

Dec. 2, 1941.

H. C. STEARNS

2,264,647

STAMP DISPENSING MACHINE

Filed Feb. 24, 1940

3 Sheets-Sheet 1

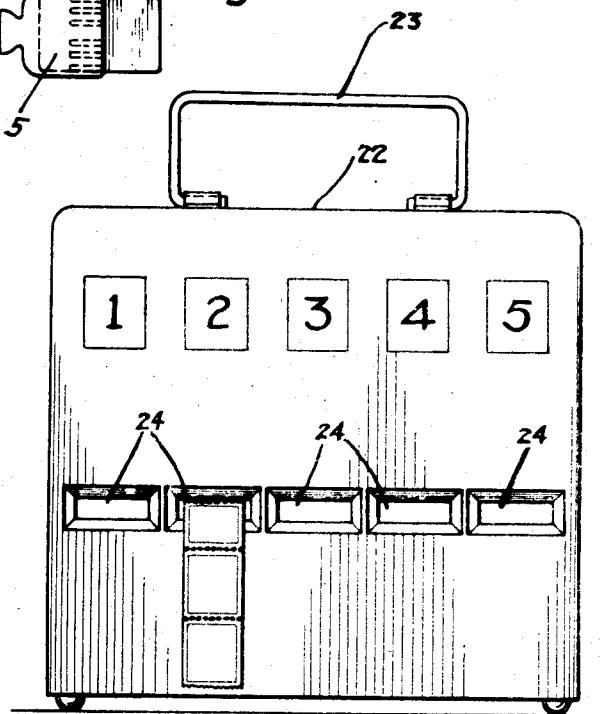
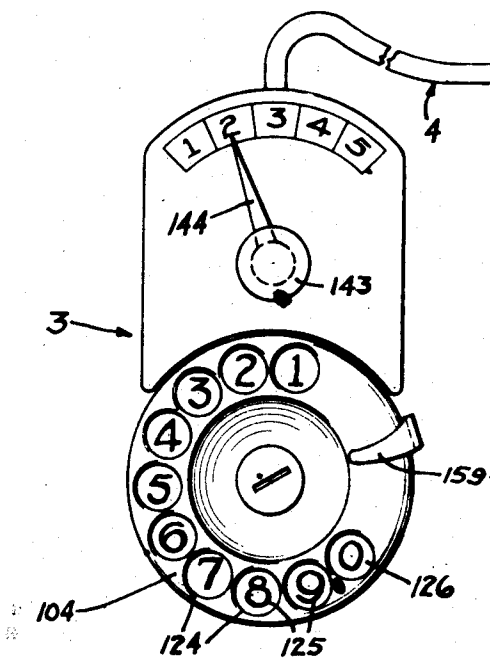
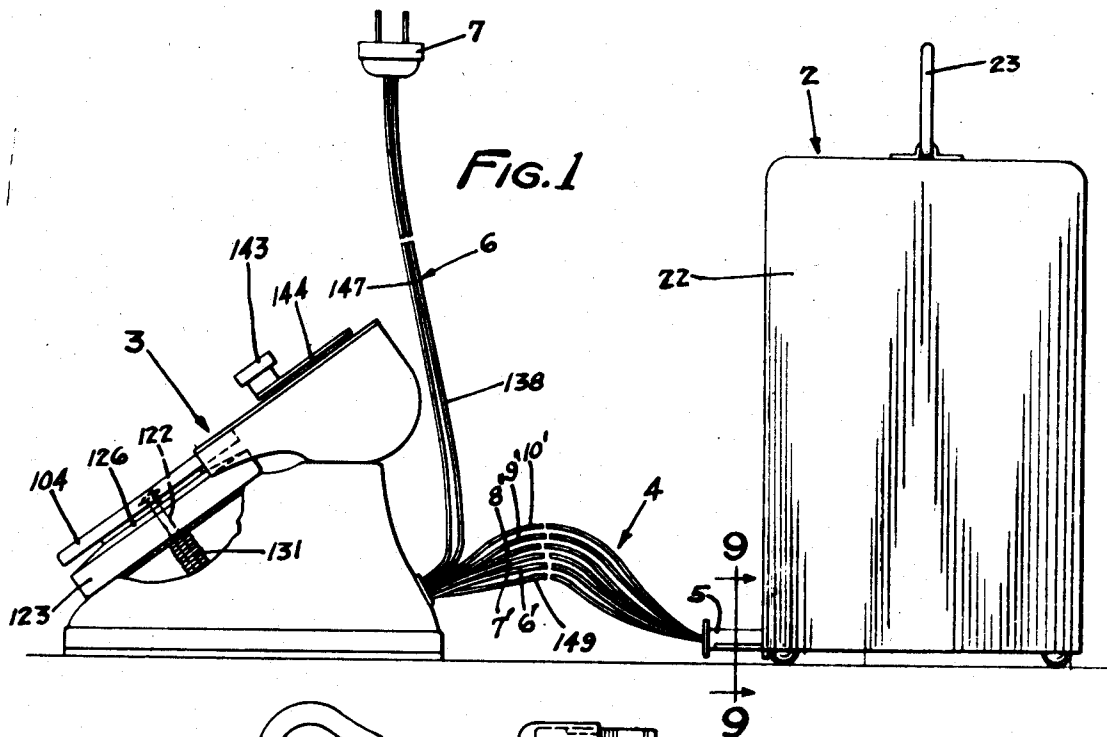


FIG. 2

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3 Sheets-Sheet 2

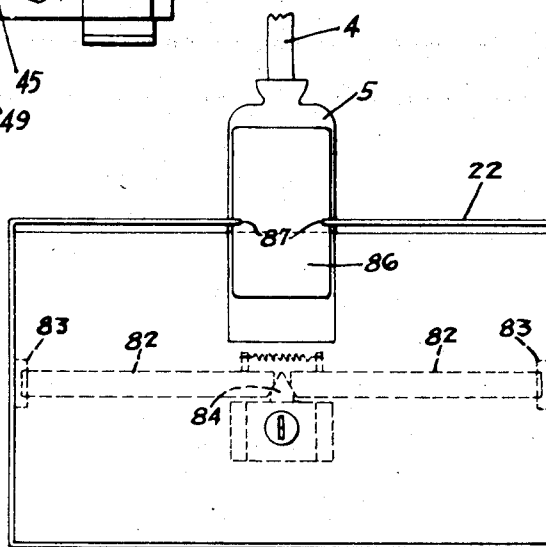
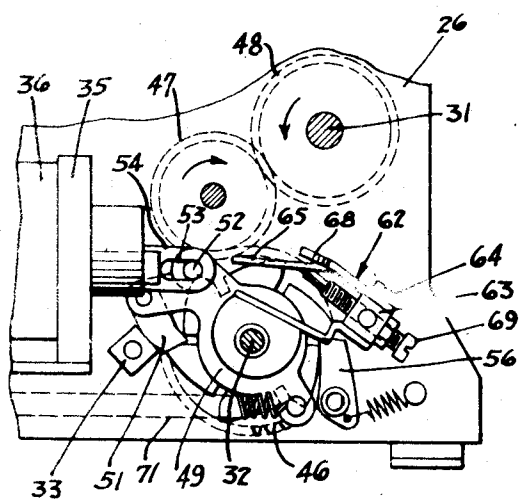
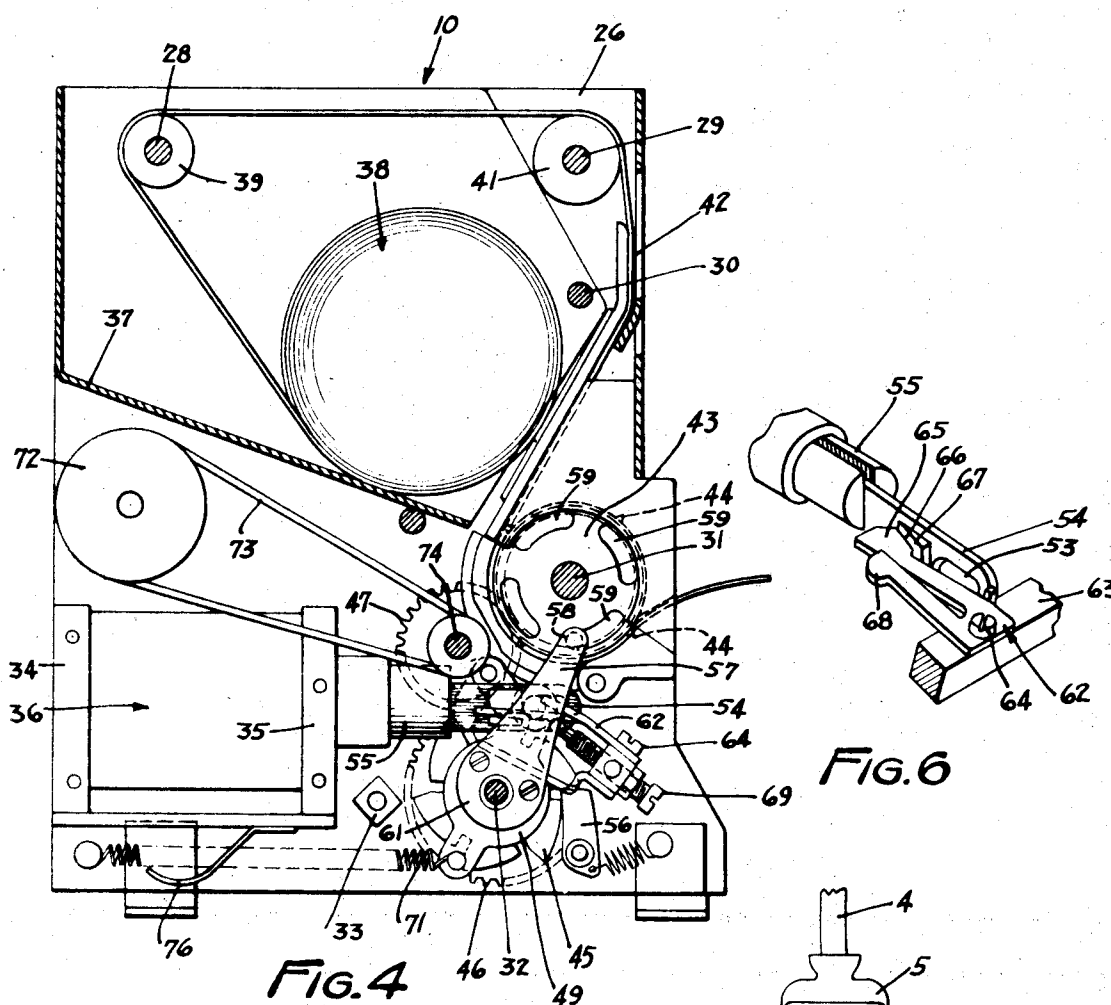


FIG. 12

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STAMP DISPENSING MACHINE

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3 Sheets-Sheet 3

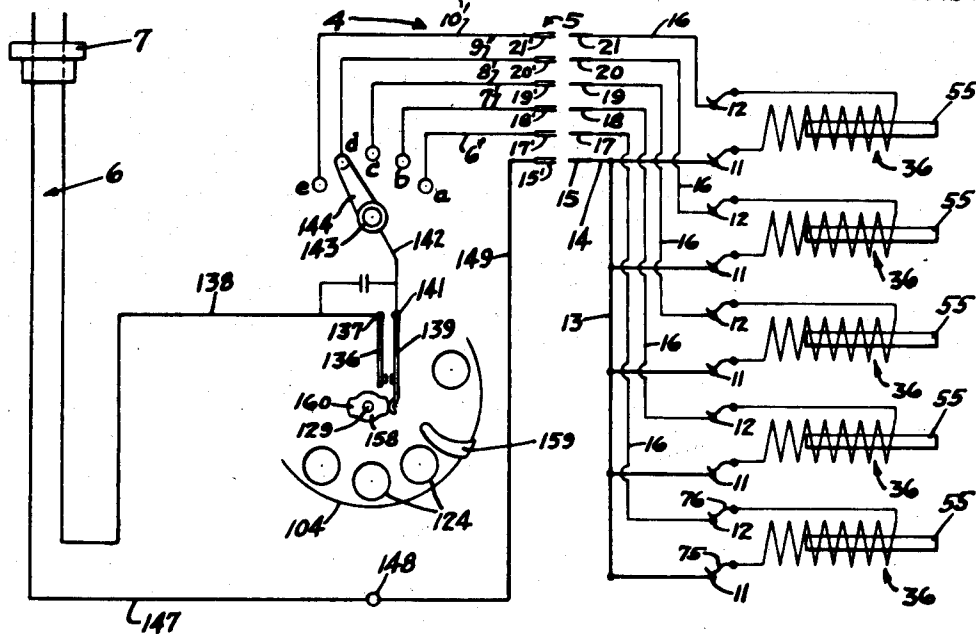


FIG. 11

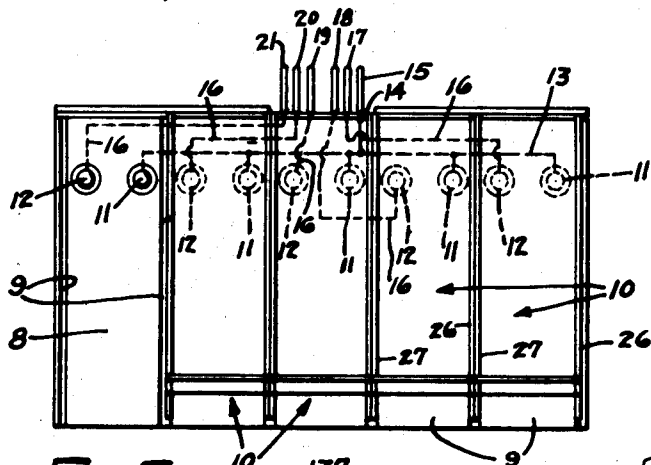


FIG. 7

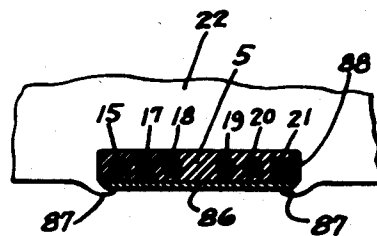


FIG. 9

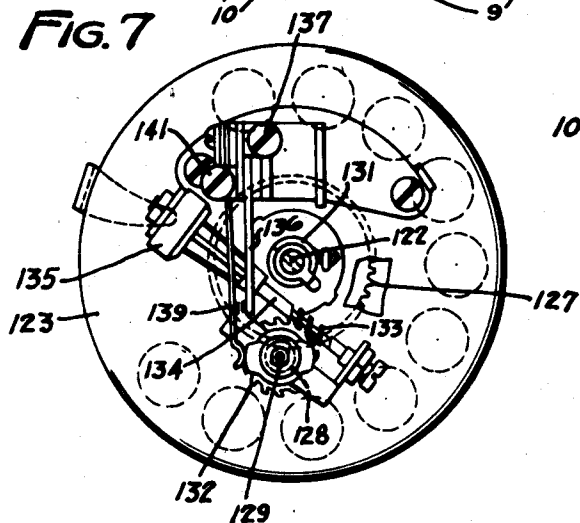


FIG. 10

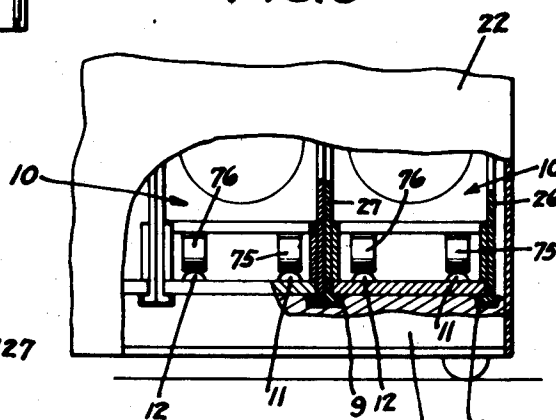


FIG. 8

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UNITED STATES PATENT OFFICE

2,264,647

STAMP DISPENSING MACHINE

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apolis, Minn., a corporation of Delaware

Application February 24, 1940, Serial No. 320,590

16 Claims. (Cl. 271—2.4)

This invention relates to new and useful improvements in article dispensing machines, and particularly to a machine for dispensing postage stamps, such as disclosed in the co-pending application of Herbert Steen and George R. Sutherland, #275,238, filed May 23, 1939.

The present invention is directed more particularly to the control unit and the unitary construction of the dispensing units, whereby a plurality of composite dispensing units may be removably mounted on a single base member to adapt the machine for dispensing stamps of different denominations and in varying quantities.

An object of the present invention is to provide a machine of the character disclosed comprising a base member having a plurality of guideways therein, each adapted to removably receive a composite stamp dispensing unit, said units being adapted to dispense stamps of different denominations, and all of said units being substantially alike in construction, whereby when one of said units has been emptied, another loaded unit may readily be substituted therefor, without materially delaying the operation of the machine.

A further object is to provide a stamp dispensing machine comprising a suitable base member having a plurality of guideways therein, each adapted to removably receive a dispensing unit, and said base being provided with a plurality of electric circuits, one for each dispensing unit, and each circuit having a pair of exposed contacts adapted to be engaged by contacts carried by the units, thereby to electrically connect the dispensing units to their respective circuits, when mounted on the base, and all of said circuits having means whereby they may be connected to a control unit by a flexible cable, said control unit comprising a single control member and a selector switch for selectively connecting the control unit to a selected stamp dispensing unit, and whereby an operator or attendant stationed remote from the dispensing machine may readily control the operation of the dispensing units.

Other objects of the invention reside in the unique construction of the base member, and the means provided thereon for removably supporting the dispensing units; in the construction of the control unit which comprises a single control member, and a selector switch or element, whereby the control member may be operatively connected to a selected stamp dispensing unit; in the means for electrically connecting the dispensing units to the electric circuits in the base; in the provision of a stamp dispensing machine

comprising a plurality of composite stamp dispensing units of like structure, which units are very small and compact in size, whereby several such units may be mounted on a single base to provide a machine capable of dispensing stamps of several different denominations; in the unitary construction of the control unit, whereby it may be constructed independently of the dispensing machine, said control unit have an electric cable provided at one end with a suitable receptacle or fitting for electrically connecting the cable to the circuits of the dispensing units, whereby the machine may be operated from a point remote therefrom; and in the provision of means for locking the enclosing casing against removal from the base, when the control unit is electrically connected to the machine.

Other objects of the invention will appear from the following descriptions and accompanying drawings and will be pointed out in the annexed claims.

In the accompanying drawings there has been disclosed a structure designed to carry out the various objects of the invention, but it is to be understood that the invention is not confined to the exact features shown as various changes may be made within the scope of the claims which follow.

In the drawings:

Figure 1 is an outside view of my improved dispensing machine, showing it operatively connected to the control unit.

Figure 2 is a front view of the dispensing machine showing the slots or openings in the wall of the casing, through which the stamps are ejected;

Figure 3 is a plan view of the control unit;

Figure 4 is a vertical sectional view through one of the dispensing units, showing the feed roll driving means in normal position;

Figure 5 is a fragmentary view showing parts of the feed roll driving means in the positions assumed when the solenoid is energized to operate the feed roll;

Figure 6 is a fragmentary view showing the means for moving the feed roll locking member out of locking engagement with the feed roll;

Figure 7 is a plan view of the base member showing the guideways therein and one of the dispensing units removed therefrom;

Figure 8 is a detail sectional view of a portion of the dispensing machine showing the electrical connections between the circuits in the base member and the dispensing units;

Figure 9 is a detail sectional view on the line 9-9 of Figure 1;

Figure 10 is a bottom view of the control member circuit closure and its associated parts;

Figure 11 is a wiring diagram; and

Figure 12 is a bottom view of the machine, showing a means for locking the casing to the base.

GENERAL

The stamp dispensing machine herein disclosed, comprises briefly, a stamp dispensing machine, generally indicated by the numeral 2, and a control unit, generally indicated by the numeral 3. The control unit has a flexible cable, indicated by the numeral 4, provided at one end with a connecting plug 5, whereby the cable 4 may be electrically connected to the circuits within the base of the dispensing machine, as will subsequently be described. The control unit 3 has an electric conductor 6 provided with a plug 7 for electrically connecting the control unit to a suitable supply circuit, not shown.

Base member and casing

The base member and casing is best shown in Figures 1, 2, 7 and 8. The base, generally designated by the numeral 8, is preferably hollow and has provided therein, a plurality of electric circuits for electrically connecting the stamp dispensing units, subsequently to be described, to the connecting cable 4.

A plurality of guideways 9 are provided in the upper wall of the base 8 adapted to removably receive the dispensing units designated by the numeral 10. A pair of contacts 11 and 12 are provided in each guideway adapted to be engaged by flexible contacts provided on the dispensing units. The machine, as herein disclosed, is shown comprising five stamp dispensing units 10, and the base is therefore provided with five guideways, one for each dispensing unit. As shown in Figure 7, the contacts 11 of each guideway are electrically connected together to a common wire 13 which, in turn, has a wire 14 connecting it to a contact or connecting post 15, projecting outwardly from the base, as best illustrated in Figure 7. The contacts 12 of the guideways are connected by a plurality of wires 16, to a plurality of contacts 17, 18, 19, 20, and 21, respectively, as best shown in Figure 11. The contacts 17 to 21, inclusive, are adapted to be connected to the connecting plug 5, shown in Figure 1, thereby to operatively connect the dispensing machine 2, to the control unit 3.

A suitable casing, generally designated by the numeral 22, is adapted to be fitted over the base 2, as shown in Figures 1, 2, and 8, to provide a closure for the dispensing units 10. The casing 22 may be provided with a suitable carrying handle 23, and has means for suitably securing it to the base 8, whereby the dispensing machine, exclusive of the control unit 3, may be conveniently carried about from place to place by the handle 23. A plurality of stamp ejecting openings 24 are provided in the front wall of the casing 22, as hereinbefore stated, and as shown in Figure 2. One such opening is provided for each dispensing unit, whereby a plurality of stamps of different denominations may be ejected from the machine, as shown in Figure 2.

Stamp dispensing unit

The stamp dispensing units 10 are alike in construction and operation, and but one will there-

fore be described in detail. As best shown in Figures 4, 5, and 8, each dispensing unit comprises spaced side plates 26 and 27, secured together by suitable cross shafts or rods 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, and a pair of spaced plates 34 and 35. The plates 34 and 35 provide a support for a suitable solenoid, generally designated by the numeral 36.

A suitable hopper 37 is mounted in the upper portion of the dispensing unit 10 adapted to support a roll of stamps 38. The stamp strip passes from the roll 38 over a pair of rollers 39 and 41 and downwardly through a guide 42 to a suitable feed roll 43 having rows of teeth 44 in its periphery adapted to be received in the perforations in the stamp strip.

The stamp strip is fed around the feed roll 43, and the dispensed end of the strip, representing the number of stamps sold at a sales transaction, are projected through one of the openings 24 in the front wall of the casing, as clearly shown in Figures 2 and 4.

The driving means for the feed roll is shown comprising a ratchet wheel 45, rotatably supported on the cross shaft 32 and having a gear wheel 46 secured thereto which meshes with an idler gear 47. The idler gear 47 meshes with a gear 48 provided at one end of the feed roll 43. A plate 49 is mounted on the shaft 32 adjacent to the ratchet wheel 45, and has a dog 51 pivotally mounted thereon adapted to engage the teeth of the ratchet, as shown in Figure 5, when the plate or arm 49 is actuated. The plate 49 has at its upper end, a pin 52 which is received in a slot 53 provided in an extension 54 of the armature 55 of the solenoid 36. Thus, when the armature 55 is retracted by energization of the solenoid 36, the arm 49 will be removed from the position shown in Figure 4, to that shown in Figure 5, thereby partially rotating the ratchet 45, whereby rotation is communicated to the feed roll 43 through the intermediate gear 47. A spring-actuated pawl 56 is mounted in the frame and engages the ratchet 45 to prevent reverse movement thereof, as will readily be understood by reference to Figures 4 and 5. From the foregoing, it will readily be understood that for each impulse of the solenoid 36, the feed roll will be rotated a portion of a revolution sufficient to eject one stamp from the dispensing unit.

Feed roll locking means

Means is provided for locking the feed roll against reverse movement, during operation of the drive means. The means provided for thus locking the feed roll against reverse movement is shown comprising a flexible member or arm 57 having a laterally extending pin 58 at its upper end adapted to be received in a plurality of recesses 59, provided in the adjacent end of the feed roll 43. The flexible arm 57 has a hub 61 fixed to the stationary shaft 32, whereby the pin 58 at the upper end thereof will be maintained in alignment with the recesses 59 in the feed roll.

Means is provided for flexing the arm 57 to temporarily disengage the pin 58 from the recesses 59 in the feed roll, each time the operating mechanism is operated, thereby to release the feed roll so that it may be advanced a portion of a revolution to eject a stamp each time the armature is energized. The means provided for thus flexing the locking arm 57 is shown comprising an element 62 pivotally supported upon a fixed cross bar 63 by a pivot or screw 64. A

head 65 is provided at one end of the element 62, and has a beveled face 66 adapted to engage a cam 67 provided upon the extension 54 of the armature 55. The element 62 further has an oppositely disposed projection 68 adapted to engage the flexible locking arm 57, whereby when the armature is retracted by energization of the solenoid 36, the element 62 is swung about its pivot 64, whereby the projection 68 will thrust the arm 57 outwardly to move the pin 58 out of the slot 59, in which it may be received. An elongated opening or slot 53 permits the armature to actuate the element 62 before the plate or arm oscillated to operate the dog 51. Outward movement of the armature is limited by a stop screw 69, shown received in the cross bar 63, which supports the element 62. A spring 71 constantly urges the arm or plate 49 into the position shown in Figure 4, whereby the arm or plate 49 is actuated against the tension of the spring, when the armature is energized.

Suitable means, such as a counter, generally designated by the numeral 72, may be provided for recording the number of stamps dispensed. This counter may be driven by a flexible drive element 73 from the shaft 74, to which the intermediate gear 47 is secured. As shown in Figures 4 and 8, each solenoid 36 is provided with a pair of flexible contacts 75 and 76, adapted to electrically engage the contacts 11 and 12, respectively, of the guideways 9, as clearly illustrated in Figure 8. By this arrangement, each time a dispensing unit is slid into one of the guideways of the base, as shown in Figures 7, and 8, the flexible contacts 75 and 76 thereof will electrically engage the contacts 11 and 12 of said guideway, whereby current may be supplied to the solenoid 36, thus mounted on the base.

Control means

In the apparatus as herein disclosed, the solenoids 36 provide the power means for actuating the dispensing units 10. One such solenoid is provided for each unit, whereby the units are adapted for independent operation. The flow of current to the solenoids is controlled by the control unit, generally designated by the numeral 3, and shown in Figure 3, which functions as a circuit closer or impulse device, and is adapted to successively close the circuit to a selected solenoid, whereby the latter may be actuated to eject one or more stamps from the machine.

The control unit comprises a single control number 104, in the form of a dial, secured to one end of a shaft 122, rotatably mounted in suitable bearings, not shown, provided in a support 123. The dial 104 is provided with suitable finger receiving openings 124, superimposing a series of numerals, generally indicated by the numeral 125, and which numerals are provided on a disk 126, secured to the support 123. In the machine herein disclosed, the numerals 125 represent the number of stamps to be dispensed each time the machine is operated.

A gear 127 is mounted on the shaft 122 within the support 123 and meshes with a pinion 128 secured to a shaft 129. The gear 127 is driven in one direction, by a suitable ratchet device not shown, when the dial 104 is rotated by the operator. The shaft 122 projects through the bottom wall of the support 123 and has a suitable spring 131 coiled thereabout and arranged to return the gear 127 to its normal position, against a suitable stop, not shown.

A small worm gear 132 is shown secured to the shaft 129 and meshes with a worm 133 fixed to the shaft 134. The shaft 134 is shown mounted in suitable bearings provided on the support 123. A suitable governor, generally indicated by the numeral 135 is provided at one end of the shaft 134, and acts to control the rotation thereof. A fixed contact 136 is mounted on the support 123 in insulated relation thereto and has a suitable terminal screw 137 to which one end of a wire 138 is secured. The fixed contact 136 is adapted to be engaged by a movable contact 139, insulated from the fixed contact 136 and the support 123. The contact 139 has a terminal screw 141 which is shown connected by a wire 142 to a selector switch 143, having a movable contact arm 144 adapted to be selectively moved into engagement with a plurality of fixed contacts a-b-c-d-e, shown in the wiring diagram (Figure 11).

The wire 138 which has one end connected to the terminal post 137, may represent one of the wires of the flexible conductor 6, shown in Figure 1. The other wire of the conductor 6, indicated by the numeral 147, may be electrically connected to a terminal post 148, located within the support 123 of the control unit. The other ends of the wires 138 and 147 are connected to the connecting plug 7, as shown in Figure 1.

Current is supplied to the solenoids 36 through the flexible cable 4, composed of wires 6', 7', 8', 9', 10', and a wire 149, which leads from the terminal post 148. The wires 6', 7', 8', 9', 10' connect the contacts a-b-c-d-e of the selector switch 143 to a plurality of sockets or connecting elements 17'-18'-19'-20'-21', provided in the connecting plug 5 of the cable 4. A wire 149 has one end connected to the terminal post 148, and has a socket member 15' secured to its opposite end adapted to receive the contact 15 of the wire 14. The wire 149 constitutes one of the wires of the flexible cable 4, as will readily be understood by reference to Figures 1 and 11. The sockets 15'-17'-18'-19'-20'-21' are provided in the plug 5, and are adapted to receive the contacts 15-17-18-19-20-21, respectively, thereby to electrically connect the control unit to the machine, as shown in Figure 1.

The means provided for successively closing the supply circuit to the solenoid 36 of a selected dispensing unit, comprises a disk 158 secured to the shaft 129 and having diametrically opposed high points 160, adapted to engage a projecting end of the movable contact 139. The parts of the control mechanism, above described, are so arranged that each time the control unit or member 104 comes to rest, one of the high points of the disk 158 will be in engagement with the contact 139, whereby the supply of current to the solenoid is cut off, whenever the machine is at rest.

The spacing between the finger receiving openings 124 of the dial 104, is such that the spacing between adjacent holes represents one-half revolution of the disk 158, whereby one impulse is obtained each time the dial is rotated a distance representing the spacing between two adjacent holes. If the dial is rotated two or more holes, one or more impulses will be received, depending upon the number of holes the dial is rotated. The specific construction of the control mechanism, shown in Figure 10, is more or less well known, and it is therefore thought unnecessary to herein further describe the same in detail.

A finger stop 159 is secured to the support 123 adapted to be engaged by the operator's finger to limit rotation of the dial by the operator's finger, as will readily be understood by reference to Figure 3.

Casing or enclosing member

Means is provided for enclosing the dispensing units 10, and, as shown in Figures 1 and 2, comprises a casing 22 provided with a suitable carrying handle 23. The front wall of the casing is provided with the stamp ejecting openings 24, as hereinbefore stated, through which the dispensed stamps are ejected, as shown in Figure 2.

Means is provided for locking the casing 22 to the base 8 whereby an unauthorized person cannot remove it for the purpose of unlawfully gaining access to the stamps. The means for thus locking the casing 22 against removal, may consist of a pair of locking bars 82 having terminals adapted to lockingly engage suitable projections 83 secured to the end walls of the casing. An operating member 84 is provided in the base for actuating the locking bars. The member 84 may be operated by a suitable key member, not shown, through a key slot in the base, whereby the locking bars 82, cannot be operated by an unauthorized person, as will readily be understood by reference to Figure 12.

Means is provided for preventing removal of the casing 22 from the base when the flexible cable 4 is electrically connected to the machine, as shown in Figure 1, should an operator or attendant inadvertently fail to lock the casing to the base by manipulation of the locking bars. The means provided for thus preventing removal of the casing from the machine is shown comprising a plate 86 secured to the plug 5 and adapted to operatively engage a pair of inwardly extending projections 87 which, for convenience, may be provided on the lower edge of the rear wall of the casing, as shown in Figure 9. When the plug 5 is electrically engaged with the contacts 15-17-18-19-20-21, it will readily be seen that the casing cannot be removed from the base, even though the locking bars 82 may be in unlocked position, because the casing must be lifted upwardly to remove it from the base, which is prevented by the inwardly extending projections 87, when the plug 5 is engaged with the terminals 15-17-18-19-20-21. The lower portion of the rear wall of the casing has an opening 88 adapted to receive the plug 5, as shown in Figure 9.

OPERATION

In the operation of the machine herein disclosed, the flexible cable 4, which may be of any desired length, is connected to the machine, as shown in Figure 1, and the conductor 6 connected to a source of electric energy. The machine is then ready for operation, and each time the dial is rotated, one of the units 10 will dispense one or more stamps, depending upon the degree of rotation of the dial 104. The particular denomination of the stamps dispensed is controlled by manipulation of the selector switch 143. For example, if the selector switch 143 is positioned with its pointer at the numeral 2, as shown in Figure 3, 2¢ stamps will be dispensed from the machine when the dial is operated. Any number of stamps from 1 to 10 may be dispensed in rapid succession, by a single manipulation of the dial 104. Thus, it will be noted that each time the dial is actuated, a predeter-

mined number of stamps of a given denomination may be dispensed from the machine, in rapid succession, whereby the operation of dispensing the stamps may be greatly expedited.

I claim as my invention:

1. In a machine for dispensing articles in varying quantities, a holder for the articles, means for ejecting the articles from the machine, including an electric power device adapted to eject an article for each impulse thereof, a single control member adapted to control the operation thereof, said control member having a variable stroke, the length of which determines the number of impulses produced by the power device for each operation of the control member and means including an electric circuit, operatively connecting the control member to the power device, said circuit including a circuit closer adapted to be actuated intermittently by movement of the control member and thereby to cause intermittent operation of the power device, whereby a predetermined number of articles are ejected from the machine.

2. A machine for selectively dispensing articles of different values in varying quantities, separate holders for the variant articles, an electrically actuated article-ejecting mechanism for each holder, a single control member for controlling the operation of the article-ejecting mechanisms, said control member having a variable stroke, the length of which determines the number of articles ejected from the machine for each operation of the control member, means for selectively operatively connecting said control member through an electrical circuit to a selected ejecting mechanism, said circuit including a circuit closer adapted to be actuated intermittently by movement of the control member and thereby to cause intermittent actuation of the article-ejecting mechanism, whereby when the control member is operated said selected ejecting mechanism will eject from the machine, a predetermined number of articles of a given value.

3. A machine for selectively dispensing articles of different values in varying quantities, separate holders for the variant articles, an electrically actuated article-ejecting mechanism for each holder, a single control unit for said mechanisms located remote from the machine, said control unit comprising a manually operable lever having a variable stroke, the length of which determines the number of articles ejected from the machine for each operation of the control member, and means for selectively operatively connecting said control unit through an electrical circuit to a selected ejecting mechanism, said circuit including a circuit closer adapted to be actuated intermittently upon movement of said lever and thereby to cause intermittent actuation of the article-ejecting mechanism, whereby when the said lever is operated, said selected ejecting mechanism will eject from the machine, a predetermined number of articles of a given value.

4. A machine for selectively dispensing articles of different values in varying quantities, separate holders for the variant articles, an article-ejecting mechanism for each holder, each having an independent electric power device, a single control member for controlling the operation of said power devices, said control member having a variable stroke, the length of which determines the number of articles ejected from the machine for each operation of the control member, and means for selectively operatively connecting the control member through an electric circuit to a

selected power device, said circuit including a circuit closer adapted to be actuated intermittently upon movement of the control member and thereby to cause intermittent operation of the power device, whereby when the control member is actuated, a selected ejecting mechanism will eject from the machine, a predetermined number of articles of a given value.

5. A stamp dispensing machine comprising a holder for stamp strips in roll form, stamp-ejecting mechanism including a feed roll, an electric power device for intermittently actuating said ejecting mechanism, said ejecting mechanism being adapted to eject a stamp for each impulse of the power device, a single control member, for controlling the operation of the power device, said control member having a variable stroke, the length of which determines the number of articles ejected from the machine for each operation of the control member, a circuit connecting the power device to the control member and comprising a circuit-closer, and means made operable by movement of the control member in one direction, to actuate the circuit closer and cause intermittent operation of the power device, whereby a predetermined number of stamps are ejected from the machine.

6. A stamp dispensing machine comprising a feed roll adapted to feed a stamp strip, drive means for the feed roll, a solenoid for intermittently operating said drive means, a control dial comprising a pair of normally open contacts electrically connected to the solenoid and a source of power, and means associated with the dial and adapted, upon rotation of the dial in one direction, to successively close said contacts, whereby the solenoid is intermittently energized to operate the drive means, the number of impulses produced by the solenoid determining the number of stamps ejected from the machine by the feed roll.

7. A stamp dispensing machine comprising a feed roll adapted to feed a stamp strip, means for driving the feed roll including a ratchet mechanism, a solenoid for intermittently operating the ratchet mechanism, a control dial comprising a pair of normally open contacts electrically connected to said solenoid and a source of power, means associated with the dial and adapted, upon rotation of the dial in one direction, to successively close said contacts, whereby the solenoid is intermittently energized to operate the ratchet mechanism and feed roll, the number of impulses produced by the solenoid determining the number of stamps ejected from the machine for each operation of the dial, and means for interrupting operation of the machine when all of the stamps are ejected therefrom.

8. A stamp dispensing machine comprising a feed roll adapted to feed a stamp strip, drive means for the feed roll, a power device for operating the drive means, a control unit comprising a manually operable dial and a pair of normally open contacts electrically connected to the power device and a source of power, and a circuit closer made operable by reverse movement of the dial, to successively close said contacts, whereby the power device is intermittently actuated to operate the drive means and therefore the feed roll, one stamp being ejected by the feed roll for each impulse of the power device, and the number of stamps ejected from the machine for each operation of the dial, being dependent upon the degree of rotation of the dial by the operator.

9. A machine for dispensing stamps in varying

quantities, comprising a frame having a guideway therein, a composite article dispensing unit removably supported in said guideway, a power device in said unit, power transmission means in the base, means for operatively connecting the power device of the dispensing unit to said power transmission means, when the dispensing unit is positioned in the guideway, and a control unit adapted to be connected to said power transmission means for controlling the operation of the dispensing unit.

10. A machine for dispensing stamps in varying quantities, comprising a base member having a guideway therein, an electric circuit in the base member having means for connecting it to a source of electric energy, said circuit having a pair of contacts located in said guideway, a composite article dispensing unit removably supported on said guideway, an electric power device in said dispensing unit comprising a pair of contacts adapted to electrically engage the contacts in the guideway, when the dispensing unit is positioned therein, and means for controlling the supply of current to said circuit, thereby to control the operation of the dispensing unit.

11. A machine for dispensing stamps of varying denominations, a base having a plurality of guideways therein, a plurality of dispensing units interchangeably supported in said guideways, each unit comprising a stamp ejecting mechanism and an electric power device therefor, each power device having a pair of contacts, a plurality of electric circuits in the base, one for each guideway, and each circuit having a pair of contacts located in a guideway and adapted to be engaged by the contacts of the dispensing unit supported therein, and an electrically operated control member common to all of said circuits and having means for selectively connecting it to the circuit of a selected dispensing unit, whereby said units may be selectively operated to dispense stamps of different denominations and in varying quantities.

12. A machine for dispensing stamps of different denominations in varying quantities, comprising a base member having a plurality of guideways therein, composite dispensing units interchangeably supported in said guideways, each of said units comprising a stamp ejecting mechanism and an electric power device for operating said mechanism, a plurality of circuits within said base, one for each dispensing unit, means whereby each unit is electrically connected to one of said circuits, when positioned in a guideway, a control unit common to all of said circuits and comprising a single control member and a circuit closer, a flexible conduit for electrically connecting the control unit to the circuits in the base member, and a selector switch on the control unit for electrically connecting the circuit of a selected dispensing unit to the control member, whereby said dispensing units may be selectively operated to dispense stamps of different denominations, in varying quantities.

13. In a machine for dispensing stamps of different denominations in varying quantities, a base member having a plurality of guideways therein, a plurality of composite dispensing units interchangeably supported in said guideways, a plurality of electric circuits in the base having means for electrically connecting them to the dispensing units, when the latter are positioned in said guideways, said circuits having a plurality of contacts, a control unit having a flexible cable provided with a plug adapted to electrically en-

gage said contacts, and whereby the control unit may be located remote from the dispensing machine, means on the control unit for selectively electrically connecting said dispensing units thereto, whereby said dispensing units may be selectively operated to dispense stamps of different denominations in varying quantities, and a casing enclosing the dispensing units.

14. In a machine for dispensing stamps of different denominations in varying quantities, a base member having a plurality of guideways therein, a plurality of composite dispensing units interchangeably supported in said guideways, a plurality of electric circuits in the base having means for electrically connecting them to the dispensing units, when the latter are positioned in said guideways, said circuits having a plurality of contacts, a control unit having a flexible cable provided with a plug adapted to electrically engage said contacts, and whereby the control unit may be located remote from the dispensing machine, means on the control unit for selectively electrically connecting said dispensing units thereto, whereby said dispensing units may be selectively operated to dispense stamps of different denominations in varying quantities, a casing enclosing said dispensing units, and means whereby when the flexible cable of the control unit is connected to the dispensing machine, said casing cannot be removed from the base.

15. In a machine for dispensing articles in vary-

ing quantities, a holder for the articles, electrically actuated means including a pawl and ratchet mechanism for ejecting the articles from the machine, a control member for controlling the operation of the article-ejecting means, said control member having a variable stroke, the length of which determines the number of articles ejected from the machine for each operation of the control member, and a circuit connecting the control member to the article-ejecting means and comprising a circuit closer adapted to be actuated intermittently by movement of the control member and thereby to cause intermittent actuation of the article-ejecting means whereby a predetermined number of articles are ejected from the machine.

16. In a machine for dispensing articles in strip form in varying quantities, a holder for the articles, a feed roll for ejecting the articles from the machine, an electric power device adapted to partially rotate the feed roll and eject an article for each impulse thereof, a circuit adapted to supply current to said power device, a circuit closer in said circuit, and a remote control unit including a rotatable dial and means, associated with the dial, adapted upon rotation to the dial to successively operate said circuit closer to closed position whereby the power device is intermittently operated to partially rotate said feed roll.

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