May 19, 1970 E. A. BECK 3,512,678

STAMP DISPENSER

Filed March 21, 1968 2 Sheets-Sheet 1

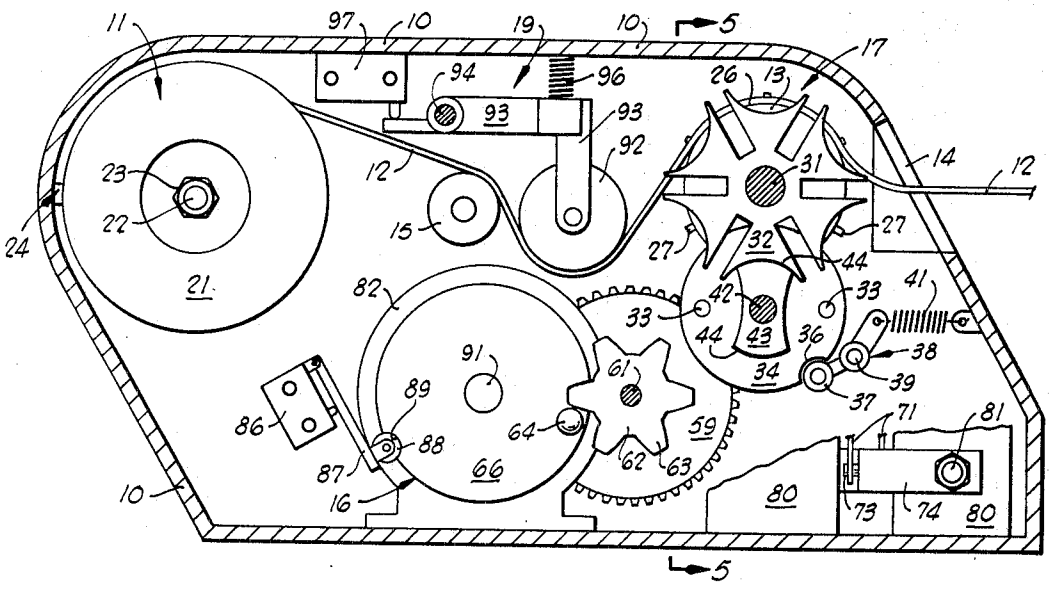


Fig. 1

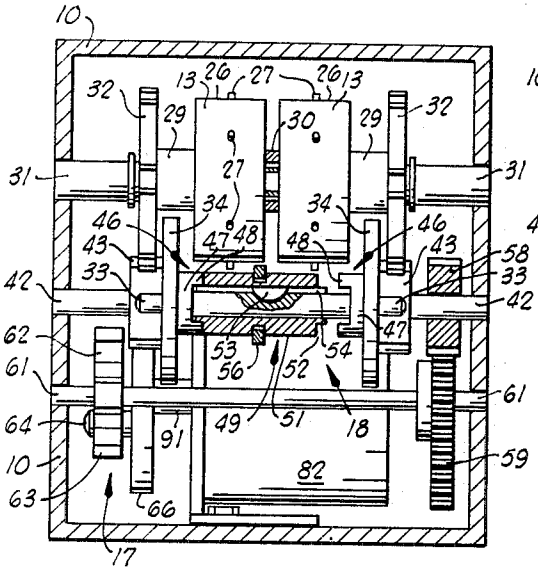


Fig. 2

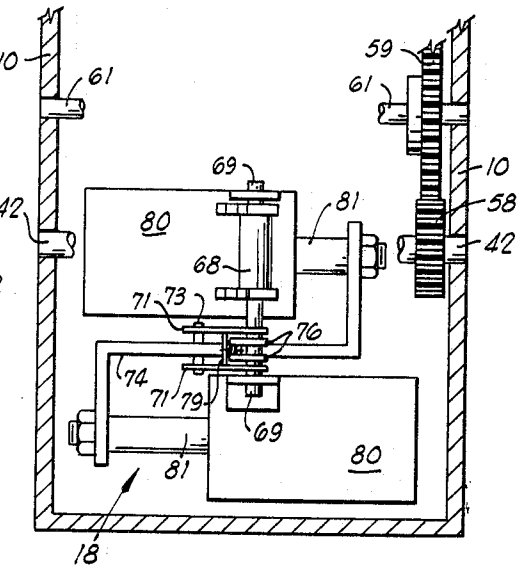


Fig. 3

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STAMP DISPENSER

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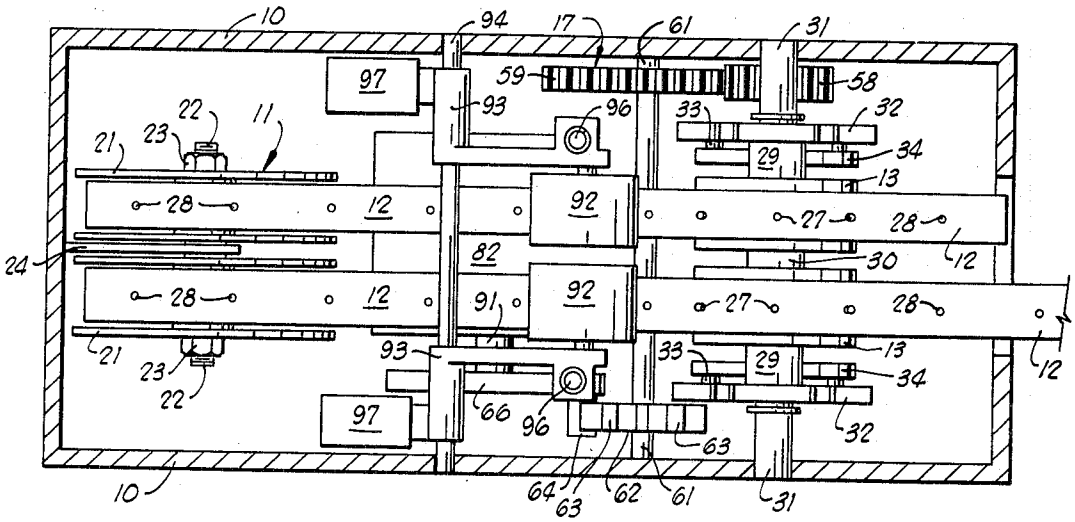


Fig. 4

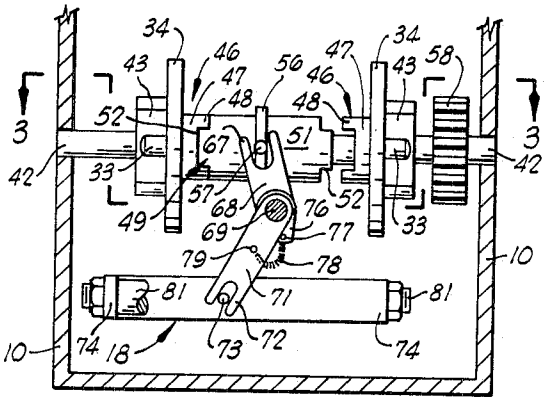


Fig. 5

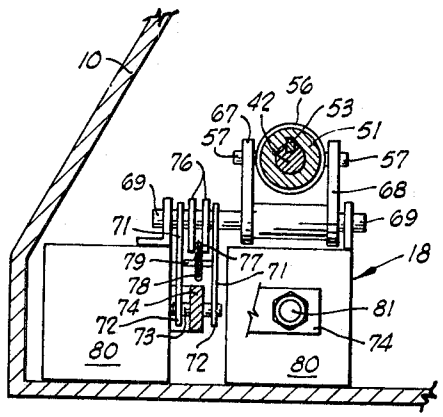


Fig. 6

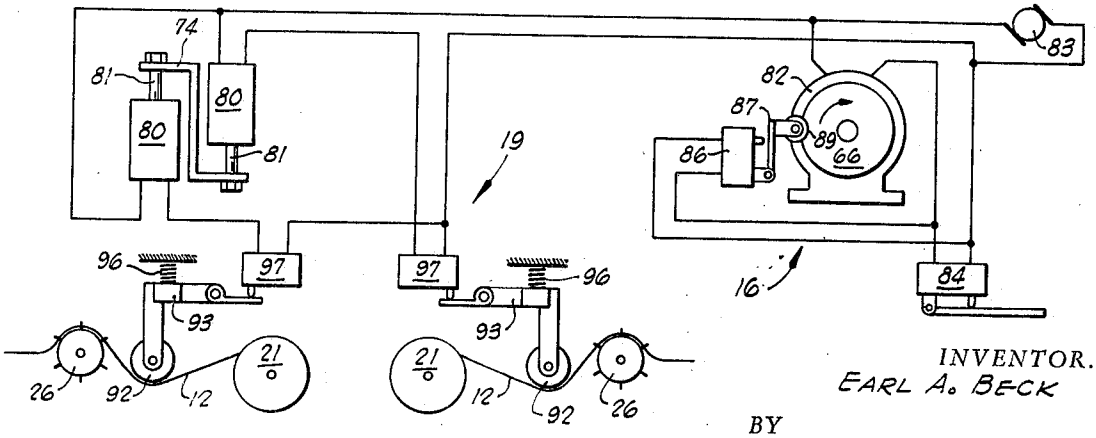


Fig. 7

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3,512,678

STAMP DISPENSER

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Int. Cl. B65h 17/40
U.S. Cl. 226—110 12 Claims

ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

The present invention has primary utility for continuously dispensing a ribbon of material, such as trading stamps and the like. In one form, apparatus embodying certain principles of the present invention may include a housing in which is positioned a plurality of stamp storage means from which stamps are dispensed automatically to the exterior of the housing. Drive wheels may be provided in engagement with the ribbon of stamps from each of the stamp storage means to aid in moving the stamps from the storage means to a dispensing outlet. Power transmitting means may be provided in operative engagment with the drive wheels and with cyclic power means for activating the drive wheels alternatively. Sensing means may be provided within the housing for sensing the exhaustion of a supply of stamps in one of the stamp storage means, whereupon shifting means responsive to the sensing means are activated to shift the power transmitting means away from the drive wheel associating with the stamp storage means from which the supply of stamps is exhausted and into engagement with the other drive wheel.

BACKGROUND OF INVENTION

Within the present century automatic coin-operated vending machines have moved from the crude, troublesome machines of the early nineteen hundreds, which now reside in museums, to the extremely sophisticated apparatus used routinely by the average American citizen. The ubiquitous coin-operated vending machine is used in modern times to dispense an almost limitless variety of merchandise—literally from soup to nuts.

The use of premiums of the type commonly referred to as "trading stamps" was initiated at approximately the same time the first crude coin-operated vending machines were being developed, and all too frequently discarded, and the growth of the trading stamp industry has developed apace with the growth of the coin-operated dispensing activities of the merchandising segment of our population. While there are detractors from the value of trading stamps, it is nonetheless an irrefutable fact that the dispensing of trading stamps has become an accepted part of the American commercial scene. Undoubtedly this fact can be attributed mainly to the almost insatiable desire on the part of the typical American housewife "to get something for free." No matter what the merchandise, it can be observed that the offer of trading stamps increases the total sales volume.

In view of the parallel development of coin-operated vending machines and trading stamp premium schemes, it is to some extent surprising that no completely successful marriage between these two types of activities has, until the present time, been consummated. Conceptually at least, the advantages to be obtained from dispensing trading stamps simultaneously with the sale of an article from a coin-operated machine are apparent. The same

stimuli which trading stamps give to sales over the counter should characterize the dispensation of trading stamps along with merchandise from a coin-operated machine.

Within the recent past apparatus for achieving just this happy result has been suggested. More particularly, in U.S. Pat. No. 3,292,834, apparatus is disclosed which has primary utility for dispensing trading stamps in conjunction with a coin-operated vending machine. The apparatus disclosed in this patent is undoubtedly useful for the purpose for which it was intended; it is, however, subject to limitations which the present invention was designed to overcome. Specifically, prior art apparatus necessitated either an excessively large storage drum for the trading stamps or, alternatively, uneconomical supervision by an attendant. Until the present invention, a satisfactory stamp dispenser which could be used in conjunction with a coin-operated vending machine and which had a plurality of stamp storage drums which could be alternately and automatically actuated has remained an elusive desideratum.

SUMMARY OF INVENTION

The present invention relates to a dispenser for ribbon material, such as trading stamps, having therein at least two storage drums for the stamps. Included within the invention are means alternately and automatically shifting an offtake power supply to remove stamps from each of the storage drums independently of the other storage drum. Sensing means are provided to control the operation of the shifting means in response to the exhaustion of a supply of stamps in one of the storage drums.

DESCRIPTION OF DRAWINGS

Apparatus embodying one form of the invention summarized immediately above is disclosed in the following description which is to be read in conjunction with the accompanying drawings wherein like reference characters designate like parts in all views and wherein:

FIG. 1 is a side view of one form of apparatus useful in practicing the present invention.

FIG. 2 is an end view of the apparatus shown in FIG. 1 as it would appear when viewing such apparatus in FIG. 1 from the right with a portion of the housing removed.

FIG. 3 is a fragmentary top view of the righthand portion of the apparatus shown in FIG. 1 taken along line 3—3 of FIG. 5 wherein certain elements are omitted to clearly indicate the structure of a pair of oppositely acting solenoids and their associated hardware.

FIG. 4 is a top plan view of the apparatus shown in FIG. 1 showing the relationship between a pair of stamp storage means.

FIG. 5 is a cross-sectional view taken along line 5—5 of FIG. 1 showing elements of power shifting means which forms a portion of the present invention.

FIG. 6 is a side view of the apparatus disclosed in FIG. 5, as viewed from the righthand position of FIGS. 5, as it would appear with the side panel of the housing removed.

FIG. 7 is a schematic electrical diagram of the drive and control portions of the apparatus shown in FIG. 1.

GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF THE APPARATUS

Turning now to the drawings, the major components of the present invention may be seen to include within a housing **10** stamp storage means, indicated generally by the numeral **11**, (FIGS. 1 and 4) from which a pair of parallel stamp ribbons **12** (FIGS. 1 and 4) are drawn by a pair of drive wheels **13** (FIGS. 2 and 4) out a dispensing slot **14** (FIG. 1) formed in housing **10**. Between the drive

wheels **13** and the storage means **11**, the stamp ribbons **12** are each passed over an idler wheel **15**.

Power is transmitted alternatively to drive wheels **13** from cyclic power means, indicated generally by the numeral **16**, (FIGS. 1 and 7) through power transmitting means, indicated generally by the numeral **17** (FIGS. 1, 2, and 4). Power transmitting means **17** are designed to drive only one of the drive wheels **13** at a time. In order to shift the drive engagement from one to the other of drive wheels **13**, shifting means, indicated generally by the numeral **18**, (FIGS. 2, 3, 5, and 6) are provided in operative engagement with a portion of power transmitting means **17**.

Sensing means, indicated generally by the numeral **19**, (FIGS. 1 and 7) are provided to control the operation of shifting means **18** in response to the exhaustion of one of the stamp ribbons **12** from stamp storage means **11**.

STAMP STORAGE MEANS

Stamp storage means **11**, which is best shown in FIGS. 1 and 4, comprises a pair of storage drums **21** on each of which a stamp ribbon **12** is wound. Storage drums **21** are each rotatably secured upon a stub shaft **22** and are held thereon by suitable securing means, such as nuts **23**. A support arm **24** projects inwardly from an end portion of housing **10** and secures shaft **22** on which the storage drums are located.

DRIVE WHEEL ASSEMBLY

The parallel stamp ribbons **12** emerging from storage drums **21** are pulled from the storage drum into engagement with a flat peripheral surface **26** on drive wheels **13**. Formed on each of the drive wheels is a series of radially extending projections **27** which engage apertures **28** in stamp ribbons **12** in a manner clearly shown in FIG. 4 to furnish a positive drive to the stamp ribbons by drive wheels **13**.

Support is given to drive wheels **13** by an axle **31** which is journaled to opposite sides of housing **10**. Since it is necessary for drive wheels **13** to move independently one from the other, these wheels are not directly connected to axle **31**; instead they are separated thereon by a spacer sleeve **30** which is in sliding contact with each of the drive wheels. In addition the outer central portion of each of the drive wheels **26** is rigidly secured to a drive sleeve **29** which rotates freely around axle **31**.

POWER TRANSMITTING MEANS

Rotation is provided to drive sleeves **29** by power transmitting means **17** which includes a star gear **32** rigidly secured on opposite ends of each drive sleeve **29**.

As best shown in FIGS. 1 and 2, star gears **32** cooperate with a pair of pins **33** which project outwardly from a pair of pin wheels **34** to provide a Geneva drive of standard design. A depression **36** (FIG. 1) is formed on the outer periphery of each pin wheel **34** and is sized to receive therein a follower wheel **37** to prevent overriding of pin wheel **34**. Follower wheel **37** is rotatably secured at one end of a bell crank assembly, indicated generally by the numeral **38**, which is pivotally mounted within housing **10** on a pivot pin **39**. Resilient means, such as tension spring **41**, is secured between a portion of housing **10** and the end of bell crank assembly **38** opposite follower wheel **37** to rotate the bell crank assembly in a clockwise direction, as viewed in FIG. 1, into constant engagement with the periphery of pin wheel **34**.

Each of the pin wheels **34** is free to rotate about a shaft **42** which is journaled into opposite sides of housing **10**. Means are provided on shaft **42** immediately adjacent each of the pin wheels **34** for preventing overriding of star gears **32**. In the embodiment shown in the drawings, such means includes a projection **43** having a pair of opposed ends **44** thereon formed into an arc to index with the arcuate portions of the periphery of star gears **32**. Since projections **43** move as a unit with pin wheels **34** and since the pin wheels are prevented from overriding by bell crank assembly **38**, star gears **32** are in turn prevented from overriding by the presence of projection **43** into the normal rotary path of the star gears.

As shown most clearly in FIG. 5, a pair of inwardly facing clutch assemblies **46** are carried on shaft **42** and each is rigidly secured on the inward side of one of the pin wheels **34**. Clutch assemblies **46** each comprises an O shaped portion **47** from which project inwardly a pair of horizontally disposed teeth **48** to provide a locking groove.

A clutch engaging member, indicated generally by the numeral **49**, is located coaxially with shaft **42** between clutch assemblies **46**. Clutch engaging member **49** includes a sleeve portion **51** from which projects on either end thereof a pair of clutch engaging teeth **52** which are sized to fit into the locking groove formed by teeth **48** of clutch assemblies **46**.

Clutch engaging member **49** is sized shorter than the distance separating clutch assemblies **46** along rotatable shaft **42**. Thus, when the clutch engaging member is in operative contact with one of the clutches **46** it is out of driving engagement with the other clutch, as clearly shown in FIG. 5. Rotation is provided to clutch engaging member **49** from shaft **42** through a key **53** projecting into a slot **54** formed on the interior surface of clutch engaging member **49**. As shown in FIG. 2, key **53** is rigidly secured to shaft **42** while slot **54** is oversized to allow clutch engaging member **49** to move parallel to the axis of rotatable shaft **42** while at the same time being rotated thereby.

Gear means are provided for rotating shaft **42**, and these gear means include a relatively small driven gear wheel **58** which is rigidly secured to shaft **42**. A relatively large gear **59** meshes with gear wheel **58** and rotates as a unit with an axle shaft **61** on which it is secured. Axle shaft **61** is journaled on opposite sides of housing **10** and has secured thereto at a point removed from gear **59** a relatively small gear wheel **62** having formed thereon a plurality of relatively coarse teeth **63**. Teeth **63** project radially from shaft **61** into the path of a pin **64** carried by and extending from the plane of a drive plate **66** which forms a portion of the cyclic power means. By this arrangement, gear wheel **62** is moved the distance between two adjacent teeth **63** with each revolution of drive plate **66**. If desired, a plurality of pins **64** may be utilized with drive plate **66** to increase the rotation ratio between gear wheel **62** and drive plate **66**.

POWER SHIFTING MEANS

As was pointed out in the previous section, pin wheels **34** together with their associated drive wheels **13** are driven singly and alternately due to the foreshortening of clutch engaging member **49**. In FIG. 5, for instance, clutch engaging member **49** is in operative engagement with the pin wheel **34** which is on the lefthand side of the drawing. Should the ribbon **12** which is being fed to the drive wheel **13** associated with the lefthand pin wheel **34** become exhausted, it would then be necessary to shift the drive to the other pin wheel and thereafter remove stamps from the stamp drum still containing a supply of stamps. As was pointed out previously, the alternate engagement and disengagement of clutch assemblies **46** are achieved by the horizontal sliding motion of clutch engaging member **49**.

In order to move clutch engaging member **49** axially along shaft **42**, a slip ring **56** is slidingly secured in the central portion of sleeve **51** so that slip ring **56** may remain rotatably stationary while clutch engaging member **49** is being powered from shaft **42**. Projecting from opposite sides of slip ring **56** are a pair of dogs **57** through which axial motion is transmitted through slip ring **56** to clutch engaging member **49**.

Power for adjusting the position of clutch engaging member **49** is provided through the dogs **57** which cooperate with bifurcated portions **67** of an actuating yoke

member **68** (FIGS. 5 and 6). A fulcrum pin **69** is rigidly attached to, and projects through a portion of, yoke member **68** in a direction normal to the plane of the bifurcations formed therein. At one end of fulcrum pin **69** is pivotally secured a pair of parallel downwardly extending pivot arms **71**, the lower portions of which are bifurcated as at **72**. Fitted within bifurcations **72** is a pin **73** which projects outwardly from either side of a tie link **74** while a pair of anchor plates **76** joined by an anchor pin **77** (FIG. 6) are rigidly secured to fulcrum pin **69** between yoke member **68** and pivot arms **71**. One end of a coiled horseshoe spring **78** is secured to anchor pin **77** while the opposite end of the horseshoe spring is secured to a similar anchor pin **79** carried between pivot arms **71** and normal to the plane of each. Horseshoe spring **78** is provided and attached in this manner in order to give a snap action to the motion of yoke member **68** upon the movement of pivot arms **71** from one side of housing **10** toward the other.

Side to side motion is transmitted to pivot arms **71** through the pin **73** which project horizontally from the tie link **74**. As most clearly shown in FIG. 3, tie link **74** has a generally Z shaped configuration and functions to couple a pair of oppositely actuated armatures **81** which form a portion of oppositely facing solenoids **80**. As solenoids **80** are alternately actuated, tie link **74** is moved back and forth.

CYCLIC POWER MEANS

The mechanism from which drive wheels **13** obtain their power is best disclosed in FIGS. 1 and 7 wherein it will be seen to include an electric motor **82**. This motor is in an electric circuit which includes a power source **83** and a normally open impulse switch **84** which may be actuated by a portion of a coin-operated vending machine to momentarily establish a circuit to motor **82**. In parallel with impulse switch **84** is provided a normally open motor stop switch **86** having associated therewith an actuating arm assembely **87**. A follower **88** which is secured to one end of actuating arm assembly **87** follows the periphery of drive plate **66** and opens switch **86** when it engages a depression **89** formed in the periphery of drive plate **66**. The drive plate is secured to shaft **91** of motor **82**.

A cycle of motor **82** is initiated by the momentary closing of switch **84** whereupon motor **82** begins to rotate drive plate **66**. As drive plate **66** rotates, actuating arm assembly **87** is moved to close switch **86** thereby maintaining a power circuit to the motor after switch **84** has reopened. At such time as follower **88** engages depression **89**, the actuating arm assembly moves to once again open switch **86** and thereby deactivate the motor.

STAMP EXHAUSTION SENSING MEANS

An important feature of the present invention involves the utilization of means to sense the exhaustion of stamps from a first source of supply and signal a stamp dispensing apparatus to activate an additional stamp dispensing source. In the present embodiment, such sensing means includes a pair of reaction wheels **92** in engagement with stamp ribbons **12** each wheel being journaled at one end of a bell crank **93**. A pivot pin **94** is provided within housing **10** to rotatably support bell cranks **93**, while a compression spring **96** is utilized for each bell crank to bias its associated reaction wheel into engagement with a stamp ribbon **12**.

At the end of each of the bell cranks **93** is located a single throw make and break switch **97** which is so positioned as to be actuated when spring **96** moves bell crank **93** in a clockwise direction, as viewed in FIG. 1, upon the exhaustion of its associated stamp ribbon **12**.

As best seen in FIG. 7, each of the switches **97** is in the circuit of one of the solenoids **80** so that when the stamp ribbon from one of the drums **21** is exhausted and its associated bell crank **93** moves to close switch **97**, its associated solenoid is activated to shift tie link **74** thereby disengaging the pin wheel **34** associated with the exhausted stamp supply and engaging the other pin wheel.

OPERATION

In the operation of the present device let it be assumed that the clutch mechanism is in the position shown in FIG. 5 so that the drive plate **66** at the bottom of FIG. 4 is being actuated from motor **82**. Thus, upon closure of switch **84**, as by placing a coin in the dispensing apparatus, motor **82** is cycled and drive plate **66** moves pin **64** into engagement with one of the teeth **63** which project from, and form a part of, small gear wheel **62**. This results in rotation of gear wheel **62** with an equal rotation of shaft **61** to which it is journaled. Movement of shaft **61** in turn causes gear **59** to rotate thus moving driven gear wheel **58** which is keyed to shaft **42**. Rotary motion from shaft **42** is transmitted through key **53** to clutch engaging member **49** and from thence through clutch assembly **46** into the lefthand pin wheel **34**, as viewed in FIG. 5. Rotation of pin wheel **34** moves pin **33** whereby its associated star gear **32** experiences simultaneous movement. The lower star gear **32**, as viewed in FIG. 4, thereupon rotates around axle **31** and carries with it its associated drive sleeve **29** to move lower drive wheel **13** and its associated stamp ribbon a limited distance.

At such time as the lower stamp ribbon **12** becomes exhausted, its associated reaction wheel **92** will move downwardly adjacent idler wheel **15** due to the action of spring **96** and pivot bell crank **93** to close and then open its associated switch **97**. As this switch closes it momentarily actuates its associated solenoid **80** thereby moving tie link **74** to the right, a viewed in FIG. 5. As tie link **74** begins to move to the right there is at first no corresponding motion of yoke member **68**; however, further movement of the tie link, which brings it into an overcenter position with regard to yoke member **68**, results in a snap action of the yoke member toward the right (FIG. 5) due to the action of coiled horseshoe spring **78** acting through anchor plates **76** and fulcrum pin **69**. Motion of yoke member **68** to the right causes a corresponding motion of clutch engaging member **49** due to the presence of dogs **57** which project from slip ring **56**. In the event that clutch engaging teeth **48** do not mesh precisely with the bifurcation formed in clutch assembly **46**, no harm will be done to the mechanism due to the resilient connection between pivot arm **71** and yoke member **68**. Upon further rotation of the clutch engaging member **49** this same resilient force causes the clutch engaging member to operably connect with the clutch as soon as it is properly indexed.

Following the switching described immediately above, depression of switch **84** will then actuate the righthand pin wheel in a manner identical to the actuation described previously for the lefthand pin wheel. This in turn will cause rotation of the upper drive wheel, as viewed in FIG. 4.

From the above description it will be seen that the present invention provides means for conveniently and easily dispensing a plurality of stamps **12** from a first source and upon exhaustion of that source for automatically switching to an alternate source so as to provide an uninterrupted flow of stamps to the customer.

It should be understood that the embodiments described herein are presented by way of example only and that many changes and modifications thereto can be made without departing from the spirit of the invention.

What is claimed is:

1. A stamp dispenser which comprises:

(a) a housing;

(b) a plurality of stamp storage means carried by said housing;

(c) a plurality of drive wheels each operatively associated with one of said stamp storage means to receive a ribbon of stamps therefrom;

(d) power means in said housing and selectively connectable to one of said drive wheels;
(e) means for sensing the exhaustion of stamps in one of said stamp storage means;
(f) means connected to said power transmitting means and responsive to said sensing means for shifting said power means out of engagement with the drive wheel paired with a stamp storage means from which the supply of stamps is exhausted and into engagement with another of said drive wheels in response to a signal from said sensing means, said shifting means comprising:
(a) a pair of opposed solenoids carried by said housing and connected to said sensing means;
(b) a tie link rigidly secured to the armature of each of said solenoids whereby said armatures and said tie link are moved as a unit by the alternate actuation of said solenoids;
(c) a fulcrum pin;
(d) a pivot arm rotatably secured at one end thereof to said fulcrum pin, the opposite end of said pivot arm being in operative engagement with said tie link;
(e) an actuating yoke member pivotally secured to said fulcrum pin and extending therefrom in a direction generally away from said pivot arm;
(f) a slip ring slidably secured on a portion of said power means and in operative engagement with said actuating yoke member; and
(g) resilient means secured between said pivot arm and said actuating yoke member for moving said yoke member in response to movement of said pivot arm by said solenoids.

2. A stamp dispenser which comprises:
(a) a housing;
(b) a plurality of stamp storage means carried by said housing;
(c) a plurality of drive wheels, each operatively associated with one of said stamp storage means to receive a ribbon of stamps therefrom;
(d) power means in said housing and selectively connectable to one of said drive wheels;
(e) a plurality of reaction wheels, each of said reaction wheels being positioned within said housing to engage a continuous ribbon of stamps emerging from one of said stamp storage means;
(f) a bell crank assembly pivotally secured within said housing, said reaction wheels being rotatably mounted in one end of said bell crank assembly;
(g) a single throw make and break switch carried by said housing and in operative engagement with a portion of said bell crank assembly opposite said reaction wheels;
(h) resilient means mounted between said housing and said bell crank assembly for urging said reaction wheels in a direction toward the continuous ribbon of stamps;
(i) electric circuitry including said make and break switch and connected to said shifting means for pulsing said shifting means upon actuation of said make and break switch; and
(j) means connected to said power means and responsive to closure of said single throw make and break switch for shifting said power transmitting means out of engagement with the drive wheel paired with a stamp storage means from which the supply of stamps is exhausted and into engagement with another of said drive wheels in response to a signal from said sensing means.

3. A stamp dispenser which comprises:
(a) a housing;
(b) a plurality of stamp storage means carried by said housing;
(c) a plurality of drive wheels, each of said drive wheels being paired with one of said stamp storage means to receive a ribbon of stamps therefrom;
(d) an electric motor having a shaft extending from one end thereof;
(e) a drive plate rigidly secured to said shaft, said drive plate having formed therein a depression along the periphery thereof;
(f) a normally open motor stop switch;
(g) an actuating arm assembly operatively secured to said normally open motor stop switch, a portion of said actuating arm assembly being positioned to engage the periphery of said drive plate and be received within said depression;
(h) a normally open impulse switch;
(i) a source of electric power;
(j) a first electric circuit including said normally open impulse switch and said electric motor;
(k) a second electric circuit including said power supply, said normally open motor stop switch, and said electric motor;
(l) a pin projecting from said drive plate;
(m) power transmitting means carried by said housing and drivingly contacted by said projecting pin for transmitting power from said drive plate selectively and individually to each of said drive wheels;
(n) means for sensing the exhaustion of stamps in one of said stamp storage means; and
(o) means connected to said power transmitting means and responsive to said sensing means for shifting said power transmitting means out of engagement with the drive wheel paired with a stamp storage means from which the supply of stamps is exhausted and into engagement with another of said drive wheels in response to a signal from said sensing means.

4. A stamp dispenser which comprises:
(a) a housing;
(b) a pair of stamp storage means carried by said housing;
(c) a pair of drive wheels, each of said drive wheels being paired on said housing with one of said stamp storage means to receive a ribbon of stamps therefrom;
(d) cyclic power means associated with said housing;
(e) a star wheel drivingly secured to each of said drive wheels;
(f) a pin wheel journaled within said housing in driving engagement with each star wheel;
(g) a clutch assembly secured to each pin wheel;
(h) a rotatable shaft within said housing;
(i) a clutch engaging member carried by said rotatable shaft and axially slidable thereon alternately into and out of engagement with each of said clutches;
(j) gear means in operable engagement with said cyclic power means and said rotatable shaft for transmitting power thereto from said cyclic power means;
(k) means for sensing the exhaustion of stamps and one of such stamps storage means; and
(l) means connected to said clutch engaging member and responsive to said sensing means for shifting said clutch engaging member alternately into and out of engagement with each of said clutches in response to a signal from said sensing means.

5. The apparatus defined in claim **4** wherein said pin wheel has formed in the periphery thereof a depression, and further characterized to include a bell crank assembly pivotally secured within said housing adjacent said pin wheel, a follower wheel mounted upon one end of said bell crank assembly in engagement with the periphery of said pin wheel and resilient means secured between the end of the housing and the end of said bell crank assembly opposite said follower wheel for pivoting said bell crank assembly to urge said follower wheel into engagement with the periphery of said pin wheel.

6. The apparatus defined in claim **4** wherein said shifting means comprises:

(a) a pair of opposed solenoids carried by said housing and connected to said sensing means;
(b) a tie link rigidly secured to the armature of each of said solenoids whereby said armatures and said tie link are moved as a unit by the alternate actuation of said solenoids;
(c) a fulcrum pin;
(d) a pivot arm rotatably secured at one end thereof to said fulcrum pin, the opposite end of said pivot arm being in operative engagement with said tie link;
(e) an actuating yoke member pivotally secured to said fulcrum pin and extending therefrom in a direction generally away from said pivot arm;
(f) a slip ring slidably secured on said clutch engaging member and in operative engagement with said actuating yoke member; and
(g) resilient means secured between said pivot arm and said actuating yoke member for moving said yoke member in response to movement of said pivot arm by said solenoids.

7. The apparatus defined in claim **6** wherein said sensing means comprises:
(a) a pair of reaction wheels, each of said reaction wheels being positioned within said housing to engage a continuous ribbon of samps emerging from one of said stamp storage means;
(b) a bell crank assembly pivotally secured within said housing, said reaction wheels being rotatably mounted in one end of said bell crank assembly;
(c) a single throw make and break switch carried by said housing and in operative engagement with a portion of said bell crank assembly opposite said reaction wheel;
(d) resilient means mounted between said housing and said bell crank assembly for urging said reaction wheel in a direction toward the continuous ribbon of stamps; and
(e) electric circuitry including said make and break switch and one of said solenoids for pulsing said solenoid upon actuation of said make and break switch.

8. The apparatus defined in claim **7** wherein said cyclic power means comprises:
(a) an electric motor having a shaft extending from one end thereof;
(b) a drive plate rigidly secured to said shaft, said drive plate having formd therein a depression along the periphery thereof;
(c) a normally open motor stop switch;
(d) an actuating arm assembly operatively secured to said normally open motor stop switch, a portion of said actuating arm assembly being positiond to engage the periphery of said drive plate and be received within said depression;
(e) a normally open impulse switch;
(f) a source of electric power;
(g) a first electric circuit including said normally open impulse switch and said electric motor;
(h) a second electric circuit including said power supply, said normally open motor stop switch, and said electric motor; and
(i) a pin projecting from said drive plate into the path of a portion of said gear means.

9. The apparatus defined in claim **4** wherein said sensing means comprises:
(a) a pair of reaction wheels, each of said reaction wheels being positioned within said housing to engage a continuous ribbon of stamps emerging from one of said stamp storage means;
(b) a bell crank assembly pivotally secured within said housing, said reaction wheels being rotatably mounted in one end of said bell crank assembly;
(c) a single throw make and break switch carried by said housing and in operative engagement with a portion of said bell crank assembly opposite said reaction wheel;
(d) resilient means mounted between said housing and said bell crank assembly for urging said reaction wheel in a direction toward the continuous ribbon of stamps; and
(e) electric circuitry including said make and break switch and a portion of said power shifting means for actuating said power shifting means upon actuation of said make and break switch.

10. The apparatus defined in claim **6** wherein said cyclic power means comprises:
(a) an electric motor having a shaft extending from one end thereof;
(b) a drive plate rigidly secured to said shaft, said drive plate having formed therein a depression along the periphery thereof;
(c) a normally open motor stop switch;
(d) an actuating arm assembly operatively secured to said normally open motor stop switch, a portion of said actuating arm assembly being positioned to engage the periphery of said drive plate and be received within said depression;
(e) a normally open impulse switch;
(f) a source of electric power;
(g) a first electric circuit including said normally open impulse switch and said electric motor;
(h) a second electric circuit including said power supply, said normally open motor stop switch, and said electric motor; and
(i) a pin projecting from said drive plate into the path of a portion of said gear means.

11. A stamp dispenser which comprises:
(a) a housing;
(b) a plurality of stamp storage means carried by said housing;
(c) a plurality of drive wheels, each operatively associated with one of said stamp storage means for withdrawing a ribbon of stamps therefrom;
(d) a motor within said housing;
(e) means for automatically driving said motor through a predetermined extent of rotation;
(f) means for transmitting power from said motor to either one of said drive wheels during the period said motor is automatically driven through said predetermined extent of rotation;
(g) means for individually sensing the depletion of said stamps from each one of said storage means; and
(h) means responsive to said sensing means for disconnecting said power transmitting means from a first drive wheel operatively associated with a stamp storage means from which stamps are depleted, and connecting said power transmitting means to a second drive wheel operatively associated with a stamp storage means upon which stamps are stored.

12. A stamp dispenser which comprises:
(a) a housing;
(b) a pair of stamp storage means carried by said housing;
(c) a pair of drive wheels, each of said drive wheels being paired on said housing with one of said stamp storage means to receive a ribbon of stamps therefrom;
(d) cyclic power means associated with said housing;
(e) means carried by said housing for transmitting power from said cyclic power means to each of said drive wheels;
(f) means for sensing the exhaustion of stamps in one of said stamp storage means;
(g) solenoid means connected to said sensing means and responsive to said sensing means by shifting when said sensing means senses the exhaustion of stamps in one of said stamps storage means;

(h) link means connected to said solenoid means for movement in response to shifting of said solenoid means;

(i) clutch means for alternately shifting said power transmitting means into engagement with one of said drive wheels, and concurrently out of engagement with the other of said drive wheels; and

(j) means interconnecting said link means with said clutch means for alternately shifting said clutch means when said link means moves in response to said solenoid means.

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