inputs connected through the lines 63-65 to three address lines of the microprocessor

52. Outputs of the circuit 230 are connected to inputs of gates 231-235 and connections are made of the output of gate 231 and line 58, of the outputs of gates 232 and 233 and line 59, and of the outputs of gates 234 and 235 and lines 5 60 and 61, respectively. For performing read, write and reset operations, inputs of gates 231 and 233 are connected to a read output of the microprocessor 52 and inputs of gates 232, 234 and 235 being connected to a write output of the microprocessor 52.

10

Low Battery Detect Circuit 74

As shown in Figure 12, a low battery detect circuit 74 includes an integrated circuit 238 which has an output connected to the line 75 and through a resistor 239 to the +VM line 198. A threshold input terminal of the circuit 238 15 is connected through a resistor 241 to ground and through a resistor 242 to the +VM line 198. When the +VM signal is applied in the power output condition and when at the same time, the battery voltage is below a certain threshold value, an output signal is applied through the line 75 to 20 signal the low battery condition to the microprocessor 52.

Operation of AMR Microprocessor 52

The microprocessor 52 is controlled by a program in the program memory 67. An example of one program is contained in object code and source listing in the 25 specification of the aforesaid U.S. application, Ser. No. 876,896 filed June 20, 1986 and an example of another program is contained in Table I of an Appendix to this specification. Each program is formulated for a type 80C31 microprocessor. Figure 13 is a structure chart and Figures 30 14-20 are flow charts which depict the mode of operation of the microprocessor 52.

Referring to Figure 13, the wake-up timer 41, status register 46 and meter pulse counter 43 are depicted in a broken line rectangle labeled "Gate Array", this label 35 being applied for the reason that it is expected that the

-27-

various gates and counters of such circuits and also gates and counters of the clock circuit 40 and reset and power control circuit 50 will be embodied in a single gate array integrated circuit chip.

5 As indicated in Figure 13, a wake-up operation is initiated from the wake-up timer or in response to call detect or tamper conditions, the wake-up operation being depicted in the flow chart of Figure 14. This operation has various subsidiary operations associated therewith including
10 "UPDATE TIME", "ADD COUNTS", "START TIME SLICE" and "SET NEXT ALARM" operations as depicted in Figures 15, 16, 17 and 18. A "TIME SLICER" operation is provided which utilizes a timer interrupt at 10 millisecond time intervals and it is used for handling telephone operations including dialing and
15 communications through the modem. The "TIME SLICER" operation is shown in Figure 19 while a "PHONE HANDLER" operation is shown in Figure 20.

Memory locations or registers are provided in RAM for keeping track of elapsed time, meter data and control
20 data. The meter data includes the accumulated total, TOD and TR totals and a leak total. The control data includes selected windows exempt times, call time and transmission control data. The access to such memory locations or registers is indicated in the structure chart of Figure 13.

25 Figure 14 illustrates the wake-up operation which is initiated in response to a signal applied through line 53 from the reset and power control circuit 50. Certain initializing operations are performed including disabling of reset, timer and UART interrupts, the initialization of a
30 stack pointer and setting up of input-output ports to a certain condition. Then a "POWER ON" test is made to determine whether the AMR 15 is being used for the first time, after installation of a battery, which is made by determining whether certain values are stored in certain ram
35 locations. Then initialization steps are performed, if required. If not a test determines whether there was a signal on the "PHONAL" line 55. If so, a bit of the status

-28-

register is clear and a control flag or "TX-ID" is set to a "wait carrier" condition. Then the start time slice operation is performed and, as part of the time slicer operation, a phone handler operation is performed. Such operations function to make a check to determine whether the incoming telephone call was originated by the CCM and if so, to take appropriate action such as an installation transaction, a demand reading transaction, or a "brainwash" transaction. A similar sequence takes place if the wake-up was initiated in response to a tamper condition, differing in that a control flag is set to a "seize" state so that in response to the next 10 millisecond time slice interrupt, a seizure of the telephone line is initiated. The hook switch is then placed in an off/hook condition and upon receipt of dial tone, the system effects dialing of the number of the CCM 12, and then transmits data through the application of signals on the line 32 to the modem. Such data, of course, will include information as to the tamper condition, and other information as hereinafter described.

If the wake-up reset is in response to a time-out signal on line 54, an "UPDATE TIME" operation is performed, and then a scheduled report-due check is made and either the time slice operation is initiated or the meter data is updated. Then the next alarm time is set in the manner as shown in Figure 18 to load a certain count into the counters of the wake-up counter 41 and to cause the next signal on line 54 to be generated after a certain time. Then a final check is made and the microprocessor 52 places itself back in the power-down or "sleep" condition.

In the "UPDATE TIME" operation of Figure 15 a five minute interval timer is incremented and then a check is made to see whether one day has elapsed, i.e., whether 288 five minute intervals have been counted. If so, a day counter is incremented. Then if the number of days = 128, the number of days is reset to 0. The five minute interval and day counters are usable in conjunction with TOD and TR metering, as determined by window and exemption day control

-29-

data.

FIGURE 15A shows an alternate "UPDATE TIME" operation which is more complex and in which clock registers are provided which include day, minute and second registers, 5 such registers being updated at certain times in accordance with current time data transmitted from the CCM 12 and being compared with call-back time data in a day, minute, second format. This alternate operation is required for use with an alternate "SET ALARM" operation of Figure 18A and may 10 also be used with a "SET ALARM" operation of Figure 18 but is not required for that purpose.

To control the time of call-ins to make scheduled reports, a call-in time instruction is sent from the CCM 12 in 4 bytes. Byte 1 is called a "NEXT TICKS" byte, being 15 immediately loaded in the wake-up timer after receipt. Bytes 2 and 3 are called a call-in interval timer and contain the number of regular five minute wake-up intervals to the next call-in. Byte 4 is called a "PHONE TICKS" byte and is loaded in the wake-up timer when the call-in interval timer 20 is decremented to zero.

The "SET NEXT ALARM" operation is shown in Figure 18. After a scheduled report and after loading byte 1 (the "NEXT TICKS" byte) to determine the next wake-up time, the wake-ups occur at regular five minute interval time-outs of 25 the wake-up timer, until the number initially entered in bytes 2 and 3 (the call-in interval timer) has been decremented to zero, byte 4 (the "PHONE TICKS" byte) being then loaded in the wake-up timer. Then at the next wake-up the prior loading of the "PHONE TICKS" byte is detected to 30 indicate that it is report time and a scheduled report transmission is initiated as shown in the flow chart of Figure 14, resulting in loading of another "NEXT TICKS" byte 1 in the wake-up timer.

If the REPORT MADE and REPORT ALERT flags are both 35 set, the counter of the wake-up timer 41 is loaded with a value such as to cause the next wake-up to occur in slightly less than five minutes and in normal operation it is again

-30-

loaded with the same value after exactly five minutes or more accurately after a certain total number of oscillator cycles so that timeouts occur regularly at approximately five minute intervals, the accuracy being determined by the accuracy of the oscillator.

With the operation as depicted in Figures 14, 15 and 18, the time to the next call-in is approximately determined by the number in bytes 2 and 3 of the call-in instruction, multiplied by five minutes, plus the sum of the numbers in bytes 1 and 4 multiplied by the time between "ticks" which are applied to the wake-up timer 41, which may be approximately 1.93 seconds in the illustrated embodiment. Typically, the time interval from one call and to the next will be an integer number of five minute intervals and, initially, the total of bytes 1 and 4 will correspond to a five minute interval, being determined in accordance with the times by which the desired call-in time precedes and follows five minute clock times. For example, if the desired call-in time is at 2:11:20 AM, byte 1 would correspond to 220 seconds and byte 4 would correspond to 180 seconds. If the call-in occurs too early or too late, either byte 1 or byte 4, or both, may be adjusted to compensate for the initial error and to also compensate for the error which might be expected if the drift of the oscillator continued at the same rate.

If the next call-in occurs at the desired time, one or the other of the bytes may be adjusted in a direction to offset the compensation for the initial error. In following call-ins, if the drift continues at the same rate, no further adjustments will be required. Bytes 2 and 3 are typically changed to accommodate changes in the number of days in a month while providing a call-in at the same day of each month. The arrangement is quite flexible in that any one of a number of different modes of operation may be obtained through programming of the data sent from the CCM 12. At the same time, the control data is compressed with the number of required bytes being minimized. Also, the AMR

-31-

15 is not required to maintain a highly accurate clock or a clock which can be reset from the CCM. At the same time, reasonably accurate TOD and PR windows are obtained and call-in times can be quite accurately controlled to minimize
5 the possibilities of interference.

Figure 18A illustrates a modified "SET NEXT ALARM" operation usable with the modified "UPDATE TIME" operation of Figure 15A. A register of current time in a day, minute and second format is maintained 3 bytes in RAM and is
10 updated in scheduled report transactions. The "UPDATE TIME" operation of Figure 15A then keeps it current and it is compared with a 3 byte call-in time register which is loaded from the CCM 12 during a scheduled report transaction. When the comparison shows that there is less than 5 minutes until
15 the report time, the required number of ticks is computed and loaded into the wake-up timer.

Another important feature of the invention relates to the detection of leaks which is especially important in metering of water consumption. As shown in the "ADD METER
20 COUNTS" flow chart of Figure 16, a test is made after each five minute time-out to determine whether a leak is indicated, a leak status bit being normally set to indicate a leak, after each scheduled report, installation transaction or demand reading transaction. If the status
25 bit is set, a check is made as to whether any pulses were received in the last five minute interval. If pulses have been received, a leak counter is cleared. If not, the leak counter is incremented and then a check is made to see whether two hours have elapsed, i.e. whether twenty-four
30 five minute intervals have been counted. If not, the operation is continued. If the leak counter is full, then the leak indication is cleared. This arrangement thus requires that in the time between reports, no meter pulses be received for a sampling time period of two hours, such a
35 time period being appropriate for residences and for many businesses having water meters. The sampling time period may, of course, be changed from two hours to some other

value. The arrangement permits detection of leakage conditions which are potentially dangerous or destructive as well as being wasteful and which might otherwise be detected only after severe damage has occurred.

5

UTILITY CONTROL CENTER 11

The utility control center 11 is shown diagrammatically in Figure 21 and it includes a computer 250 with a hard disk drive, a floppy disk drive and an optional tape drive. The computer 250, in the embodiment as herein
10 shown and described, is an IBM PC AT computer. Computer 250 is connected to a display 251 which may be an enhanced color display but a monochrome display may be used, if desired. Computer 250 is also connected to a printer 252 and it is powered through a surge suppressor 253 from an
15 uninterruptable power supply 254.

CALL COLLECTION MODULE 12

As also shown diagrammatically in Figure 22, the call collection module 12 comprises three call collection units 256, 257 and 258, a master central
20 processing unit 260 and a RAM 261, all connected to a multi-bus 262. The RAM 261 may have a one-half megabyte capacity. Each of the call collection units 256, 257 and 258, in the illustrated embodiment, is a type mSBC 86/35 single board computer manufactured by Micro Industries,
25 Westerville, Ohio. Each such single board computer has an on-board local bus which is connected to a type mSBX 355 board to interface with standard modems for connection to two telephone lines. Control and dialing means are provided for responding to an incoming call and for seizing a line
30 and making an outgoing call, as required. Each of the call collection units 256, 257 and 258 has 512 K bytes of memory of which approximately half are available for temporary storage of incoming meter data. The master central processing unit 260 is also an mSBC 86/35 single board
35 computer and it is provided with a serial communications

-33-

controller and a serial interface to the UCC 11, being connected thereto through a cable 264. A conventional RS 232 interface may be used, and a 9600 baud rate is used in communications between the CCM and the UCC. The master central processing unit 260 is also connected to indicator lights 265 on a back panel 266 which carries jacks for the six telephone lines 13 as well as a connector for the UCC 11.

With a UCC 11 and a CCM 12 as shown and with programming as hereinafter described, a very large number of AMR's 15 can be accommodated for efficient, accurate and reliable receipt of meter data therefrom and for compilation, printing, storage and transmission of such data to facilitate billing of customers, keeping records and analyses of operations.

Operation of Utility Control Center 11

An important function of the UCC 11 is to facilitate entry of control data which is temporarily stored and which can be edited as required, such control data being transmitted to the CCM 12 in a certain form and being translated by the CCM 12 into a form in which it can be stored in RAM of the CCM 12, to be transmitted to the AMR's 15 in an initial installation transaction and also in subsequent scheduled report transactions. The UCC 11 is also operative to receive and store data from the CCM 12 and to store such data, being also operative to disassemble data and to place it in proper fields, compute the next call-in date, and analyze data as well as storing data. It is also, of course, usable to print-out data, using the printer 253.

An exemplary program for the UCC 11, written in the BASIC language, is listed in Table II in the specification of the aforesaid U.S. application Ser. No. 876,896 filed June 20, 1986 and another is listed in the Appendix to this specification. Each program is written in modules, the first having the name "AMR" and the second having the name "ACCESS". The remaining listed modules, with the exception

-34-

of an "LPRINT" module for program listings, has a name in the form of an identifying number, preceded by "BM".

The mode of operation of the UCC 11 is illustrated in the flow charts of Figures 23-27 in which the names of the listed program modules are set forth, for reference. At start-up, an operating system is loaded from a disc into the computer 250 and then the meter reading operating system is loaded from a disc into the computer, the "AMR" and "ACCESS" modules being run. Initially, an introductory screen is produced which includes a "Flowing 'b'" or moving statement "Press Any Key To Start" and, upon pressing any key, a module BM001 operates to produce a main menu which permits selection of any one of the following:

15 System Maintenance
 Meter Reading
 CRT Report Generator
 Printer Report Generator
 Program Utilities
 Return to PC-DOS

20 The "System Maintenance" option is used in initialization of the system. It uses a program identified as "BM001A" and it is depicted in the flow chart of Figure 24, being operative to display a menu with a large number of items from which to select. This menu is produced from program lines 25160-300 and is as follows:

 System Maintenance Menu
 Customer Account Maintenance
 Utility Telephone Number
 Access Plus (TM) Programming & Startup
30 Demand Meter Reading
 Time of Day & Peak Rate Usage
 Time of Day & Peak Rate Exemption Days
 Time of Day Usage
 Peak Rate Usage
35 Main Menu
 Return To Main Menu
 Meter Reading

CRT Report Generator
 Printer Report Generator
 Program Utilities

The first item "Customer Account Maintenance" is usable for adding, changing or deleting customer accounts. In adding or changing accounts, a menu is produced in which information as to the items listed in the data statements at lines 430-780 of the AMR module (see first page of Table II). This menu is as follows:

```

10Customer Name.....?-----
   Address.....? -----
   City & State.....? -----
   Zip Code:.....? -----
   Cust Phone Number:? -----
15Meter Mfg.....? -----
   Type Model & Size.? -----
   Configuration/TC:?.? --
   Meter Serial #....? -----
   Access + Serial #:? -----
20Battery Pack Code.? -- -- -- --
   Leak Indicator:...? --
   Call In Attempts:?.? --
   Call In Frequency:?.? --
   Call Back Date:...?   -   -
25
   -----
   Call Back Time:...?  --:--:-0
   Account Status.....? --
   Prev Mtr Rdng:.....? -----
   Pres Mtr Rdng:.....? -----
30Dt Prev Mtr Rdng:..?   -   -
   -----
   Dt Pres Mtr Rdng:..?   -   -
   -----
   Tm Prev Mtr Rdng:..?  --:--:-0
    
```

-36-

Tm Pres Mtr Rdng:..? ---:---:-0
 Time of Day Usage.? --
 Usage Period #1:..? -----
 Usage Period #2:..? -----
 5Usage Period #3:..? -----
 Calculated Usage..? -----
 Peak Rate.....? --
 Rate Period #1:...? ----
 Rate Period #2:...? ----
 10Rate Period #3:...? ----
 Access + Password.? -
 DTM Deletion Code:? -----

The operator enters or edits appropriate items, such as "Customer Name", "Address", "Cust Phone Number", etc. and when the items appear to be satisfactory to the operator, the information may be stored on hard disc and may also be sent to the CCM 12.

An important feature relates to entry of call back dates and times. If such are not filled in or entered, the program operates to automatically set a time and date. If a date only is selected, and the time is left open, or vice versa, the program automatically sets the time or date. If both a time and a date are selected, they will be used unless previously set for another customer.

25 The call-ins may be set to occur on a daily, weekly, monthly or quarterly basis and if a date is selected by the operator, subsequent call-ins will be automatically set by the program. For example, if a monthly call-in is selected and if the fifth day of a month is selected, call-ins will be made on 30the selected day and on the fifth day of each subsequent month. The 29th, 30th and 31st days of a month are not accepted.

Data of a "global" nature are entered separately and are used for all customers or as "default" data to be used if not overridden for a particular customer. Utility telephone 35number data and CCM set-up data are entered using a menu as indicated at lines 130-160 of module BM002. Time of day and

-37-

peak rate exemption day data are entered for each year using a menu as indicated at lines 120-230 of module BM004. Time of day and peak rate windows are entered using menus as indicated at lines 130-200 of module BM011 and lines 130-200 of BM012.

5After entry of control data, the system may be immediately placed in a meter reading mode or state or, if left in any other state and no action is taken after elapse of a certain interval of time, the system automatically reverts to the meter reading mode. This feature insures that the UCC 11 will collect data 10from the CCM when left unattended overnight or for substantial intervals of time.

In the meter reading mode, program module BM018 is operative. Referring to line 470, a command M\$ is sent to file #4 which is CCM 12. M\$ is initially defined as "DUMP" in 15line 180 and sending it causes the CCM 12 to send or dump transaction data. Then M\$ is defined as "N" in line -470 which causes the CCM 12 to send or dump the next transaction data to the UCC 11. This operation continues until all transactions which have been sent to and processed by the CCM 12 are dumped 20to the UCC 11. When all available transaction data have been dumped to the UCC 11, the CCC 11 program will operate in a continual loop, operating to receive more data as it becomes available as a result of receipt and processing of AMR data by the CCM 12. The loop may, of course, be interrupted at the UCC 2511 to perform other operations in which case the CCM 12 stores up data in its memory for sending to the UCC 11 at the request of the UCC 11.

As transaction data is received at the UCC, it is disassembled and placed in proper fields. The next callback 30date is computed and checked with that sent from the CCM 12 which will have independently computed the call-back date and which will have sent it to the reporting AMR 15 during a scheduled report transaction. This call-back date computation and check is made to detect possible malfunctions and if an 35error is detected, it is reported.

The UCC 11 also analyzes alarm condition data and indicates and prints alarm data. Received data are sent to

the disc drive for storage with a format such that they can be readily retrieved and sent to processing equipment for sending of bills to customers and for record-keeping and such other purposes as may be desired by a utility or municipality.

5 The program of the UCC 11 also includes many advantageous features relating to display and printing of control, meter and status data. The program modules BM001B and BM001C are usable for control of display and printing of items as indicated in lines 160-310 of module BM001B (CRT Report
10 Generator Menu) and lines 160-340 of module BM001C (Printer Report Generator Menu), by chaining of other modules as respectively indicated in lines 660-790 of module BM001B and lines 690-850 of module BM001C. The CRT and Printer Report Menus are as follows:

15

CRT Report Generator

Individual Customer Account
Scan All Customer Accounts
Scan Key Fields - Customer Accounts
20 Date & Time Management Percent of Load
Delinquent Call Backs
Utility Telephone Number
Time of Day & Peak Rate Exemption Days
Time of Day Usage
25 Peak Rate Usage
 Main Menu
Return To Main Menu
Meter Reading
System Maintenance
30 Printer Report Generator
Program Utilities

Printer Report Generator

Individual Customer Account
35 All Customer Accounts
Scan Key Fields - Customer Accounts
Sort Key Fields - Customer Accounts

-39-

Call Back Date & Time Management
 Call Back Date & Time Management Sort
 Delinquent Call Backs
 Alarm / Status & Leak Indicator Sort
 5 Utility Telephone Number
 Time of Day & Peak Rate Exemption Days
 Time of Day Usage
 Peak Rate Usage
 Main Menu
 10 Return To Main Menu
 Meter Reading
 System Maintenance
 CRT Report Generator
 Program Utilities

15 The operator can readily and quickly obtain all data required for ascertaining the status of operations and for facilitating accurate control of all operations.

For communication between the UCC and CCM, the system operates at 9600 Baud, with 8 data bits, 1 stop bit and no
 20 parity, and ASCII characters are used, the ASCII carriage return (CR) being allowable. The following specifications apply to the form of messages:

A. Command Formats

All commands are of the general form:

25 COMMAND [KEYWORD=VALUE [KEYWORD=VALUE] ...

where

COMMAND identifies the specific action that is being requested;

30 KEYWORD identifies a parameter associated with the command;

VALUE is the value being assigned to the associated keyword.

Depending on the command, there may be any number of keyword values assigned. NOTE: the square brackets in
 35 the general form of the command are not part of the

command string; they are used in the command form description to indicate that the keyword/value pair may be optional (depending on the command). The CCM will always respond to any command from the UCC with either response "OK" or "REJECT". If the response is "REJECT", an error code is also indicated in the response. Each response line is terminated with a carriage return and a line feed. The error codes that are returned with the "REJECT" response are command-specific. However, the following error codes are possible with all commands:

- 1 - command not recognized
- 2 - command not yet implemented
- 3 - invalid keyword
- 4 - insufficient data available to service command

15

B. Commands Originated by the UCC

1. PARAM - global parameter initialization

a. General Description

This command is used to set the values for certain parameters that are used globally by the CCM (i.e. they are not specific to a particular AMR).

20

b. Allowed keywords and associated values

PHONE - utility phone number.

25

TOD - default indication of whether TOD calculations are to be performed.

PR - default indication of whether TOD and PR calculations are to be performed on a 5-day or 7-day schedule.

WINDOWS - TOD/PR window definitions.

30

CALLBACK - next call-in interval width.

MODE - CCM mode of operations.

c. Additional error codes

2. PREINSTALL - load pre-installation data

a. General description

35

This command is used to pre-load the CCM with information that will be used later with an

INSTALL command. By preloading the information using this command, the amount of information required by the INSTALL command is minimized. Thus, the CCM can be pre-loaded by the UCC and the INSTALL command could be more easily issued at a "dumb" ASCII terminal.

The PREINSTALL command does not initiate a phone call; it merely loads the pre-installation data into the CCM memory.

10 b. Allowed keywords and associated values:

ACCT -account number. This parameter is required, as it is used to cross-reference the data in this command with the associated INSTALL command.

15 MPHONE - phone number which is dialed to call the AMR.

PHONE - phone number which is the AMR must call in order to call the CCM. If this parameter is not present the PHONE parameter loaded by the PARAM command is used.

20 CALLIN - the next scheduled call-in time for the AMR.

CALLBACK - used to override the global (via PARAM command) CALLBACK interval width.

25 PREV - previous meter reading for the meter. If this parameter is missing the value 000000 is used.

-42-

TOD - used to override the global (via
PARAM command) TOD value.

PR - used to override the global PR value.

5 PRMODE - used to override the global PRMODE
value.

METER - meter definitional status' defaults to
"ON".

WINDOWS - used to override the global
WINDOWS value.

10 SERNO - the serial number of the AMR.
This parameter is normally sent with the
associated INSTALL command.

c. Additional error codes

15 10 - insufficient memory to load
pre-installation data.

3. INSTALL - perform AMR installation

a. General description

20 This command will cause an installation phone call
to be placed to the specified AMR. The "OK"
response does not return until a phone line is
assigned for the call. Any of the parameters may
be given in associated PREINSTALL command; the ACCT
parameter is used to cross-reference the data. If
25 a given parameter appears in both the INSTALL and
PREINSTALL command for a given ACCT number, the
value specified in the INSTALL command is used.

b. Allowed keywords and associated values

All keywords described for the PREINSTALL command
also apply to the INSTALL command.

- c. Additional error codes
 - 20 - ACCT parameter not supplied
- 4. KEYS - load security key
 - 5 a. General description

This command is used to load the security keys into the CCM memory. Sixteen security keys must be loaded using separate KEYS commands before the CCM will become operational.
 - 10 b. Allowed keywords and associated values

INDEX - the index associated with the given key. This value must be in the range 0 to 15.

KEY - four hexadecimal values specifying the four bytes of the security key.
 - 15 c. Additional error codes
- 5. SCHEDULE - load scheduled call modification information
 - a. General description

This command is used to load information into the CCM that will be sent to a specified AMR when it calls in for its next scheduled report. This command is issued for a given AMR account number only if there is a need to modify either the global parameter data (see PARAM command) for the particular AMR or existing operational data in the AMR.
 - 20 b. Allowed keywords and associated values

The ACCT, CALLIN, CALLBACK, TOD, PR, PRMODE METER, and WINDOWS (see PARAM and PREINSTALL commands) are the allowed parameters for the SCHEDULE command.

 - 25
 - 30 c. Additional error codes

10 - insufficient memory in the CCM to hold the
SCHEDULE data.

6. DEMAND - load demand call information

a. General description

5 This command is used to load information for a
Demand Reading call into the CCM memory. The CCM
will then place the call when a line becomes
available. The "OK" message is returned to the
UCC after the data has been placed into the CCM
10 memory; the "OK" response does not mean that the
call has been placed.

b. Allowed keywords and associated values

This command allows all the keywords that are
recognized by the SCHEDULE command. Additionally,
15 the SERNO parameter (see PREINSTALL command) is
required.

c. Additional error codes

10 - insufficient memory in CCM to hold DEMAND
data.

20 7. EXEMPTIONS - load exemption days

a. General description

This command is used to load the exemption days for
an entire year into the CCM memory. If the year
specified is the current year, then any existing
25 days for the current year are deleted before
storing the new ones. If the year specified is
for the next year, then they are added to the
existing list of exemption days (in the CCM
memory).

30 b. Allowed keywords and associated values

YEAR - specifies the year for which the exemption
days are being entered.

-45-

DAY - specifies one exemption day in the form
"mm/dd";

each exemption day may be specified using a
separate DAY keyword/value pair, or multiple days
(separated by commas) may be provided with one DAY
keyword.

5

c. Additional error codes

30 - invalid year (neither current year or next
year)

10

8. DUMP - request AMR call data

a. General description

This command is used by the UCC to request that
Scheduled Report transaction data be dumped from
the CCM. The data is dumped one transaction at a
time. At the end of each transaction dump, the CCM
waits for a "command" character from the UCC what
specifies what the CCM is to do next. These
characters are as follows:

15

20

Q - quit dumping data; the CCM will then
respond "OK".

N - dump next transaction data

b. Allowed keywords and associated values No
keywords are recognized by this command.

25

c. Additional error codes

40 - no transaction data is available.

9. GETTIME - read CCM time and data

a. General description

This command allows the UCC to read the current
time and date that the CCM is keeping.

30

b. Allowed keywords and associated values This
command requires no keyword parameters.

c. Additional error codes

None.

35 10. SETTIME - set CCM time and date

- a. General description
This command allows the UCC to set the time and date in the CCM.
 - b. Allowed keywords and associated values
5 DATE - the current date.
TIME - the current time.
 - c. Additional error codes
50 - invalid date
51 - invalid time
- 10 11. REQOLD - request old information report
- a. General description
This command is used to query the CCM for "old" information that may be in its data bases (scheduled report changes, demand readings,
15 installations). The CCM will report the account number, the associated data base, and the age of the data. No data is deleted by this command; a PURGE command must be issued in order to delete the data.
 - b. Allowed keyword and associated values
20 DATE, TIME - all data that is older than this indicated date and time is reported to the UCC
 - c. Additional error codes
60 - no data available.
- 25 12. PURGE - purge old information
- a. General description
This command will cause all information in the Scheduled Reading Change, Installation, and Demand
30 Reading data bases that is older than the specified date and time to be purged from the CCM memory.
 - b. Allowed keywords and associated values
DATE and TIME.

- 13. STATS - request memory statistics
- 14. DIAGNOSTICS - request diagnostics
- 15. LOAD - download software

5 A summary of the commands is as follows:

COMMANDS ORIGINATED BY UCC

1. Global Parameter Initialization

UCC: PARAM PHONE=nnnnnnnnnnnn TOD=f PR=f PRMODE=n
 WINDOWS=nn,nn,nn,nn,nn,nn CALLBACK=cccccc
 10 MODE=mmmmmmmm

2. Pre-load Installation Information

UCC: PREINSTALL ACCT=nnnnnnnnnnnn PHONE=nnnnnnnnnnnn
 MPHONE=nnnnnnnnnnnn CALLIN=mm/dd/yy, hh:mm:ss
 CALLBACK=cccccc PREV=nnnnnnn TOD=f PR=f PROMODE=n
 15 METER=f WINDOWS=nn,nn,nn,nn,nn,nn SERNO=nnnnnnnnnnnn
 CCM: OK or REJECT

3. Load Installation Information

UCC: INSTALL ACCT=nnnnnnnnnnnn PHONE=nnnnnnnnnnnn
 MPHONE=nnnnnnnnnnnn CALLIN=mm/dd/yy, hh:mm:ss
 20 CALLBACK=CCCCCC PREV=nnnnnnn TOD=f PR=f PRMODE=n
 SERNO=nnnnnnnnnnnn
 CCM: Ok or REJECT

4. Load Encryption Keys

UCC: KEYS INDEX=NNN key=hh, hh, hh, hh
 25 CCM: OK or REJECT

5. Load Scheduled Call Information

UCC: SCHEDULE ACCT=nnnnnnnnnnnn CALLIN=mm/dd/yy, hh:mm:ss
 CALLBACK=cccccc TOD=f PRMODE=n METER=f
 WINDOWS=nn, nn, nn, nn, nn, nn
 30 CCM: OK or REJECT

6. Load Demand Call Information

-48-

UCC: DEMAND ACCT=nnnnnnnn CALLIN=mm/dd/yy, hh:mm:ss
 CALLBACK=cccccc TOD=f PR=f PRMOD=n METER=f
 WINDOWS=nn,nn,nn,nn,nn SERNO=nnnnnnnnnn
 CCM: OK or REJECT

5 7. Load Exemption Days

UCC: EXEMPTIONS YEAR=nnnn DAY=mm/dd DAY=mm/dd,mm/dd
 CCM: OK or REJECT

8. Request AMR Call Data

UCC: DUMP

10 CM: REJECT

or

ACCT=nnnnnnnn mm/dd/yy hh:mm:ss

MTIME=mm/dd/tt, hh:mm:ss NUMCALL=nn NUMQUERY=nn

ALARMS=xxxxxxxx,xxxxxxxx,... READ=nnnnnn

15 PREV=nnnnnn TOD=f PR=f METER=f

TODDATA=nnnnnn,nnnnnn,nnnnnn

PRDATA=nnnnnn,nnnnnn,nnnnnn OLDINDEX=nn NEWINDEX=nn

transaction-status

UCC: Q or N

20 CCM: OK or REJECT or more data

Repeat

9. Read CCM Time and Date

UCC: GETIME

CCM: mm/dd/yy, hh:mm:ss

25 10. Set CCM Time and Date

UCC: SETTIME DATE=mm/dd/yy TIME=hh:mm:ss

11. Request Old Information Report

UCC: REQOLD DATE=mm/dd/yy TIME=hh:mm:ss

CCM: REJECT

30 or

ACCT=nnnnnnnn DB=xx mm/dd/yy hh:mm:ss

ACCT=nnnnnnnn DB=xx mm/dd/yy hh:mm:ss

35 ACCT=nnnnnnnn DB=xx mm/dd/yy hh:mm:ss

OK

12. Purge Old Information

UCC: PURGE DATE=mm/dd/yy TIME=hh:mm:ss

13. Request Memory Statistics

UCC: STATS

5 CCM: MASTER: nn%
 CCU1: nn%
 CCU2: nn%
 CCU3: nn%

10 14. Request Diagnostics

UCC: DIATNOSTICS

CCM: REJECT

or

15 ERROR (nnnn) xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx
 ERROR (nnnn) xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx

.
 .
 .

ERROR (nnnn) xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx

20 OK

15. Download Software

UCC: LOAD MASTER

..... Intel Hex Records

LOAD CCU

25 Intel Hex Records

COMMANDS ORIGINATED BY CCM

1. Report Alarm Condition

CCM: **ALARM**

UCC: OK

30 CCM: ACCT=nnnnnnnn mm/dd/yy hh:m:ss
 MTIME=mm/dd/yy/hh:mm:ss NUMCALL=nn NUMQUERY=nn
 ALARMS=xxxxxxx,xxxxxxx,...
 READ=nnnnnn PREV=nnnnnn TOD=f PR=f METER=f
 TODDATA=nnnnnn,nnnnnn,nnnnnn
 35 PRDATA=nnnnnn,nnnnnn,nnnnnn
 OLDINDEX=nn NEWINDEX=nn

transaction-status

2. Report CCM Failure

CCM: CCMFAIL xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx

Operation of the Call Collection Module 12

5. The CCM 12 operates to respond to various UCC commands as listed above and to send commands to report alarm and failures, as indicated. It also performs a very important function in communicating with the AMR. Such AMR-CCM communications include installation, demand read, 10 scheduled report, emergency report and brainwash transactions which are summarized as follows:

Installation Transaction

CCM to AMR

AMR to CCM

- TOD on/off, PR on/off,
- 15 meter on/off (1 byte)
- customer account (4 bytes)
- AMR serial number 15 bytes)
- date of inti. (3 bytes)
- utility phone # (6 bytes)
- 20 -init. prev. meter (3 bytes)
- CCM bookkeeping data (7 bytes)
- current time (3 bytes)
- next call-in time (4 bytes)
- recall day (1 byte)
- 25 -TOD/PR exemption schedule
- (8 bytes)
- TOD/PR windows (3 bytes)
- PR window width (1 byte)

-ACK

BOTH HANG UP

30

Demand Reading Transaction

CCM to AMR

AMR to CCM

-transaction i.d. 80H (1 byte)

-AMR serial number (5 bytes

		-ACK
		-account number (4 bytes
		-CCM bookkeeping data
5		(7 bytes)
		-leak, low bat., freeze,
		tamper, TOD on/off
		(1 byte)
		-current meter reading
10		(3 bytes)
		-previous meter reading
		(3 bytes)
		-TOD data (9 bytes)
		-PR data (6 bytes)-ACK
15		-CCM bookkeeping data (7
		bytes)
		-next call-in-time (4
		bytes)
		-new TOD/PR window flag,
20		TOD on/off, PR on/off,
		meter on/off (1 byte)

-ACK

BOTH HANG UP

25 Scheduled Report Transaction

CCM to AMR

AMR to CCM

		-transaction i.d. 80H
		(1 byte)
30		-account number (4 bytes)
		-CCM bookkeeping data
		(7 bytes)
		-leak, low bat., freeze,
		tamper, TOD on/off,
35		PR on/off, meter on/off

-52-

(1 byte)
 -current meter reading
 (3 bytes)
 -previous meter reading
 (3 bytes)
 -TOD data (9 bytes)
 -PR data (6 bytes)
 -ACK
 -CCM bookkeeping data (7 bytes)
 10 -next call-in time (4 bytes)
 -new TOD/PR window 1 flag,
 TOD on/off, PR on/off,
 meter on/off (1 byte)
 -ACK
 15 BOTH HANG UP

Emergency Report Transaction

<u>CCM to AMR</u>	<u>AMR to CCM</u>
20	-transaction i.d. 40H (1 byte) -CCM bookkeeping data (7 bytes)
25	-leak, low bat., freeze, ramper, TOD on/off PR on/off, meter on/off (1 byte)
30	-current meter reading (3 bytes) -previous meter reading (3 bytes) -TOD data (9 bytes) -PR data (6 bytes)
	-ACK -CCM bookkeeping data (7 bytes)

-53-

-nex call-in time (4 bytes)
 -new TOD/PR window, flag,
 TOD on/off, PR on/off,
 meter on/off (1 byte)

5

-ACK

BOTH HANG UP

To handle such communications with the UCC 11 and the AMR's 15, the CCM 12 of the illustrated embodiment may use, for example, the mSBC 86/35 single board computer in the call collector units 256-258 and in the master central processing unit 260, connected through an Intel Corporation "MULTIBUS" system and using a PL/M 86 language developed by Intel Corporation which is a specific, block structured language. An example of a program is contained in a listing of Table III of the specification of the aforesaid U.S. application Ser. No. 876,896 filed June 20, 1986 and another example is in the Appendix to this specification. The mode of operation is illustrated in the block structure or tasking model charts of Figures 28 and 29.

Commands from the UCC 11 are handled by a UCC command interpreter of the system of the master CPU 260 shown in Figure 28. The command interpreter sends messages to an Install DBM (Data Base Management) task, a Modify DBM task and an Alarm DBM task and also to an IPC (Inter-Processor Control) task which effects communications with the CCU's 256-258 through buffers which are respectively identified as ; "CCU #1 IPC Send Buffer", "CCU #2 IPC Send Buffer" and "CCU #3 IPC Send Buffer" in Figure 28. The system of the master CPU 260 also includes an IPC Dispatcher task which receives messages through an IPC Receive task and through receive buffers for the three CCU's 256-258 and which sends messages through a LED control task, a U.P.S. task, a Printer task and the Alarm DBM task.

The tasking model of one of the CCU's 256-258 is shown in Figure 29. Two telephone lines are connected to each CCU through an interface and each line has an

-54-

associated Install Call Handler, Demand Call Handler and Incoming Call Handler which "PUT" or send data received from an AMR to a Report Data Base, operating through a Report DBM (Data Base Management) task. Such call handlers may also
5 send messages received from an AMR to an IPC Send Buffer to an IPC Send task, either directly or indirectly through a Watchdog task.

A CCU Dispatcher task receives messages from an IPC Receive Buffer through an IPC Receive task and sends
10 messages to the three call handlers and an Incoming Message Handler for each of the two telephone lines and also to the Report DBM task, the IPC Send task and a Global Parameter base from which the call handlers may obtain data. As also indicated, provision is made for sending time and random
15 number data through the call handlers.

In essence, the system permits operation through the UCC 11 to install and modify a control data base in the memory of the CCM 12, data from that base being ready for transmission from the CCM 12 to an AMR 15 when, for example,
20 an AMR 15 makes a scheduled report. The meter data received by the CCM 12 during a scheduled or other report is stored in a report data base in the RAM memory of the CCM 12, for transmission to the UCC 11 in response to "DUMP" and "N" commands sent from the UCC 11 to the command interpreter of
25 the master CPU 260, shown in Figure 28.

The CCM 12 also performs data processing operations which allow the data sent from and to AMRs 15 to be in a compressed format, minimizing the duration of transmissions of control and meter data to and from AMRs 15.

30 Since ordinary voice communication lines are used, it is desirable to use a relatively low baud rate. The illustrated system operates with FSK transmissions at 300 baud and with a standard asynchronous serial format with 8 data bits, one parity bit (even) and one stop bit. In the
35 illustrated system, what may be described as a "PACKED BCD" format is used in transmission of numerical digits from 0 through 9, a 4 bit nibble being used for transmission of

-55-

each digit. For communications between the CCM and the UCC, the standard ASCII code is used and the required translations are performed in the CCM.

The CCM 12 is also operative to make all required 5 translations between the command formats listed above and the transmission of corresponding data to the AMRs 15 in formats such that the AMR may operate with a minimum amount of RAM and ROM and also a minimum amount of circuitry. The CCM 12 uses high speed processing circuitry and is very fast 10 and efficient in handling all of its functions. Its cost is, of course, very much greater than that of an AMR. However, since its cost is in effect shared by all of the AMRs which may run into the tens of thousands and since the cost of each AMR is reduced, there is a very substantial 15 overall reduction in the cost to the utility and its customers.

A further advantage of the arrangement using the CCM 12 such as disclosed is that it provides a great deal of flexibility with respect to changing modes of operation if 20 required. The operating program for the CCM may be loaded from a disc storage and with an uninterruptable power supply, a high degree of reliability is obtained, with assurance against loss of meter data. It should also be noted that in normal operations, the meter data need only be 25 temporarily stored in the memory of the CCM and with frequent transfers to the UCC, the meter data can be safely stored on the disc, with disc or tape back-ups being made, if desired.

Referring to Figure 30, reference numeral 280 30 generally designates a modified AMR in which low power consumption circuitry 281 is provided which may include or be in the form of a gate array integrated circuit, as indicated and which includes clock, wake-up timer, meter pulse counter, status register, and reset and power control 35 circuitry corresponding to the circuits 40, 41, 43, 46 and 50 of the AMR 15 of Figures 2-12. The AMR 280 also includes higher power consumption circuitry 282 which may be in the

-56-

form of or include very large scale integrated circuitry, as indicated, and which includes telephone interface and power supply circuits, a modem, a dial tone detect circuit, a low battery detect circuit, and a microprocessor with RAM and
5 serial I/O, a program memory ROM and I/O decode circuit. A non-volatile memory may be included, as is indicated, or it may be provided in a separate circuit. The circuit 282 is connected to tip and ring terminals 283 and 284 and separate crystals 285 and 286 are provided for the operation of the
10 clock circuitry of circuitry 281 and for operation of the microprocessing circuitry serial I/O modem circuitry of circuit 282.

The arrangement of Figure 30 has the advantage of a substantial reduction of cost and manufacture, in large
15 volumes, and greater reliability as a result of fewer circuit interconnections. The use of separate crystals 285 and 286 has an advantage which is independent of other advantages in that the crystal 285 may be a relatively low frequency crystal such as a 32 KHz, for example, reducing
20 the number of count-down stages in the clock circuitry and thereby reducing power consumption. At the same time, the crystal 286 may be a very high frequency crystal, operative at a frequency of on the order of 11-12 MHz, to permit very fast processing operations and to reduce the "on" time of
25 the processor and thereby reduce average power consumption.

Figure 31 corresponds to the right-hand portion of the flow chart of Figure 14 and shows a modified operation. After a time-out of the wake-up timer 41 and after checking to see if it is time for a scheduled report, a test is made
30 to determine whether a "off" bit is set, this bit being a bit in RAM which may set from the UCC 11 through the CCM 12 when, for example, service to a customer has been discontinued while the AMR 15 remains connected and operative, awaiting resumption of service to the same
35 customer or start of service to a new customer at the same premises. If the "off" bit is set and a meter count greater than zero is detected, a special report call is initiated to

-57-

report the condition.

As also shown in Figure 31, a test may be made to detect whether a malfunction flag is set and, if so, the special report is initiated to report that condition as well
5 as provide other status information. The malfunction flag may be set in response to conditions such as a freeze condition, a tilt condition of the AMR unit, detectable through a suitable switch which may be connected to an additional input of the status register buffer 194.

10 The malfunction flag may, of course, be set in response to other conditions. Figure 32 shows an arrangement for detecting one type of malfunction which could present problems, especially in arrangements in which a metering switch is at a distance from an AMR or is
15 otherwise so arranged that there is an exposed connecting wire which might be cut by a customer or which might accidentally become severed so as to be continuously opened or shorted so as to be continuously closed. As shown, a resistor 290 is connected in series with a meter switch 291
20 and a second resistor 292 is connected in parallel with the series combination of resistor 290 and switch 291. The combination of resistors 290 and 292 and the switch 291 is connected through lead wires 293 and 294 to terminals 295 and 296 of metering circuits of an AMR which includes
25 comparator and de-bounce circuitry 298 supplied with an operating voltage from an output terminal 299 of a strobe circuit 300. Terminal 299 is connected through a resistor 301 to the terminal 295. The comparator and de-bounce circuit 298 has an output terminal 303 which may be
30 connected to a meter pulse accumulator counter and an output terminal 304 which provides a malfunction output indication and which may be connected to a buffer stage of a status register. The strobe circuit 300 operates periodically to briefly apply an operating voltage at terminal 299 so as to
35 develop a certain voltage at terminal 295 which is dependent upon the condition of the switch 291 and the connecting wires 293 and 294. At the same time, comparator circuitry

-58-

is operated. If the switch 291 is operating properly, certain voltages will be developed at the input of the circuit 298 dependent upon the condition of the switch 291. If, however, the wires 293 and 294 are shorted together, a lower resistance is developed at all times or, if one of the other of the connecting wires 293 or 294 is open, a higher than normal voltage will be developed at the input of the circuit 298. In either case, circuit 298 develops a malfunction indication at the terminal 304. Circuitry 298 also responds to normal closures of the switch 291 to develop de-bounced output pulses at the terminal 303 for application to a meter pulse accumulator counter. This circuit arrangement minimizes power consumption.

Referring to Figure 33, reference numeral 310 generally designates another preferred embodiment of an automatic meter reader or "AMR" constructed in accordance with the principles of the invention. The AMR 310 comprises circuitry which is shown as block 311 in Figure 33 and which, as shown in more detail in Figure 35, includes a microprocessor 312, logic circuits 314, a program memory 315, a non-volatile memory 316, a pre-settable counter 317, a binary counter 318 and a low battery detector circuit 319. As described hereinafter in connection with Figure 35, the logic circuits 314 may be in the form of a gate array, embodying a number of the circuits of the AMR 15 as shown in Figure 2-12 to produce the same general mode of operation.

The AMR 310 of Figures 33-35 is similar to the AMR 280 of Figure 30 in that circuits 314 are incorporated in an electronically programmable logic device or "EPLD", similar to a gate array. However, it differs therefrom as well as from the AMR 15 of the embodiment of Figures 2-12 in the inclusion of a demand signal detector circuit 320, and in use of modified circuits including a telephone interface circuit 321, a power supply circuit 322 and a modem circuit 323. With the circuit 320 and the combination thereof with the modified circuits 321-323 a number of advantages are obtained, including reduced power consumption, simplicity,

-59-

reliability, protection against transient voltage spikes on the telephone line and avoidance of interference with a subscriber's use of his telephone line.

The demand signal detector circuit 320 is operative at all times but has extremely low current consumption. It includes a frequency discriminator circuit 324 which is coupled to the telephone line to detect a demand signal of a certain form, for example, a tone burst having a frequency of 2800 Hz and a duration of 4.5 seconds. Such a signal may be sent from the CCM 12 to initiate a demand call sequence, as when initially setting up a AMR or when changing the service at a particular location from one customer to another. When the demand signal is detected, the circuit 324 develops a signal on a "PHONE" terminal 325 which is connected to power control circuitry to initiate a microprocessor power-up operation. The interface circuit 321 is then supplied with an off-hook signal at "OFFHK" terminal 326 to operate hook switch circuitry thereof and to connect the modem circuit 323 to the telephone line. The operation thereafter is similar to that of the AMR 15 as above-described, the modem circuit 323 being controlled to establish communications with the CCM and to transmit and receive data.

The interface circuit 321 does not provide direct coupling between the line and the modem circuit 323 but uses an isolation transformer 327 of a standard type having a primary winding 328 coupled to telephone line terminals 329 and 330 and having a secondary winding 332 coupled to the demand signal detecting circuit 320 and modem circuit 323. A pair of voltage protection diodes 333 are connected across the secondary winding 332 and another pair of voltage protection diodes 334 are connected between the telephone line terminals 329 and 330. Terminal 329 is connected directly to one end of the primary winding 328 and terminal 330 is connectable to the other end of the primary winding 328 through contacts 335 and 336 of a hook relay 337. A coil 338 of relay 337 is connected between a battery

-60-

terminal, indicated as "+VB", and the collector of a transistor 340 which has an emitter connected to ground and a base connected through a resistor 341 to the "OFFHK" terminal 326. When the processor circuitry applies a positive voltage to terminal 326, the transistor conducts to energize the relay 337 and connect the primary winding 328 of transformer 327 to the telephone line terminals 329 and 330, thereby effecting a change from an "on-hook" condition to an "off-hook" condition in which the modem circuit is coupled to the telephone line but with DC isolation and with the voltage protection provided by the two pairs of diodes 333 and 334.

The demand signal detector circuit 320 draws no current from the telephone line but an AC coupling is provided for detection of a demand signal burst or bursts in the on-hook condition of the relay 337. In the illustrated circuit, the detector circuit 320 is coupled to the transformer secondary winding and a capacitor 343 is connected in series with a resistor 344 between the line terminal 330 and primary winding 328, across the relay contacts 335 and 336. It is found that this arrangement provides sufficient coupling of the AC demand signal while providing DC isolation and while obtaining the protection of diodes 333 for the detector circuit 320 as well as the modem circuit 323.

The power supply 322 is operated by two batteries 347 and 348 in series, and comprises terminals 349 and 350 for connection to the negative and positive terminals of battery 347 and terminals 351 and 352 for connection to the negative and positive terminals of battery 348, terminal 349 being grounded and a fuse link 353 being connected between terminals 350 and 351. Terminal 352 forms the aforementioned "+VB" terminal and is connected to an input terminal of a voltage regulator circuit 354, also through a capacitor 355 to ground. An output terminal of the circuit 354 forms a "+V" voltage supply terminal for supplying voltages for the frequency discriminator circuit 324 and for

-61-

meter pulse registering and memory circuits, as hereinafter described. A capacitor 356 and also a pair of series resistors 357 and 358 are connected between the "+V" terminal and ground, the resistors forming a voltage divider 5 to supply a feedback voltage to a voltage sense input of the regulator 354.

The "+V" voltage is applied to the emitter of a transistor 360 and a "+VT" voltage is developed at the collector of the transistor 360 when an "OFFHKN" signal 10 voltage at a terminal 361 is brought low, terminal 361 being connected through a resistor 362 to the base of the transistor 360. The "+VT" voltage is applied to the modem circuit 323 and to a dial tone detect circuit 363 in the off-hook condition.

15 The modem circuit 323 is similar to the modem circuit 30 of Figure 4. It includes a standard integrated circuit 364 which has pins connected to a "TXD" terminal 365, a "CDN" terminal 366, a "RXD" terminal 367 and a "SQT" terminal 368. A voltage supply pin is connected to the "+V" 20 terminal and through a capacitor 370 to ground. A "TXA" pin is connected to a "RXA" pin and is also connected through a resistor 371 to a circuit point 372 which is connected through a capacitor 373 to the secondary winding 332 of the isolation transformer 327. Circuit point 372 is also 25 connected to a second "RXA" pin of circuit 364 and to the input of the dial tone detect circuit 363 which, after a dialing operation, may apply an output signal at a "DIALTON" terminal 374. Additional pins of the integrated circuit 364 are connected to a crystal 376 and to capacitors 377-381 and 30 resistors 382 and 383 as shown which have values such as to obtain optimum operation, especially with respect to attack/release times.

In the demand signal detector circuit 320, the frequency discriminator circuit 324 includes a built-in 35 amplifier section for receiving a low level sinusoidal input tone signal at a pin 384 and developing an amplified digital tone signal at a pin 385 which is connected through a line

-62-

386 to a pin 387 connected to a digital tone input of a frequency discriminator section of the circuit. The input of the amplifier section is connected through a capacitor 388 and a diode 389 to ground, through a diode 390 to "+V" and through a resistor 391 and a capacitor 392 to the secondary winding 332 of the isolation transformer 327. Components 388-392 provide additional protection with respect to voltage spikes or the like on the telephone line. A reset input of the circuit is connected to the "OFFHK" terminal 326. Additional pins of the circuit 324 are connected to a crystal 394 which may have a frequency of 32.768 KHz, for example, and which is connected to an internal clock generator to develop timing signals for comparison with the input signal to determine whether it has a certain frequency and duration.

When a signal of a certain frequency and duration is received, e.g. 2800 Hz and 4.5 seconds, a positive pulse is developed at a pin 395 which is connected through a line 396 to a pin 397 to trigger a one-shot multivibrator within circuit 324 and to switch a latching circuit to a condition to develop a signal at a pin 398 which is connected to the "PHONE" terminal 325.

Figure 34 is a schematic diagram of the frequency discriminator circuit 326, showing the connections to an amplifier 399, a frequency discriminator 400, clock generator 401, sample interval timer 402, one-shot 403 and latch circuitry 404. An additional one-shot 405 and a disconnect timer 406 are included in the circuit but are not used in the illustrated embodiment. It is noted that the clock generator develops a signal at the same frequency as that of the crystal 394 which is applied to an output pin 408 connected to a "OSC" terminal 409 as shown in Figure 33, terminal 409 being connected to metering circuitry as shown in Figure 35.

Referring to Figure 35, the "OSC" terminal 409 is connected to the counter 318 which is a 14 stage binary counter and which performs functions similar to those

-63-

performed by the counters 175 and 176 in the AMR 15 of Figures 2-12, developing signals which are applied through lines 411 and 412 to logic circuitry 314. In response, the logic circuits develop a 0.5 Hz signal, applied through a line 413 to the pre-settable counter 317 which performs the functions of counters 179 and 180 in the AMR 15, the counter 317 being controlled by the microprocessor 312 through an eight line data bus 414. The output of counter 317 is a time-out signal applied through a line 416 to the microprocessor 312 and to the logic circuits 314 to initiate a "wake-up" and a sequence of operations like those produced by the AMR 15.

It is noted that no counter corresponding to the counter 166 of the AMR 15 is required. A high frequency clock signal for operation of the microprocessor 312 is developed by a crystal 418 connected directly thereto and connected through capacitors to ground as shown.

As aforementioned, the logic circuits 314 may be in a EPLD or may be in a gate array and they perform a number of the functions which are performed by separate circuits in the AMR 15 as illustrated in Figures 2-12. Logic circuits 314 include a meter pulse counter like that of Figure 8, having an input coupled to the output of a Schmitt trigger circuit 420 which has an input coupled through a capacitor 421 to ground, through a resistor 422 to +V and through a resistor 423 to a meter pulse input terminal 424. Buffers corresponding to buffers 190-192 are connected to the data bus 414 and are controlled by signals applied through lines 426-428 from the microprocessor 312.

The logic circuits further include a status register which is connected to a tilt switch 430 and to the "PHONE" terminal 326. The status register may also be connected to a terminal 432 to which another status signal may be applied, such as a freeze-detect signal or a tamper or malfunction signal other than the tilt signal developed by the switch 430. Attention is directed to Figure 32, in this connection.

-64-

For an initial power-on reset conditioning operation, the AMR 310 includes triggering circuits 433 and 434, a capacitor 435, a resistor 436 and a diode 437 which are connected as shown and which correspond to components 5 217, 218 and 220-222 of the circuit shown in Figure 10.

The AMR 310 further includes the low battery detect circuit 319 connected to resistors 439 and 440 and connected in series with a transistor 442 which is rendered conductive when a +VM voltage is applied, so as to be conductive at all 10 times during operation of the AMR 310. Alternatively, a jumper may be positioned to render transistor 442 conductive only in response to the +VT voltage, to thereby perform the low battery test only during a call-in or during a demand call and to thereby reduce battery drain.

15 The microprocessor 312 is connected through a first inverter 443 to develop the "OFFHK" signal at terminal 326, a second inverter 444 being operative to develop the "OFFHKN" signal at terminal 361.

The AMR 310 has substantially the same operation as 20 depicted by the flow charts of Figures 13-20 and as described in connection with the AMR 15. When a demand signal is detected by the detector 320, a signal is developed at the "PHONE" terminal 325 and a wake-up operation is initiated as depicted in Figure 14, a "yes" 25 being developed upon testing of a "phone" flag which is then cleared and an identification flag is then set, after which the time slicer operation is initiated with the relay 337 being operated to the off-hook condition in the phone handler operation. A +VT voltage is then applied to the 30 modem 364 and if a carrier tone is detected by the modem, followed by the appropriate security data from the CCM, communications are established for receiving and sending data.

For use with the AMR 320, each of the call 35 collection units 256, 257 and 258 of the CCM 12 includes a tone generator for generating a demand signal of a form for detection by the detector 320, e.g. a 4.5 second burst at a

-65-

frequency of 2800 Hz, such tone generators being illustrated diagrammatically in Figure 22 and being indicated by reference numerals 446, 447 and 448. The CCM 12 may thus be used with either type of AMR.

5 As aforementioned, the AMR 310 has important advantages. Since the off-hook condition needs to be established only in response to a demand signal from the CCM, which occurs very infrequently in normal operations, or during scheduled reports at monthly or other regular
10 intervals, it is possible to use battery power to energize the modem while keeping average battery current flow at a very low level. It is not necessary to use line voltage for operation of the modem and problems are avoided. Also, a high degree of isolation is obtained, insuring that the
15 impedance in the on-hook condition is very high in compliance with FCC regulations and also protecting the circuitry against transient voltage spikes on the telephone line. The circuitry is also relatively simple both in construction and operation and a high degree of reliability
20 is obtained.

With a demand signal in the form of a tone burst of a certain frequency and duration, adequate security is normally maintained since additional security checks are made after responding to a detected burst. However, demand
25 signals of other forms may be used using variations in frequency or duration or both, for additional security or for other purposes.

It will be understood that modifications and variations may be effected without departing from the spirit
30 and scope of the novel concepts of this invention.

What is claimed is:

1. A metering system comprising: a plurality of automatic meter readers, each arranged for connection to a telephone line and for dialing of a certain telephone number and transmission of meter data, utility control center means including data storage means and data processing means, and call collection means including data storage means and data processing means and arranged for connection to a certain telephone line to which said certain telephone number is assigned, said call collection means further including means for responding to a call on said certain line for reception of meter data and immediate storage of said meter data in said data storage means thereof, and means controlled by said utility control center means for effecting transfer of stored meter data from said data storage means of said call collection means to said data storage means of said utility control center means.

2. In a metering system as defined in claim 1, each of said automatic meter readers including data storage means and processor means for controlling operation thereof in accordance with control data stored in said data storage means, and said call collection means including means for storing control data in said data storage means thereof and means for transferring control data from said data storage means thereof through said telephone lines and telephone exchange equipment to said automatic meter readers for storage in said data storage means of said automatic meter readers.

3. In a system as defined in claim 2, said utility control center means including means for storing control data in said data storage means thereof and means for transferring control data from said data storage means thereof to said call collection means for storage of control data in said data storage means of said call collection means.

-67-

4. In a system as defined in claim 2, said call collection means being arranged to send control data to an automatic meter reader during a response to a call from the same automatic meter reader.

5. In a system as defined in claim 4, said control data including means for controlling the time of a next call-in by said automatic meter reader.

6. In a system as defined in claim 5, said control data in said data storage means of said call collection means including data as to the number of days in the current month, and said call collection means including means for controlling said next call-in time in accordance with data as to the number of days in the current month.

7. In a system as defined in claim 4, said control data in said data storage means of said call collection means including data as to forthcoming exemption days, and said call collection means including means for sending control data to an automatic meter reader to control metering operations in accordance with exemption day control data.

8. In a system as defined in claim 2, said control data in said storage means of said call collection means including data for establishing time-of-day window periods of meter pulse accumulations.

9. In a system as defined in claim 8, said control data in said data storage means of said call collection means including means for controlling window periods of peak rate measurements.

10. In a metering system as defined in claim 1, said call collection means being arranged for connection to a plurality of lines with said certain telephone number being assigned to all lines and with the telephone exchange equipment being operative to make a connection to one of said lines as long as all lines are not busy, said call collection means including means for responding to an incoming call on any of said lines and to substantially immediately receive data from a calling automatic meter reader.

11. An automatic meter reader arranged for battery operation and comprising: meter pulse counter means, oscillator driven clock means for developing a periodic tick signal, wake-up timer means including counter means arranged to be loaded with a control number and driven by said tick signal to develop a wake-up signal after said control number of tick signals, memory means, program means, processor means, power-up means responsive to said wake-up signal to change said processor means from a power-down sleep condition to a power-up wake condition, said processor means being controlled by said program means in said wake condition to perform processing operations including accumulation of pulses from said meter pulse counter means and said memory means, reset of said meter pulse counter means, loading of said control number in said wake-up timer and a final power-down to said sleep condition.

12. An automatic meter reader as defined in claim 11, arranged for connection to a telephone line and comprising: call-in means for effecting a dialing operation to establish communication with a data receiving means, and call-in time control means for controlling the time of operation of said call-in means, said call-in means including wake-up signal counter means for counting said wake-up signals.

13. In a system as defined in claim 12, said call-in time control means including means for controlling the control number loaded in said wake-up timer means after a call-in operation.

14. A reader as defined in claim 13, said call-in time control means further including means controlled by said wake-up signal counter means to control the control number loaded in said wake-up time means and to effect a call-in operation in response to the next wake-up signal.

15. In a reader as defined in claim 12, the count entered in said wake-up signal counter after a call-in operation being controlled from said call collection means.

16. In a reader as defined in claim 13, said control number entered in said counter means of said wake-up timer means after a call-in operation being controllable from call collection means.

17. In a reader as defined in claim 15, the control number entered in said counter means of said wake-up timer means and which controls the next following call-in operation being controlled from said call collection means.

18. In a reader as defined in claim 14, said call collection means being operative to control the control number entered in said counter means of said wake-up timer means after a call-in operation, the count-in operation of said wake-up signal counter and the control number entered
5 in said counter means of said wake-up timer means to control the next subsequent call-in operation.

19. Control apparatus for use in a metering system which includes a plurality of meter readers each arranged for connection to and data transmission over a telephone line and for calling a certain telephone number, said
5 control apparatus comprising: call collection means for connection to a telephone line to which said certain number is assigned and including means for responding to a call on said line to receive and store transmitted data, and
10 computer means including memory means and data processing means, said computer means being operable to send a dump command to said call collection means, said collection means being operable in response to said dump command to send data to said computer means, and said data processing means of
15 said computer means being operable to process received data and to store data in said memory means including identification data corresponding to the meter reader from which data was received, meter reading data corresponding to a cumulative meter reading at a certain reading time and time data corresponding to said certain reading time.

20. Control apparatus as defined in claim 19, wherein said computer means includes a keyboard and a display operable from said keyboard to display said identification, meter reading and time data.

21. Control apparatus as defined in claim 20, wherein said identification data includes customer's name and address information, and wherein said data processing means is operable from said keyboard for entry and editing of said identification data.

22. Control apparatus as defined in claim 20, wherein said data processing means is operable from said keyboard for controlling said certain reading time.

-71-

23. Control apparatus as defined in claim 19, said certain reading time being the time of a call by a meter reader and said call collection means being operable during a call from a meter reader to receive data
5 corresponding to a current cumulative meter reading at the time of said call.

24. Control apparatus as defined in claim 19, said computer being operable to send schedule data to said call collection means which includes data defining the calling times for meter readers, and said call collection
5 means being operable to send corresponding data to said meter readers for control of the calling times thereof.

25. Control apparatus as defined in claim 24, wherein each meter reader of said system may be assigned one of a number of possible time slots for calling of said certain telephone number, said data processing means of said
5 computer being operable to store data in said memory corresponding to time slots which have been assigned to meter readers of the system.

26. Control apparatus as defined in claim 25, said data processing means being operable to generate data as to an open time slot for assignment to a meter reader being added to said system and to send said generated open
5 time slot data to said call collection means for transmission to said meter reader being added to said system.

-72-

27. Control apparatus as defined in claim 26, wherein said computer means includes a keyboard and a display operable from said keyboard, said keyboard being usable to select a time slot for a meter reader to be added to said system, and said data processing means being operable to send corresponding data to said call collection means when said time slot has not been assigned and to indicate on said display when said time slot has been assigned.

28. Control apparatus for use in a metering system which includes a plurality of meter readers each arranged for connection to and data transmission over a telephone line and for calling a certain telephone number and each being arranged for assignment of one of a large number of possible time slots for calling of said certain telephone number, said control apparatus comprising: computer means including memory means and data processing means, means for connection between said computer means and a telephone line to which said certain number is assigned and arranged for responding to a call on said line and for transmission of received data to said computer means, said data processing means of said computer means being operable to store data in said memory corresponding to time slots which have been assigned to meter readers of the system, and said data processing means being operable to generate data as to an open time slot for transmission to a meter reader being added to said system.

29. Control apparatus as defined in claim 28, wherein said computer means includes a keyboard and a display operable from said keyboard, said keyboard being usable to select a time slot for a meter reader being added to said system, and said data processing means being operable to indicate on said display when a selected time slot has been previously assigned.

30. Control apparatus for use in a metering system which includes a plurality of meter readers each arranged for connection to and data transmission over a telephone line and for a calling a certain telephone number and each being arranged for assignment of one of a large number of possible time slots for calling of said certain telephone number, said control apparatus comprising:
5 computer means including memory means and data processing means, means for connection between said computer means and a telephone line to which said certain number is assigned
10 and arranged for responding to a call on said line and for transmission of received data to said computer means, said data processing means of said computer means being operable to store data in said memory corresponding to name, address
15 and other customer identification data and also data corresponding to the time slot which has been assigned to each meter reader connected to the system, said computer means including a keyboard and a display and including
20 output means for transmission of data to a printer or utilization means, said computer being operable from said keyboard means for viewing of customer identification data and time slot data on said display and for transmission of such data through said output means.

31. A metering system comprising: a plurality of automatic meter readers each arranged for connection to a telephone line and for transmission of meter data to utility control center means, each of said meter readers including
5 means for generating meter data, sampling means for accumulating generated meter data over sampling time intervals of a certain duration, and indicating means for generating an indicating signal under conditions in which during a number of said sampling time intervals there are no
10 intervals of no generated meter data.

32. In a metering system as defined in claim 31, said indicating means comprising a status indicator, means for initially shifting said status indicator from a cleared condition to a set condition, means for shifting said status indicator to said cleared condition in response to
5 generation of meter data during any sampling time interval, and means for generating said indicating signal when said status indicator remains in said set condition after a number of sampling time intervals.

33. In a metering system as defined in claim 31, said meter readers being operable for measuring cumulative volume flow of water or other fluids wherein said indicating signal indicates a leakage condition.

34. In a reader as defined in claim 31, sampling means for accumulating generated meter data over sampling time intervals of a certain duration, and indicating means for generating an indicating signal under conditions in
5 which during a certain number of said sampling time intervals there are no intervals of no generated meter data.

35. In a reader as defined in claim 34, said indicating means comprising a status indicator and an indicator counter, said status indicator being initially shifted from a cleared condition to a set condition and said
5 indicator counter being initially cleared, and said processing operations including clearing of said counter when no meter pulses were accumulated since the preceding wake-up signal and clearing of said status indicator when said counter registers a certain count.

36. A metering system comprising: a plurality of automatic meter readers each arranged for connection to a telephone line and for transmission of meter data to a utility control center means, each of said meter readers including data generating means for generating meter data, data storage means for storing generated meter data, data transmission means for transmitting stored meter data from said data storage means over a telephone line, status control means for setting said meter reader in either an active condition or an inactive condition, and alarm generating means coupled to said data generating means and said status control means and arranged to generate an alarm signal in response to the generation of meter data while said status control means is in said inactive condition.

37. A metering system as defined in claim 36, each of said meter readers further including data receiving means for receiving control signals from said utility control center to control said status control means.

38. A metering system as defined in claim 36, said data transmission means being arranged to transmit said alarm signal over said telephone line to said utility control center means.

39. A metering system comprising: a plurality of automatic meter readers each arranged for connection to a telephone line and for transmission of meter data to a utility control center means, each of said meter readers including data generating means for generating meter data, data storage means for storing generated meter data, data transmission means for transmitting stored meter data from said data storage means over a telephone line and to said utility control center means, and electronic alarm circuitry for generating a tamper alarm signal in response to tampering with said meter reader, said data transmission means being arranged for transmitting said tamper alarm signal over said telephone line to said utility control center means.

40. A metering system as defined in claim 39, each of said meter readers further including data receiving means for receiving control signals from said utility control center means to control operation of said electronic alarm circuitry.

41. A metering system as defined in claim 39, said data generating means being arranged for coupling through a connection line to a meter signal generating device to receive meter signals therefrom, and said electronic alarm circuitry including means for sensing tampering with said connection line.

42. A metering system as defined in claim 41, said electronic alarm circuitry including means for sensing a high impedance open circuit condition of said connection line.

43. A metering system as defined in claim 41, said electronic alarm circuitry including means for sensing a low impedance short circuit condition of said connection line.

44. A metering system as defined in claim 41, said electronic alarm circuitry including means for sensing either of high impedance open circuit condition of said connection line or a low impedance short circuit condition thereof.

45. A metering system as defined in claim 39, said electronic alarm circuitry being operable in response to tilting of said meter reader.

46. A metering system as defined in claim 39, said electronic circuitry being operable in response to a low temperature freeze condition of said meter reader.

47. A metering system comprising: a plurality of automatic meter readers each arranged for connection to a telephone line and for transmission of meter data to a utility control center means, each of said meter readers including data generating means for generating meter data, data storage means for storing data including generated meter data in accordance with predetermined criteria, and data transmission means for transmitting stored meter data from said data storage means over a telephone line, computer means including memory means and data processing means and arranged for receiving data transmitted from said meter readers and for controlling transmission of control data to said meter readers to control said predetermined criteria, said computer means including a keyboard, a display operable from said keyboard and means responsive to operation of said keyboard for transmitting control data to said meter readers to control said predetermined criteria of storage of generated meter data.

48. In a system as defined in claim 47, each of said meter readers including control data means for supplying data establishing said predetermined criteria, processor means coupled to said control data means and to said data generating and storage means for controlling the storage of data in accordance with control data supplied by said control data means, and means for receiving control data from said computer means.

49. In a system as defined in claim 48, wherein said control data include data establishing at least one time of day window for storage of generated meter data.

50. In a system as defined in claim 48, said computer means being operable from said keyboard to store global control data and to normally transmit said global control data to each meter reader to establish criteria for storage of generated meter data.

51. In a system as defined in claim 50, said computer means being operable from said keyboard to develop local control data applicable to a selected meter reader and to transmit said local control data to a selected meter reader to at least partially override said global control data.

52. In a system as defined in claim 47, said predetermined criteria including predetermined periods of the day for storage of generated meter data.

53. In a system as defined in claim 47, said predetermined criteria including predetermined days during periods of a number of days for storage of generated meter data.

54. In a system as defined in claim 53, said control data transmitted from said computer means to said meter readers including digital data establishing predetermined exemption days for non-storage of certain generated meter data.

55. In a system as defined in claim 54, said predetermined exemption days being days numbered from the day of transmission of said control data from said computer means.

56. In a system as defined in claim 47, said predetermined criteria including the peak rate of generation of meter data during at least one predetermined time period.

57. In a system as defined in claim 47, said generated meter data being stored by said data storage means of said meter readers in a plurality of separate storage locations corresponding to a plurality of criteria of said predetermined criteria, said computer means being arranged to store data received from each meter reader in a plurality of fields corresponding to said separate storage locations and being operable from said keyboard means to display received and stored data in said fields.

58. In a system as defined in claim 57, said computer means being operable from said keyboard means to compile data received from all meter readers in each of said fields.

59. In system as defined in claim 58, a first one of said fields being total cumulative meter data generated during a number of days and a second one of said fields being cumulative meter data generated during a certain window portion of each of at least certain days of said number of days.

60. In a system as defined in claim 59, a third one of said fields being the peak rate of generation of meter data during certain time periods.

61. In a system as defined in claim 60, said certain time periods of peak rate generation being window portions of at least certain days of said number of days.

62. In a system as defined in claim 61, each of said meter readers including means for sensing certain conditions and storing alarm data in said data storage means, a fourth one of said fields being alarm data
5 initially stored in said data storage means and transmitted to said computer means.

63. In a system as defined in claim 47, call collection means associated with said computer means, said call collection means including data storage means and data processing means and being arranged for connection to a
5 telephone line to receive data from said meter readers, said call collection means further including means for reception of meter data and storage of meter data in said data storage means thereof and being also arranged for storage of control data from said computer means and transmission of said
10 control data to said meter readers.

64. In a system as defined in claim 63, said call collection means being arranged for connection to a plurality of lines to which one telephone number is assigned with the telephone exchange equipment being operative to
5 make a connection through one of said line to a calling meter reader as long as all lines are not busy, and said call collection means including means for responding to an incoming call on any of said lines and to substantially immediately receive and store data from a calling meter
10 reader for subsequent transmission to said computer means.

-81-

65. A metering system comprising: a plurality of automatic meter readers each arranged for connection to a telephone line and for transmission of meter data to a utility control center means, each of said meter readers including data generating means for generating meter data, data storage means for storing generated meter data, data communication means including means for transmitting stored meter data from said data storage means, hook switch means for connecting said data communication means to a telephone line, control means for controlling said data generating means and said data communication means and said hook switch means, said hook switch means being normally in a on-hook state to disconnect said data communication means from said telephone line and establish a high resistance on-hook condition and being operable by said control means to an off-hook state to connect said data communication means to said telephone line and establish a low resistance off-hook line condition, demand signal receiving means arranged to develop a control signal in response to a demand signal of a certain form, coupling means for coupling said demand signal receiving means to said telephone line to develop said control signal in response to a signal of said certain form on said line, and means for applying said control signal to said control means, said control means being responsive to said control signal to operate said hook switch means to said off-hook condition to and to connect said data communication means to said telephone line for transmission of meter data through said telephone line to said utility control center.

66. A metering system as defined in claim 65,
wherein each of said meter readers includes a power supply
for supply of an operating voltage for said data generating
means, said data communication means, said control means and
5 said demand signal receiving means, said control means
including means for normally disconnecting said data
communication means from said power supply and for connecting
said data communication means to said power supply in
response to said control signal from said demand signal
10 receiving means.

67. A metering system as defined in claim 66,
wherein said demand signal receiving means has a very low
average current consumption while being connected to said
power supply for substantially continuous operation to
5 respond to a demand signal developed at any time on said
telephone line.

68. A metering system as defined in claim 65,
wherein said demand signal includes an AC signal burst
having a certain frequency and duration.

69. A metering system as defined in claim 68,
wherein said coupling means comprises a capacitor operative
to provide DC isolation between said demand signal receiving
means and said telephone and to present a very high DC
5 resistance across said telephone line in said on-hook state
of said hook switch means.

70. A metering system as defined in claim 69,
wherein each of said meter readers includes a power supply
for supply of an operating voltage for said data generating
means, said data communication means, said control means and
5 said demand signal receiving means, said control means
including means for normally disconnecting said data
communication means from said power supply and for connecting
said data communication means to said power supply in
response to said control signal from said demand signal
10 receiving means.

71. A metering system as defined in claim 70,
wherein said demand signal receiving means has a very low
average current consumption while being connected to said
power supply for substantially continuous operation to
5 respond to a demand signal developed at any time on said
telephone line.

72. A metering system as defined in claim 68,
wherein said demand signal receiving means comprises
frequency discriminator and interval timer means for
establishing the frequency and duration of burst required
5 for development of said control signal, and a clock circuit
operative to develop a clock signal of a substantially
constant frequency to said frequency discriminator and
interval timer means.

FIG. 1

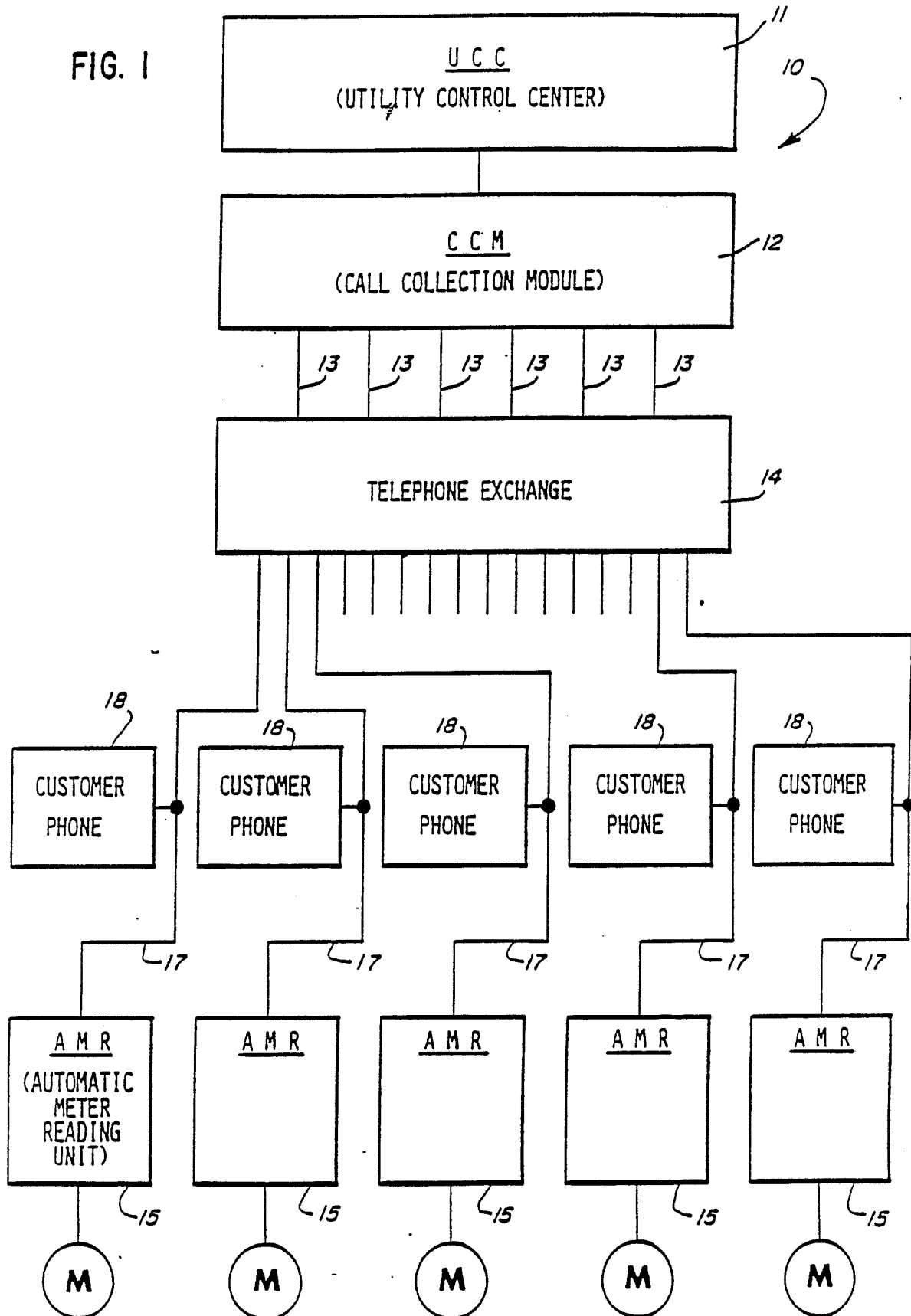
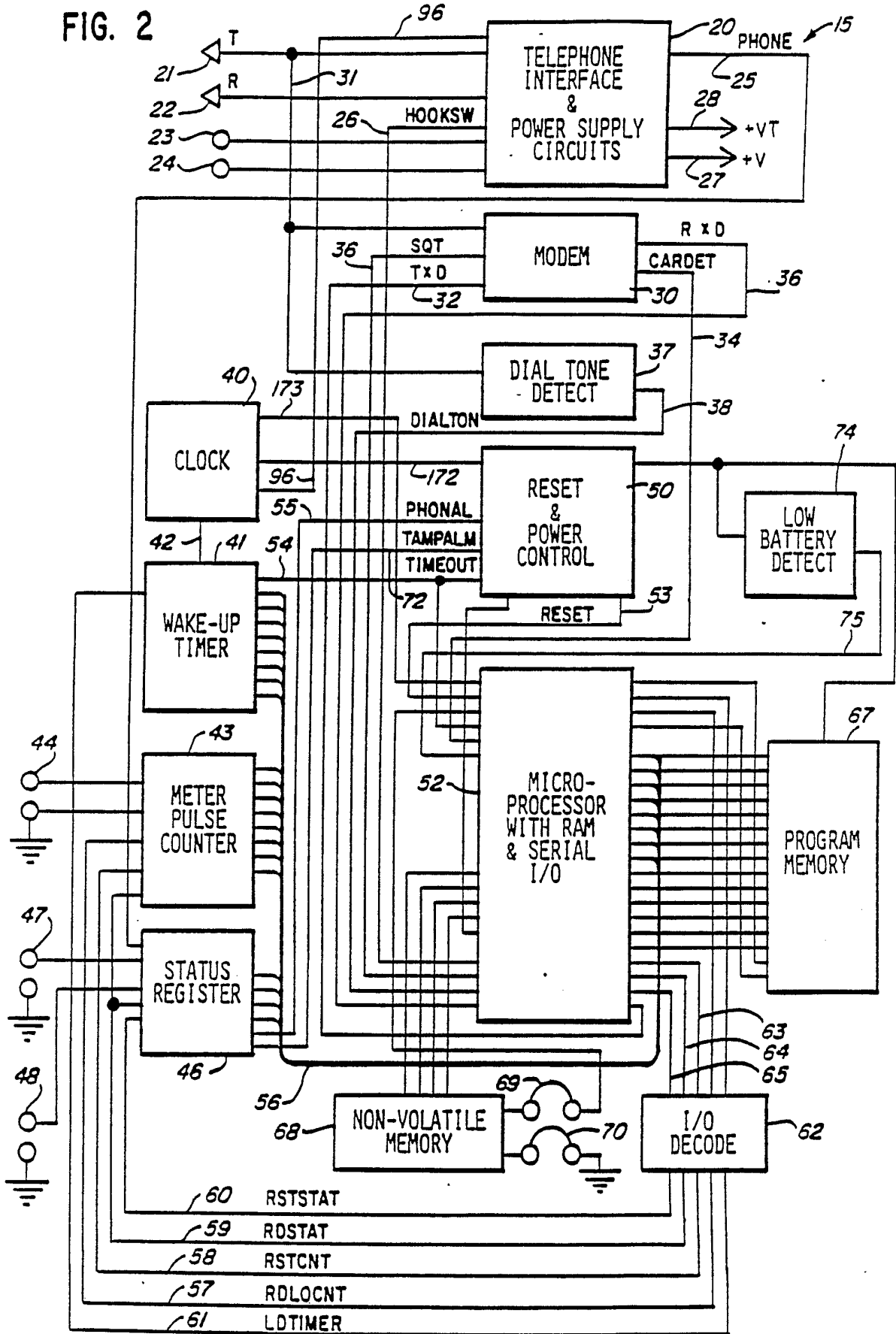


FIG. 2



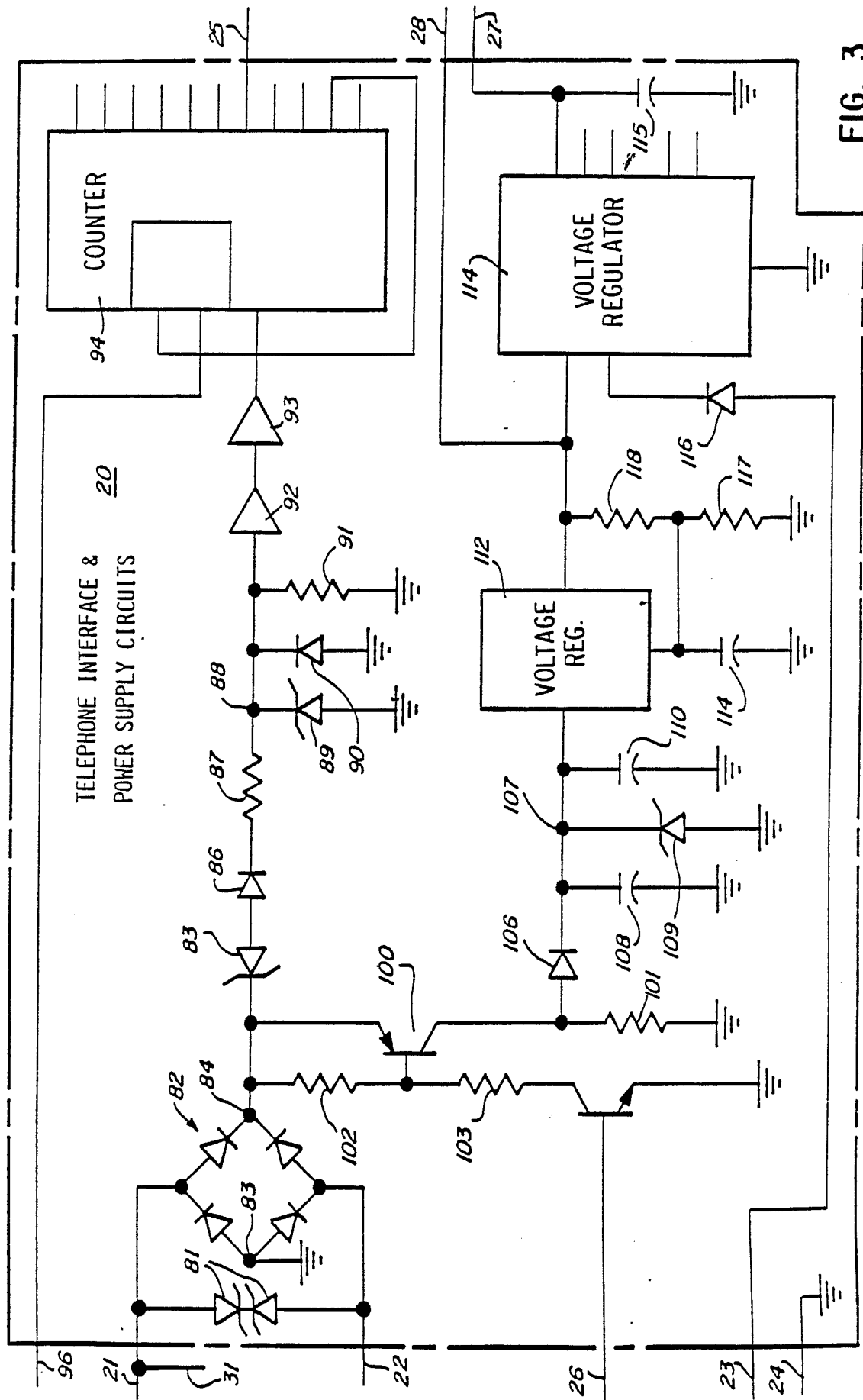


FIG. 3

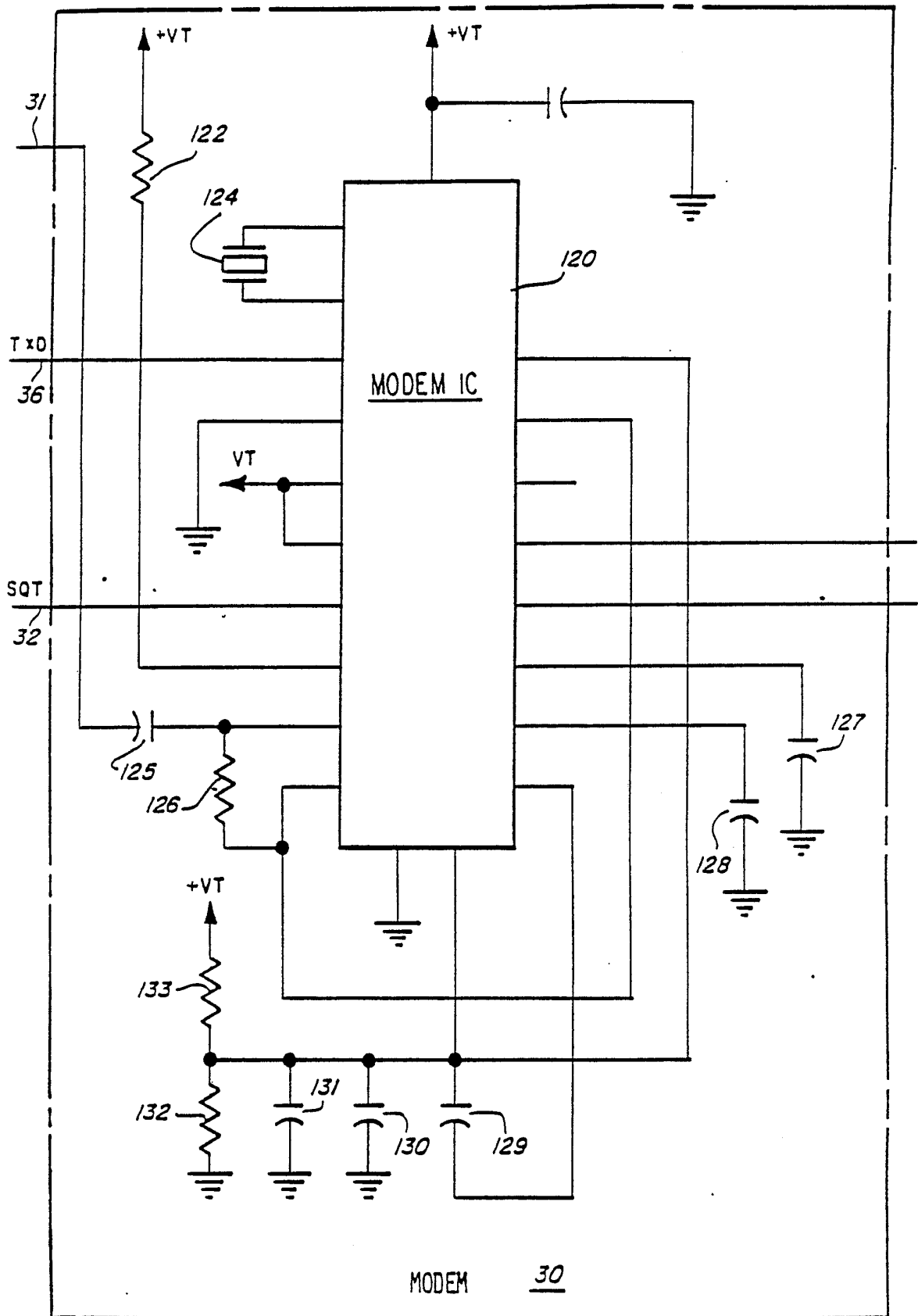


FIG. 4

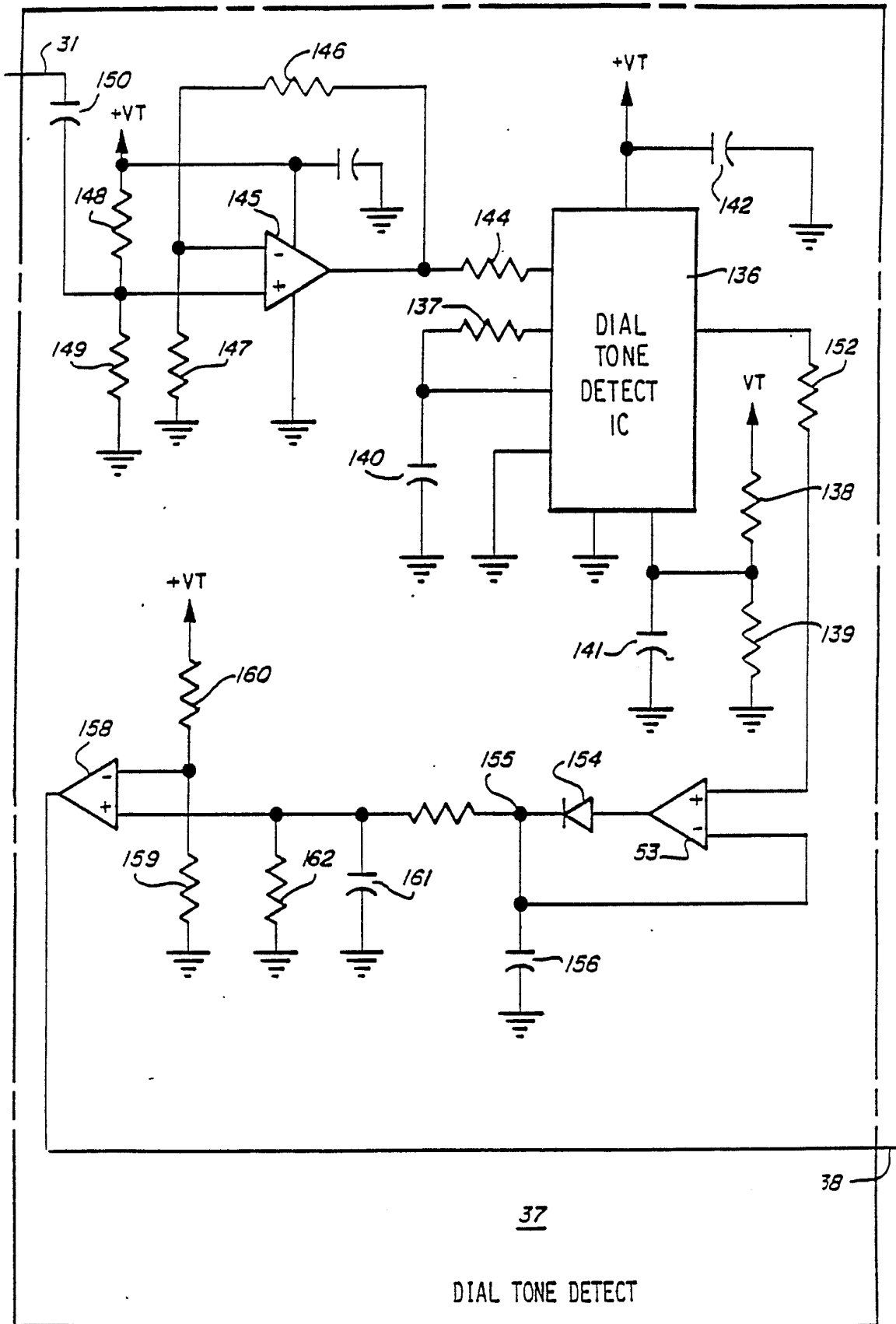


FIG. 5

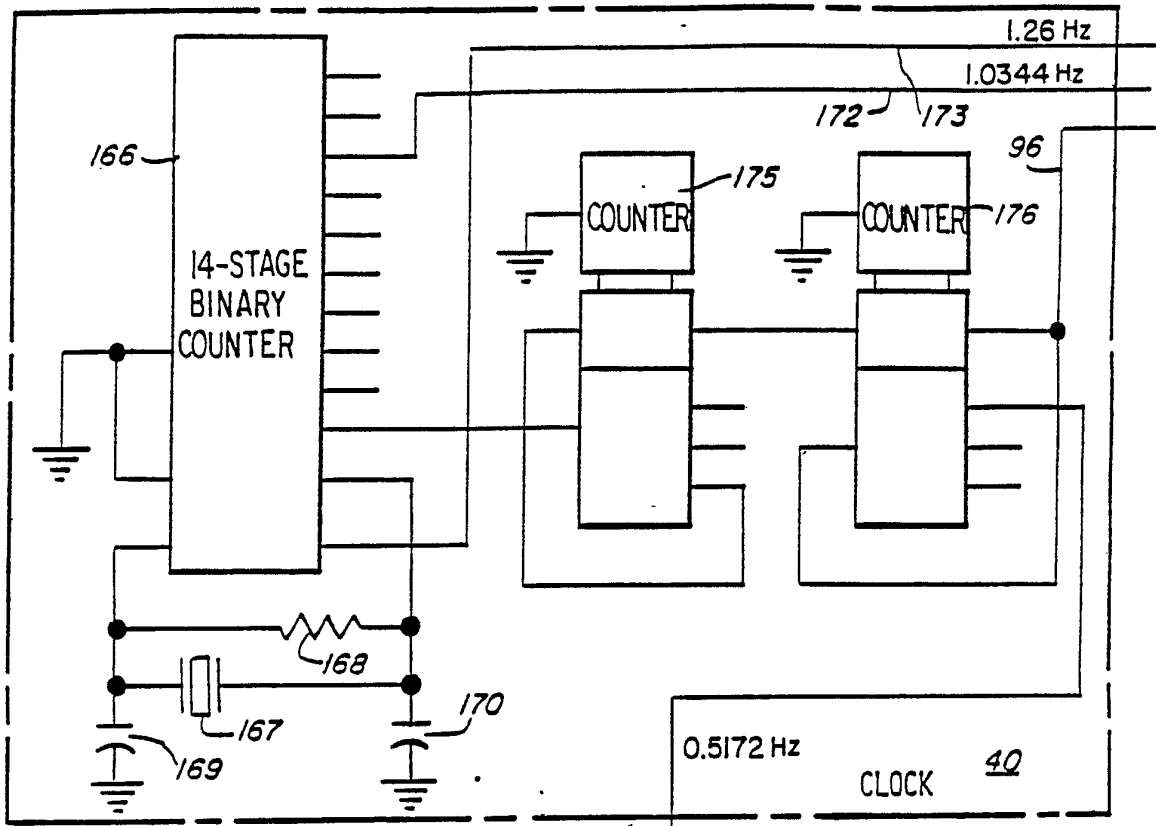


FIG. 6

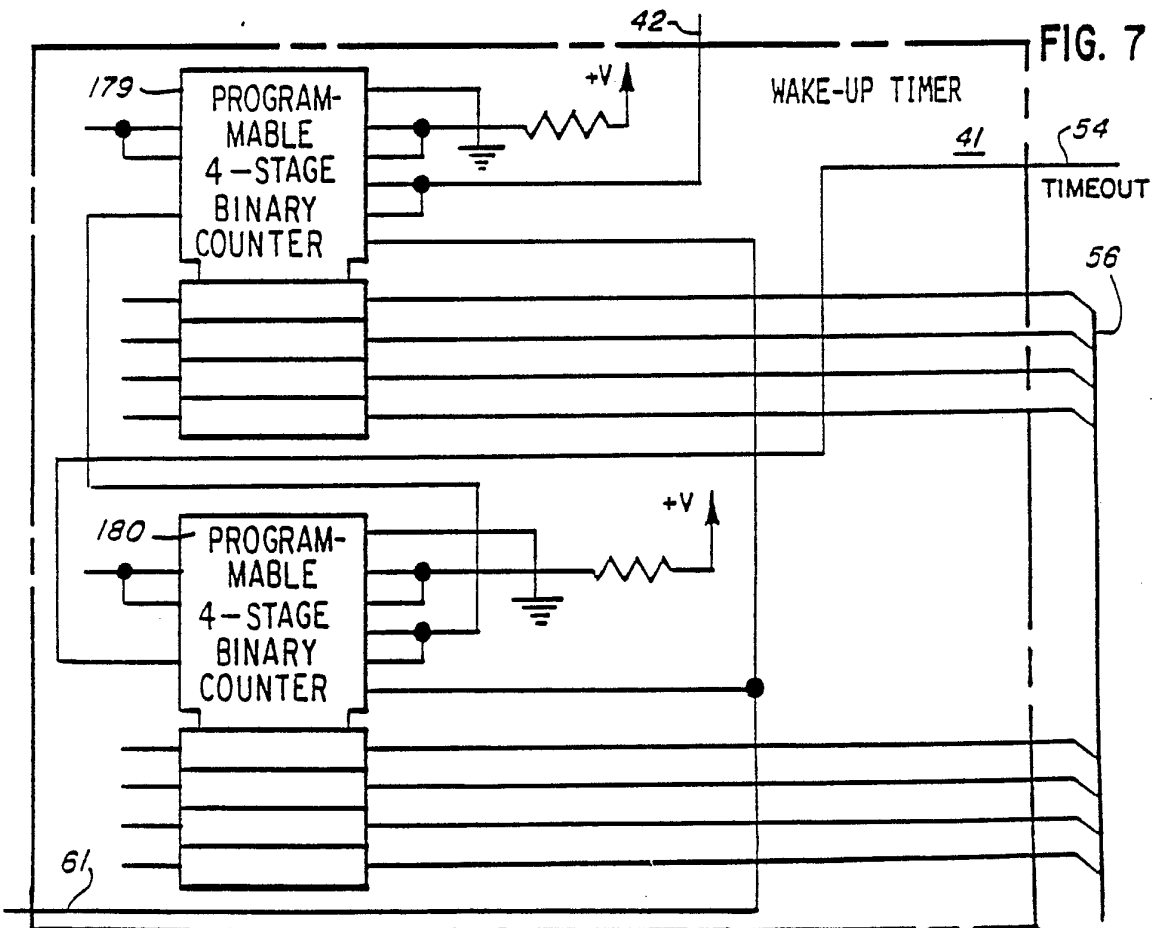


FIG. 7

7/28

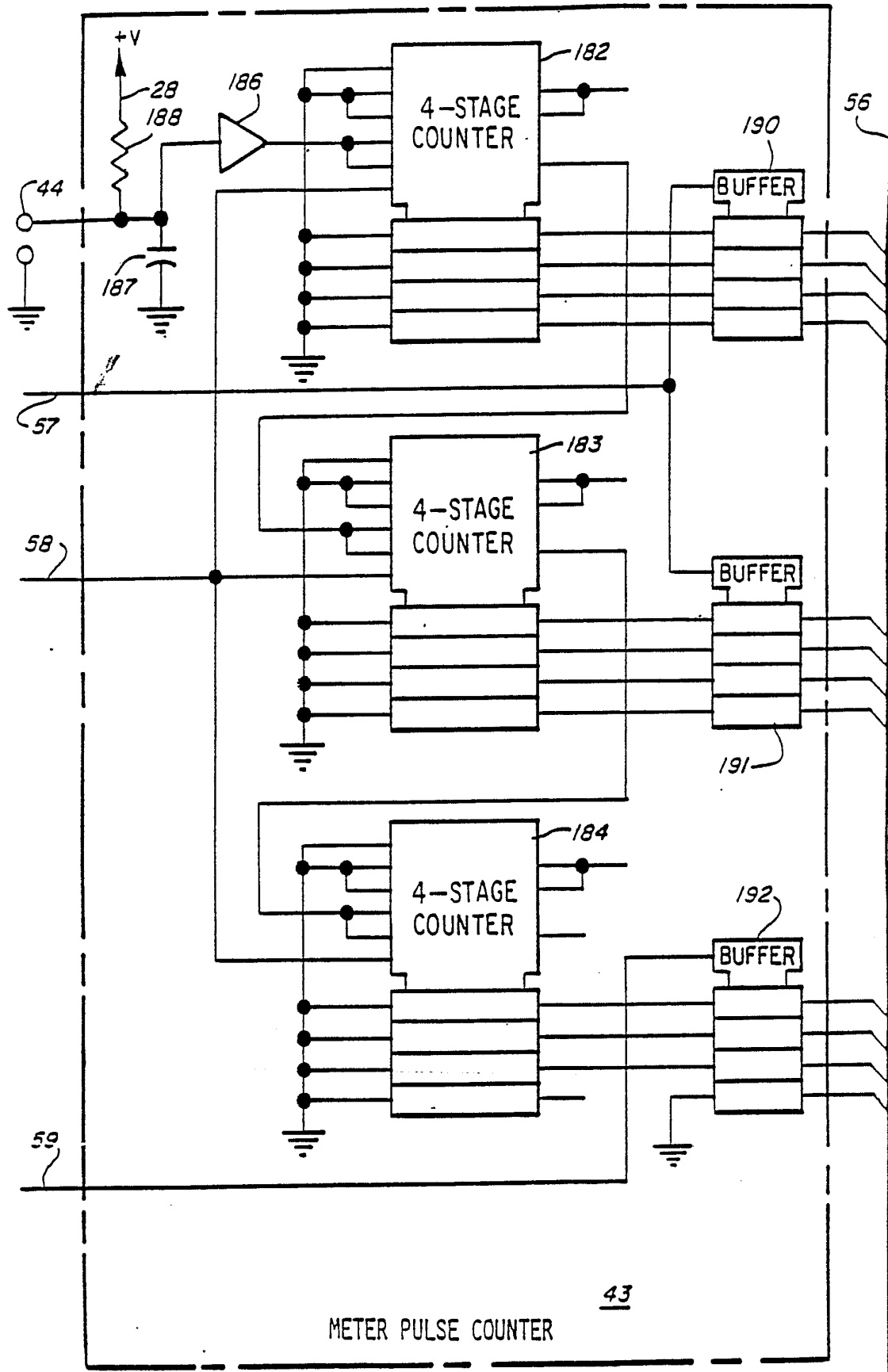
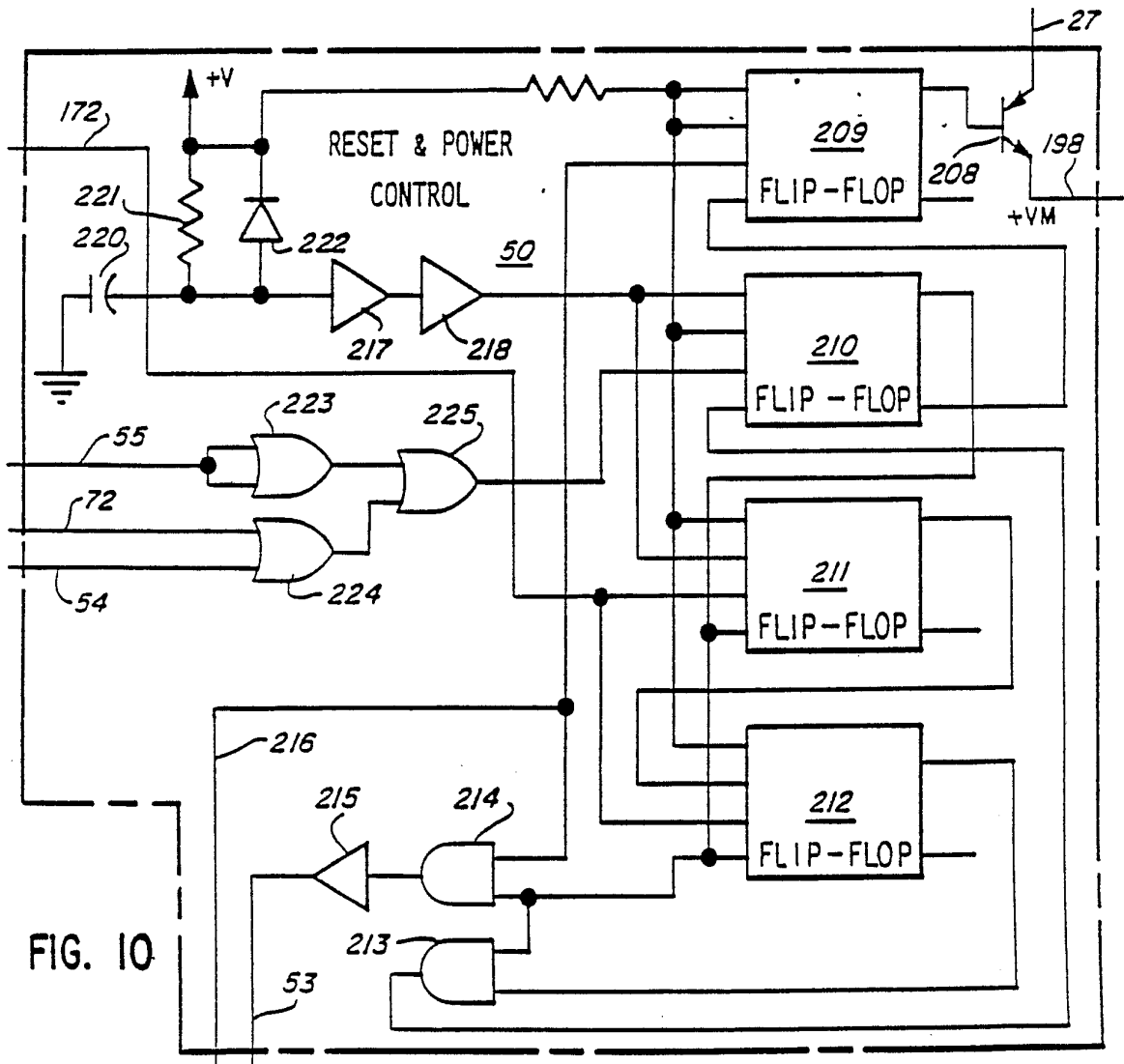
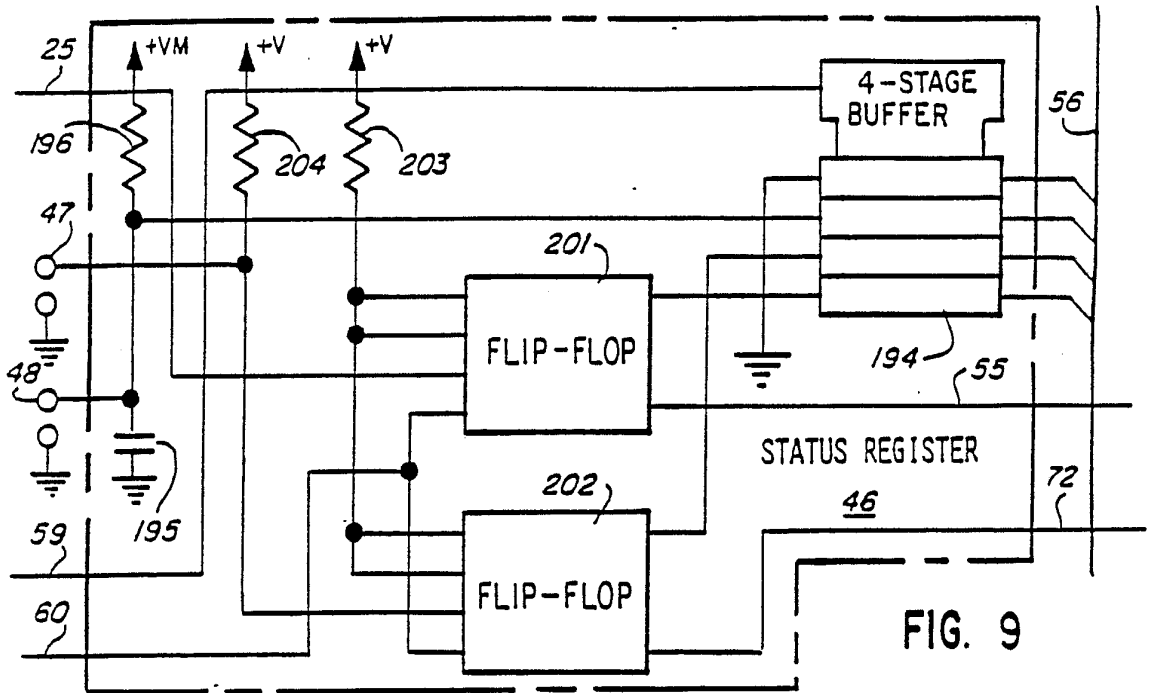


FIG. 8



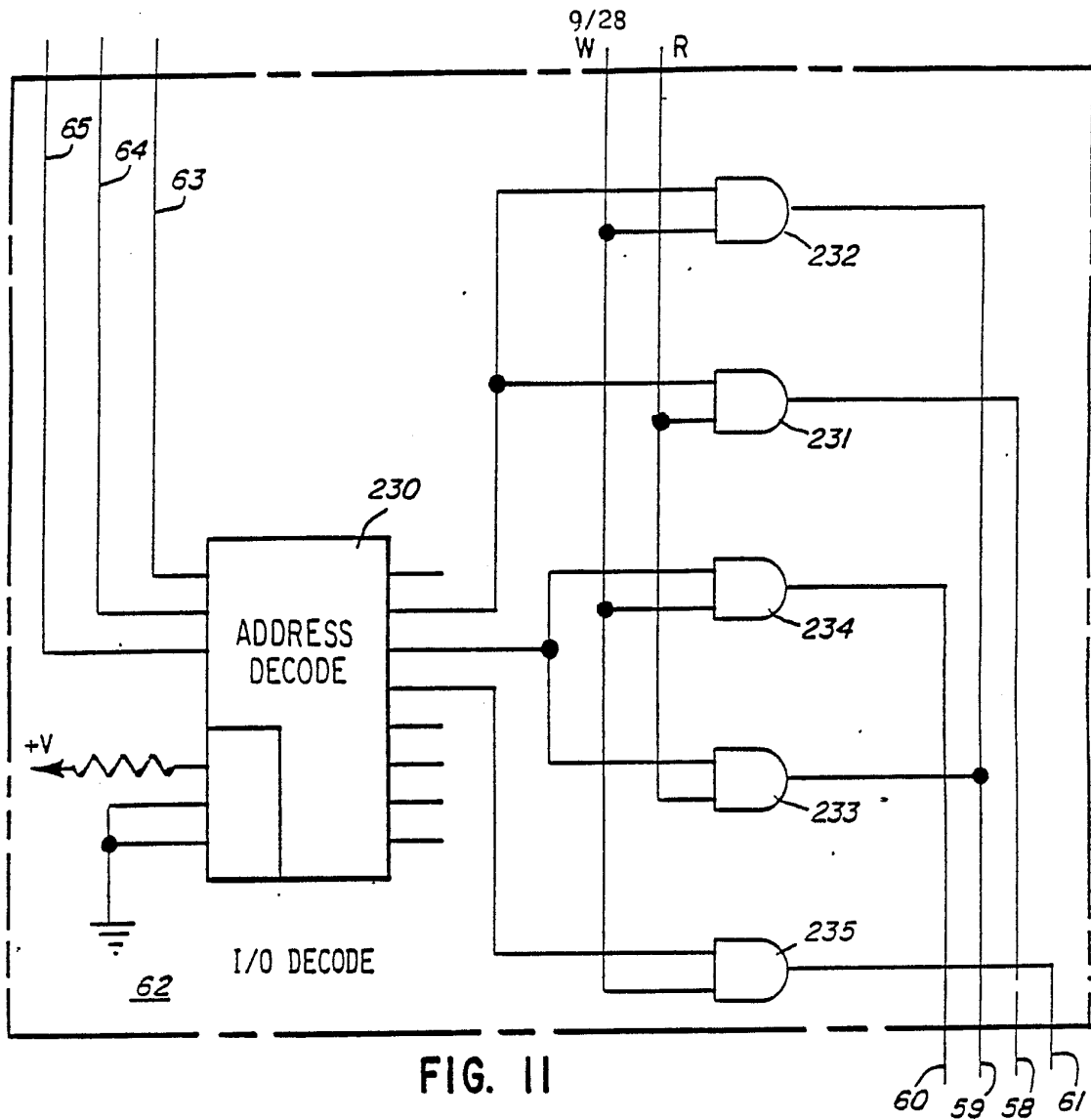
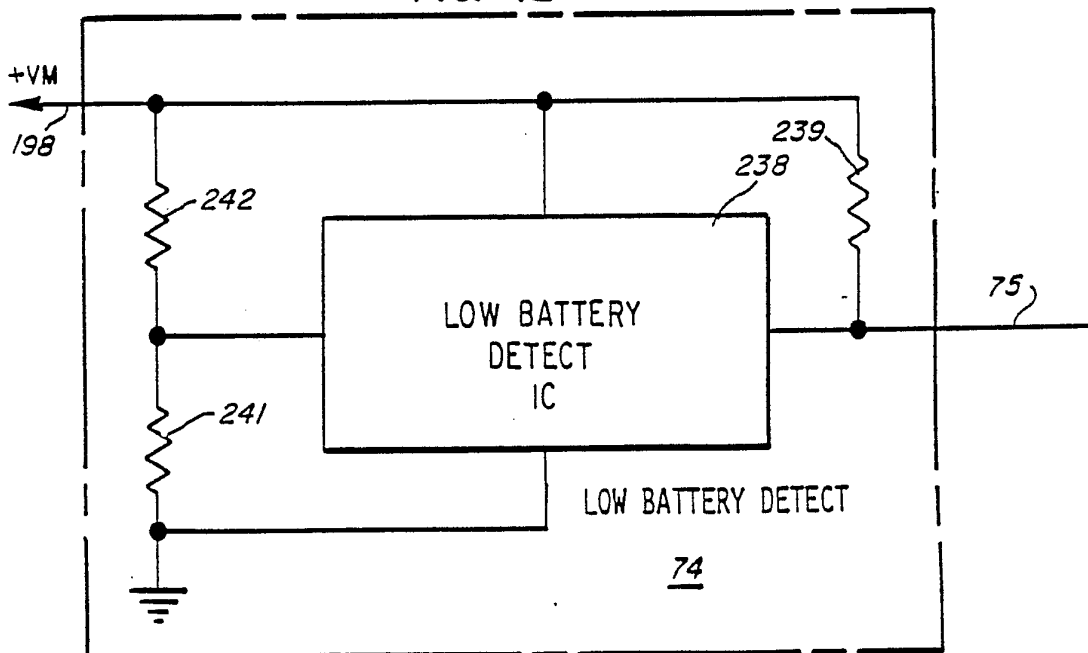


FIG. 11

FIG. 12



74

10/28

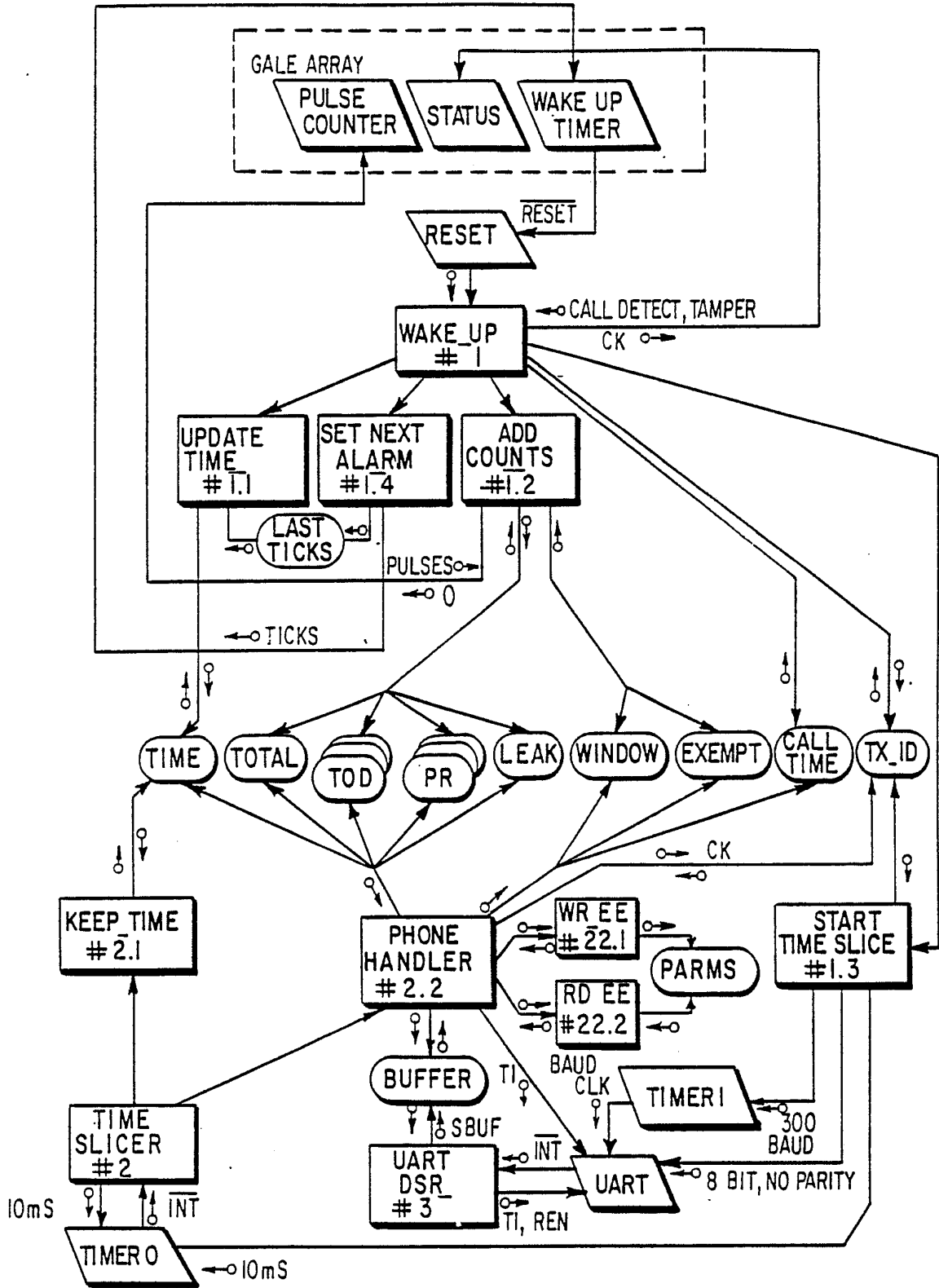
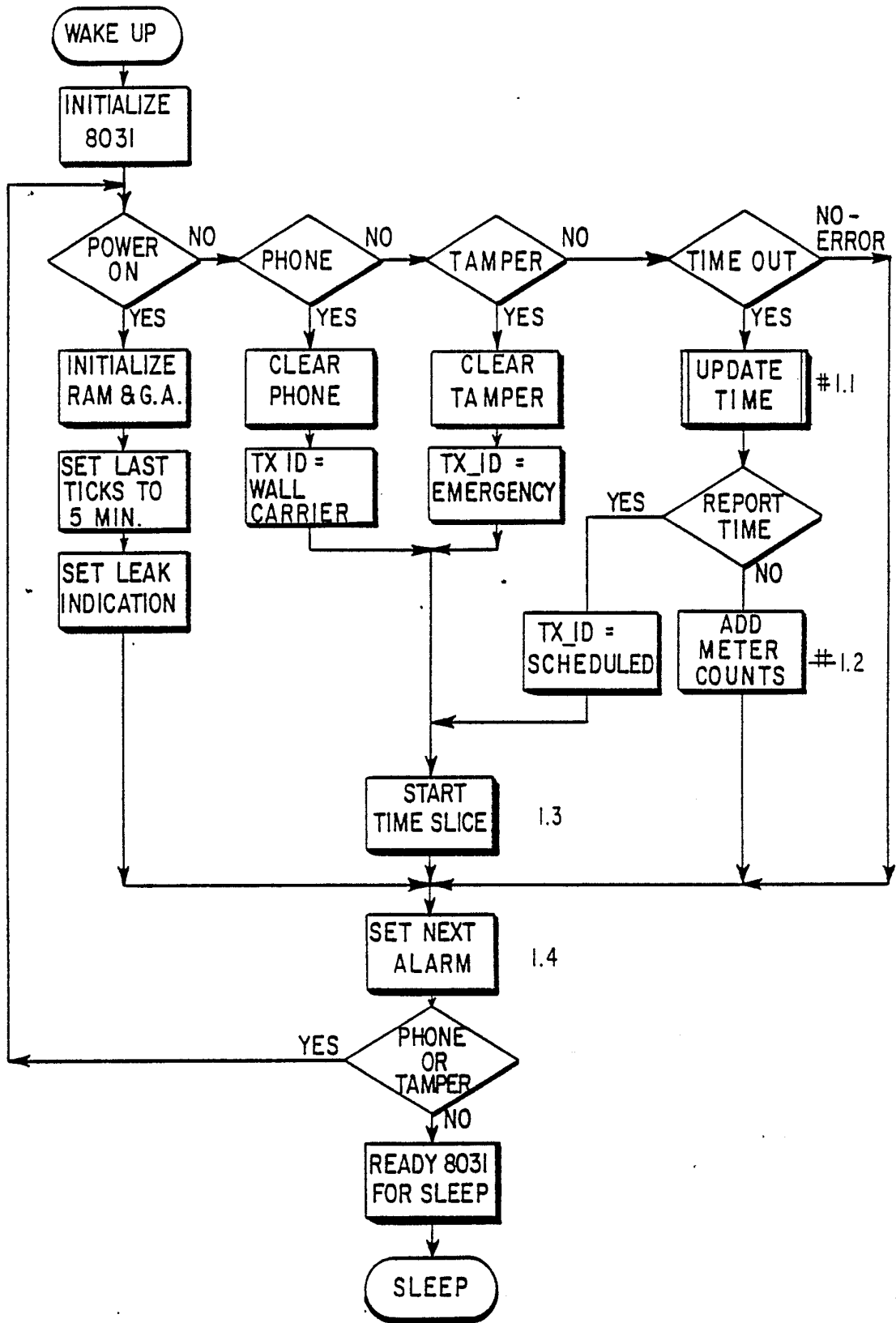


FIG. 13

11/28

FIG. 14



12/28

FIG. 15

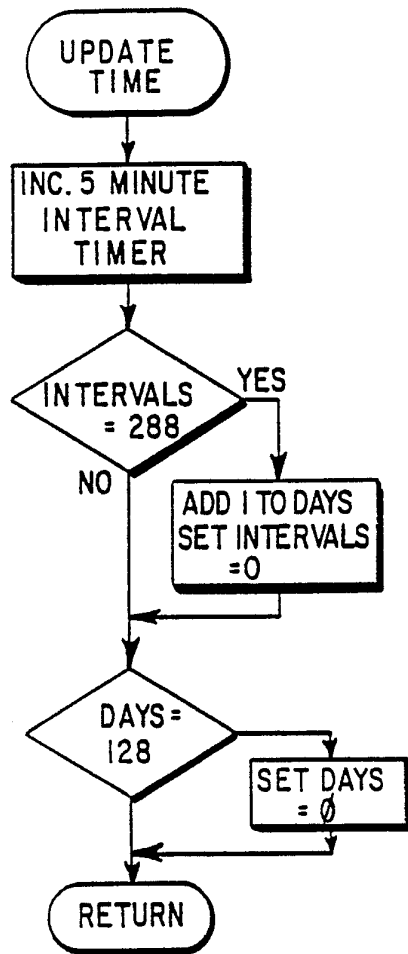


FIG. 15A

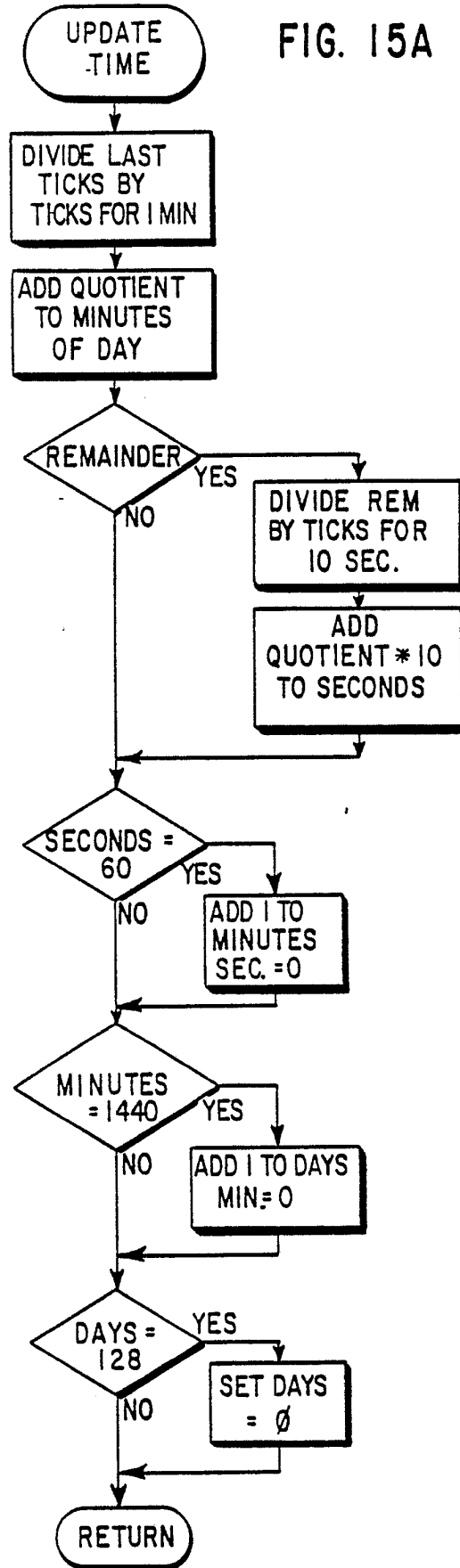
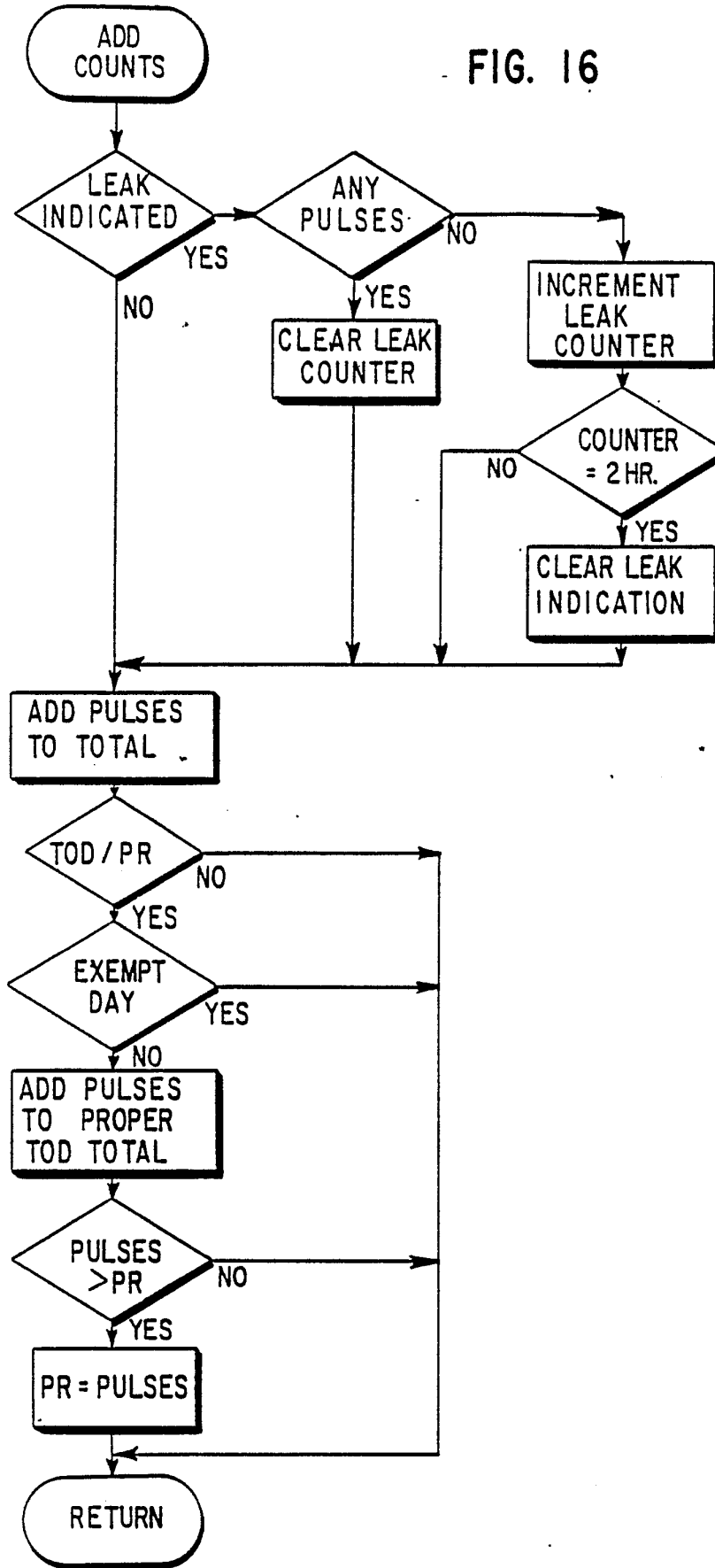


FIG. 16



14/28

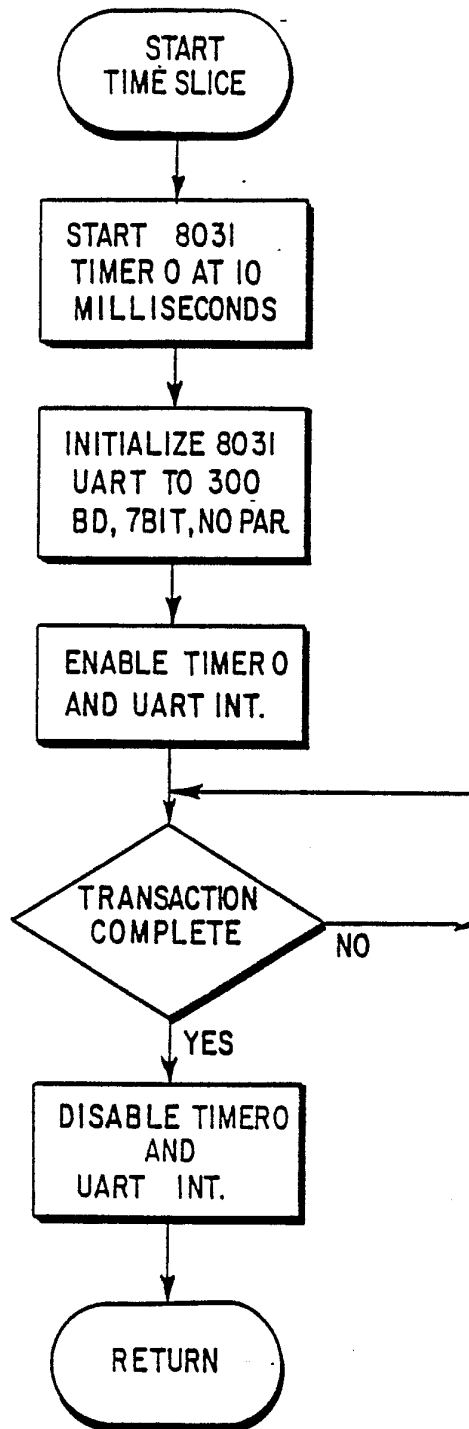


FIG. 17

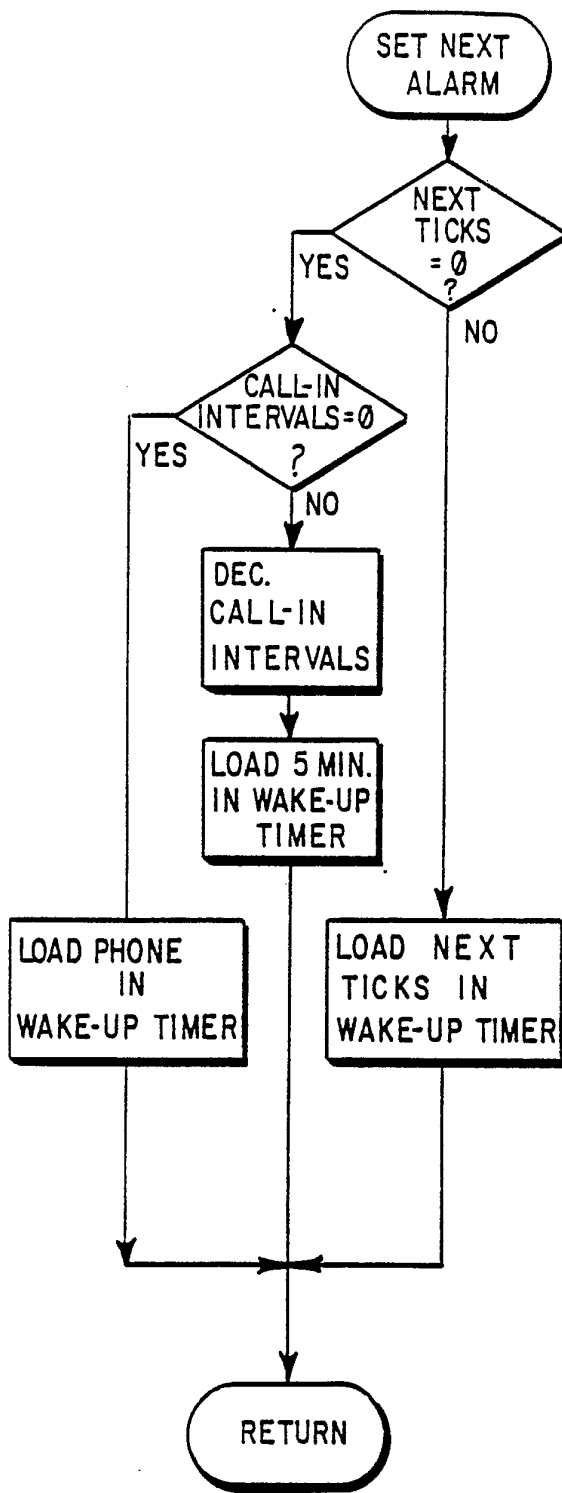


FIG. 18

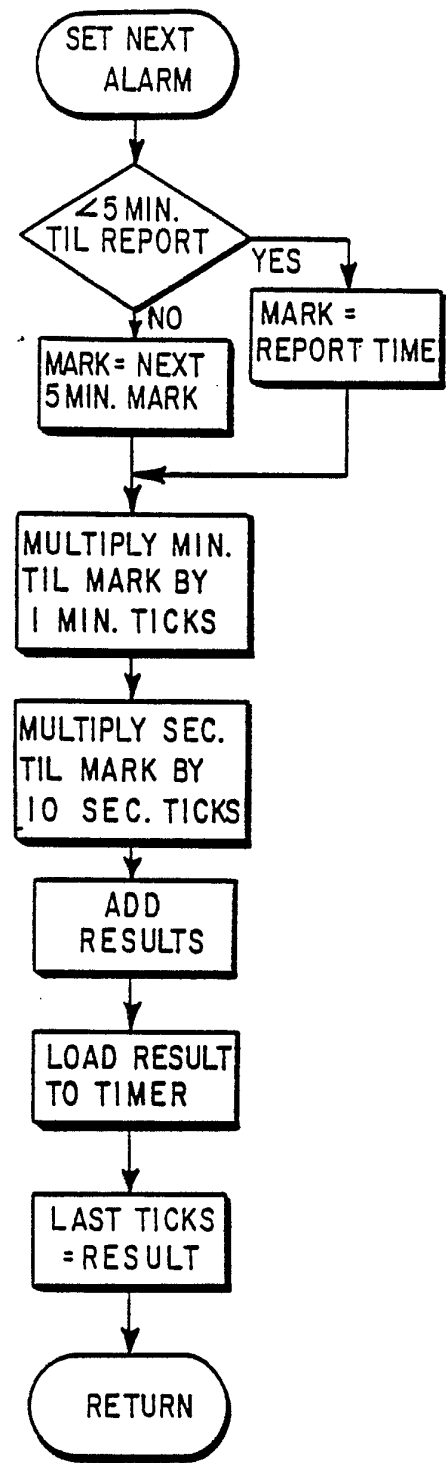


FIG. 18A

16/28

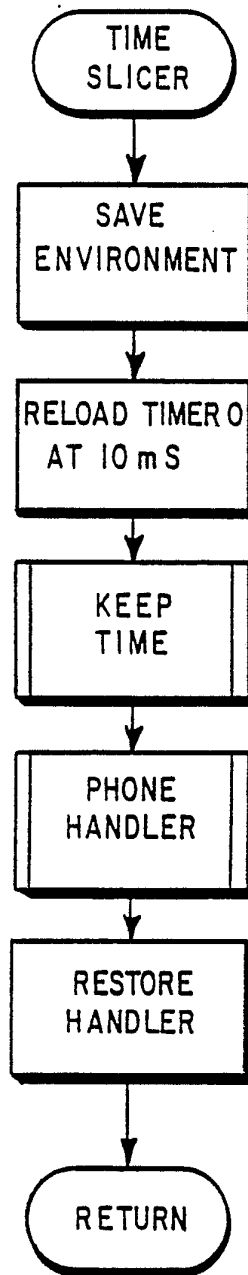
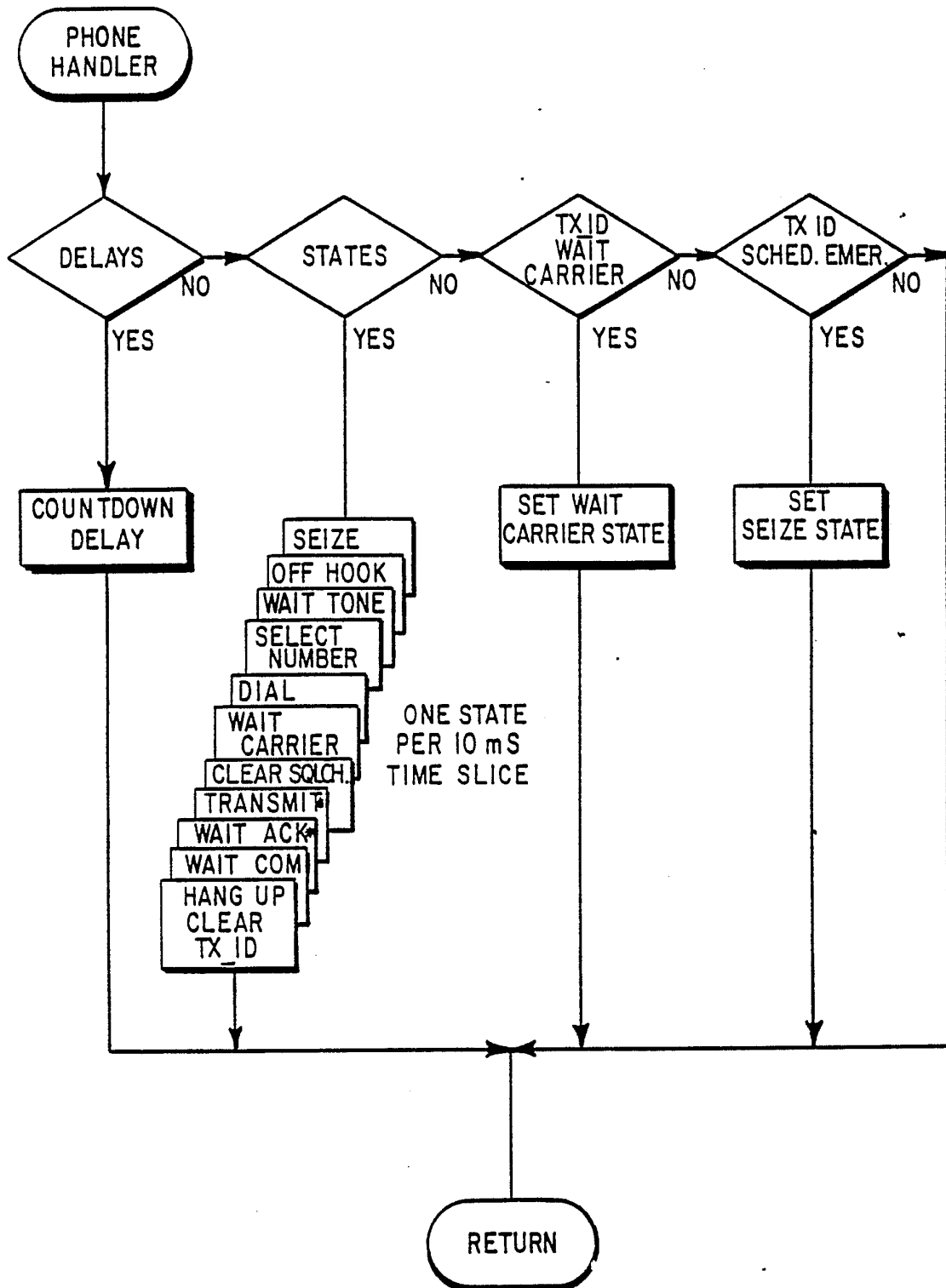


FIG. 19

FIG. 20



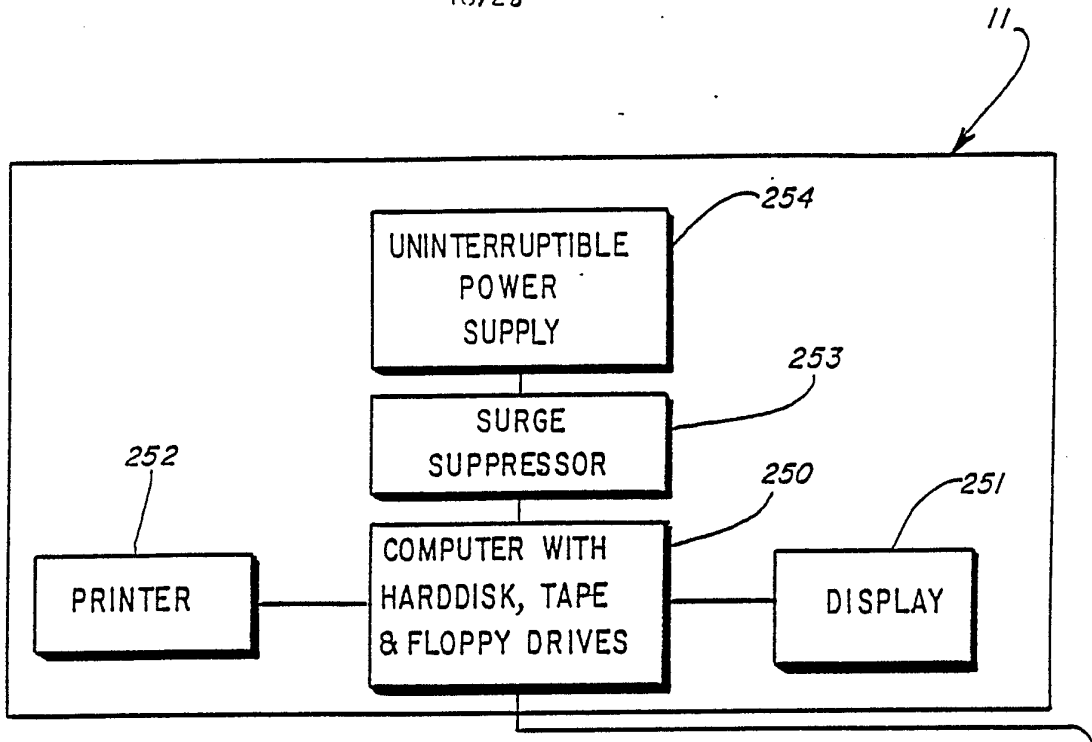


FIG. 21

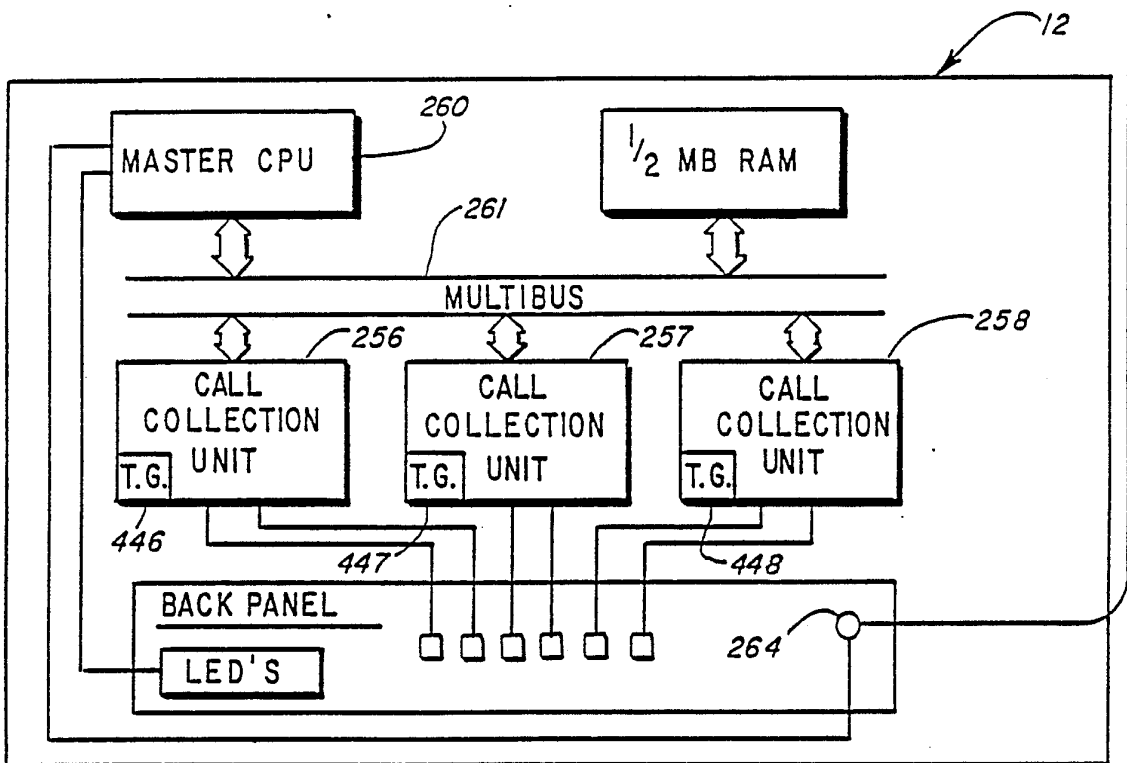


FIG. 22

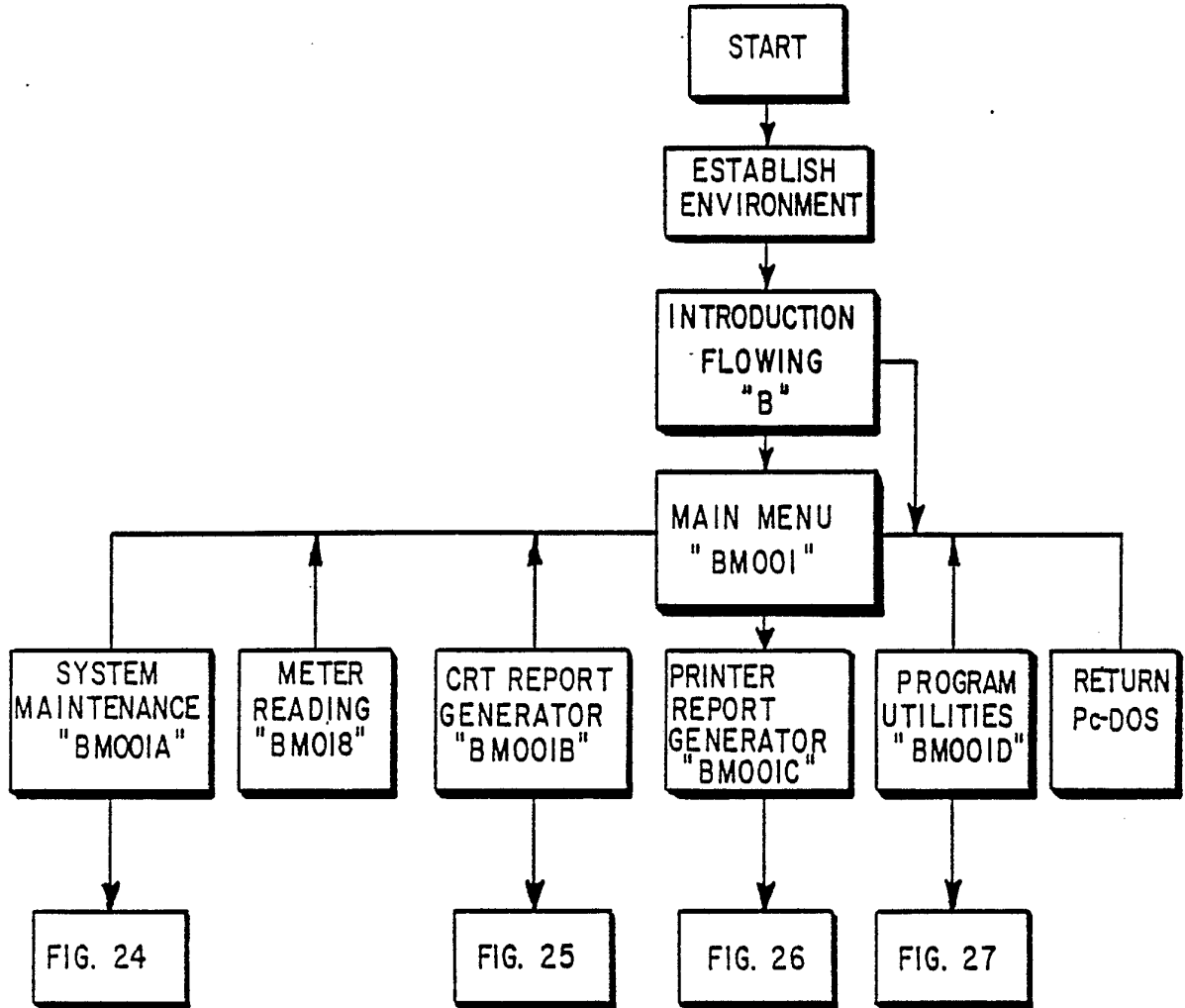
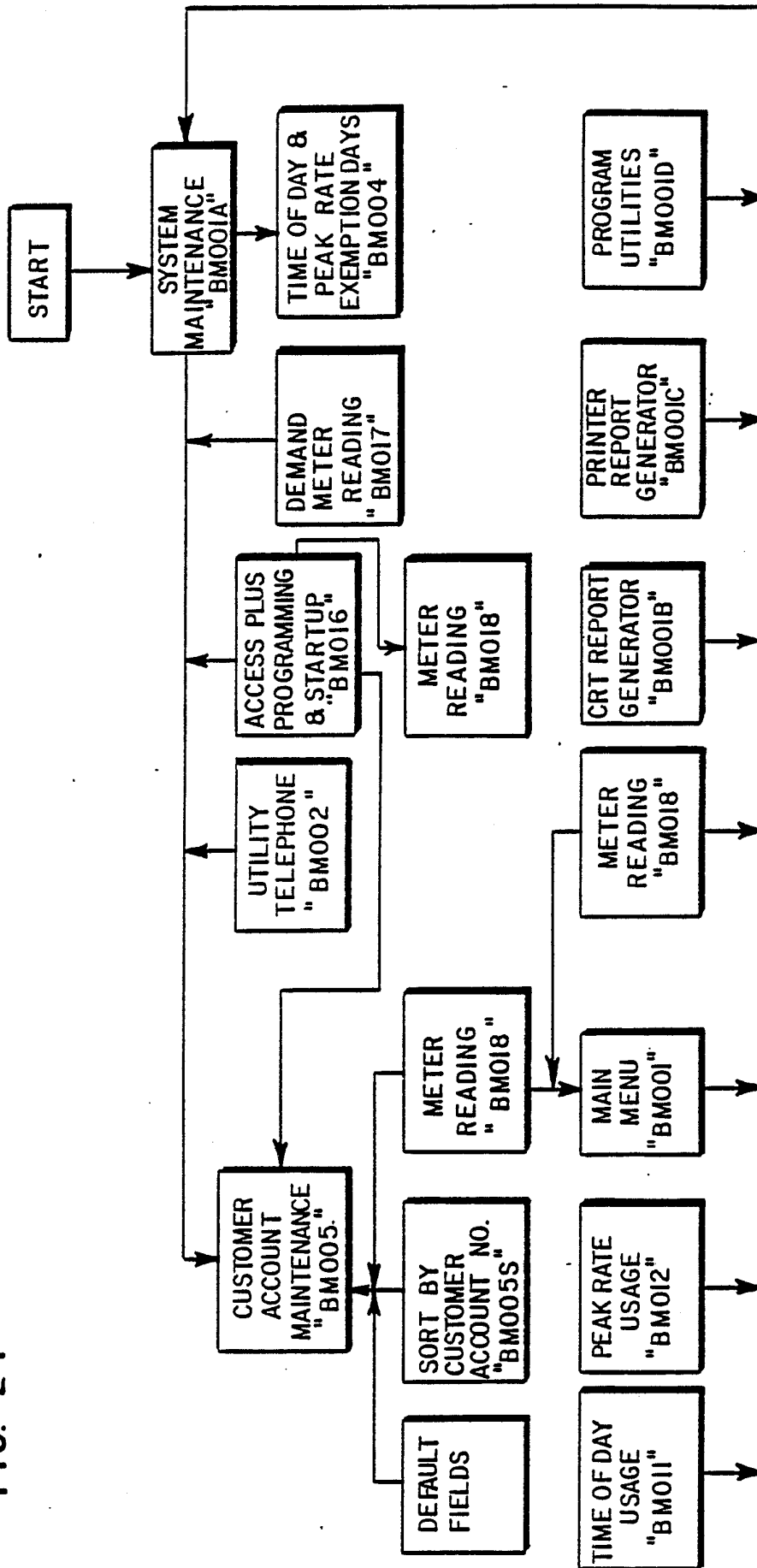


FIG. 23

FIG. 24



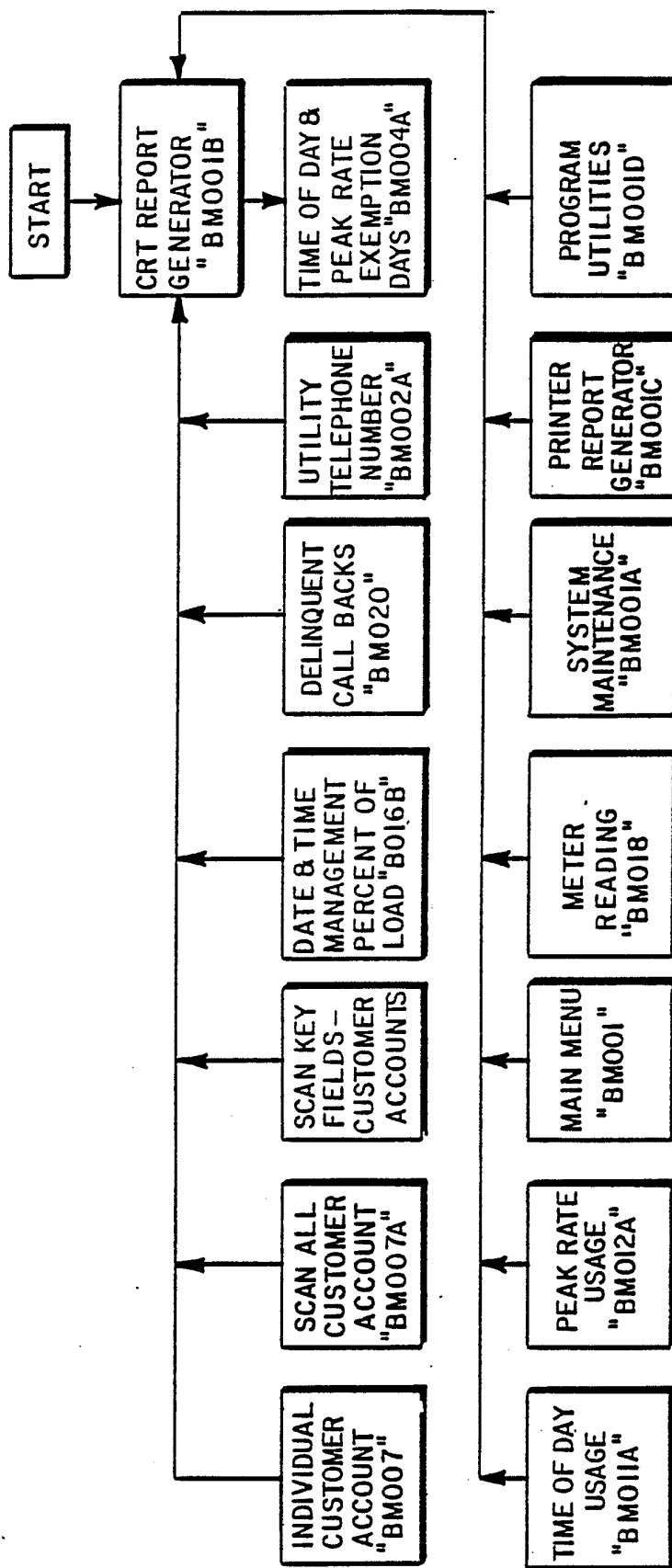
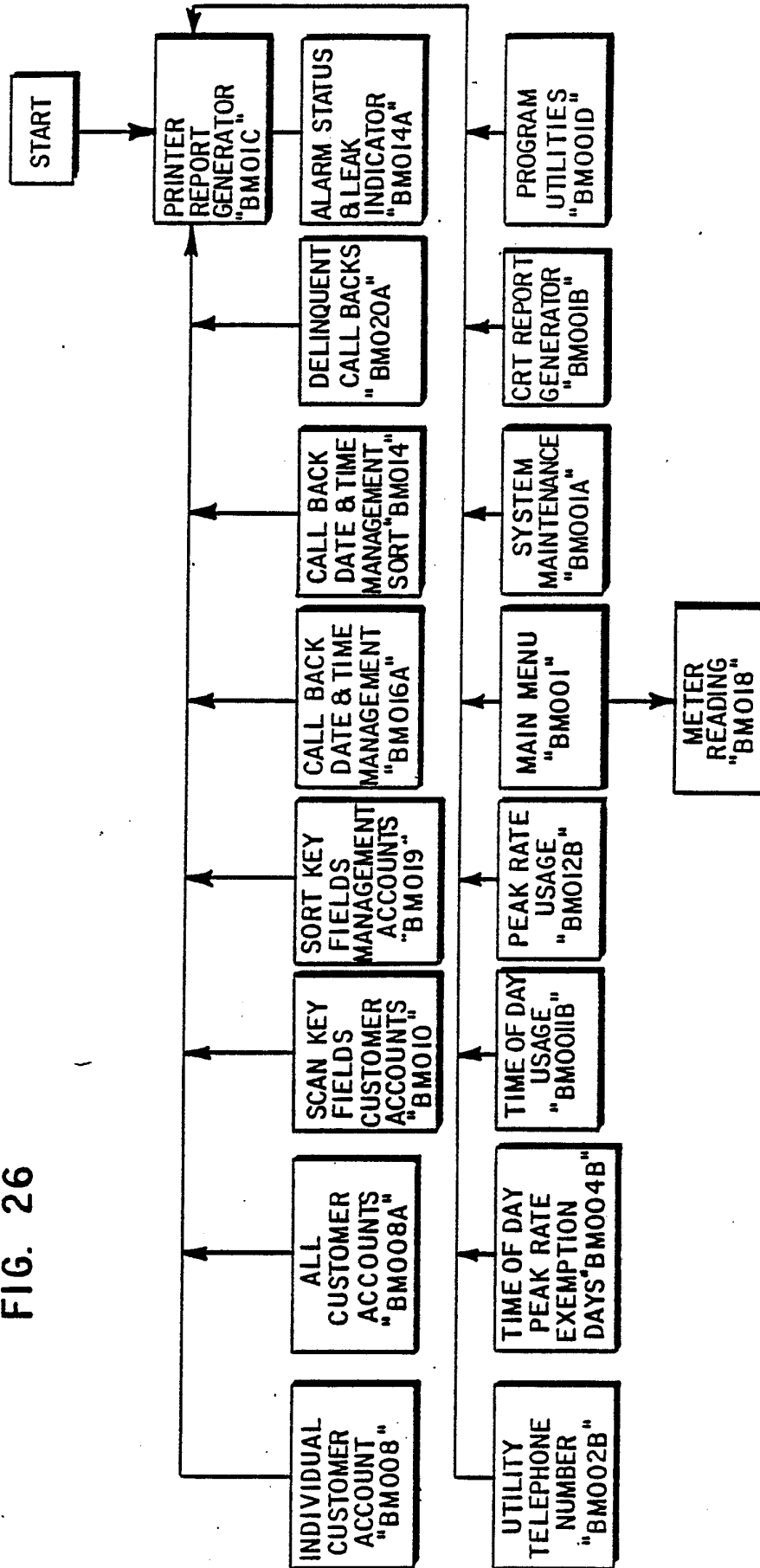


FIG. 25.

FIG. 26



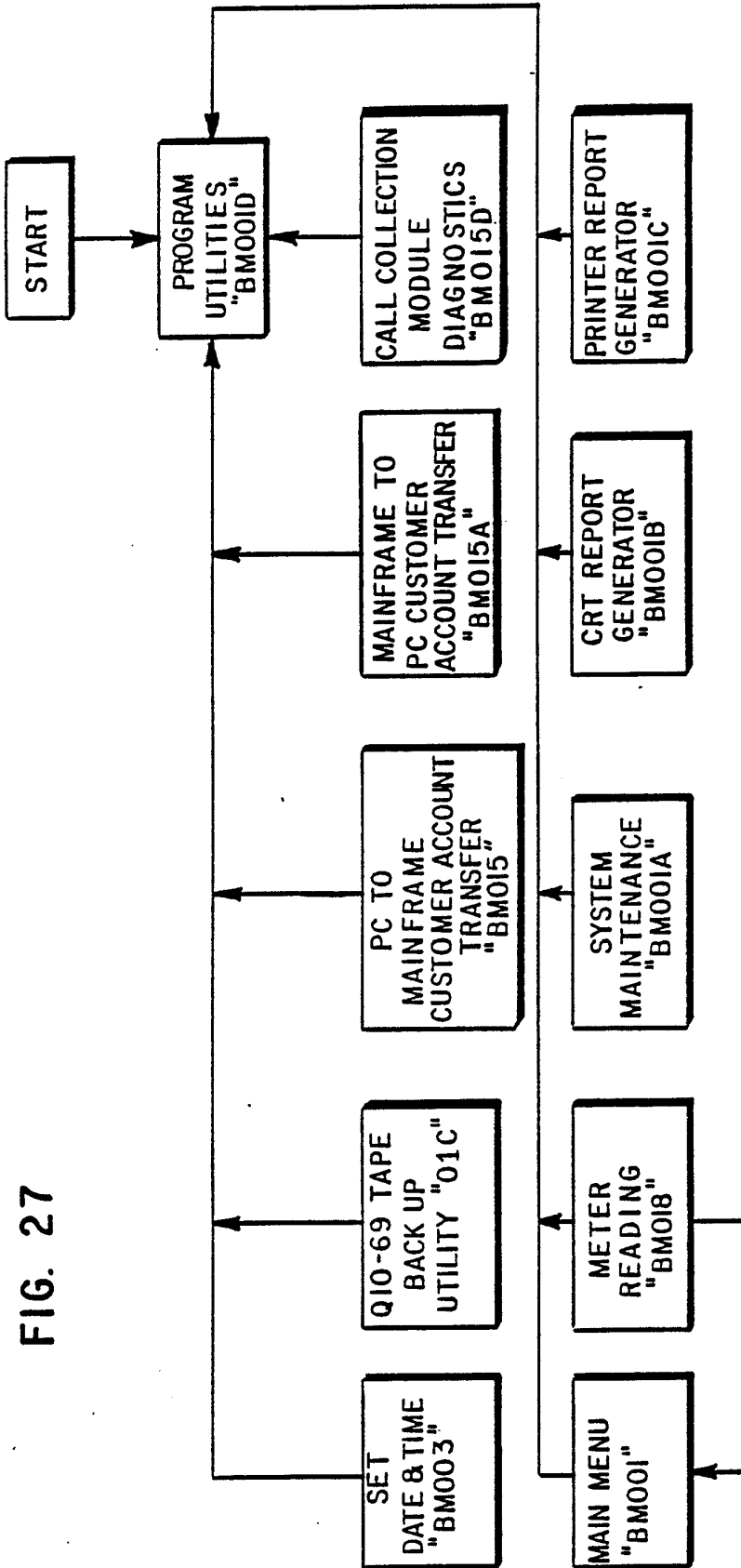


FIG. 27

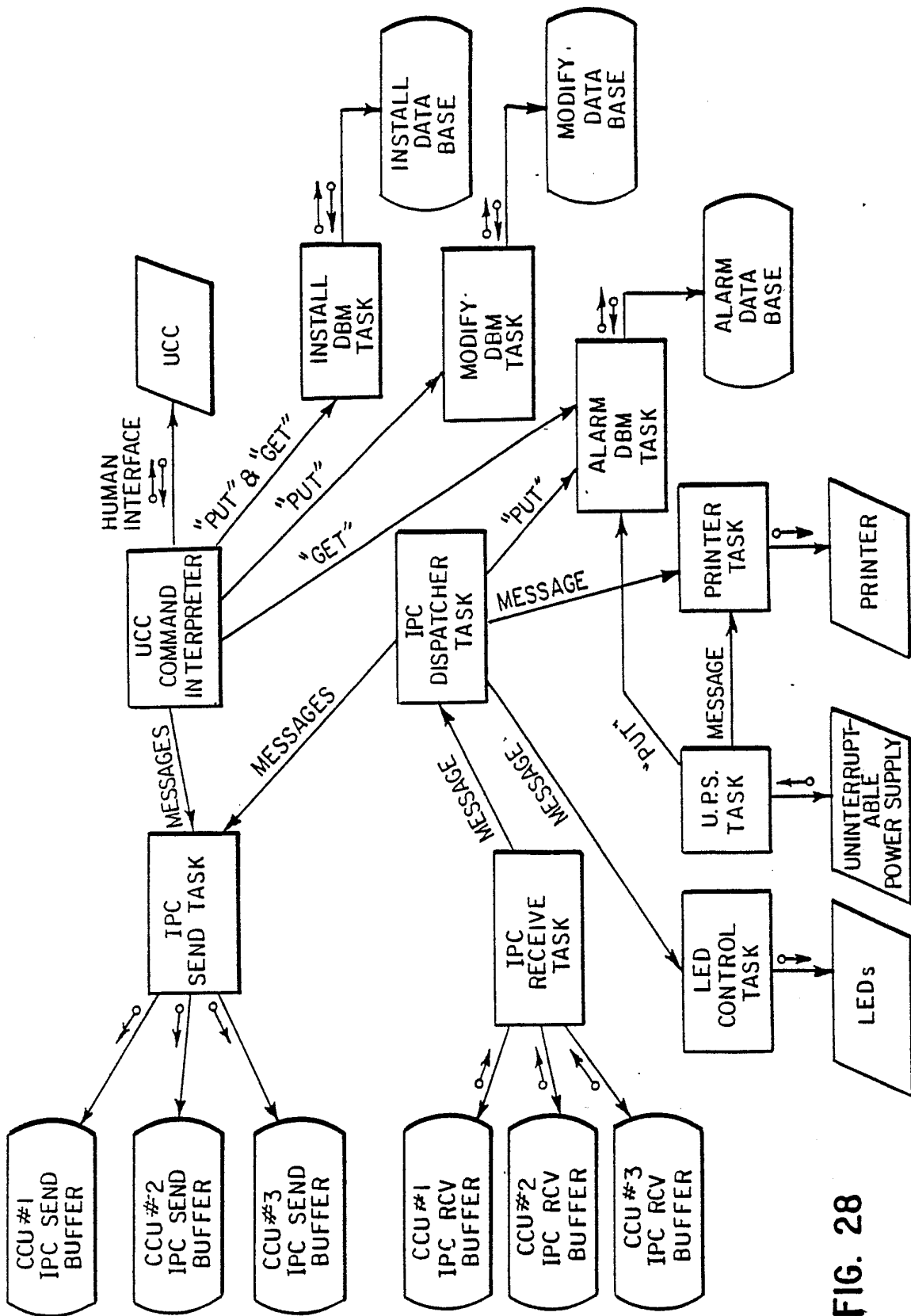
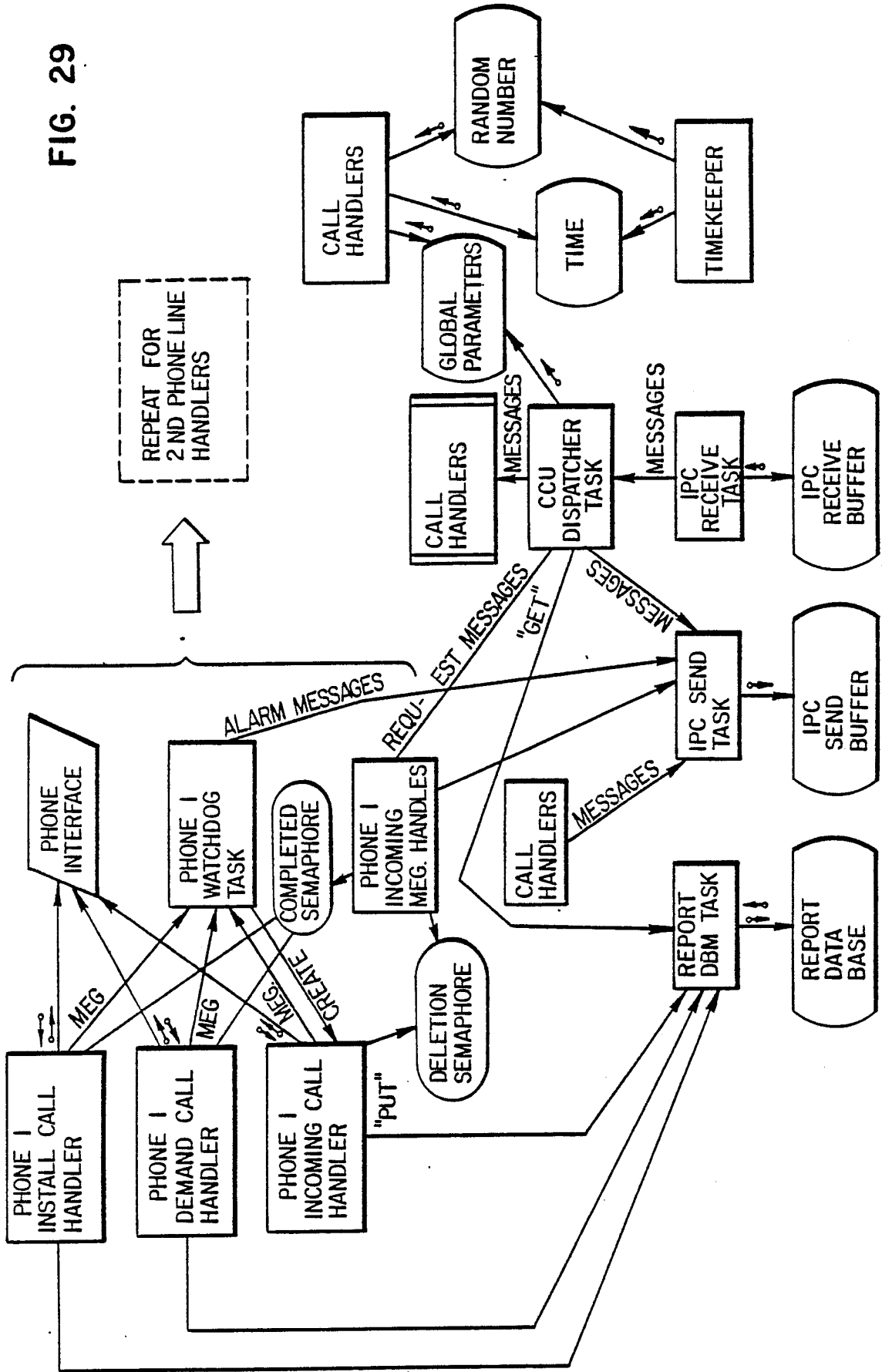


FIG. 28

FIG. 29



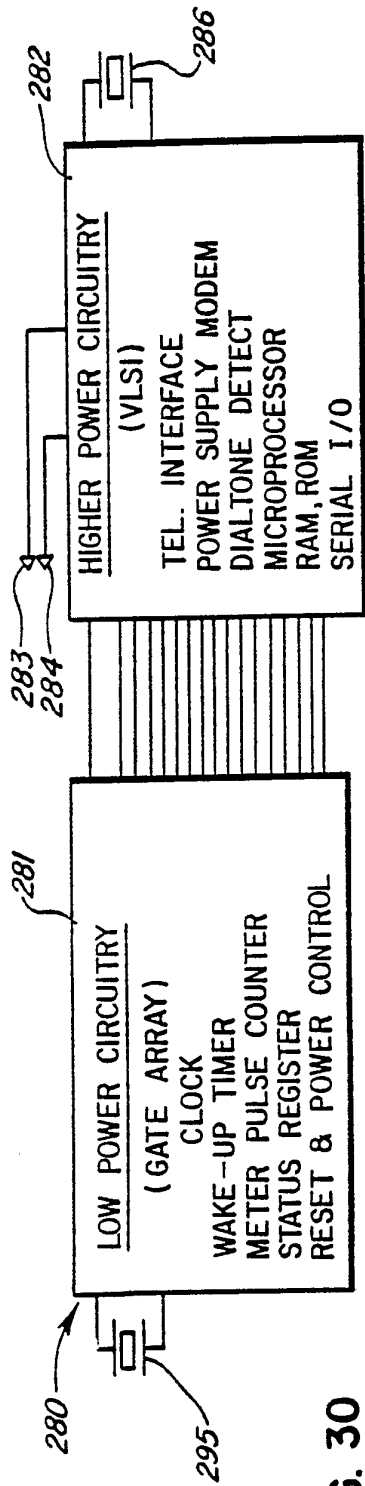


FIG. 30

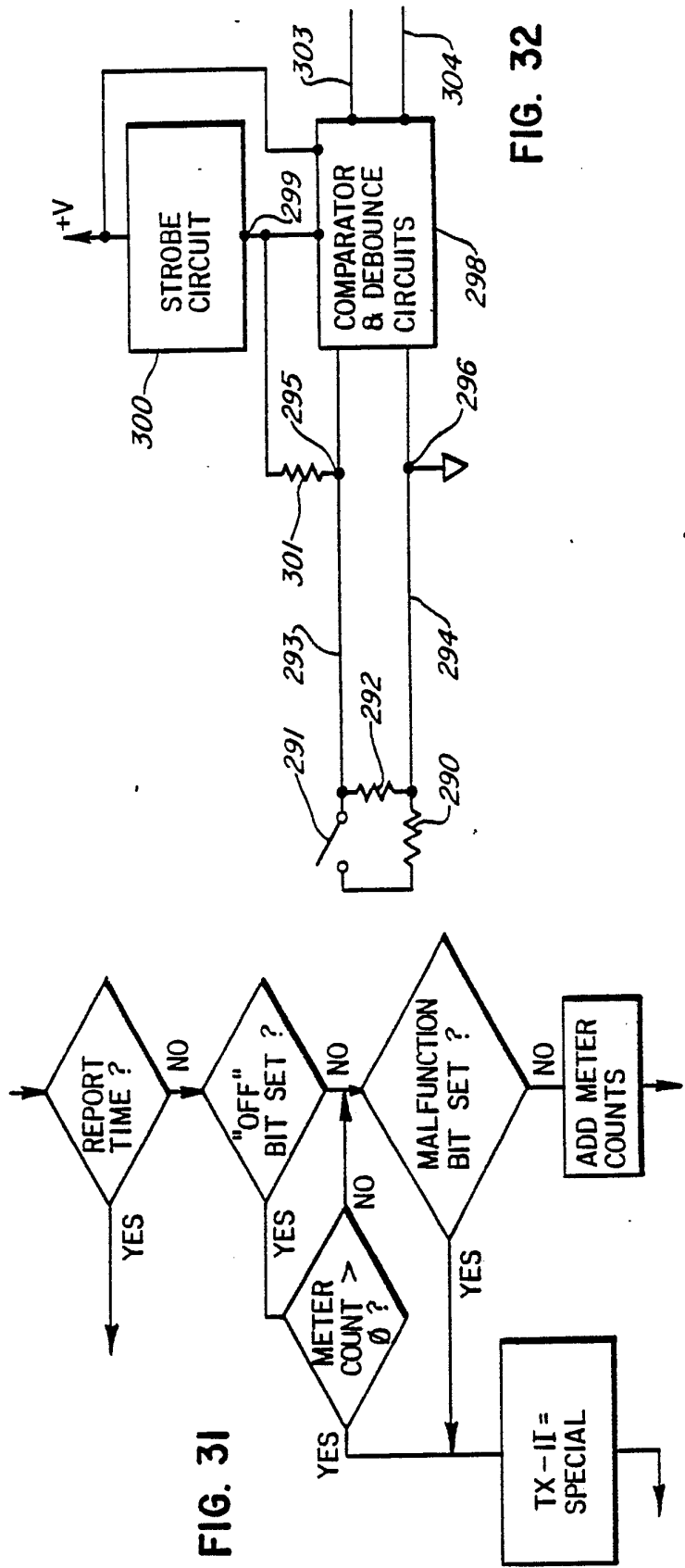


FIG. 31

FIG. 32

FIG. 33

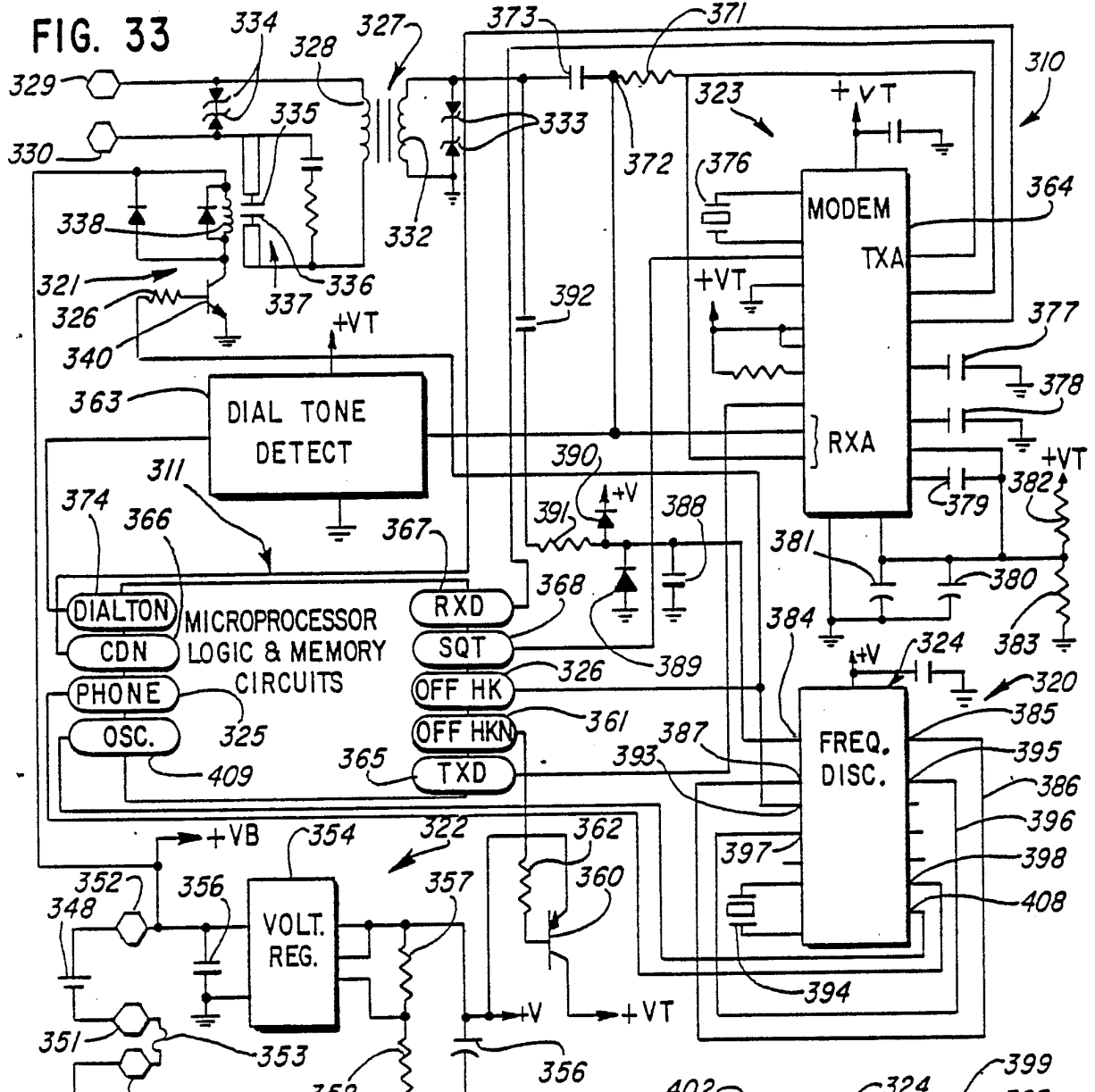
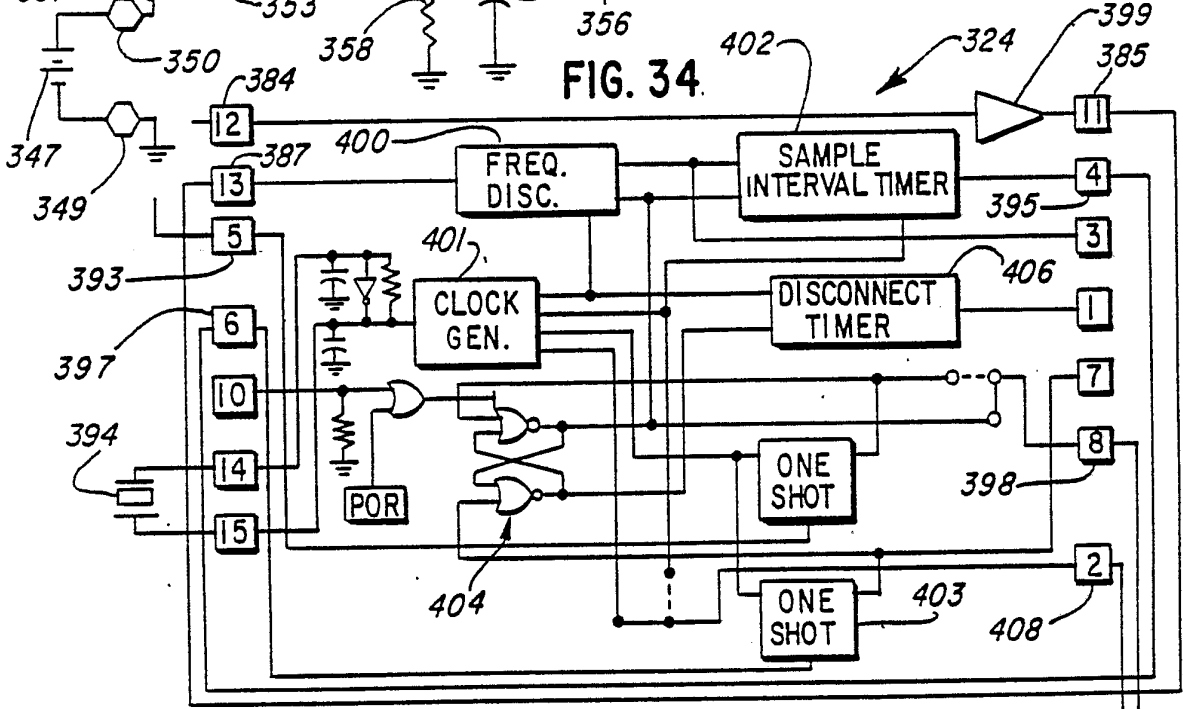
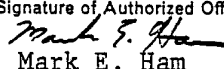


FIG. 34



INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International Application No PCT/US87/01509

I. CLASSIFICATION OF SUBJECT MATTER (if several classification symbols apply, indicate all) ³		
According to International Patent Classification (IPC) or to both National Classification and IPC		
IPC(4) H04M 11/00 U.S. CL. 379/107; 364/870.03		
II. FIELDS SEARCHED		
Minimum Documentation Searched ⁴		
Classification System	Classification Symbols	
U.S.	379/106, 107; 340/870.02, 870.03, 870.06, 870.07, 364/483, 200, 900	
Documentation Searched other than Minimum Documentation to the Extent that such Documents are Included in the Fields Searched ⁶		
III. DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT ¹⁴		
Category [*]	Citation of Document, ¹⁶ with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages ¹⁷	Relevant to Claim No. ¹⁸
X	Schiesl, J.W., "Automatic Hydrologic Observing System" U.S. Department of Commerce, National Weather Service, Silver Spring MD, July 1976. See pp. 2-5 and Figs. 3-5.	1-3, 8-10
Y, P	U.S., A, 4,614,945 (Brunius et al.) 30 September 1986. See col. 11 lines 42-45, 64-col. 12 line 2, col. 19 line 55- col. 20 line 5 and Figures 9, 13.	39-40, 45
Y, P	U.S., A, 4,649,538 (DeLuca et al.) 10 March 1987. See col. 6 lines 54-61 and Figures 2, 3.	11
Y	U.S., A, 4,578,536 (Oliver et al.) 25 March 1986. See col. 2 lines 40-52, col. 4 lines 7-38, col. 6 line 64- col. 7 line 10 and Figures 2 and 5.	65-72
Y	U.S., A, 4,573,115 (Halgrimson) 25 February 1986. See col. 9 lines 35-42 and Figures 5, 8.	11
Y	U.S., A, 4,455,453 (Parasekvakos et al.) 19 June 1984. See col. 6 lines 29-43 and Fig. 1.	4-6
(continued)		
<p>[*] Special categories of cited documents: ¹⁵</p> <p>"A" document defining the general state of the art which is not considered to be of particular relevance</p> <p>"E" earlier document but published on or after the international filing date</p> <p>"L" document which may throw doubts on priority claim(s) or which is cited to establish the publication date of another citation or other special reason (as specified)</p> <p>"O" document referring to an oral disclosure, use, exhibition or other means</p> <p>"P" document published prior to the international filing date but later than the priority date claimed</p> <p>"T" later document published after the international filing date or priority date and not in conflict with the application but cited to understand the principle or theory underlying the invention</p> <p>"X" document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered novel or cannot be considered to involve an inventive step</p> <p>"Y" document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is combined with one or more other such documents, such combination being obvious to a person skilled in the art.</p> <p>"&" document member of the same patent family</p>		
IV. CERTIFICATION		
Date of the Actual Completion of the International Search ²	Date of Mailing of this International Search Report ²	
05 August 1987	28 AUG 1987	
International Searching Authority ¹	Signature of Authorized Officer ²⁰	
ISA/US	 Mark E. Ham	

III. DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT (CONTINUED FROM THE SECOND SHEET)

Category *	Citation of Document, ¹⁶ with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages ¹⁷	Relevant to Claim No ¹⁸
Y	U.S., A, 4,388,690 (Lumsden) 14 June 1983. See col. 2 line 5- col. 4 line 34, col. 5 line 51- col. 6 line 48, col. 8 line 41 - col. 9 line 6, col. 11 line 27- col. 12 line 2 and Fig. 4, 5.	2, 3, 8, 9, 47-49, 56
Y	U.S., A, 4,357,601 (McWilliams) 02 November 1982. See col. 1, lines 50-56, col. 2 lines 24-49, col. 3 lines 61-68 and Fig. 1.	41-44
$\frac{X}{Y}$	U.S., A, 4,287,567 (Lumsden) 01 September 1981. See col. 1 line 15- col. 3 line 2, col. 4 line 60- col. 5 line 55, col. 6 lines 33-68 and Fig. 1, 2.	1, 10 2, 3, 8, 9, 19-22, 47-49, 52, 57-62.
A	U.S., A, 4,086,434 (Bocchi) 25 April 1978. See Figures 4A-4I.	