

Plymouth Is Last Friend Of Meters

By W.W. EDGAR

When Carlton Cole Magee invented the parking meter and had it installed in Oklahoma City in 1935 as a means of collecting a "painless tax" in the dark days of the depression, he had no idea he had developed one of the most controversial mechanical devices that has come along in years.

Designed as a means of helping cities and all other communities raise the money so scarce in those days, it has become both a "pet" and a nuisance to government officials through the years.

One of the first to balk at the installation of meters along the curb to control what had become a parking problem was the late Edward J. Jeffries Jr., then mayor of Detroit.

"Our streets belong to the people," he stated, "so why should they be made to pay to use them?"

And so long as he was in office there were no parking meters lining the curb. It is a significant fact that all cities and townships in

have been a bonanza to government but a headache to the merchants.

The city of Plymouth has 428 parking meters in operation. Of this number 222 are street meters and 206 are installed in parking lots.

During the past year the revenue has amounted to \$22,974.49 with \$15,161.82 coming from the street meters.

This bonanza has become an integral part of the city budget -- but a source of strong opposition from the merchants.

Listen to the shopkeepers along Main Street and they tell you that the "monsters" are driving shoppers away from the downtown area and straight to the outlying shopping centers.

Meanwhile, the City Fathers go merrily on defending the plan that puts meters on downtown streets and in two parking lots.

Much the same contention existed in Farmington and Redford Township until 10 years ago when they were declared a nuisance and removed.

"We got rid of them in 1963," Robert Deadman, Farmington city manager, explained, "for two reasons. First, we wanted to help our merchants in the downtown

areas to increase their business in face of the growing suburban challenge. And, secondly, we found them to be a nuisance.

"With the necessity of maintenance and the added manpower to read them and collect the money," he continued, "it wasn't worth while."

Strangely, while Farmington was getting rid of the meters, and stressing private parking, Redford Township was doing the same.

"We took them out in 1963," said Cpl. John Brodie of the Redford Traffic Division, "and we never had a demand for their return."

"When it comes to parking on the streets," he said, "we follow the state law and do not permit parking on the streets for more than 48 hours -- unless otherwise posted."

The city of Southfield has

eliminated the need for street parking meters by use of a stringent code under the commercial and professional areas must furnish the parking conveniences.

"And our streets have been constructed in a way that we have no place to put them," City Clerk Patrick Flannery commented.

Mayor Eugene McKinney of Westland is quite frank in his attitude toward the parking meter.

"We don't have any now," he said, "and we don't have a municipal parking lot. I see no reason for getting involved with them. All of our parking is private and it has proven satisfactory."

The city of Livonia has shied away from street meters and is using a special assessment formula to handle the only pressing problem -- on Plymouth Road.

"Most of our parking is private," City Attorney Harry Tatigian explained. "Our major shopping centers and super-markets provide their own."

"Our one problem was on Plymouth Road between Merriman and Farmington Roads and that is being handled by a special assessment of the business and professional men."

In Garden City there never has been a thought given to the installation of parking meters. The greatest concern there is finding places to park.

"We never got to the point where we could get accustomed to metering street parking," William Opper, the city clerk, said.

Asked how the city made up the budget without the potential funds of metering, he stated: "We make up our tax money from various sources,

but never a thought about parking."

"What parking we have is free parking on private lots -- and at the moment there is no demand for a change."

The newest city in Observoland -- Farmington Hills -- also is without street metered parking.

"We don't permit parking on Grand River," said acting city manager Floyd Cairns.

Like many of her communities, Farmington Hills offers plenty of free parking at the major shopping centers spread through the area.

"There really is no need for meters on our streets," Cairns concluded, "and I don't know if we ever will have a demand for them."

So, Mr. Magee, you might have had a great idea back in the depression days, but in Observoland your parking meters are on the unwanted list.



THE WORLD'S FIRST parking meter, installed at Oklahoma City in 1935, is given a dusting by an employee of the Oklahoma Historical Society which keeps it on display in the state museum.

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Madonna Adds Business Class

Madonna College, 36600 Schoolcraft, Livonia, will offer a new course for the fall semester entitled, "Introduction To Business." Classes will be held on Saturdays from 9 a.m. to 12 noon, beginning Sept. 8.

The new course carries four credit hours and will be taught by Carmen Pascaretti, MBA, Madonna instructor in business administration.

Classroom-laboratory periods for the course, which is planned as an introduction to business administration, will review the four major elements of business -- accounting, marketing, management and finance -- and will demonstrate how these elements affect and determine every major business decision.

In addition to taking a look at the basics of business, the course will include an explanation of advertising procedures and will provide answers to some of the enigmas faced by today's hard-pressed consumer.

"Introduction To Business" is open to persons interested or presently engaged in the various aspects of business, as well as those intending to major in business administration.

Registration is scheduled for Aug. 6 - 7 from 9 - 11 a.m., 1 - 5 p.m., and 7 - 9 p.m. Tuition is \$35 per credit hour.

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