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Patented Aug. 7, 1900.

A. G. R. NICHOL
SIGN OR SIGNAL FOR CALLING CABS.

(Application filed Sept. 1, 1899.)

(No Model.)

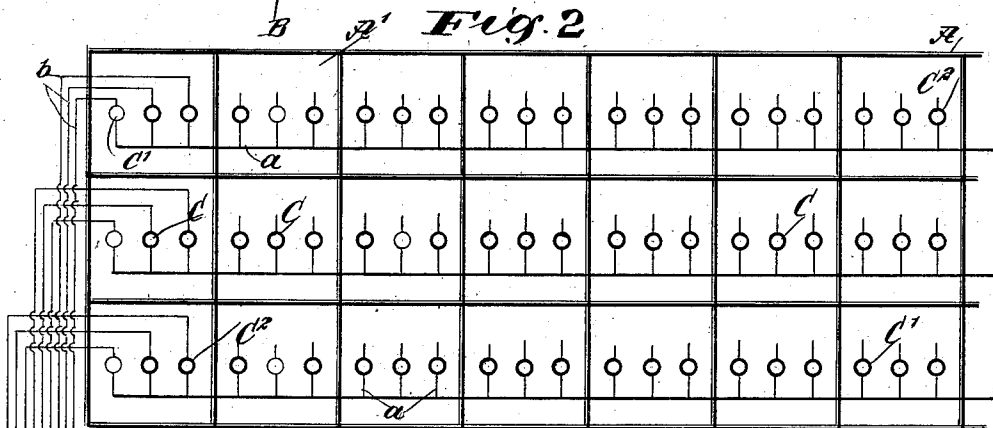
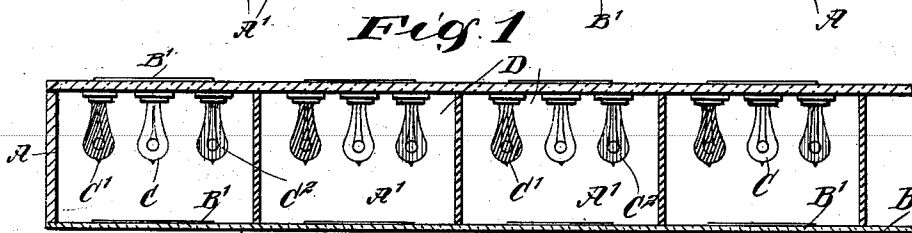
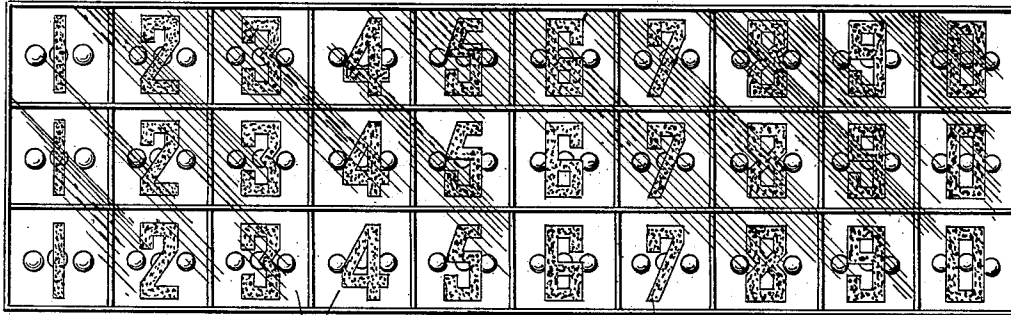


Fig. 4

INVENTOR

A. G. R. Nichol

BY

Mundy
ATTORNEYS

WITNESSES:

John Beington
John Lotta

Fig. 3

UNITED STATES PATENT OFFICE.

ARTHUR GEORGE RAWLINGS NICHOL, OF NEW YORK, N. Y.

SIGN OR SIGNAL FOR CALLING CABS.

SPECIFICATION forming part of Letters Patent No. 655,264, dated August 7, 1900.

Application filed September 1, 1899. Serial No. 729,169. (No model.)

To all whom it may concern:

Be it known that I, ARTHUR GEORGE RAWLINGS NICHOL, of the city of New York, borough of Manhattan, in the county and State of New York, have invented certain new and useful Improvements in Signs or Signals for Calling Cabs, of which the following is a full, clear, and exact description.

My invention relates to signs or signals, and has for its object to provide a simple and convenient means whereby a clerk in a hotel or theater may call several cabs or other carriages successively or simultaneously; but it will be understood that such a device may be used for other purposes as well.

The invention will be fully described hereinafter, and the features of novelty pointed out in the claim.

Reference is to be had to the accompanying drawings, forming a part of this specification, in which similar characters of reference indicate corresponding parts in all the figures.

Figure 1 is a front elevation of my improved sign or signal. Fig. 2 is a broken sectional plan thereof. Fig. 3 is a diagrammatic view of the sign, the switchboard, and the wiring; and Fig. 4 shows one of the sets of plugs adapted for use in conjunction with the switchboard.

The improved sign or signal consists of a box or casing A, having compartments A', arranged in superposed rows, (three rows, as shown,) and each row has its compartments numbered successively from "1" to "0." The front of each compartment is either apertured, transparent, or translucent, so that light may be visible therethrough, and, as shown, the front consists of a glass pane B, in which the numerals B' are produced by etching or grinding. The opposite side or back may be constructed in the same manner. In each compartment is arranged a series of incandescent lamps, three in the specific case illustrated. These lamps are differentiated by their color—for instance, the central lamp C may be colorless or white, the lamp C', at the left, red, and the lamp C'', at the right, blue.

The wiring is as follows: One terminal of each lamp is connected, as by wires a, to one pole of a dynamo or other source of electricity. Instead of employing wires a the

lamp-sockets might be screwed into a common metallic base, so that one terminal of each lamp would be in contact with the base, which latter would be connected with the dynamo. The other terminal of each lamp is connected by a wire, such as b, with the switchboard E, which may be located at any suitable place—for instance, the switchboard may be located in the office, while the sign is placed in front of the hotel. The switchboard is provided with a series of contact-plates E', two for each lamp, the plates belonging to the same lamp being placed so close together that they may be connected electrically by the insertion of conducting-plugs between them. To distinguish the contact plates from each other, the words "Red," "White," and "Blue" may be produced adjacent to them, or the plates may be painted in the colors corresponding to those of the lamps connected therewith. One contact-plate of each set of two is connected by one of the wires b with one terminal of the corresponding electric lamp C, C', or C'' and the other contact-plate is connected by a wire, such as c, with the other pole of the dynamo or other source of electricity.

The plugs F may all be of the usual cylindrical or slightly-conical shape; but I consider it preferable that plugs intended to insert into the circuit lamps of different colors should be differently made, so as to prevent mistakes. Thus, for instance, all the plugs for the central white lamps might be circular in cross-section, while the plugs for the blue lamps would be, say, square in cross-section, and the plugs for the red lamps triangular. Of course the adjacent edges of the contact-plates E' would be recessed or cut out correspondingly, as indicated in the diagram, Fig. 3. It will be understood that with this arrangement plugs will fit only the contact-plates for which they are intended. To further guard against mistakes, I consider it advisable to connect plugs of like shape by a string G or the like, as shown in Fig. 4. This will assist the operator in properly inserting the plugs and will prevent him from leaving some of the plugs in by inadvertence, since the entire set must be removed before the connecting-string G can be taken off the switchboard E.

The operation is as follows: Suppose it is desired to call cab 111. The clerk takes one of the (three) sets of (three) connected plugs F and inserts them in the first vertical column of the switchboard. These plugs will fit the contact-plates connected with lamps of one color only—say red—as indicated. It follows that the red lamps C' in three compartments A', bearing the numeral "1," will be lighted, thereby calling cab 111. It will be understood that the upper row is for units, the second for tens, and the bottom row for hundreds, or the reverse arrangement may be used. Now supposing two cabs are to be called at the same time—say 232 in addition to 111. The operator will then take the second set of plugs F, and as they are of a different shape from the plugs of the other set he cannot make the mistake of inserting them, so as to light lamps of the wrong color—that is, of the same color (red) as for the first set. By inserting these plugs, as indicated in Fig. 3, the numbers "232" will be illuminated, say, in white, thereby calling cab 232 in addition to cab 111. Similarly a third cab would be called by the blue lamps. It might happen that the numbers of the cabs called would have some figures in common—say 111 and 271. In this case the unit numeral "1" would receive a double supply of light and besides the color of the light would be modified, so that it would be easy to see that the same unit figure belonged to both cabs called. It will, however, be obvious that in such a case the figure in common to both numbers might be

illuminated by one lamp only, (one of the plugs being left uninserted,) as no mistake would be possible. After the answering of the call the operator would withdraw the plugs from the switchboard, and as all the plugs belonging to the same series are connected there is little danger of the operator overlooking to remove some of the plugs, and thereby calling a cab unintentionally.

To the sign or signal hereinbefore described might be added a series of lamps to light the words "Cab," "Hansom," "Coach," or "Automobile." The electrical arrangements for such purpose being well known, I have not deemed it necessary to show them.

Having thus described my invention, I claim as new and desire to secure by Letters Patent—

The herein-described sign or signal, comprising a box or casing divided into compartments of approximately-equal size arranged in superposed rows, each compartment being provided with a distinguishing character, a plurality of differently-colored electric lamps in each compartment, lamps of a like color occupying the same relative positions in all the compartments, a switchboard having a series of switches or circuit-closers, one for each lamp, and connections from the switchboard to the lamps.

ARTHUR GEORGE RAWLINGS NICHOL.

Witnesses:

DANIEL C. BRENNAN,
JOHN LOTKA.