

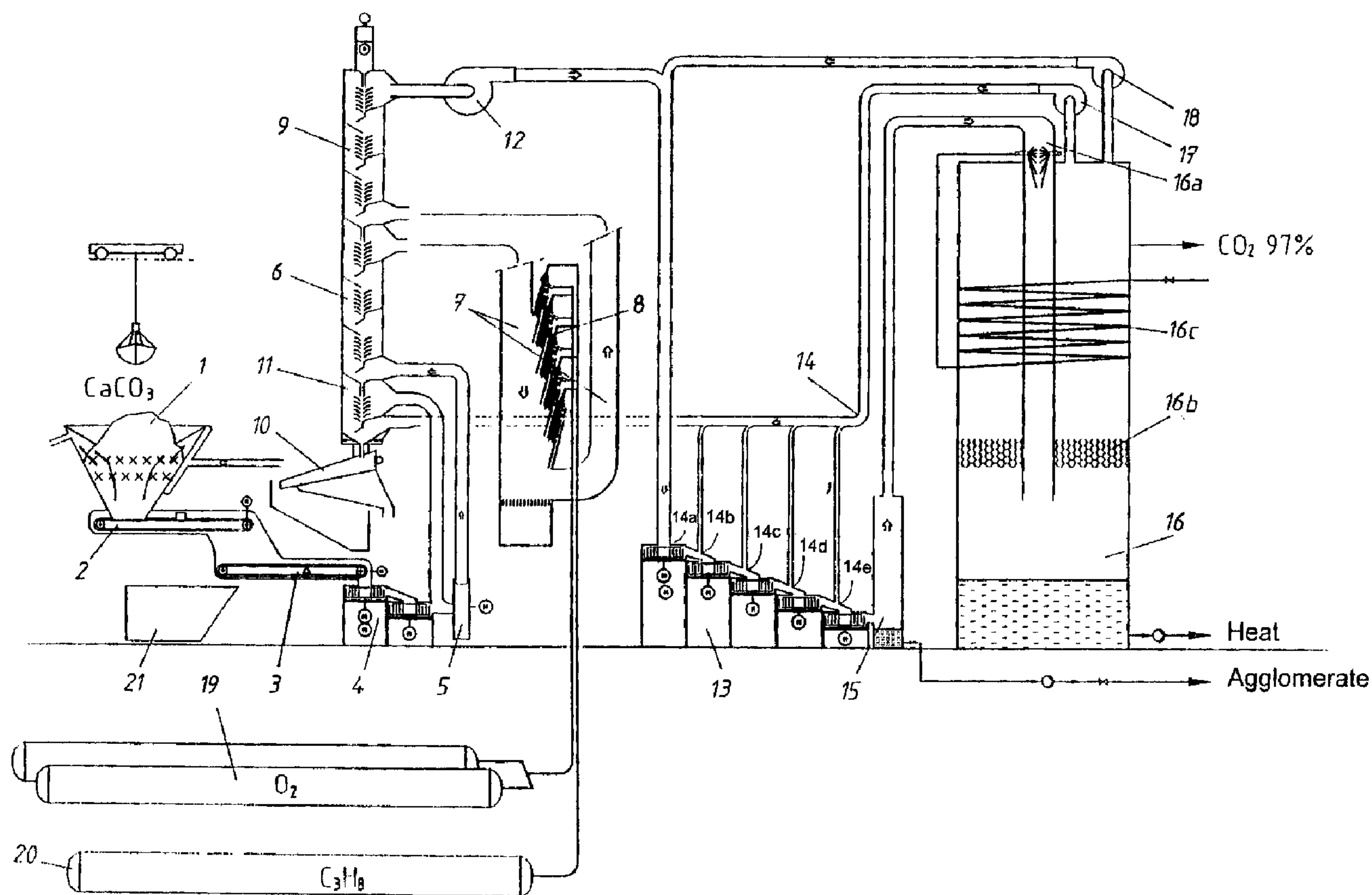
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(54) Titre : PROCEDE ET APPAREIL DE PREPARATION DE CARBONATE DE CALCIUM PRECIPITE  
(54) Title: PROCESS AND APPARATUS FOR PREPARING PRECIPITATED CALCIUM CARBONATE



This invention concerns a process and equipment for producing precipitated calcium carbonate. According to the process, limestone is burnt at a high temperature to form calcium oxide and, thereafter, calcium carbonate is formed from calcium oxide in the presence of water and carbonate ions and the formed calcium carbonate is recovered. The formation of the carbonate may be

**(57) Abrégé(suite)/Abstract(continued):**

performed by carbonating calcium oxide with carbon dioxide gas in the presence of water or water vapour, or by reacting calcium oxide with soda solution. According to the invention calcium oxide is converted to calcium carbonate without separate slaking and essentially without intermediate storage, in particular without intermediate storage between the burning of the starting material and the forming of calcium carbonate. With the aid of the invention a quite advantageous solution in view of heat economy is achieved.

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<b>(21) International Application Number:</b> PCT/FI98/00700 <b>(22) International Filing Date:</b> 8 September 1998 (08.09.98)  <b>(30) Priority Data:</b> 973632                      8 September 1997 (08.09.97)                      FI  <b>(71) Applicant (for all designated States except US):</b> FP-PIGMENTS OY [FI/FI]; Ahventie 4 A 21-22, FIN-02170 Espoo (FI).  <b>(72) Inventor; and</b> <b>(75) Inventor/Applicant (for US only):</b> VIRTANEN, Pentti [FI/FI]; T-linja 38 A, FIN-37800 Toijala (FI).  <b>(74) Agents:</b> LAINE, Seppo et al.; Seppo Laine Oy, Itämerenkatu 3 B, FIN-00180 Helsinki (FI).		<b>(81) Designated States:</b> AL, AM, AT, AU, AZ, BA, BB, BG, BR, BY, CA, CH, CN, CU, CZ, DE, DK, EE, ES, FI, GB, GE, GH, GM, HR, HU, ID, IL, IS, JP, KE, KG, KP, KR, KZ, LC, LK, LR, LS, LT, LU, LV, MD, MG, MK, MN, MW, MX, NO, NZ, PL, PT, RO, RU, SD, SE, SG, SI, SK, SL, TJ, TM, TR, TT, UA, UG, US, UZ, VN, YU, ZW, ARIPO patent (GH, GM, KE, LS, MW, SD, SZ, UG, ZW), Eurasian patent (AM, AZ, BY, KG, KZ, MD, RU, TJ, TM), European patent (AT, BE, CH, CY, DE, DK, ES, FI, FR, GB, GR, IE, IT, LU, MC, NL, PT, SE), OAPI patent (BF, BJ, CF, CG, CI, CM, GA, GN, GW, ML, MR, NE, SN, TD, TG).  <b>Published</b> <i>With international search report.</i> <i>In English translation (filed in Finnish).</i>
<b>(54) Title:</b> PROCESS AND APPARATUS FOR PREPARING PRECIPITATED CALCIUM CARBONATE  <b>(57) Abstract</b> <p>This invention concerns a process and equipment for producing precipitated calcium carbonate. According to the process, limestone is burnt at a high temperature to form calcium oxide and, thereafter, calcium carbonate is formed from calcium oxide in the presence of water and carbonate ions and the formed calcium carbonate is recovered. The formation of the carbonate may be performed by carbonating calcium oxide with carbon dioxide gas in the presence of water or water vapour, or by reacting calcium oxide with soda solution. According to the invention calcium oxide is converted to calcium carbonate without separate slaking and essentially without intermediate storage, in particular without intermediate storage between the burning of the starting material and the forming of calcium carbonate. With the aid of the invention a quite advantageous solution in view of heat economy is achieved.</p>		



**Process and apparatus for preparing precipitated calcium carbonate**

The present invention relates to a process for preparing precipitated calcium carbonate.

- 5 According to such a method the calcium carbonate is produced by reacting calcium oxide with carbonate ions in a medium.

The invention also relates to an apparatus for preparing precipitated calcium carbonate.

- 10 The use of calcium carbonate, particularly precipitated calcium carbonate, is becoming increasingly common within many industries, such as within the paper, the plastics and the pharmaceuticals industry. The aim is to formulate of the precipitated calcium carbonate (PCC) a finely divided, pure pigment which is as white as possible for many purposes.

- 15 The production of PCC usually begins with slaked lime or calcium hydroxide which is carbonated with flue gases or subjected to causticizing using sodium carbonate or ammonium carbonate. Very finely divided pigments are often prepared by mixing calcium chloride and ammonium carbonate or soda (sodium carbonate).

- 20 The calcium hydroxide, then, is obtained by burning a calcium carbonate -containing starting material, such as limestone, in a vertical or round kiln to form calcium oxide, which is conventionally slaked to obtain calcium hydroxide. It has generally been thought that lime burning must be performed in large units such as are represented by vertical and pipe furnaces. A large unit has been seen as representing an economical process.

- 25 What is characteristic of the prior-art solutions is that all operations are carried out in different places because one customer needs burnt lime, another one slaked lime, while a third one requires reprecipitated calcium carbonate. Such operations at different stages and different locations entail transportation and storage which incur significant costs. It is  
30 characteristic of the present invention that these operations can be carried out either at the same location or, in certain situations, at different locations.

It is the aim of the present invention to remove the drawbacks hampering the prior art and to obtain an entirely novel type of solution for the preparation of precipitated calcium carbonate.

5 During the past few years the focus of environmental protection within the sector of power plant technology has been on removing the sulphur dioxide generated during the combustion of fuels. In this connection, much research has been carried out on the use of calcium carbonate as a sorbent which is calcinated in the power plant furnace, and the calcium oxide thus obtained reacts further with sulphur dioxide, in part directly and in part  
10 in a so called activation reactor. It has been found during these tests that the conversion of finely ground calcium carbonate into an oxide can occur in  $< 0.5$  seconds at a temperature of approximately  $1000^{\circ}\text{C}$ .

The present invention has developed these techniques further. It has namely been found  
15 possible to turn the calcium oxide directly into calcium carbonate in one process step without first having to slake it to obtain calcium hydroxide. On the other hand it has also been found that it is both technically and economically advantageous to recombine the calcium oxide and the carbon dioxide released during combustion. In short, the process of the present invention has two important embodiments whereby the first one comprises  
20 converting calcium oxide into calcium carbonate without any separate slaking or intermediate storage. In the second embodiment the calcium carbonate containing starting material is decomposed thermally and combined to form a new precipitated calcium carbonate without having to separate the products from each other for storage and without performing separate intermediate steps.

25

Of the above-described solutions the latter can be carried out by means of an apparatus comprising connected units for grinding limestone and for burning the ground limestone to obtain calcium oxide, a reaction unit for the calcium oxide to obtain carbonate, and a gas recovery and circulation unit. Between the units, finely divided lime or, correspondingly,  
30 calcium oxide is transferred along canals in the form of a fluid comprising solids and carrier gas.



The invention offers considerable benefits. Thus, from the point of view of thermal economy, a better solution is achieved by means of the method than by conventional lime burning, and all of the heat is recovered, even if at a lower temperature. Even the heat which is removed along with the hot product is of advantage in a northern climate in wintertime because the product can be taken to the user without being frozen.

According to the invention, the calcium carbonate powder is disintegrated into calcium oxide and carbon dioxide at an elevated temperature of approximately 800 to 1400°C, the mixture is cooled and the final temperature is slaked with water. Next, the mixture undergoes intensive stirring, and as the end product, a 10 to 100%, for example, advantageously an approximately 60 to 80% PCC slurry is obtained directly. The solids content of the product can be adapted according to use. A product suited for use as a filler, for instance, can be prepared as an approximately 20% slurry, whereby no dispersing agents are needed. The solids content of a slurry suited for use in coating mixes may be 60 to 80%, but it is also possible to recover the PCC as a dry powder.

It is also possible to recover the calcium oxide and the carbon dioxide separately from the burning of the calcium carbonate powder. The solution is applicable both to carbon dioxide carbonating and to carbonating using known soluble carbonates, whereby, in the latter case, the carbon dioxide can be used in some other process.

One of the key ideas behind the invention is further that gas, liquid and solids are taken forward as a so called fluid, whereby the problems relating to the high viscosities and putty-like composition normally caused by the high solids contents can be controlled. In this context, a fluid is a mixture of solids and gas, possibly containing water which is present as a mist, i.e. as fine water drops. Thus, a fluid comprises a mixture of suspension

and aerosol.

The starting material for lime is calcium carbonate which is converted into calcium oxide at a high temperature, the calcium oxide is slaked and calcium carbonate is formed from the calcium oxide in the same process without separating the reaction products from each other. Thus, in the inventive process, all unnecessary separation of gas and solids and water has been eliminated. Hence, according to the invention, new surface and particle shape are created in a process lasting about 3 to 10 seconds in all from the moment the calcium carbonate stone reaches the first grinder and when the same material leaves the last reaction mixer in the form of a completed aqueous slurry.

According to the invention, calcium carbonate is formed of calcium oxide in the presence of water and carbonate ions (or a precursor thereof).

According to a preferred embodiment, the calcium oxide is carbonated with carbon dioxide gas in the presence of water to form PCC. In water, the carbon dioxide forms carbonate ions. It is particularly advantageous to use such carbon dioxide gas for carbonating which has mainly been obtained from the preceding lime burning.

According to a second advantageous embodiment the PCC is prepared by reacting the calcium oxide with an aqueous solution of an alkali metal carbonate. Hereby a separately prepared alkali metal carbonate solution is fed straight into the causticizing reaction. The concentration of the alkali metal carbonate is approximately 5 to 40 % by weight, whereby an alkali metal hydroxide solution having a concentration of appr. 10 to 30 % by weight is obtained as a by-product of the reaction.

The calcium carbonate -containing limestone used as starting material in the invention is first ground into the desired particle size. As grinder, a pressure roll grinder or a shock grinder, for example, may be used. In general, most of the stone is ground to a particle size of less than 100  $\mu\text{m}$ , advantageously at least 50 % of the particles are smaller than 90  $\mu\text{m}$ . Preferably, a great bulk are smaller than 10  $\mu\text{m}$  whereby essentially all silicate minerals can be separated from the limestone.



The grinding, as well as the following treatment steps, are advantageously carried out in air-free conditions, preferably in a carbon dioxide environment possibly containing water vapour and/or mist.

- 5 The powdered lime is transferred from the grinding step to preheating along a pipe equipped with a pressure-generating device. As the pressure-generating device, a suitable grinder or a corresponding device having a grinding property may be used. During preheating, the temperature of the powder is raised to above 500 °C, preferably above 700 °C, whereafter the lime is burnt in the presence of oxygen to produce calcium oxide. In the  
10 process the lime burning is performed with pure oxygen in a gaseous atmosphere in the presence of much carbon dioxide, as was stated above. This solution enables as closed a gas circulation, and therefore heat recovery, as possible, resulting in an advantageous thermal economy. The purity of the oxygen usually exceeds 80 %.
- 15 In the burning of limestone, the hydrocarbon used comprises, e.g. propane, butane, kerosene, diesel oil, alcohol, vegetable oil, natural gas or biogas.

The present implementation has been made economical and therefore possible by the new advantageous methods for producing almost pure oxygen, such as molecular sieves and the  
20 PSA (Pressure Swing Absorption) method derived therefrom for separating oxygen and nitrogen.

The calcium oxide powder obtained from burning is taken via cooling further to carbonate formation which may take place through a carbonating or causticizing reaction, as stated  
25 above. In accordance with the invention it has been found that in numerous contexts the alleged precondition that the calcium oxide must be slaked before being carbonated, no longer holds true, but that the desired finely divided PCC is even more easily obtained when the slaking and the carbonating are performed simultaneously under intensive stirring. If desired, the calcium oxide can, however, also be slaked before being taken to the  
30 formation of calcium carbonate.

According to a particularly advantageous embodiment the carbonating, or,



correspondingly, the causticizing, is carried out under an intensive turbulence in a turbulence zone such that the calcium oxide is reacted with water and/or water vapour via the intermediation of random pearls of carbon dioxide or carbonate compound. Thus, in the reaction the gas, liquid and solids particles are simultaneously contacted with each other under an intensive turbulence and a great energy intensity. The gas flow absorbs the liquid and the particles, forming a turbulent three-phase mixture. The solution according to the invention may also be termed a "three-phase" process, as three phases are simultaneously present.

The apparatus according to the invention comprises at least two pin mills or shock grinders arranged in cascade and having one or several rotatable vane rings which can be used to impose a great energy intensity on the material fed into the apparatus. Instead of a pin mill, the carbonate reaction unit may comprise several cascaded pearl mills or successive mixing zones formed by similar mixing/grinding apparatuses. The first mixing zone is equipped with inlets for at least lime oxide, carbon dioxide and water vapour/water as well as an outlet for the reaction product, and the second one is equipped with an inlet for the product from the previous mixing zone and an outlet for the reaction product. Gas or mixing liquid can be fed between the rotating vane rings or groups of vane rings of the pin mills. The pin mills are interconnected by means of pipes which may, if desired, be furnished with inlets for the mixing liquids. The carbonating, or correspondingly, causticizing of calcium oxide takes place very rapidly in the apparatus. The residence time of the reaction is as short as less than 1 second.

The conversion of calcium carbonate increases from step to step; depending on the dry matter content of the calcium carbonate, it is usually already close to 100 after three or four steps. By dividing the method into steps, blend components can be added to the different layers of the  $\text{CaCO}_3$  particle, which components affect, among other things, the opacity and acid resistance of the product and may, on the other hand, act as dispersing agents.

According to the invention, in carbonate formation the reactants are taken to an intensive turbulence having an energy intensity of  $> 1000 \text{ kW/m}^3$ .

The volume fraction of the calcium oxide/calcium hydroxide/calcium carbonate solution/slurry of the gas volume of the apparatus is small, typically smaller than 1 %, preferably about 0.1 to 5 %. By way of citing an example it may be mentioned that about 10 to 200 cm<sup>3</sup>, advantageously about 50 to 150 cm<sup>3</sup>, of calcium oxide and water or water vapour may be fed into an apparatus having a gas volume of about 40,000 cm<sup>3</sup>, and an energy of about 2,000 kW is imposed on this aerosol per cubic metre. Due to the great energy intensity the carbonating or the causticizing may be carried out at a high solids content (10 to 100 % by weight).

Any apparatus can be used for providing the turbulence, i.e. as the turbulence zone, which can be used to generate a high energy intensity in a gas volume. The apparatus used is advantageously a so called pin mill or a similar device (a shock mixer) or a pearl mill. An advantageous apparatus is described e.g. in WO Published Application No. 96/23728. The apparatus in question is mainly filled with reagent gas and only has small volumes of materials in e.g. liquid or solid phase. The condition can also be met in e.g. disk or cone refiners designed for an entirely different purpose.

The calcium carbonate obtained in the invention is of homogeneous quality. The primary diameters of the PCC particles prepared may generally be within the range from 10 to 100 nm, usually 20 to 50 nm, for minute PCC particles are produced on the surface of the lime particles during carbonating or, correspondingly, causticizing. Due to the turbulence provided by the mixer, however, these particles are separated from the surface of the calcium oxide or calcium hydroxide particles. In the mixer fluid they do not remain independent and the primary particles rapidly combine to form bigger particle aggregates or clusters of about 10 to 30, typically about 15 to 20 particles. The clusters have a size of 50 to 100 nm. The aggregates provide agglomerates or botryoidal bunches containing about 500 to 600 aggregates connected to each other. The bunches have a size of about 500 nm. They are quite strong and withstand the turbulence of the reactor. When growing bigger, looser grid agglomerates, the turbulence is reduced. The formation of these agglomerates can be carried out by adjusting the pH value such that the Z potential of the particles is as small as possible. The particles can also be used to coat other pigments, such as kaolin, chalk, talcum or titanium dioxide. The coating can be performed by feeding the pigments



to be coated e.g. in the form of an aqueous slurry together with calcium oxide and carbon dioxide into the apparatus of the invention and, if necessary, by adjusting the pH to a suitable value by means of carbonic acid or some other acid (e.g. phosphoric acid).

5 In the following, the invention is examined in more detail by means of a detailed description and with reference to the annexed drawings.

Fig 1 is a skeleton diagram of the basic structure of an advantageous embodiment of the apparatus according to the invention, and

10 Fig. 2 is a skeleton diagram of a process application of another advantageous embodiment of the invention.

The following reference numerals are used in both Figures 1 and 2:

15	1	Storage hopper for limestone
	2	Belt conveyor and metal detector
	3	Weighing
	4	Grinding of limestone
	5	Blower
20	6	Preheating of ground limestone
	7	Flame tubes
	8	Main burner
	9	Cooling of burnt lime and carbon dioxide
	10	Apparatus for treating heat transfer material
25	11	Aftercooler
	12	Blower
	13	Carbonating apparatus
	14	CaO slaking and cooling water
	15	PCC separator
30	16	Jet condensing system
	16 a	Jet condenser
	16 b	Drop separator
	16 c	Condenser
	17	Supply of additional carbon dioxide
35	18	Supply of additional carbon dioxide
	19	Molecular sieve
	20	Propane container
	21	Waste receiver

40 Fig. 2 further contains the following reference numerals:

	25	Storage hopper for soda
	26	Belt conveyor
	27	Weighing
	28	Dissolution of soda
5	29	Separator for burnt lime/circulation gas
	30	Apparatus for treating separated material
	31	Filter
	32	PCC after-treatment
	33	Sodium hydroxide container
10	34	Steeping

The circulation of carbon dioxide denoted by the reference numerals 17 and 18 is not present in the embodiment of Fig. 2.

15

Fig. 1 is a schematic representation of an apparatus for producing PCC wherein the production is based on a carbonating reaction. The apparatus comprises a unit (reference numerals 1 to 4) for mechanically treating the raw material, i.e. limestone, a limestone burning unit (reference numerals 5 to 12), a carbonating unit (reference numerals 13 to 15) and lastly, a gas recovery and circulation unit (reference numerals 16 to 18).

20

In the storage hopper 1 the crushed limestone is preheated and, if necessary, the snow and ice which is mixed with the limestone is melted. The limestone is taken to a belt weigher 3 by means of a belt conveyor 2. The speed of the conveyor is regulated by controlling the amount of limestone introduced into the process. A metal detector is provided in connection with the belt conveyor and can be used to detect possible metal items which are separated and transferred to the waste receiver 21 by means of the weigher belt 3.

25

A weighed amount of limestone is then fed into a grinding step 4 where the limestone is refined in a two-phase shock refiner, thus obtaining a limestone powder, 90 % of whose particles have a size  $< 90 \mu\text{m}$ . From the grinding step 4 the powder is taken to the preheater 6 by means of the blower 5. Additional gas is taken to the suction face of the blower from the jet condenser 16.

30

The preheating of the ground limestone takes place in a heat exchanger 6, 9, the limestone being preheated in the lower part 6 thereof and the burnt limestone (calcium oxide) and the

35



carbon dioxide being cooled in the upper part 9 thereof. In the preheating section 6 the hot (800 to 900 °C) heat transfer material flows downwards along the central passage of the heat exchanger, and the fluidized limestone powder is blown through the bed thus formed in multiple steps in accordance with the counterflow principle. When entering the heat exchanger the fluid is at a temperature of 20 to 100 °C and in the heat exchanger the temperature rises to approximately 700 °C. At the same time, the temperature of the heat transfer material is reduced to approximately 200 °C.

The preheated limestone powder is then forwarded to limestone burning 7 where carbon dioxide is separated from the calcium carbonate, thus obtaining burnt lime, or that is, calcium oxide, in accordance with the following equation:  $\text{CaCO}_3 \rightarrow \text{CaO} + \text{CO}_2$ . The burning takes place in a fluid tube 7 where the temperature of the particles rises to approximately 900 to 1400 °C, which is achieved by means of the burners 8. In the burners, propane is burnt with oxygen, whereby carbon dioxide and water vapour are released in the reaction  $\text{C}_3\text{H}_8 + 5\text{O}_2 \rightarrow 3\text{CO}_2 + 4\text{H}_2\text{O}$ . The propane is introduced into the burning from the propane container 20 and the oxygen from the oxygen source 19 where it is separated from air, e.g. by means of a molecular sieve, thus obtaining pure  $\text{O}_2$  at a pressure of, for example, 2 bar.

The cold heat transfer material obtained from the limestone preheating unit 6 is cooled from 200 °C to approximately 20 to 100 °C by means of a gas flow, simultaneously separating the fine constituents using a heat transfer material treatment apparatus. Cold heat transfer material is used for cooling burnt lime and carbon dioxide in the cooling part 9 of the heat exchanger. At the same time, the regeneration of the heat transfer material is achieved. Thus, the heat transfer material is taken downwards along the central passage of the heat exchanger 6, 9 and the burnt limestone powder is taken through the bed thus formed in multiple steps in accordance with the counterflow principle. When entering the heat exchanger, the temperature of the fluid obtained from the burning step is 900 to 1000 °C and in the heat exchanger the temperature declines to approximately 200 °C. At the same time the temperature of the heat transfer material rises to approximately 800 °C.

As the heat transfer material, 1 to 5 mm crushed limestone can be used. The apparatus

comprises means (not shown) for the sorting and additional metering of limestone as well as an elevator conveyor 11 and a shaker screen 10. The elevator conveyor 11 is used to lift the heat transfer material to the top part of the heat exchanger from where it flows into the lower part of the heat exchanger 6, 9 along the central channel in the above-described manner, and from there further to the shaker screen 10. The shaker screen conveys the heat transfer material to the elevator conveyor 11 and separates the fine constituents therefrom.

The heat transfer material is cooled from 200 °C to 100 °C in an after-cooler 11 using a gas flow, simultaneously separating the fine constituents therefrom.

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The burnt limestone powder obtained from the top part of the heat exchanger 6, 9 is taken to a carbonating step by means of a blower 12. The blower is simultaneously employed to regulate the flow rate of the fluid in the cooling part 9 of the heat exchanger.

The carbonating apparatus 13 comprises five turbulence mixers of the shock refiner type, which mixers are arranged in cascade and form cascaded steps. At each step, the product at that particular stage can be modified. The process is essentially a downstream process where all reactants flow into the same direction. Water is introduced into the apparatus through the inlet 14. The water, which determines the dry matter content of the product, is metered into a desired step of the carbonating apparatus. The water used for slaking and cooling lime is conveyed to the inlets into the steps of the carbonating apparatus by means of feed pipes and nozzles 14a to 14 e.

The product obtained from the carbonating step 13, i.e. the precipitated calcium carbonate ( $\text{CaCO}_3$ ) is separated from the fluid gas ( $\text{H}_2\text{O} + \text{CO}_2$ ) in a separator 15 which is, e.g. a clarifier based on gravity, or a classifier of the cyclone or hydrocyclone type. The separating can also be performed by throwing the putty-like  $\text{CaCO}_3 + \text{H}_2\text{O}$  mixture onto a conveying support such as a belt or a plate to which it clings and is separated by doctoring, whereby the separation of gas and other constituents is easy.

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The fluid gases of carbonating, i.e. water and carbon dioxide, are recovered in a jet condenser 16 comprising a jet condenser part 16a, a drop separator 16b, and a condenser



16c. In the jet condenser part 16a the gases are cooled using a water jet and the water vapour is condensated into water. The drop separator 16b prevents water from rising into the top part of the separator in the form of drops, and the condenser 16c is employed to cool the carbon dioxide entering the circulation. Uncondensed gases to be recovered in the condenser are returned for use in the process via the pipe 17 and the condensed water is removed from the bottom of the condenser 16. The carbon dioxide recovered can, for example, be conveyed to the carbonating step 13 via the pipe 17 to be used as additional carbonating gas in the second - the fifth step, or to the heat exchanger 6, 9 where it can be used as blow cleansing gas for the heat transfer material and as carrier gas for limestone. Additional carbon dioxide is taken to the carbonating apparatus via the pipe 18, whereby the carbon dioxide stream can be combined with the limestone fluid from the blower 12 prior to the first carbonating step.

The desired product, i.e. the precipitated calcium carbonate (PCC) is recovered as a PCC slurry or powder having a desired solids content.

To a large extent, the embodiment of Fig. 2 corresponds to the solution of Fig. 1. However, in the case of Fig. 2 PCC is formed by reacting calcium oxide with sodium carbonate. Hereby the carbon dioxide obtained from limestone and fuel is not used for carbonating but is instead recovered as a concentrated gas (concentration over 90 %, e.g. approximately 95 to 99 vol.-%).

In fig. 2 a storage hopper 25 for soda (i.e. sodium carbonate) is shown from which the soda is fed on a belt conveyor 26 and is taken to weighing 27 and dissolution 28 of soda. The solution obtained is fed into the causticizing apparatus 13 in the above-described manner preferably in the form of liquid mist containing finely divided droplets.

Gas is separated from the carbon dioxide/calcium oxide fluid obtained from the blower 12 in the separator 29 for burnt lime/circulation gas prior to the causticizing apparatus. The gas mainly contains carbon dioxide and is taken to a condenser 16 from where it is recovered as a very pure gas (97 vol.-%). Prior to being fed into the causticizing step, the calcium oxide is treated by a shaking screen 30.

In this application, a slurry is obtained from the PCC formation containing PCC suspended in sodium hydroxide. The solids are separated from the sodium hydroxide by means of a filtering apparatus 31, from where a product is obtained which can be treated further in a shock refiner 32 or a corresponding mixing apparatus in order to obtain the desired end product. At this stage, e.g. acid such as phosphoric acid can be added to the PCC in order to adjust the pH value. The fresh feed of sodium hydroxide is taken from a container 33 from which it is conveyed to a steeping tank 34 where it can be combined with the mother liquor of the filtering step and circulated to sodium carbonate steeping.

10 **Example:**

Lime was used which originated in Gothland and had a composition of 94.3 % of  $\text{CaCO}_3$  and 1.7 % of  $\text{MgCO}_3$ , 2.1 % of  $\text{SiO}_2$ , and 0.8 % of  $\text{TiO}_2$ . The limestone was ground to a fineness of 97 % < 30 microns, this was calcinated at a temperature of 1100 °C, as described above, in a pipe furnace, the flow rate being 3 m/s, length 4 m, residence time 1.33 s, the calcination degree was 98 % in relation to the calcium carbonate and magnesium carbonate as total mol-%. When converted into a weight percentage, a result of 96 % was obtained. Hereby even the presence of  $\text{Ca(OH)}_2$  is regarded as calcination, and it was present in an amount of 2.8 % by weight.



**Claims:**

1. A process for the preparation of precipitated calcium carbonate, comprising
  - burning a calcium carbonate containing starting material in order to form calcium oxide,
  - forming calcium carbonate of the calcium oxide in the presence of water and carbonate ions, and
  - recovering the calcium carbonate,wherein
  - the calcium oxide is carbonated in a carbonating apparatus with carbon dioxide gas in the presence of water vapour, water droplets or mist fed into the carbonation apparatus via a water vapour/water inlet, or
  - causticizing the calcium oxide in a causticizing apparatus with a solution of an alkali metal or ammonium carbonate present in the form of a liquid mist containing finely divided droplets fed into the causticizing apparatus via an inlet, in order to convert the calcium oxide into calcium carbonate.
2. The process according to claim 1, wherein conversion of the calcium carbonate is performed without separate slaking.
3. The process according to claim 1, wherein the forming of calcium carbonate from the calcium oxide is performed essentially without any intermediate storage between the burning of the starting material and the formation of calcium carbonate.
4. The process according to claim 3, wherein starting material for calcium carbonate is limestone which is converted into calcium oxide at an elevated temperature, the calcium oxide is slaked and calcium carbonate is formed from calcium oxide in the same process without separating the reaction products from one another.
5. The process according to claim 4, wherein the carbon dioxide gas used for carbonating the calcium oxide is mainly derived from burning of the limestone.

6. The process according to claim 1, wherein the solution of alkali metal or ammonium carbonate is fed straight into calcium carbonate formation in order to achieve a causticizing reaction.

5 7. The process according to claim 1 or 6, wherein the alkali metal or ammonium carbonate is fed into the formation of carbonate as a 5 to 40 wt% solution.

10 8. The process according to any one of claims 5, 6, or 7, wherein carbon dioxide obtained is used separately in another process.

9. The process according to any one of claims 1 to 8, wherein calcium carbonate is recovered as a 10 to 99 wt%.

15 10. The process of claim 9, wherein the calcium carbonate is recovered at approximately 60 to 80 wt% aqueous slurry or dry powder.

20 11. The process according to any one of claims 1 to 10, wherein refining of the calcium carbonate containing starting material is carried out in a carbon dioxide environment.

25 12. The process according to any one of claims 1 to 11, wherein the starting material is burnt by taking refined lime through a furnace unit in a carrier gas flow.

13. The process according to any one of claims 1 to 12, wherein the burning takes place with oxygen and an oxidizable hydrocarbon.

30 14. The process according to claim 13, wherein as the oxidizable hydrocarbon, propane, butane, kerosene, diesel oil, alcohol, vegetable oil, natural gas or biogas is used.

15. The process according to claim 13 or 14, wherein at least part of the excess carbon dioxide obtained from burning hydrocarbon is recovered.



16. The process according to claim 13, wherein the oxygen has a degree of purity of at least 70 wt%.

17. The process according to any one of claims 11 to 15, wherein the carbonate-containing starting material is burnt to obtain an oxide in a fluid pipe.

18. The process according to claim 17, wherein gas flow is recovered from a last carbonating reactor and is returned to a burning reactor as a cooled dilution gas along with a limestone powder.

19. The process according to any one of claims 1 to 18, wherein the solid matter, water and gas pass through the process equipment as a mixture of aerosol and suspension, as a fluid, at least during slaking and carbonating.

20. The process according to any one of claims 1 to 19, wherein a hydration and the carbonating take place in a downstream direction.

21. The process according to any one of claims 1 to 20, wherein a hydration and the carbonating occur on the surface of the same particle immediately after one another.

22. The process according to any one of claims 1 to 21, wherein the production time from a carbonate to a carbonate is less than 60 seconds.

23. The process according to claim 22, wherein the production time is about 3 to 15 seconds.

24. The process according to any one of claims 1 to 23, wherein essentially all process steps are carried out in an environment of carbon dioxide and water vapour and/or aqueous mist.

25. An apparatus for producing precipitated calcium carbonate, wherein the apparatus comprises,

- a unit for mechanically treating limestone,
- a unit for burning limestone,
- a carbonate reaction unit and
- a gas recovery and circulation unit,

5        said carbonate reaction unit comprising a carbonating or causticizing apparatus equipped with nozzles for feeding water in the form of water droplets, mist or water vapour or sodium carbonate in the form of liquid mist containing finely divided droplets into the carbonating or causticizing apparatus.

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26.     The apparatus of claim 25, wherein the unit for burning limestone comprises a preheater, where the temperature of the refined limestone is raised to above 500°C, and a fluid burning unit where the preheated limestone powder is burnt at a temperature of above 1000°C.

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27.     The apparatus of claim 25 or 26, wherein the carbonate reaction unit comprises several shock mixers or pearl mills in cascade, or successive mixing zones composed of similar mixing/refining devices.

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28.     The apparatus of any one of claims 25 to 26, wherein the unit for mechanically treating limestone is connected to the limestone burning unit by means of piping equipped with a first blower, and the burning unit is connected to the carbonate reaction unit by means of piping equipped with a second blower, whereby the limestone and correspondingly the calcium oxide powder can be transferred between the units in the form of a fluid.

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29.     The apparatus of claim 28, wherein the first blower has a grinding property.

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30.     The apparatus according to any one of claims 25 to 29, wherein the gas recovery and circulation unit is connected to the limestone burning unit by means of piping and correspondingly to the carbonate reaction unit for circulating recovered carbon dioxide to preheating and correspondingly to the carbonating step.



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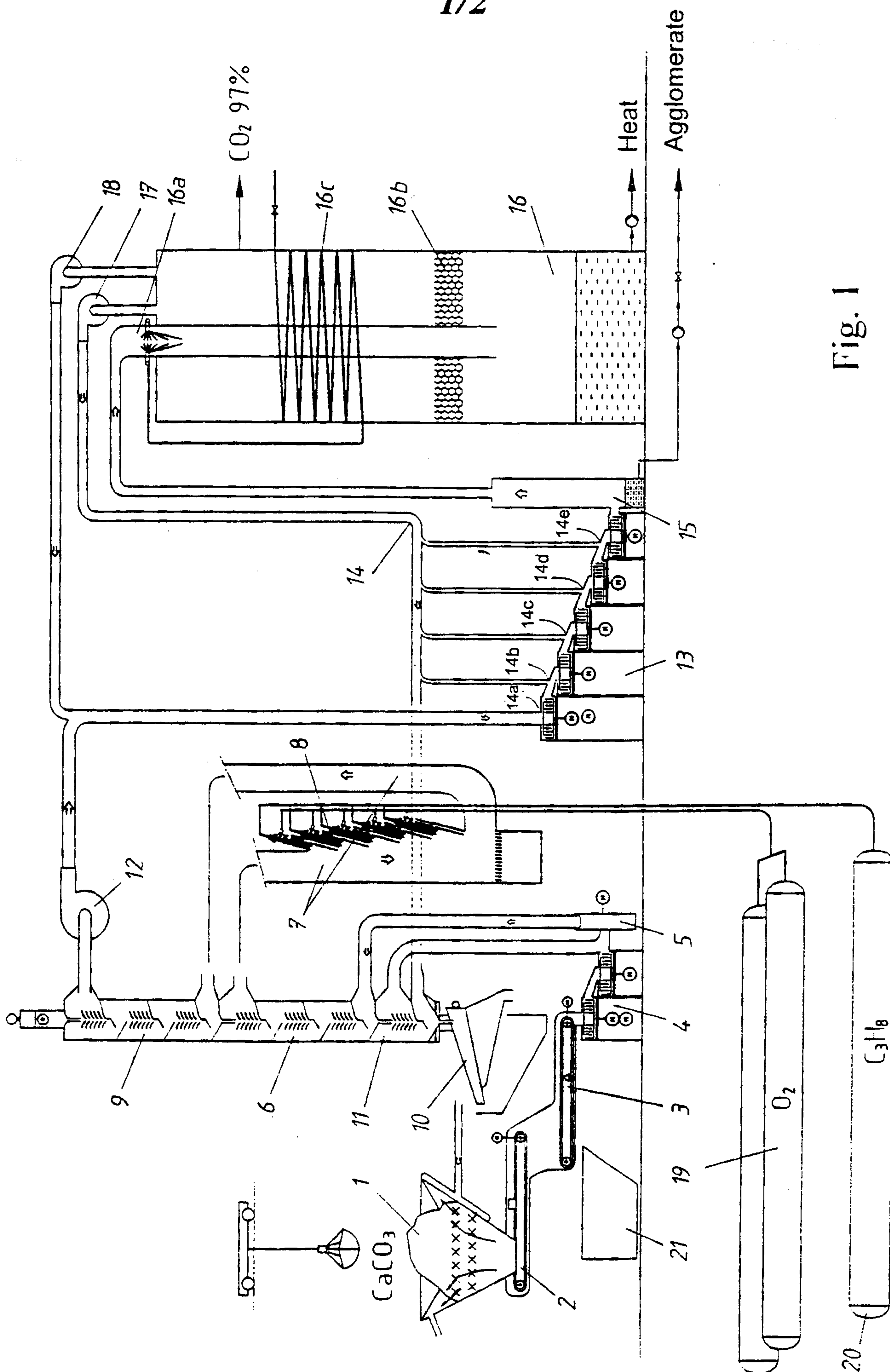


Fig. 1

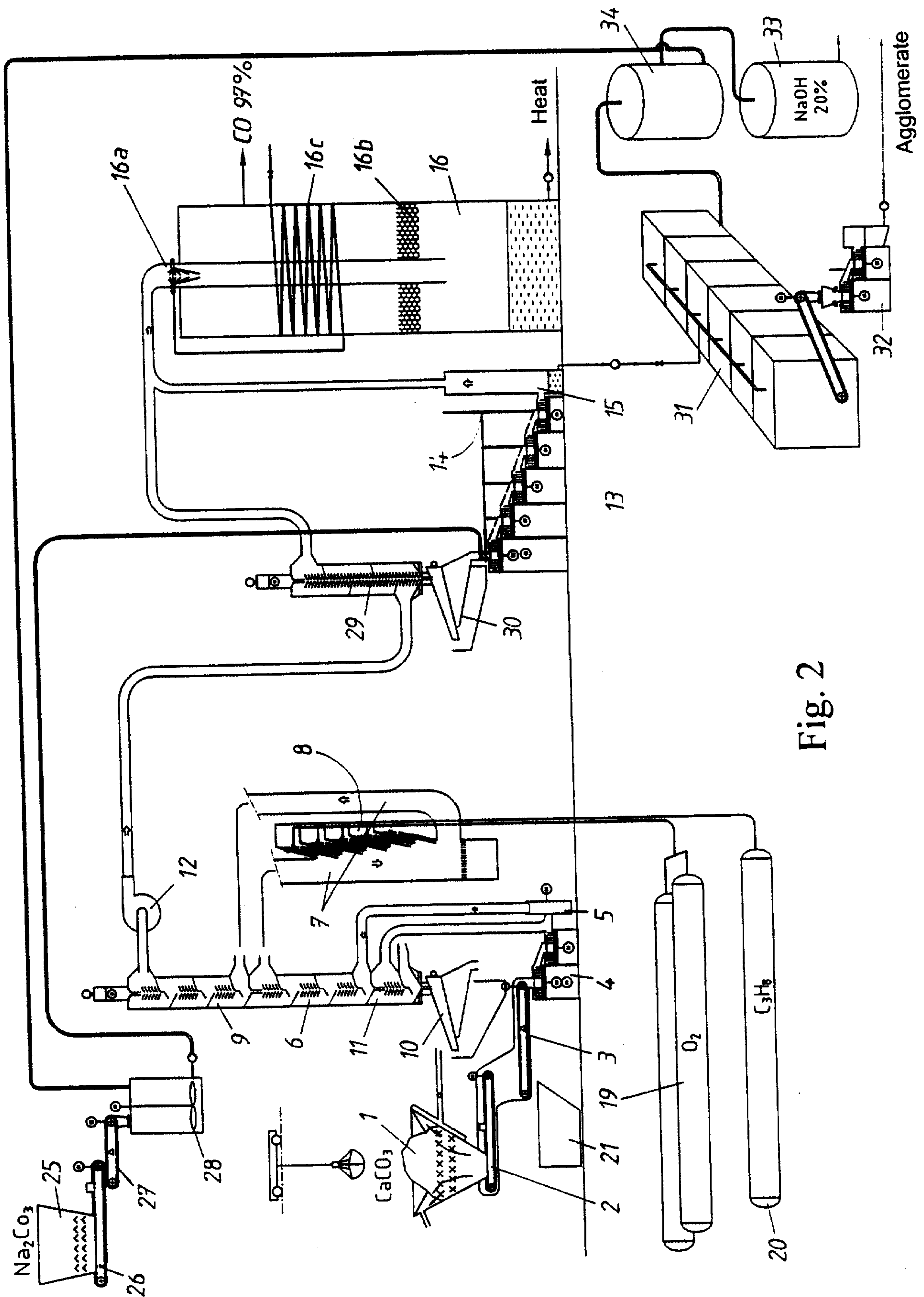


Fig. 2



