UTILITY DEVICE FOR SIGNALLING WAITERS IN HOTEL DINING ROOMS, ETC.

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Fig. 1.

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This invention relates to a waiter-signalling utility device to be installed in hotel dining rooms, in restaurants, tearooms and the like.

In order that the principle of the invention may be readily understood, I will set forth at length several forms or embodiments of the device.

In the accompanying drawings wherein are shown several forms of the device,

Fig. 1 is a side elevation of one form of the device;

Fig. 2 is a vertical section of the basal member of the device shown in Fig. 1, and showing the internal construction thereof;

Fig. 3 is a plan view of the basal member shown in Fig. 2, looking downward and showing the internal construction;

Fig. 4 is a side elevation similar to Fig. 1, but showing another form of the device;

Fig. 5 is a vertical section through the basal member of Fig. 6 upon the line 5—5 thereof;

Fig. 6 is a side elevation similar to Fig. 1 of still another form of the device;

Fig. 7 is a vertical section of the basal member of Fig. 6 and the lower portions of the upwardly extending arms.

The purpose of the herein disclosed invention is to provide for signalling the waiter assigned to a hotel dining room or restaurant table that his or her services are required at that table, and my invention includes a utility device of preferably attractive design, one of which is to be placed upon each table and which utility device has a self-contained source of artificial light, preferably electrical. Such device as herein disclosed is a combination signalling device and a utility device, serving, for example, to receive a sugar bowl, or an ash tray.

My invention has many advantages for the guests, for the management of the hotel or restaurant and for the waiters themselves. It provides for securing more prompt and efficient service as well as ensuring more satisfaction and privacy while actually reducing the cost of the service.

Among the advantages derived by the guests at the tables from the use of the invention may be mentioned the following.

When the device is provided at each table, the result is that the waiter is at hand without delay when wanted and is not hovering about the table when not wanted. It eliminates any need of having the waiter stand at the guest's elbow when he or she is trying to decide what to order, thus causing the guest frequently to order before studying the menu thoroughly. The invention insures more privacy as the waiter does not approach for orders until he sees the signalling device lighted. Moreover the annoyance is entirely eliminated that results from the guest trying to catch the waiter's attention after he has brought on the main course but has inadvertently omitted something essential.

It often happens that a guest does not know which waiter is serving his table and is obliged to look about in an endeavor to attract the attention of the right waiter, and this is particularly difficult when the guest is sitting with his back toward the main part of the dining room.

The use of the signalling device entirely eliminates the possibility of the waiter passing by and ignoring the table where the signal is displayed, because it commands or compels attention. In places where the service is not up to a proper standard, my invention makes it possible to improve the service without adding to the number of waiters.

The invention is also of great advantage to the management because better service is obtained, the goodwill of the place is built up, and the patronage is increased. The invention obviously results in a general speeding up of the service and makes it possible to free tables more promptly, making them available for new guests in less time than customary, so that more people can be served without an increase in the number of tables or of waiters. The invention often makes it possible to reduce the number of waiters or to get along without hostesses. Moreover it is possible for the proprietor or head waiter to tell at a glance whether guests are receiving proper service or whether any particular waiter has too many tables to serve or is perhaps not up to the proper standard. The revenues of the hotel or restaurant may be substantially increased by reason of the creation, by the use of my invention, of a reputation for furnishing good service at all times. Furthermore the combined signalling and utility device adds to the attractiveness of the table, and if there should happen to be any sudden failure of the regular lighting system at the tables the herein disclosed device provides an emergency light for each table where it has been installed.

My invention is also of advantage to the waiter because it makes it possible for him to be more efficient since it saves him the time he would ordinarily spend in watching the guests.

My invention is clearly distinguished from a mere lighting device such as an electric lamp that...
frequently is placed upon a dining table for affording the necessary illumination. The device is intended to be used in daylight as well as at hours when artificial light is provided either overhead or at the individual tables. Such lights are connected up with the lighting system of the hotel or restaurant and are not self-contained devices, each of which has an individual source of light and which, as herein disclosed, has combined therewith a further feature of utility as a support or container in that they may and preferably do serve to support some article required or usually provided at a table, such as a sugar bowl, or an ashtray.

The device shown in Fig. 1 is the preferred form thereof for practicing the method or system of my invention. In the device is shown of full size. It is constructed of any suitable material, and is preferably of artistic and attractive design. While I prefer to construct the device of metal such, for example, as aluminum or some alloy thereof, it may be made of plastic material or of any other suitable material. The device therein shown includes a basal member 1 having a flat upper face 2 which may be provided with a surrounding rim 3 to hold in place whatever may be positioned thereon. The face 2 is desirably flat and is of sufficient area to receive thereon some article of table use or service, as, for example, a sugar bowl, indicated at 4, which, in this form of my invention, is not connected to the device but may be removed for filling or other purpose.

The lower face of the basal member 1 is flat so as to be received upon the hotel or restaurant table. Upwardly extending from the basal member 1 is an arm 5 of attractive shape and suitable length. It is desirably curved as indicated, and has a downwardly directed upper end 6 terminating substantially centrally over the upper face 2 of the basal member 1, being at a sufficient distance therefrom to permit the ready insertion of the sugar bowl or other receptacle 4. Suitably secured to the end 6 of the arm 5, and desirably in such a way as to prevent too removable from the end 6 of the arm 5, is a small electric light bulb 7, desirably frosted so that the light will not be objectionable to the guests at the table, but will nevertheless be sufficiently strong to attract the immediate attention of the waiter.

The arm 5 is hollow and receives the wire or wires connecting the electric light bulb 7 with the self-contained means concealed within the basal member 1 for igniting the bulb 7 when a suitable switch is operated. For this purpose a switch 8 is secured which is of a plunger type so as to be readily operated by downward pressure. When so operated the plunger will return to the position shown in Fig. 1, the bulb 7 still remaining ignited and remaining ignited until the plunger switch 8 is again moved downward. The said switch is desirably vertically positioned because in that position it is most readily operated by a guest at the table. The said switch is received desirably within a suitable projecting formation 9 integral with and outwardly extending from the side wall of the basal member and desirably diametrically opposite the arm 5.

The basal member 1 is of sufficient height to receive therein the source of electrical energy for igniting the bulb 7. For this purpose, as shown in Fig. 2, I provide the basal member 1 with a detachable bottom 10, best shown in Fig. 2, which, as therein indicated, is provided with a suitable number of bayonet slot connections, one being indicated at 11 in Fig. 2. In the construction shown, the bayonet slots 11 are formed in the upwardly, inwardly extending rim 12 of the cover 10, and inwardly extending from the lateral wall of the basal member 1 are a corresponding number of pins, one of which is shown at 13 in Fig. 2. Desirably the source of illumination consists of one or more small storage batteries or cells, and for this purpose I have represented two cells 14, 15. They are removably supported within a sleeve, somewhat springy brackets 16, 17, each desirably of general U-shape, and with or without the central portion between the two upper ends and being of any suitable conducting material. Preferably one of the upper ends of each of the brackets 16, 17 is solid and the other is of open formation in order to insure by their distinction from each other the proper insertion and positioning of the two batteries or cells 14, 15. Such correct positioning is secured because the contact at the end of each battery or cell must be positioned against the solid upper end of the receiving bracket to secure a proper contact. The two batteries or cells are thus positioned in the respective supporting brackets, as indicated in Fig. 3.

In order to support the two brackets or pairs of brackets that receive the batteries or cells, they are, as shown in Figs. 2 and 3, riveted to a central insulating wall or bracket 18, and that in turn is riveted to an upstanding bracket 19, the lower right-angled base 20 of which is itself riveted or otherwise suitably secured to the inner face of the cover member 10, substantially centrally thereof. Any other suitable means may be provided to support within the basal member 1 the means for causing illumination of the electric light bulb 7 when the switch is depressed.

In order to provide circuiting means for the light bulb 7, I provide the following arrangement of wiring with that form of my invention shown in Figs. 1, 2 and 3.

To the supporting bracket for the battery 15 there is secured a wire 21 which extends to the switch 8, and from the switch 8 extends a wire 22 received within the arm 5 of the device and leading to and suitably connected with the light bulb 7. Upon the switch 8 there are secured two nuts 23, 24 receiving between them the end 25 of a wire 26, which extends to and is secured to the bracket 18 of the battery 14, and there is provided a metallic rivet 26a connecting the two brackets. Thus the electric circuit is from the battery 14 through wire 21 to the switch 8, from the switch through the wire 22 to the light bulb 7 and through the metal of the structure to the switch 8 and its nuts 23, 24 and through the wire 26 to the battery 14.

The structure of the device shown in Figs. 4 and 5 is substantially the same as that shown in Figs. 1, 2 and 3, and the same reference numerals are employed. The batteries themselves are not shown in Fig. 5. Instead of providing the basal member 1 with a flat top or upper face so as to support a flat bottomed receptacle such as 4, thereon, I have shown the upper face of the basal member 1 as concaved at 27, and I preferably removably support thereon an ash tray or like receptacle 28 shaped to fit against the face 27 of the basal member. The electrical wiring in the form of the device shown in Figs. 4 and 5 is the same as that shown in Figs. 1, 2 and 3.

In that form of the device shown in Figs. 6 and 7, the parts except where specifically re-
ferred to are the same as in the form of the device shown in Figs. 1, 2 and 3 and the same references numerals are provided. The batteries are supported in the same manner as in Figs. 1, 2 and 3. The top or upper face of the basal member 1 is shown as concave at 28, and an ash tray or the like may be supported thereon or the said face may be flat if desired. Inasmuch, however, as in this form of the device I provide standing arms 30, 31 extending to the light bulb 1 at a lesser height than in the form of the device shown in Figs. 1 and 4, I desirably so construct the upper face of the basal member 1 as to serve as an ash tray or for a like purpose.

In this form of the device there extends from one of the batteries, as shown in Fig. 7, a wire 32 corresponding to the wire 22 of Fig. 2. The said wire is received within the arm 31. From the other battery extends the wire 33 received within the arm 38. The wires 32 and 33 both extend to the light bulb 1. The body of the device itself does not serve as a ground.

There is also provided a suitable wire 34 extending to the switch 5. In this construction, therefore, the electric circuit is not through the walls of the device but through the described wires.

Any of the forms of the device of my invention may be, if desired, provided with two switches desirably about diametrically opposite each other so that guests seated at opposite sides of the table might either one summon the waiter in the manner explained. If two switches are provided, the wiring is suitably arranged so that by pressing either switch the light bulb 1 is ignited and continues lighted until the switch is again pressed.

In the form of the device shown in Figs. 1, 2 and 3, the wiring, instead of being extended to the switch, may be extended to the face of the receptacle, as at the foot 20 of the bracket 10.

It is highly desirable that the device by which my invention is practiced have a self-contained source of artificial light, preferably electrical. Nevertheless I may in certain cases resort to an extraneous source of artificial light, as where the devices or some of a set of the devices are to be installed at a table or tables close to a wall of the dining room or restaurant where a socket is available for connecting up to the lighting system. This is not a preferred construction, but may be alternatively resorted to in certain cases. In such cases the wiring within the basal member, instead of being connected to the battery or batteries, as in the drawings, may be prolonged and provided with a plug to be inserted in such a socket.

In that form of the invention shown in Figs. 4 and 5, the upper face of the basal member is concaved and removably receives an ash tray of similar shape. In that form of the invention shown in Figs. 6 and 7, the upper face of the basal member is shown as concaved so as itself to serve as an ash tray or for like purpose. With respect to the form of the invention shown in Figs. 1, 2 and 3, wherein the upper face of the basal member is shown as flat so as to receive thereon a sugar bowl having a flat bottom, I may, in the case of Figs. 1, 2 and 3, make the sugar bowl or like container integral with the basal member itself.

Having thus described several forms of the device which may be employed to carry out the system or method of my invention, and having described how the system or method is practiced, it will be understood that although specific terms are employed, they are used in a generic and descriptive sense and not for purposes of limitation, the scope of the invention being set forth in the following claims.

I claim:

1. A utility device for signalling waiters in hotel dining rooms, in restaurants, etc., comprising a hollow basal member adapted to be received upon and supported by a hotel dining or restaurant table or the like and shaped to support upon an upper face thereof a readily removable table utility receptacle and to receive between such receptacle and the bottom of the hollow basal member a source of electrical energy for the production of a signalling electric light at such table, said device having at least one arm upwardly extending from said hollow basal member laterally outside of the supported utility receptacle so as not to interfere therewith, and provided with a small electric light bulb and also having circuit wiring connecting said light bulb and the individual source of electrical energy within the said hollow basal member, said device being also provided with a switch in the circuit wiring at a point conveniently accessible to a guest seated at the table so that a waiter may be signalled when service is needed.

2. A utility device in accordance with claim 1, but wherein the lateral upwardly extending member is of sufficient height to provide, between the electric light thereon and the upper surface of the basal member, room for a utility container.

3. A utility device in accordance with claim 1, but wherein the lateral upwardly extending member is of sufficient height to provide, between the electric light thereon and the upper surface of the basal member, unobstructed room for a utility container, and means for securely interconnecting such container and the hollow basal member, to prevent ready removal of such container from the said device.

4. A utility device in accordance with claim 1, but wherein the source of electrical energy within the hollow basal member consists of a battery or batteries, and wherein said hollow basal member has a bottom cover member that can be opened or removed for affording access to said battery or batteries.

5. A utility device in accordance with claim 1, but wherein the hollow basal member has two members rising substantially oppositely therefrom and meeting substantially centrally above the basal member and there receiving an electric light bulb.

6. A utility device in accordance with claim 1, but wherein the basal member has a removable bottom having secured to the upper face thereof brackets for the removable reception of a battery or batteries.

7. A utility device in accordance with claim 1, but wherein the upper end of the said arm is bent inward to overhang the table utility receptacle without interfering therewith.

8. A utility device in accordance with claim 1, but wherein within the hollow basal member there is secured at least one supporting bracket of general U-shape to receive a battery between the arms thereof, the said battery being connected with the circuit wiring.

9. A utility device in accordance with claim 1, but wherein within the hollow basal member there are provided two springy supporting members, each of general U-shape and each adapted
to receive a small battery, another bracket to which the U-shaped brackets are secured, and means to secure said other bracket within the basal member, the said battery being connected with the circuit wiring.

10. A utility device in accordance with claim 1, but wherein the hollow basal member is provided with a readily removable, flat bottom 10 to rest upon the upper surface of the table, an upstanding bracket secured to the inner face of said removable bottom 10, an insulating bracket secured to said upstanding bracket and two conducting brackets of general U-shape secured to said insulating bracket and each having two opposite ends between which a small battery may be removably positioned, and wherein means are provided to connect said batteries to the circuit wiring.

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