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Curtis

[11] **3,866,211**

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[54] **PARLIMENTARY PROCEDURE SIGN**

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[52] **U.S. Cl.** **340/332,** 35/60, 108/32, 248/441, 340/326

[51] **Int. Cl.** **G08b 5/36**

[58] **Field of Search** ..... 340/332, 323, 326, 225; 108/23, 32; 248/441; 35/9 B, 60

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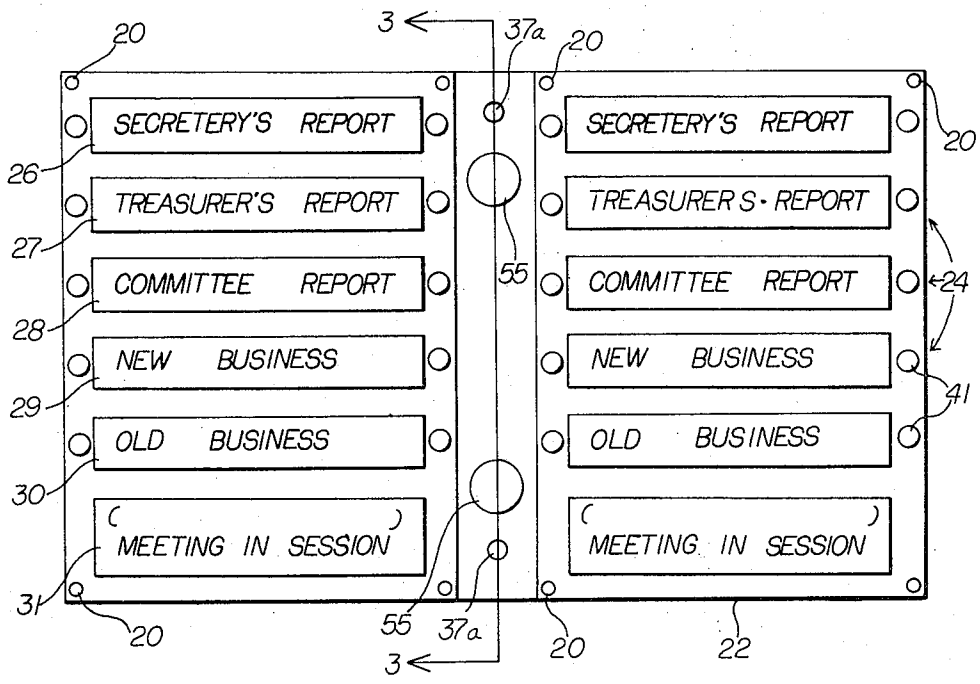
[57] **ABSTRACT**

Disclosed is a lectern that defines a place for a speaker to stand or sit and includes a plurality of independently controllable electrical signs, each sign displaying a message indicative of a different phase of parliamentary procedure. The individual signs are readily visible to an audience facing the speaker and are selectively controlled by the speaker.

15 Claims, 4 Drawing Figures



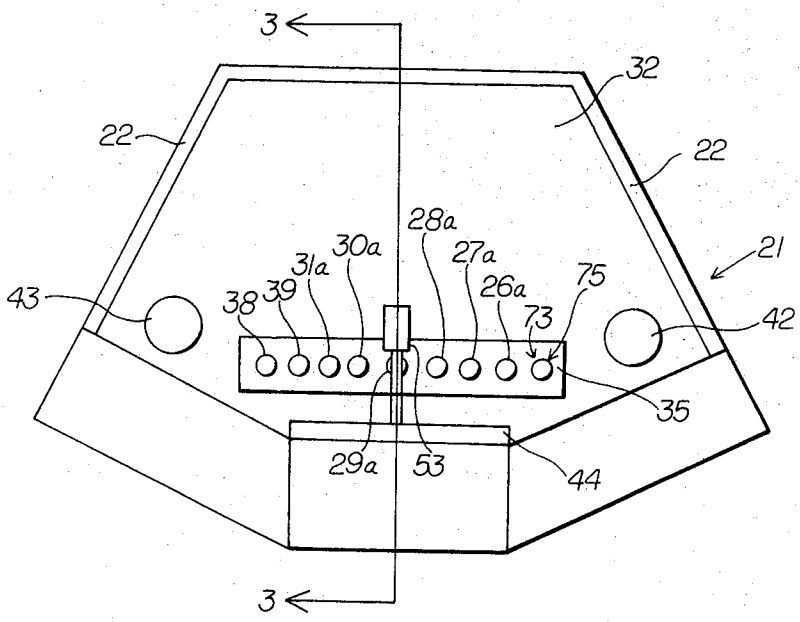

3
32
22
22
21
28a
30a
27a
31a
26a
39
38
75
43
73
42
35
29a
53
44
3

FIG. 1

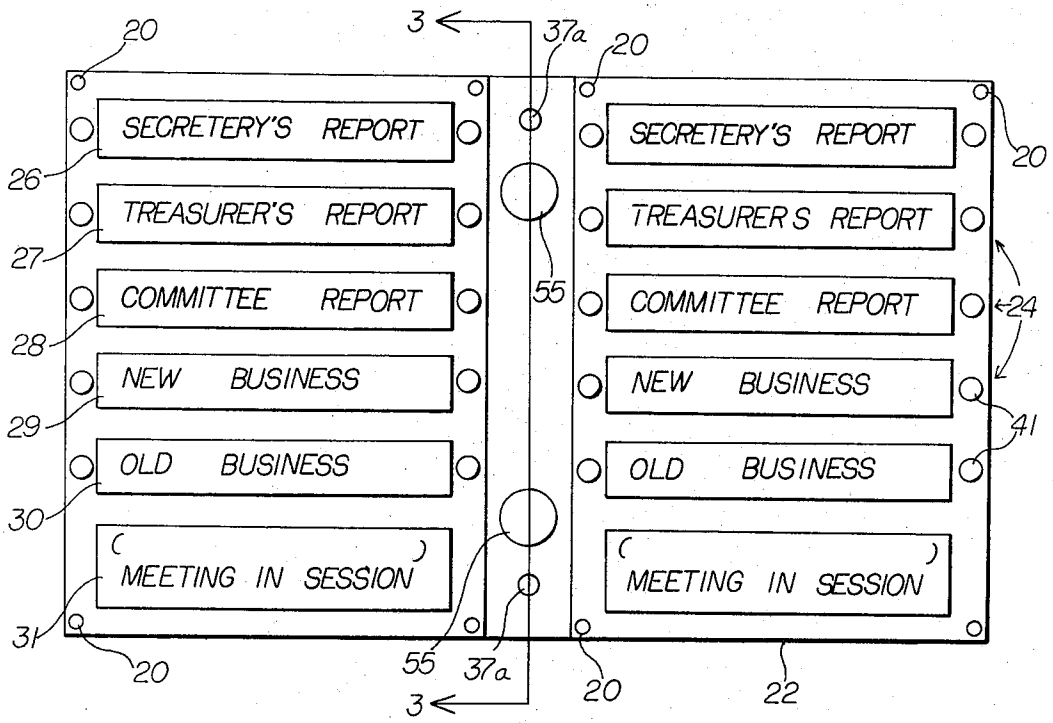

3
37a
20
20
20
SECRETERY'S REPORT
SECRETERY'S REPORT
26
TREASURER'S REPORT
TREASURER'S REPORT
27
55
COMMITTEE REPORT
COMMITTEE REPORT
24
28
NEW BUSINESS
NEW BUSINESS
29
41
OLD BUSINESS
OLD BUSINESS
30
MEETING IN SESSION
MEETING IN SESSION
31
20
55
37a
20
22
3

FIG. 2

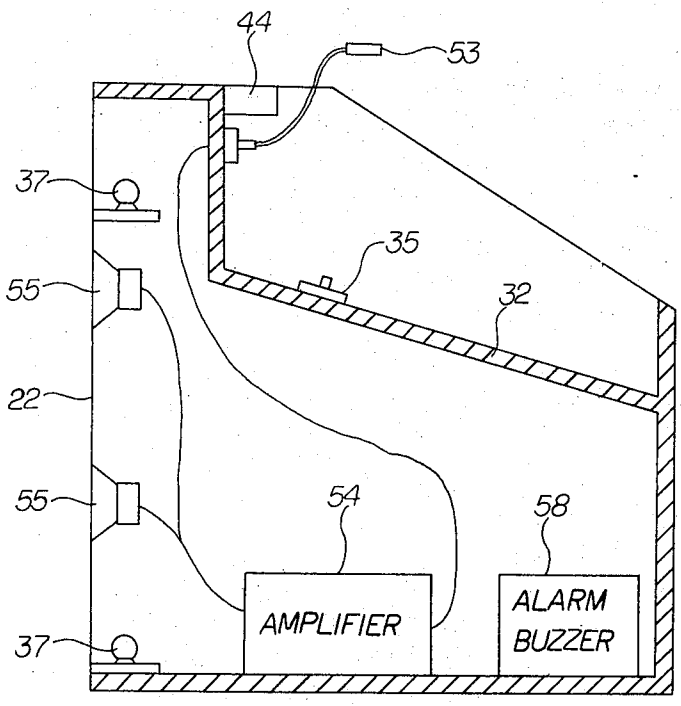


FIG. 3

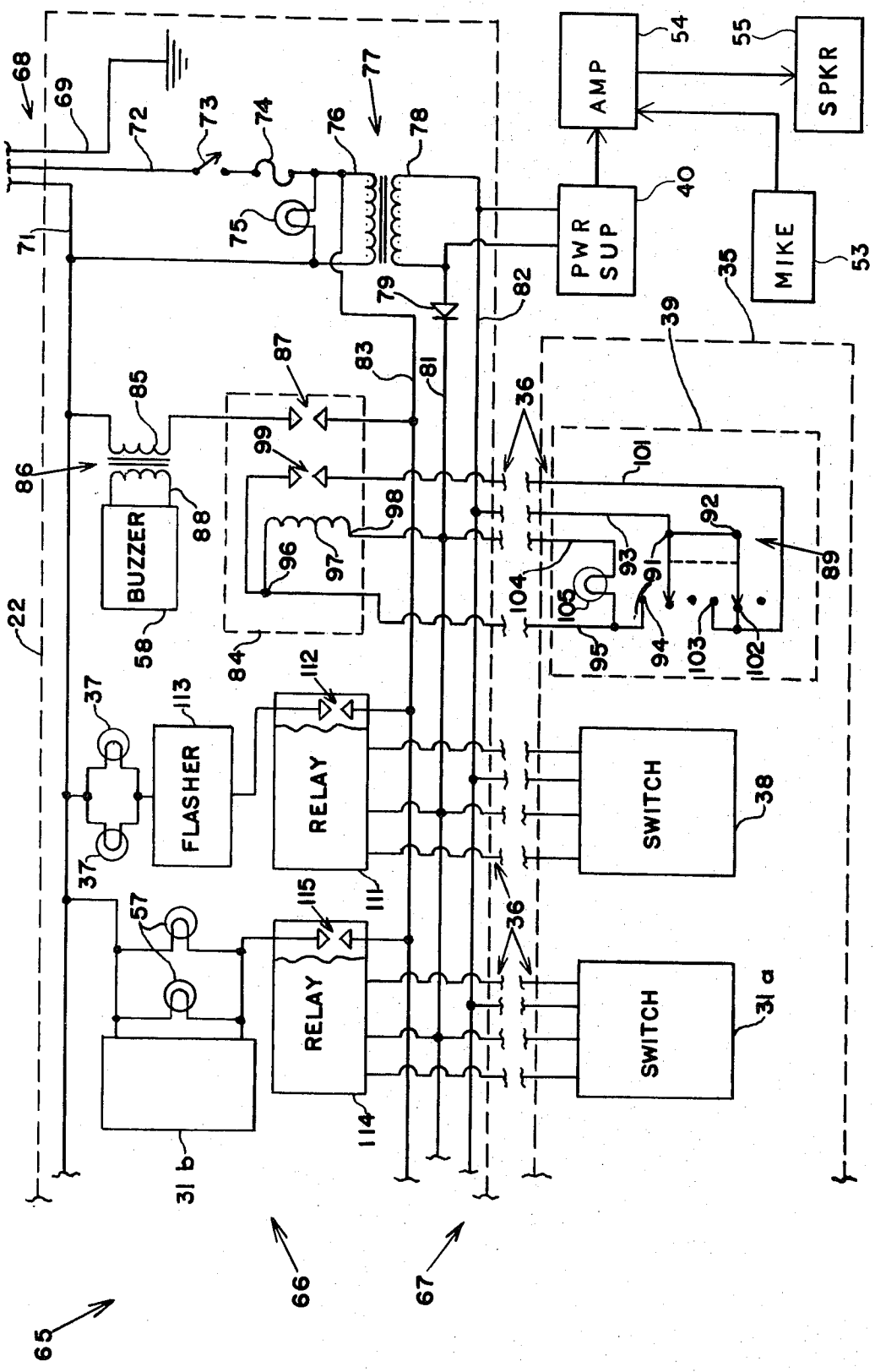

AMP
SPKR
PWR SUP
MIKE
BUZZER
FLASHER
RELAY
RELAY
SWITCH
SWITCH
65
66
67

Fig. 4.

PARLIMENTARY PROCEDURE SIGN

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

This invention relates to apparatus that is an aid in conducting meetings and, more particularly, to a lectern including a plurality of signs that display the various phases of parliamentary procedure to aid in the utilization of parliamentary procedure when conducting a meeting.

Efficiency demands that meetings of all but the smallest groups of people be conducted in accordance with established rules of procedure. For example, parliamentary procedure has been widely adopted as the most efficient process for conducting meetings that involve a substantial number of persons.

Yet even when using parliamentary procedure, problems remain. One difficulty encountered in following parliamentary procedure in meetings with many persons is that often a large number of participants are unsure of what phase of the meeting is currently in progress. This occurs, for example, when persons enter and leave the meeting hall, as seems inevitable in a large meeting, or when small groups within the hall hold brief discussions among themselves and temporarily become uncertain of the phase the meeting has reached. Thus time is often wasted when persons make motions or other suggestions and comments at an improper time. Much of this time could be saved if a way to continually, but unobtrusively, indicate the phase to which the meeting has progressed were available.

It is an object of this invention, therefore, to provide a sign that effectively indicates the phase to which a meeting has progressed and possesses such other attributes as are necessary to render the sign acceptable to those responsible for the conduct of meetings.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

This invention is characterized by a lectern that defines a place to be occupied by a speaker and includes a front face that defines a plurality of openings, each opening retaining a separate display sign. The upper surface of the lectern slopes toward the speaker to provide a convenient work surface for him. Different phases of parliamentary procedure are displayed by each sign and separate illumination sources, selectively controlled by the speaker, illuminate each indicator. The lectern is placed so that the signs are in the view of persons facing the speaker. During the course of the meeting, the illumination source associated with the indicator corresponding to the contemporaneous phase of the meeting is energized to illuminate the appropriate display sign. Thus, the participants of the meeting are continually aware of the phase of the meeting that is currently transpiring and little time is wasted with motions and comments that are inappropriate for the contemporaneous phase. In a preferred embodiment disclosed herein, two sets of display signs are utilized to provide better visibility for the audience when the speaker is addressing a large group.

A feature of the invention is that it is self-contained. Consequently, the lectern can be removed from sight when not in use. The ability to remove the lectern when it is not being used will be attractive to many prospective purchasers. For example, hotels and restaurants that possess large combination meeting and ballrooms may be hesitant to install a permanent rostrum bearing such indicator signs in the view of persons within the room. That is because, while the sign would be useful during meetings, it would detract from the atmosphere desired during such functions as receptions and dances. Thus, if the meeting room is in fact a multipurpose room, a removable rostrum is preferable. Also, consider the organization that is holding the meeting. Many organizations, such as service clubs, may meet at various locations at different times. Thus, in order for the subject lectern to be most useful for the organization, it must be readily movable to their various meeting locations.

Yet another feature of the invention is the inclusion of an alarm apparatus comprising indicator lamps and a buzzer. The lamps, when activated, flash repeatedly in response to a flasher. Separate or simultaneous energization of the lamps and buzzer is possible. The alarm apparatus is used, for example, when a discussion of a controversial subject promotes private conversations and out of order comments among the meeting participants. In such an event, either the lamps or the buzzer or both can be activated so that the chairman or the speaker can quickly and easily regain the attention of the meeting participants.

Still another feature of the invention is the utilization of rear illumination sources in conjunction with indicator signs that are composed of transclucent material. During use, the signs may be viewed from many directions simultaneously and indicators that are front lighted can be subject to glare and thus be rendered illegible to some meeting participants. However, rear lighting permits the use of a glare resistant substrate for the signs, thus insuring that the indicators are legible from all positions within the meeting hall.

DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

These and other features and objects of the present invention will become more apparent upon a perusal of the following description taken in conjunction with the accompanying drawings wherein:

FIG. 1 is a plan view of a preferred lectern apparatus;

FIG. 2 is a front elevation view of the apparatus shown in FIG. 1;

FIG. 3 is a sectional view of the apparatus shown in FIGS. 1 and 2 taken along the lines 2—2; and

FIG. 4 is a diagram of a portion of the circuitry utilized in the preferred lectern shown above.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

referring first to FIGS. 2 and 3 there is shown a lectern **21** including an enclosure **22** that defines two pluralities of windows **24.** The pluralities are identical and thus distinctions need not be made between them. In each window **24** is a display sign **26, 27, 28, 29, 30** and **31,** each sign **26–31** displaying a different phase of parliamentary procedure as shown in FIG. **2.** An examination of FIG. **2** shows that the sign **11** is larger than the others, and thus may carry two lines of lettering. For, example, both "Meeting in Session" and a line identifying the organization holding the meeting. Preferably, at least the sign **31** is removable, thus permitting a change of organization names. The sign **31** can be removed from the rear of the panel on which it is mounted. The panel can be removed for sign changing or maintenance by removal of screws **20.** The rostrum **21** is self-contained and portable.

On an upper platform surface 32 of the enclosure is a control panel 35. On the panel 35 is a push-button on-off switch 73 with a built in pilot light 75. The slope of the upper surface 32 helps define a place for a speaker to stand. Also on the upper surface are a coaster 42 for a glass and a receptacle 43 for an ash tray. A light assembly 44 illuminates the upper surface 32. A microphone 53 is coupled to an amplifier 54 and then to two loudspeakers 55 that project the speaker's voice toward an audience facing him. The gain of the amplifier can be rendered responsive to a control on the panel 35 if desired.

The signs 26–31 are transulcent plates with opaque lettering thereon and thus, when rear light sources 26*b*–31*b* (described below) behind them are energized, the lettering shows clearly. Separate rear light sources are provided for each separate sign 26–31 and switches 26*a*–31*a* on the control panel 35 independently operate the light sources. In addition, behind two red filters 37*a* in the enclosure are two alarm lamps 37 and when a switch 38 is activated the alarm lamps 37 begin to flash, and when a switch 39 is activated a buzzer 58 is energized. Each switch 26*a*31*a*, 38 and 39 includes a lamp that lights when the switch is activated. Disposed at each end of each sign 26–31 is a small marker lens 41, covering a marker lamp (not shown) that is illuminated when the associated indicator is illuminated. The lenses 41 may be, for example, a color such as red that will attract attention.

During use of the lectern 21, the enclosure 22 is placed in a position that is within sight of the meeting participants. When it is desired to bring the meeting to order, the speaker activates the switch 31a thus illuminating the sign 31 and the lenses 41 adjacent thereto. It will be recalled that the sign 31 displays both the name of the organization that is meeting and the message that the meeting is in session. In the event that illumination of the sign 31 does not immediately attract the attention of the participants of the meeting, the speaker can flash the lamps 37 or activate the buzzer 58 or he may do both as the situation requires. When the meeting is thus drawn to order the operator proceeds to the first phase, for example the secretary's report of the minutes of the previous meeting, and he therefore activates the switch 26*a* to illuminate the sign 26. Presumably, the sign 31 remains illuminated during the entirety of the meeting, with the exception of intermissions. Upon completion of the secretary's report, the chairman deactivates the switch 26*a* and then activates the switch 27*a* to illuminate the sign 27 and thus the participants of the meeting are informed that the treasurer's report is next. If at any time during the meeting out of order comments transpire the operator can activate the switch 38, thus flashing the lights 37 until the switch 38 is deactivated. If flashing the lights 37 is not sufficient to restore order to the meeting the operator can in addition activate the switch 39, thereby starting the buzzer 58. When order is restored, the operator deactivates the switches 38 and 39 thus extinguishing the lamps 37 and stopping the buzzer 58.

Referring now to FIG. 4 there is shown a portion of the circuitry 65 used in the lectern 21. Connected to the circuit 65 is a three-wire power input cable 68 one lead 69 of which is grounded, another lead 71 of which forms neutral buss bar 71 and the third lead 72 is connected to the on-off switch 73 and thence to a fuse 74. Connected in parallel between the buss 71 and the output of the fuse 74 are the pilot ligh 75 and a primary winding 76 of a step down transformer 77. The output of a secondary winding 78, is passed through a rectifier 79 and thence to a positive buss 81 and a negative buss 82. Also connected to the output of the fuse 74 is a power buss 83. Thus, when the switch 73 is closed the pilot 75 is illuminated and line voltage appears between the busses 71 and 83 and low voltage d.c. appears between the busses 81 and 82.

The switch 39 is connected to a relay 84 by some of a group of connector leads 36. One side of a primary winding 85 of a step down buzzer transformer 86 is connected to the buss 71, and the other side is connected to the buss 83 through a pair of normally open contacts 87 within the relay 84. Thus when the relay 84 is activated the contacts 87 close and an output produced in a secondary winding 88 of the transformer 86 emergizes the buzzer 58. The switch 39 includes a three position element 89 that has two common contacts 91 and 92, both of which are connected by a line 93 to the buss 82. When the element 89 is rotated in a clockwise direction the contact 91 is connected to a contact 94 and thus by a line 95 to one end 96 of a coil 97 within the relay 84. The other end 98 of the coil 97 is connected to the buss 81. The first end 96 of the coil 97 is also connected through a pair of normally open contacts 99 and a line 101, to two contacts 102 and 103 in the element 89. The common contact 92 engages the contact 102 when in the position shown in FIG. 4 and engages the contact 103 in the event of a clockwise rotation.

Connected between the line 95 and the buss 81 by a line 104 is a lamp 105. Thus, the lamp 105 is connected across the coil 97 and therefore lights whenever the relay coil 97 is energized. Since the lamp 105 is within the switch 39, the switch is illuminated and this indicates that the associated relay 84 is activated.

Rotation of the element 89 in a clockwise direction connects the line 93 and the line 95 and thus energizes the relay coil 97. When the relay 84 closes, the contacts 99 close and thus the coil 97 is also energized through the contacts 92 and 103 and the line 101. When the three position element 89 is returned to the neutral position, as shown in FIG. 4, the relay coil 97 remains energized through the contacts 92 and 102, the line 101 and the contacts 99. Thus, once the relay coil 97 is energized by a clockwise rotation of the element 89, the relay 84 remains activated until the three position element is rotated in a counterclockwise direction thus breaking contact between contacts 92 and 102. In addition, the contacts 87 are closed when the coil 97 is energized so that the buzzer 58 is then energized. Consequently, it is seen that a clockwise rotation of the element 89 energizes the relay 84 and thus ignites the lamp 105 and energizes the buzzer 58, and that both the lamp and the buzzer remain energized when the element is returned to the neutral position. Only a counterclockwise rotation of the three position element 89 extinguishes the lamp 105 and stops the buzzer 58.

The switch 38, which is identical to the switch 39, is shown in block form and is connected by flexible leads 36. Thus the switch 38 closes at an associated relay 111 in response to a specific actuation and opens the relay only in response to a second, different actuation. The relay 111 is identical to the relay 84. When the relay 11 is activated, two normally open contacts 112 close and thus connect a flasher 113 to the buss 83 and therefore

the lamps **37** flash intermittently when the relay **111** is energized. Consequently, when the switch **38** is initially activated the relay **111** is energized and the lamps **37** begin to glash and remain flashing until the switch is deactivated so as to open the relay **111.**

The switch **31**a is identical to the switch **39** and an associated relay **114** is identical to the relay **84.** Thus, the above described actuation, performed on the switch **31***a* causes a pair of normally open contacts **115** to close and thus energize four lamps, that are behind the filters **41,** and the two rear illumination sources **31***b* associated with the signs **31.** Each of the remaining switches **26***a*–30a and the associated light sources **26***b*–30b are wires identically with the combination **31***a*–31b just described and thus need not be shown.

Also shown in FIG. **4** is the amplifier **54** and its power supply **40** that draws low voltage a.c. from the transformer **77.**

As mentioned previously, operation includes placing the enclosure **22** where it is visible by all participants of the meeting. The speaker can then display the signs representing any of the indicated phases conveniently and independently. For example, a meeting may proceed as follows: When it is desired to draw the meeting to order, the speaker will activate the switch **31***a* to illuminate the "Meeting in Session" sign and, if he feels it necessary to attract the attention of the participants, he can activate the switch **38** to flash the lights **37.** When the attention of the participants has been obtained, the operator extinguishes the lamps **37** with the switch **38.** Presumably, he will leave the display **31** lighted during the entire course of the meeting with the possible exception of intermissions. Next he will activate the switch **26***a* and thus illuminate the sign **26** ("Secretary's Report"). On the conclusion of the secretary's report, he will extinguish the sign **26** with the switch **26***a* and, by utilizing the switch **27***a*, illuminate the sign **27.** Thus the display signs are illuminated sequentially during the course of the meeting. If at any time it is necessary to restore order, the speaker can again flash the lamps **37,** or, if need be activate the buzzer **58.** At the conclusion of the meeting the switch **73** is turned "off" and the rostrum **21** can be removed to a storage location.

Obviously, many modifications and variations of the present invention are possible in light of the above teachings, For example, different size rostrums can be made to be table mounted or floor standing. It is to be understood, therefore, that the invention can be practiced otherwise than as specifically described.

What is claimed is:

1. A lectern comprising:

enclosure means defining a platform for accommodating reading material to be read by a speaker occupying a position on one side of said enclosure means;

a panel comprising a plurality of electrically operated, individually controlled illuminated display signs, said panel mounted on an opposite side of said enclosure means so as to be readily visible to an audience facing the speaker, said signs are indicative of events contemporaneously transpiring; and

switch control means for controlling said signs, said control means being disposed on said platform so as to be readily operated by the speaker.

2. A lectern according to claim **1** wherein each of said signs comprises a plate of translucent material bearing indicia thereon and said control means comprises individual rear light sources, each source disposed by and associated with one of said plates.

3. A lectern according to claim **2** wherein at least one of said plates is removable.

4. A lectern according to claim **2** wherein at least one of said plates bears the legend "New Business" and another one of said plates bears the legend "Old Business."

5. A lectern according to claim **2** comprising a second plurality of display signs, similar to said plurality of display signs, and wherein said second plurality of display signs are oriented differently than said plurality of display signs but are also readily visible to an audience facing the speaker.

6. A lectern according to claim **5** comprising an upper surface that slopes toward the speaker.

7. A lectern according to claim **6** comprising a microphone disposed to be used by the speaker.

8. A lectern according to claim **7** comprising an amplifier coupled to said microphone and a loudspeaker coupled to said amplifier and disposed so as to project the speaker's voice to an audience facing him.

9. A lectern according to claim **6** defining ash receptacle means on said upper surface.

10. A lectern according to claim **6** defining coaster means on said upper surface.

11. A lectern according to claim **6** comprising a light for illuminating said upper surface.

12. A lectern according to claim **6** comprising alarm means for indicating out of order events, said alarm means being obserable by an audience facing the speaker.

13. A lectern according to claim **12** wherein said alarm means comprises a light coupled to a flasher.

14. A lectern according to claim **12** wherein said alarm means comprises a buzzer.

15. A lectern according to claim **1** wherein said enclosure means is portable.

* * * * *