Nov. 20, 1962 H. L. FITCH 3,064,377

ROOM DATA INDICATOR MEANS FOR HOTELS AND LIKE

Filed March 25, 1960 3 Sheets-Sheet 1

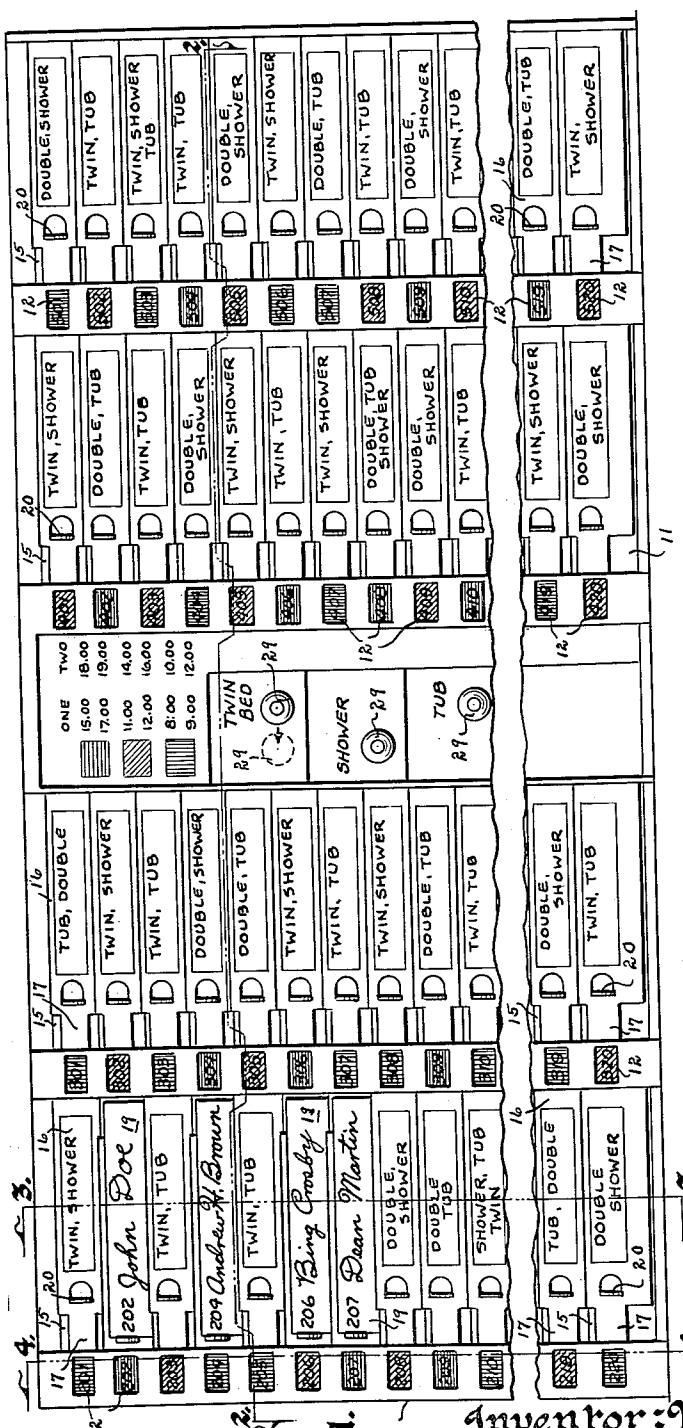


Fig. 1.

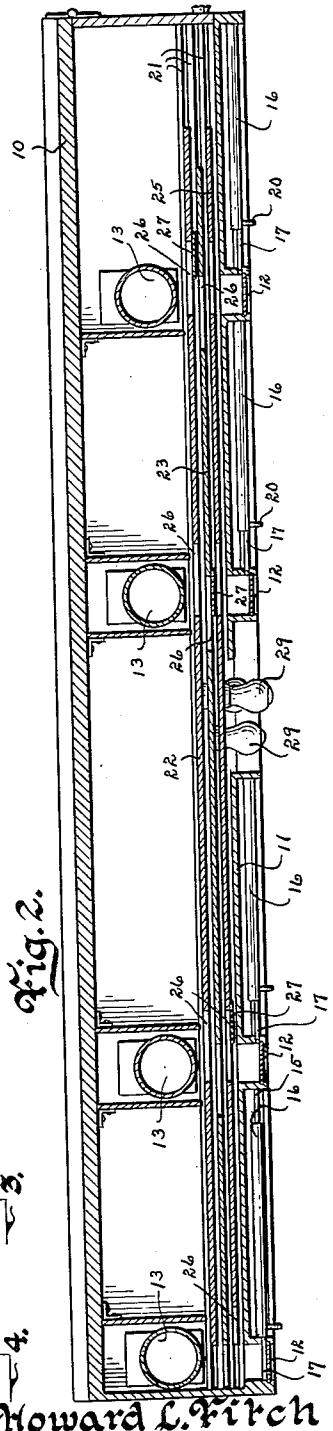


Fig. 2.

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Fig.3.

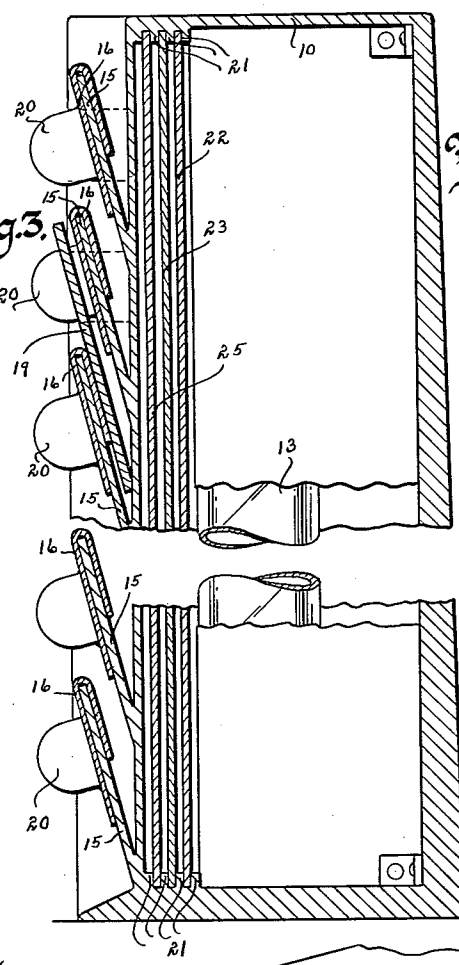
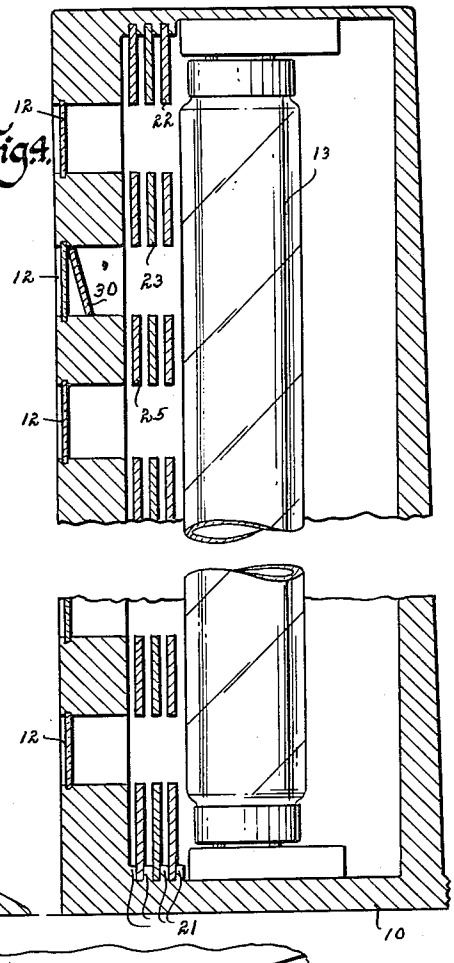


Fig.4.



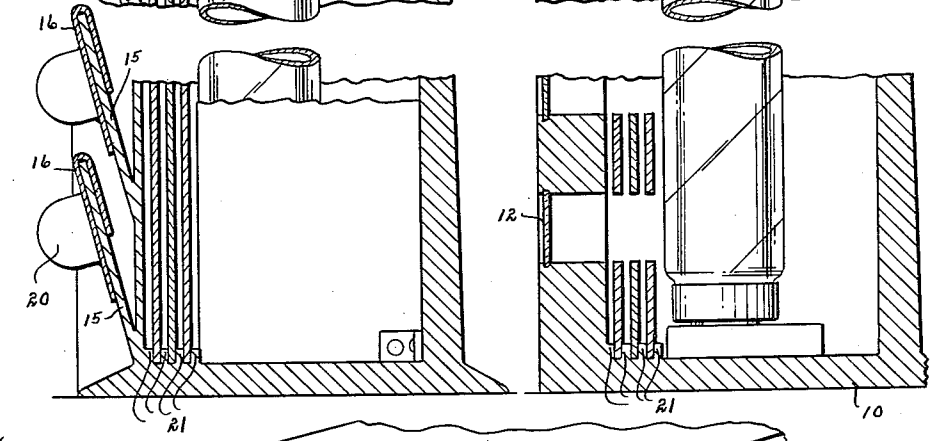
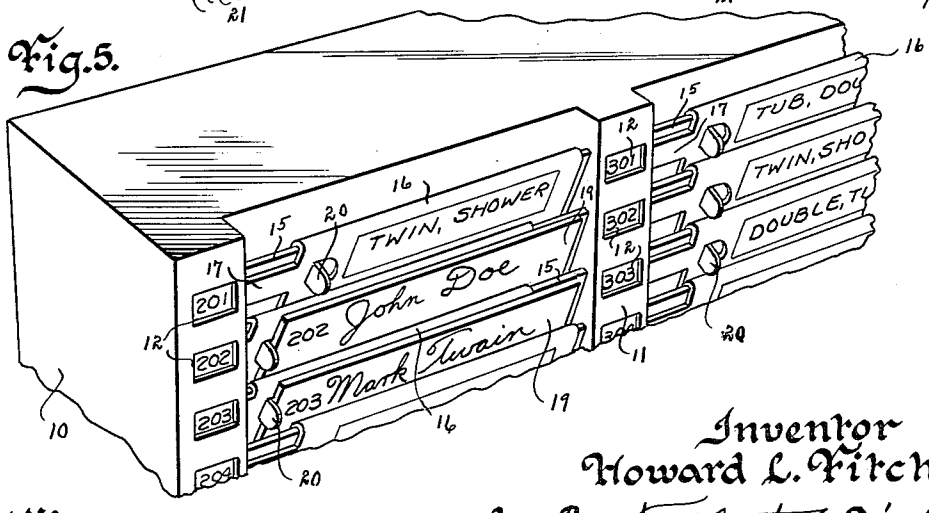


Fig.5.



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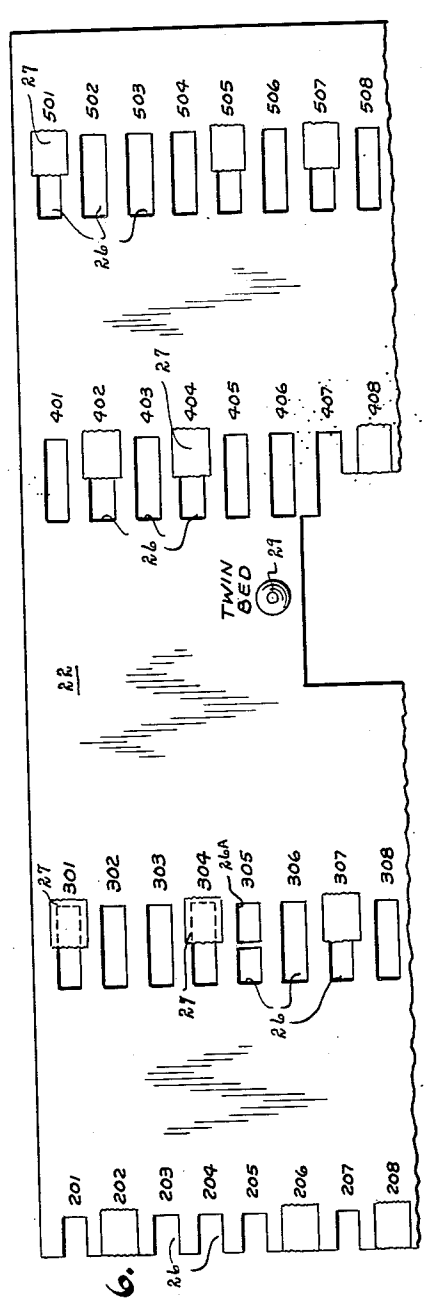


Fig. 6.

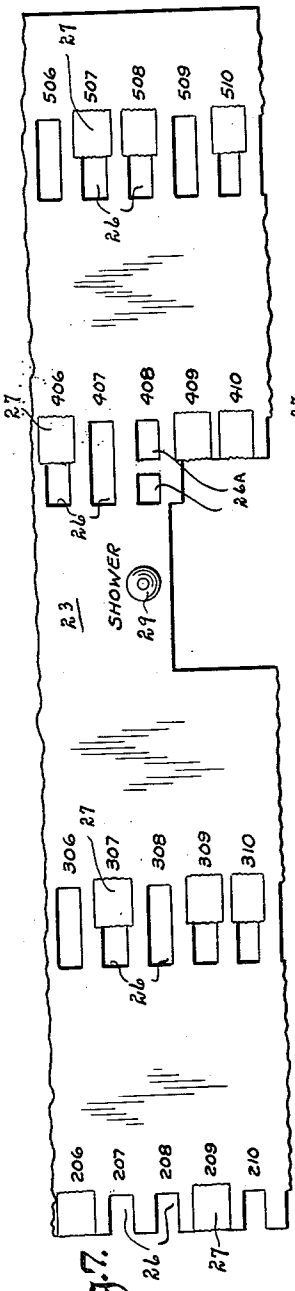


Fig. 7.

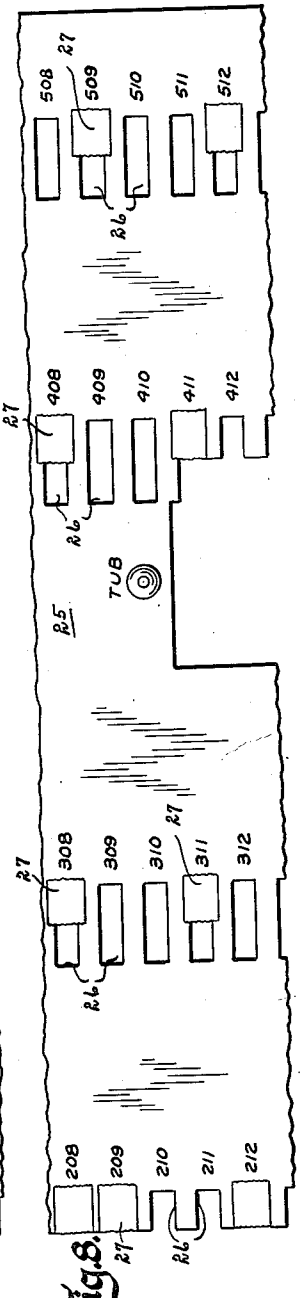


Fig. 8.

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ROOM DATA INDICATOR MEANS FOR HOTELS AND LIKE

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9 Claims. (Cl. 40—65)

This invention relates to a room data indicator means for use by hotels, motels, and like.

One of the most difficult tasks confronting a desk clerk of a hotel or like is the rapid determination of the specific rooms available for rent at any given moment, the room price, the room facilities, and other pertinent necessary information relative to each of the rooms. Usually the clerk must rely chiefly on his memory and personal knowledge of the specific room in question. Obviously mistakes are most frequent and if the clerk is required to make inquiry or consult card files, much time is consumed not only by the desk clerk but by the waiting guests. Due to the complexities of the situation, a new desk clerk cannot successfully function, and it is because of this fact that the hotel management can ill afford to part with the services of a desk clerk of long standing. Still another serious problem with the present system is that it is almost impossible to quickly determine the most expensive rooms that are available and it behooves all hotel operators to rent the more expensive rooms first.

Therefore, one of the principal objects of my invention is to provide a mechanical room data machine, that will instantly give the desk clerk a visual picture of the rooms available for rent, their price range, and the facilities available in each room.

A further object of this invention is to provide a room data device that will visually indicate the rooms that have been rented and to whom.

A still further object of this invention is to provide a room data indicator that may be used easily and quickly by a desk clerk not familiar with the hotel or like.

Still further objects of this invention are to provide a room data indicator means for hotels and like that is economical in manufacture, durable in use, and refined in appearance.

These and other objects will be apparent to those skilled in the art.

My invention consists in the construction, arrangements, and combination, of the various parts of the device, whereby the objects contemplated are attained as hereinafter more fully set forth, specifically pointed out in my claims, and illustrated in the accompanying drawing, in which:

FIG. 1 is a front-sectional view of my device;

FIG. 2 is a cross-sectional view of the device taken on line 2—2 of FIG. 1;

FIG. 3 is an enlarged vertical-sectional view of my device taken on line 3—3 of FIG. 1 and more fully illustrates its construction;

FIG. 4 is an enlarged vertical-sectional view of the device taken on line 4—4 of FIG. 1 and illustrates the lighting means;

FIG. 5 is an enlarged perspective view of the upper left corner of the device;

FIG. 6 is an enlarged sectional front view of the twin bed panel screen;

FIG. 7 is an enlarged sectional front view of the shower panel screen; and

FIG. 8 is an enlarged front sectional view of the tub panel screen.

In these drawings I show only three screen panel plates, i.e., to designate rooms with twin beds, rooms with showers, and rooms with bath tubs. Obviously many other screen panels may be used to furnish data such as

rooms with single beds, rooms that have excellent window views, rooms that have been newly decorated, rooms having television, rooms of extra size, and so forth. The three panel screen plates shown will, however, illustrate the operation of my device. The device may be enlarged or reduced to handle any number of rooms. I have used the numeral 10 to generally designate the housing. The numeral 11 designates the face board of the housing, and I show four spaced apart vertical rows of colored windows 12. These windows in the front face board are enclosed by any transparent or translucent sheet material such as glass, and each window has a room number imposed upon it as shown in FIG. 1. These windows are color tinted, and any number of color tints may be used. The various colors designate various room price ranges. In the drawings I use blue, to indicate rooms in the price range of $15.00 to $17.00 for one person and $18.00 to $19.00 for two people. Green indicates a price range of $11.00 to $12.00 for one person and $14.00 to $16.00 for two people. Red indicates a price range of $8.00 to $9.00 for one person and $10.00 to $12.00 for two people. Naturally the desk clerk will attempt to first rent rooms showing the blue windows, then the rooms showing the green windows, and lastly the red windows. To illuminate these windows I have a lamp means 13 spaced back of each of the four vertical rows of windows as shown in FIG. 2. Each row of windows is positioned somewhat forward of the main front face 11 of the device as shown in FIG. 5. Extending to the right of each window is a track bar 15. Slidably mounted on each track bar is a flat sleeve 16, having a tab tongue 17 extending to the left. By manually sliding the sleeve 16 (located to the right of any one window) to the left, its tab tongue 17 will slide back of that window and forward of the light means, thereby darkening that particular window and thus indicating it has already been rented and, therefore, not available. The flat sleeve has indicia about that particular room. After the room has been rented, the name of the guest may be placed on a card 19 and placed in front of the sleeve 16 as shown in FIG. 1. This feature is made possible by the track bars positioned so that their widths extend outwardly and upwardly as shown in FIG. 5. After a room has been rented, the room window will remain blocked out until the room is again available for rent. When the room becomes again available, its adjacent sleeve is slid to the right, and the window is again exposed to the light means. A handle 20 is on each of the sleeves to facilitate their manual sliding movement. Between the lamps 13 and face 11 having the windows 12, I provide a plurality of flanged spaced apart tracks 21, both at the top and bottom of the housing 10. Horizontally slidable in these track flanges are the three movable screen panel plates 22, 23, and 25. In the drawings the plate 22 is designated "Twin Bed." Plate 23 is labeled "Shower." Plate 25 is labeled "Tub." As before indicated, any number of these screen panel plates may be used to designate rooms having different furnishings or like. In each plate 22, 23, and 25, are four rows of spaced apart slit openings 26. Each row of slits is directly back of a row of windows 12, respectively, as shown in FIG. 2. Normally each slot opening is substantially twice as long (horizontally) as its adjacent window 12. The horizontal sliding movement of the panel plates is limited so that normally there will always be a slot opening back of each window 12. When any one or all of the panel plates are slid to the right, there will always be the left ends of the slots registering with the adjacent windows 12. This may not necessarily be true when a panel plate is slid to the left, thus bringing the right ends of the slots to register with their adjacent windows.

Therefore, to make possible the individual operation of each screen panel plate, I cover the right end area of certain of the slots as shown in FIGS. 6, 7, and 8. This may be accomplished by a patch **27** pasted over the right end areas of certain of the slot openings **26**. These patches **27** for any one panel plate are of negative information. As an illustration, plate **22** is for the purpose of showing all rooms, not rented, having twin beds. Therefore, patches **27** would be placed over the right hand area of all slots registering with room windows that have only double beds. Thus when the panel plate **22** was slid to the left, the right hand end area without patches would permit the light to pass through and light up the room windows that had twin beds. The single room windows with double beds, however, would not be illuminated because of the patches **27**. The same arrangement of blanking out negative information is found in the screen panels **23** and **25**. Normally when all screen panels are moved to the right, and before any patches are applied, the rows of slot openings of all panels will register with each other. Other means besides the patches may be used to block out the right end areas of certain of the slot openings. If the hotel rooms are previously known, the screen plates, when manufactured, may have one-half slot openings of certain of the slot openings for blocking off the illumination when the plate is moved to the left. However, the facilities of hotels, motels, and like are constantly changing and usually the best procedure is to make all the slot openings full length and then by a suitable means block off the right end area of the slot openings of certain of the slots. By this arrangement of parts, once the device is set up for a given hotel or like, even a person not familiar with the rooms can at a glance determine not only the rooms that are available, but their prices, and accommodations. If a guest wants only a room with shower, the panel **23** is slid to the left. The room windows having a shower will remain illuminated, but all other rooms will be blocked out from the illuminating lamps. The illuminated windows of rooms having a shower, will, as herebefore discussed, be in different colors to designate price range. After the room is rented, the adjacent sleeve **16** is moved to the left, thereby blocking out that lighted window. When the guest has checked out, this sleeve is then moved to the right to bring the blocking tab **17** from the window opening. Knobs **29** facilitate the manual sliding of the screen panel plates. Any given individual window **12** can be blocked out for an extended period of time merely by placing a card plate **30** back of the window. This may be desirable if a given room is to be taken out of the listing for an extended time. This card plate, as well as the slidable screen panel plates, should be of a material through which light can not pass.

If desired, instead of having the elongated slots **26**, two side by side smaller slots may be used. While the blocking off of one of them gives the same result as blocking off one-half of the elongated slots, the section between the two smaller slot openings gives additional strength to the structure.

Some changes may be made in the construction and arrangement of my room data indicator means for hotels and like without departing from the real spirit and purpose of my invention, and it is my intention to cover by my claims, any modified forms of structure or use of mechanical equivalents which may be reasonably included within their scope.

I claim:

1. In a room data indicator, a housing having a front face wall, a plurality of spaced apart windows in said face wall each window indicative of a given room, a light producing means in said housing and back of said windows, and a plate slidably mounted in said housing between said face wall and said light producing means; said plate having a plurality of spaced apart slot openings positioned to the rear of said spaced apart windows, respectively, some of said slot openings having an area substantially that of the area of the windows adjacent to them and some of said slot openings having an area substantially twice that of the windows adjacent to them.

2. In a room data indicator, a housing having a front face wall, a plurality of spaced apart windows in said face wall each window indicative of a given room, a light producing means in said housing and back of said windows, and a plate slidably mounted in said housing between said face wall and said light producing means; said plate having a plurality of spaced apart slot openings positioned to the rear of said spaced apart windows, respectively, said slots each being elongated to an area substantially double that of the area of the window adjacent to it, and a means for reducing the length of each of said elongated slots.

3. In a room data indicator, a housing having a front face wall, a plurality of spaced apart windows in said face wall each window indicative of a given room, a light producing means in said housing and back of said windows, and a plate slidably mounted in said housing between siad face wall and said light producing means; said plate having a plurality of spaced apart slot openings positioned to the rear of said spaced apart windows, respectively, said slots each being elongated in the direction said plate is slidably mounted to an area substantially double that of the area of the window adjacent to it, and a means for reducing the length of each of said elongated slots.

4. In a room data indicator, a housing having a front face wall, a plurality of spaced apart windows in said face wall each window indicative of a given room, a light producing means in said housing and back of said windows, and a plate slidably mounted in said housing between said face wall and said light producing means; said plate having a plurality of spaced apart slot openings positioned to the rear of said spaced apart windows, respectively, and different colored light passing sheet members closing said plurality of windows.

5. In a room data indicator, a housing having a front face wall, a plurality of spaced apart windows in said face wall each window indicative of a given room, a light producing means in said housing and back of said windows, and a plate slidably mounted in said housing between said face wall and said light producing means; said plate having a plurality of spaced apart slot openings positioned to the rear of said spaced apart windows, respectively, and different colored light passing sheet members closing said plurality of windows and different room numbers imposed in said sheet members.

6. In a room data indicator, a housing having a front face wall, a plurality of spaced apart windows in said face wall each window indicative of a given room, a light producing means in said housing and back of said windows, and a plate slidably mounted in said housing between said face wall and said light producing means; said plate having a plurality of spaced apart slot openings positioned to the rear of said spaced apart windows, respectively, a slidable bar operatively secured on said face wall adjacent each of said windows, and a member on each of said bars capable of closing its adjacent window when said bar is moved in one direction.

7. In a room data indicator, a housing having a front face wall, a plurality of spaced apart windows in said face wall each window indicative of a given room, a light producing means in said housing and back of said windows, and a plurality of plates slidably mounted in said housing, between said face wall and said light producing means, each plate having a plurality of slot openings positioned to the rear of said windows, respectively; some of said slot openings of each of said plates having an area substantially that of the area of the windows adjacent to them, and some of said slot openings of each of said plates having an area substantially twice that of the area of the windows adjacent to them.

8. In a room data indicator, a housing having a front face wall, a plurality of spaced apart windows in said face wall each window indicative of a given room, a light producing means in said housing and back of said windows, and a plurality of plates horizontally slidably mounted in said housing, between said face wall and said light producing means, each plate having a plurality of elongated horizontal slot openings positioned to the rear of said windows, respectively; some of said slot openings of each of said plates having an area substantially that of the area of the windows adjacent to them, and some of said slot openings of each of said plates having an area substantially twice that of the area of the windows adjacent to them; said slots of each of said plates registering with each other and said windows when all of said plates are moved to one direction of their sliding movement.

9. In a room data indicator, a housing having a front face wall, a plurality of spaced apart windows in said face wall each window indicative of a given room, a light producing means in said housing and back of said windows, and a plurality of plates horizontally slidably mounted in said housing, between said face wall and said light producing means, each plate having a plurality of elongated horizontal slot openings positioned to the rear of said windows, respectively; some of said slot openings of each of said plates having an area substantially that of the area of the windows adjacent to them, and some of said slot openings of each of said plates having an area substantially twice that of the area of the windows adjacent to them; said slots of each of said plates registering with each other and said windows when all of said plates are moved to the right in their horizontal sliding movements.

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