

November 26, 1962

Value Service
Schenectady Office

Mr. J. O. DeVries, Jr.
General Manager
Clock and Timer Department
ASHLAND, MASSACHUSETTS

The product I suggest to you probably doesn't fit in your charter at the present but an essential ingredient is an appropriate electric clock so I am sending it to you and know that if it should go elsewhere you will send it.

For several years I have had the belief that the present style of red/amber/green traffic light is unnecessarily and continually frustrating to drivers. Now I have seen an embodiment of a control which is not frustrating and which causes me to make this specific suggestion.

Each of us approaches many traffic lights every day. If, as we are a block away, it is green, we have no idea whether to allow the car to roll to a stop or whether to maintain regular speed. The result is a "blind" decision which probably in a third of the cases is exactly wrong. If one allows the car to roll to a stop, he will roll clear to the light only too late to realize he could just as well have held full speed and driven on; or, he chooses to maintain speed and must, at the last instant, excessively brake to avoid the appearance of "running through" the light. What is needed is an indicator of the progression of the signal toward change. With such an indicator, all decisions can be right and such frustration is entirely removed.

Perhaps what is needed is a large well-lighted clock face, perhaps two feet in diameter with one segment red and the other segment green and with one moving pointer. I felt that there would, of course with anything new, be loudly voiced objections. One might be that it would tend to make a raceway toward the intersection; a second, that it would be so simple and accomplish its function so well without a large battery of electrical equipment that it would down-grade the seller's volume decidedly.

I now have seen it in operation and know that the former is not the case. In Bonn, Germany, one intersection was controlled by this means. I was driving. I used it several times and observed it. It certainly brought a new measure of satisfaction, when approaching that corner, to know a block in advance when one could and should start slowing down.

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Since G. E. is not now in this business, the matter of providing all of the functions better for very much lower cost would not be a negative factor for any department and since the purchase of all road controlling equipment is a matter of taxes, it might be of vital importance to us to tangibly assist municipalities in accomplishing much more function per dollar for the money they spend.

L. D. Miles

Manager - Value Service

LDM: AMH