

P. G. Gossler : I think you will find with most meters that are used that the serial numbers of meters, especially the Schallenberger meter, are up in the several hundreds of thousands and you cannot index them, neither can you locate them by the man's name on whose premises they are placed, because they may be changed several times a year. We have invented a card catalogue, and find it very satisfactory.

A. A. Wright : I know nothing about the Schallenberger meter.

The President : The same idea will apply to any make of meter, because their numbers are increasing all the time, and indexing by the number of the meter will become somewhat difficult ; it is well enough in the case of a small number of meters. But the card system will locate any meter at any time, and the history of that meter may be recorded on the card catalogue as forming the ledger referred to by Mr. Dion. It takes the place of a page in a book in which you recite the number of the meter, the date on which you receive it, the date on which you test it, the date on which you placed it in the customer's premises, the date on which you removed it from the customer's premises, the date on which you test it again, and the day on which you place it in another customer's premises, and so on ; in other words, it is the life history of that meter.

A. A. Wright : I have no doubt that would be a very advantageous way to do it, and of course we are very thankful to receive pointers in that way. I quite agree with Mr. Dion with reference to the installing of small meters instead of large ones, that it is very much better to install them on the small than on the large side, because it works better to the station owner. He suggests the reading of meters once in three months. I don't know, I am sure, how it would work in some places ; I know it causes a good deal of work, but I have always been under the impression that reading them monthly is the better way ; it saves a great deal of trouble and you don't have such difficulty in collecting your bills. Sometimes your customers run away, sometimes the bill gets too large, and I think monthly reading is the better way.

Mr. Fisk : In regard to the number business, we find the serial numbers change with some manufacturers. For instance, they will come out with a meter No. 650 Type F ; after a while another meter, 650 Type J, or something else. To get over that difficulty we started with our own local number, started with No. 1, and worked up, and we found it simplified things very much.

Mr. A. A. Wright : I suppose this matter of station meters could not be worked where you run both on meter and on flat rate.

Mr. Dion : Mr. President, I might say that I would take the station meter to be of special value in a case of that kind. I would compare the output of the station as recorded on that meter with the aggregate consumption as recorded in the consumer's meter ; the difference would represent waste ; and you could determine on that whether you were getting enough for your flat rates or not.

Mr. Wyse : I would like to ask Mr. Dion if he has adopted the method of having blanks, and having the man that would otherwise read the meter simply mark the location of the hands on those blanks, showing the location of the hands on the dial ?

Mr. Dion : Yes. The man has a book and each space contains about four cards ; each card is a facsimile of the meter dial, and he takes his pencil and writes the man's name and puts three or four strokes indicating the position of the different pointers.

Mr. Wyse : We make the bill out in the office and give the man those slips in duplicate, one of which he leaves with the customer showing the indication of the hands, and the other one he turns into the office, also showing the indication of the hands on the dial.

A. A. Wright : How do you keep account of these in your office so that at any time you can refer to them ?

Mr. Dion : The book is made of such a size that it will last about one reading. We employ two men reading the meters and there are four books ; each man

takes a book, say, to-day, and he leaves it in the office the day following, so that the records may be transcribed from the books, and when they are through with that reading the books are about filled, and they are filed away, and a new set of books taken out next time.

A. A. Wright : I have never seen anything to equal the system I use myself. We find no difficulty whatever in having the whole month, every man's reading, right in the book, and you can see everything about his meter reading any time you want to let him see what every month's consumption amounts to and all about it.

Mr. Dion : How much room in a book would one customer take ?

A. A. Wright : Two pages to one customer.

Mr. Dion : We have over 3,000 meters ; that would be 6,000 pages.

A. A. Wright : One man couldn't do all that work ; you would have to have several books, one for each reader.

Mr. Dion : Each reader has to have a complete list unless you divide your city into districts.

A. A. Wright : Certainly.

The President : With the Royal Electric Company, we supply our meter readers with a card for each individual customer, instead of a book ; that card is arranged to take the readings of one entire year ; it recites the name of the customer, the number of his meter, and so on, and gives each reading so that the meter reader has before him the previous readings for all the time of the year that readings have been taken.

Mr. Dion : That is like our system, except that ours is in book form.

The President : The district is divided by the number of cards given to each meter reader ; the card shows the whole history of each customer's consumption for a year. The card is numbered with the ledger folio and every man's account in the ledger folio must have an invoice rendered for it, and the card is returnable.

A. A. Wright : You have not one of your cards that we can see.

The President : There will be some presented tomorrow.

Mr. Bilger : Is a new card issued every time a meter is changed ?

The President : It is noted on the card.

Mr. Wyse : Do you render your bills quarterly or how ?

Mr. Dion : We have two periods of three months each, and three periods of two months each, five periods for the year.

Mr. Wyse : You don't find that there is more objection to paying them on account of the larger accounts than if they were rendered in closer periods, of say a month.

Mr. Dion : We have not tried them monthly.

Mr. Wyse : I presume the other is satisfactory.

Mr. Dion : The other works well.

A. A. Wright : You never lose anything by customers going away.

Mr. Dion : We occasionally lose a few dollars by people not paying their bills, but we have to take our chances in watching those people.

The President : I may say for your information, that in Montreal we had a large number of quarterly customers, in fact, at one time they were all quarterly customers, and new contracts were taken making them pay monthly, and after that had gone on some time we adopted the policy of rendering bills monthly. Those customers whose contracts provided that they should pay quarterly exercised that right if they wished to, but they got their bills every month just the same, with the result that practically every customer that we have now has got into the habit of paying his bills monthly. It was not forced upon them, but they were given copies of their accounts and they found it convenient to pay. It involves of course some work, extra meter reading and extra making of accounts, but we have found in practice we can get in our returns monthly quite agreeably.

Mr. Wyse : Do you find that you have better results