

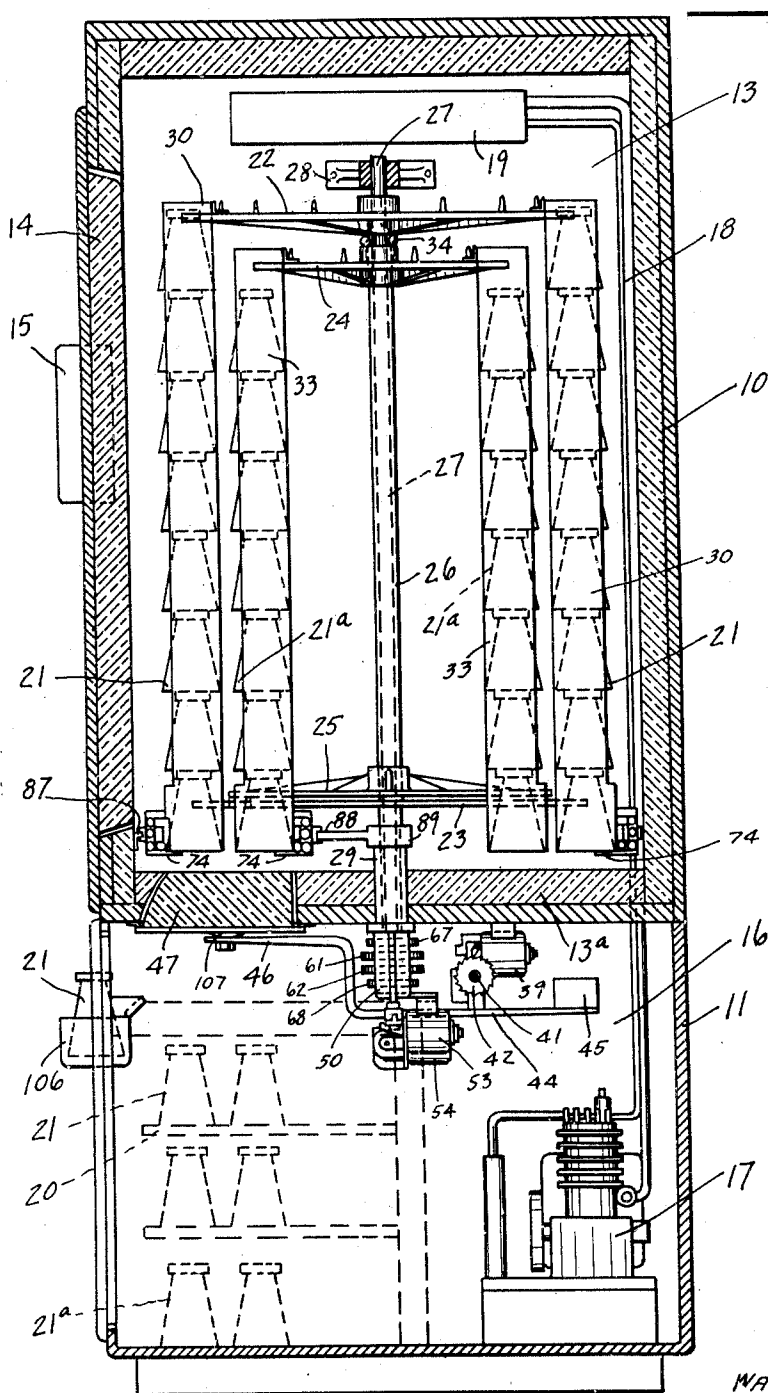
Feb. 14, 1950

W. VON STOESER
PACKAGE VENDING MACHINE

2,497,748

Filed March 8, 1946

6 Sheets-Sheet 1



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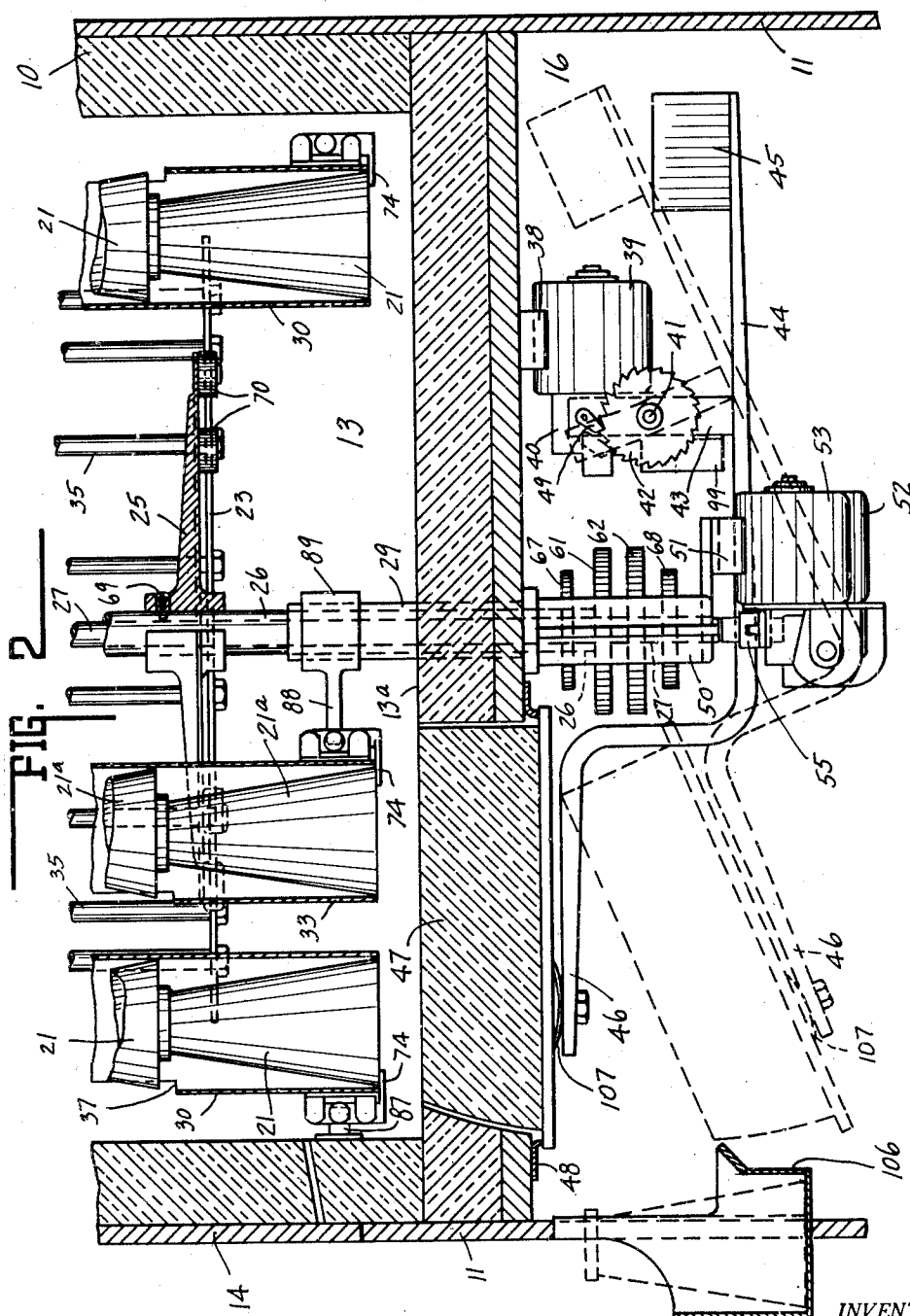
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6 Sheets-Sheet 2



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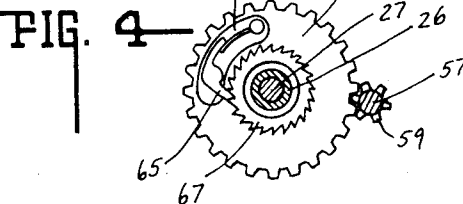
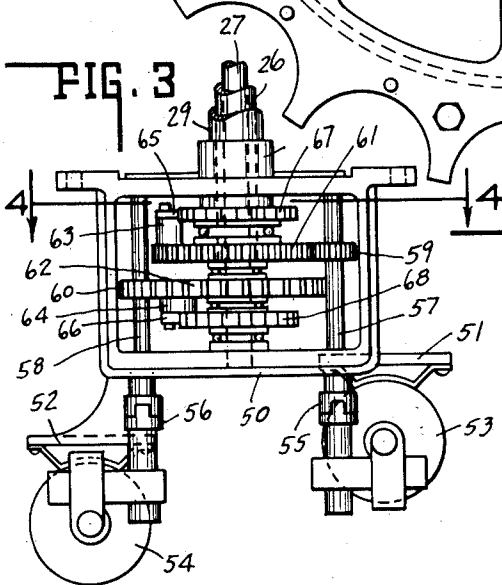
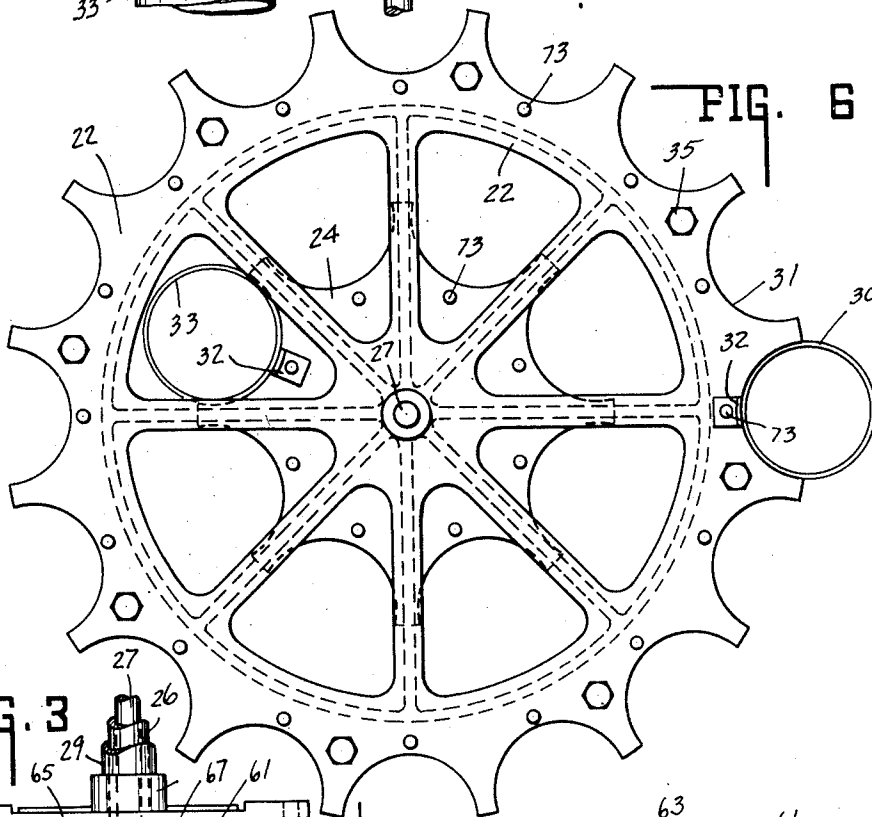
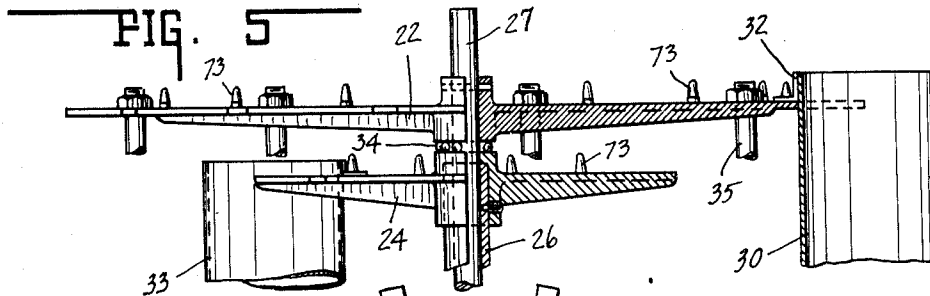
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6 Sheets-Sheet 3



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PACKAGE VENDING MACHINE

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6 Sheets-Sheet 4

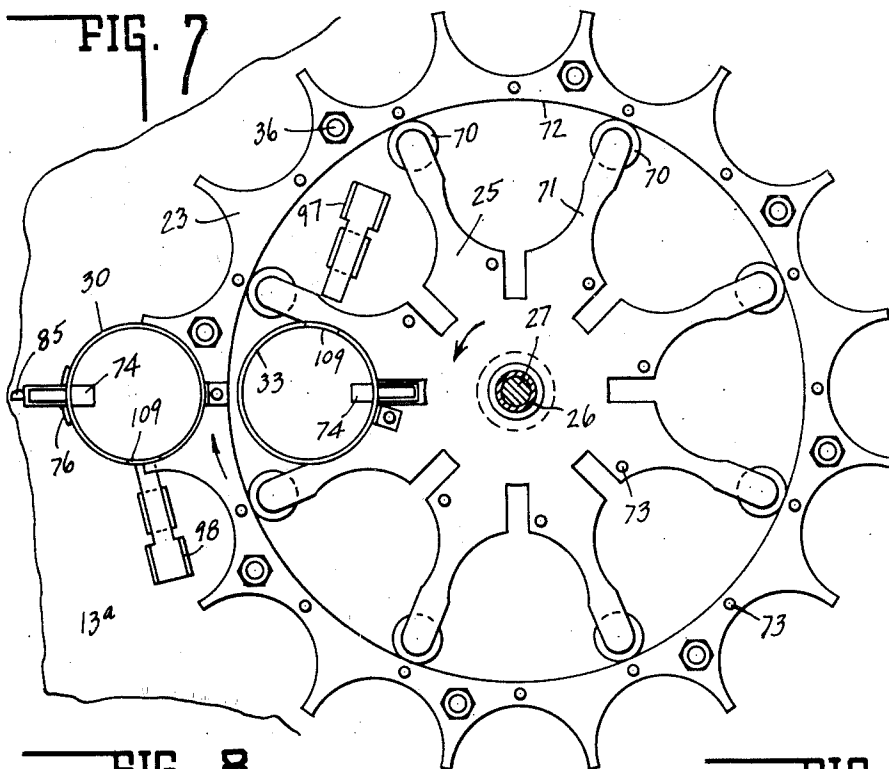


FIG. 8

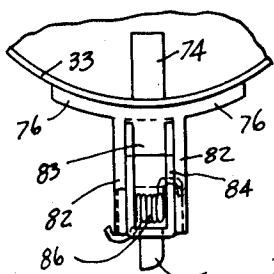


FIG. 9

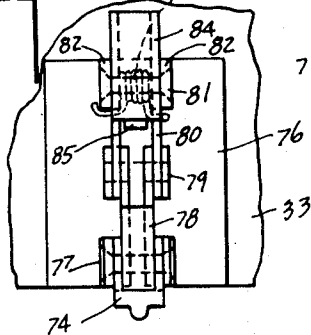


FIG. 10

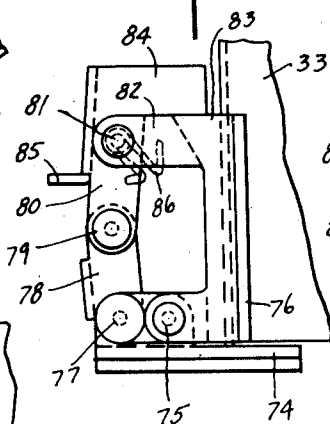
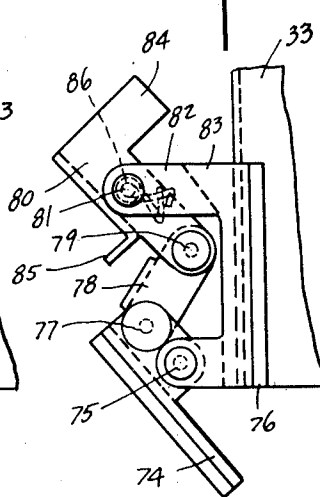


FIG. 11



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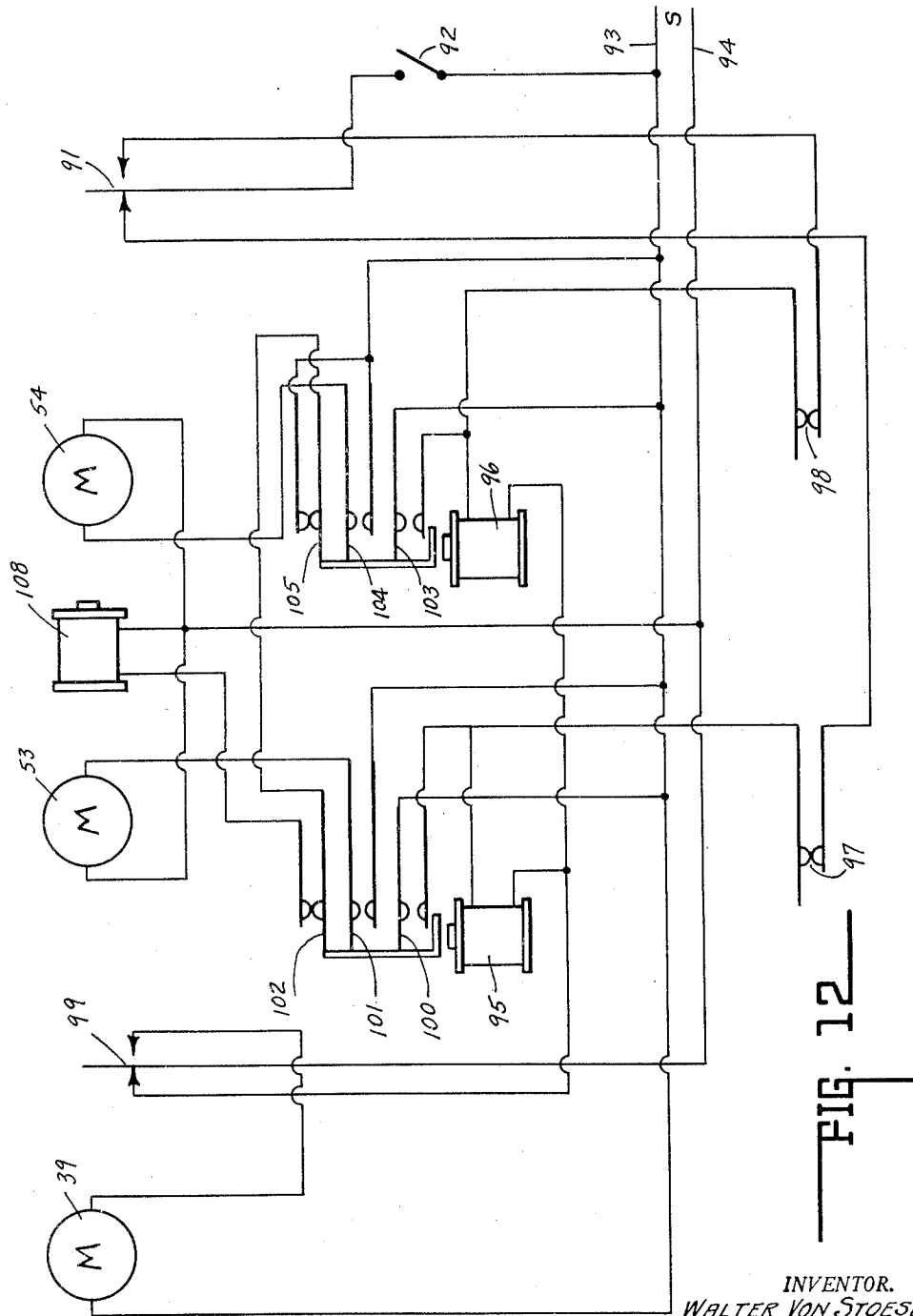
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6 Sheets-Sheet 5



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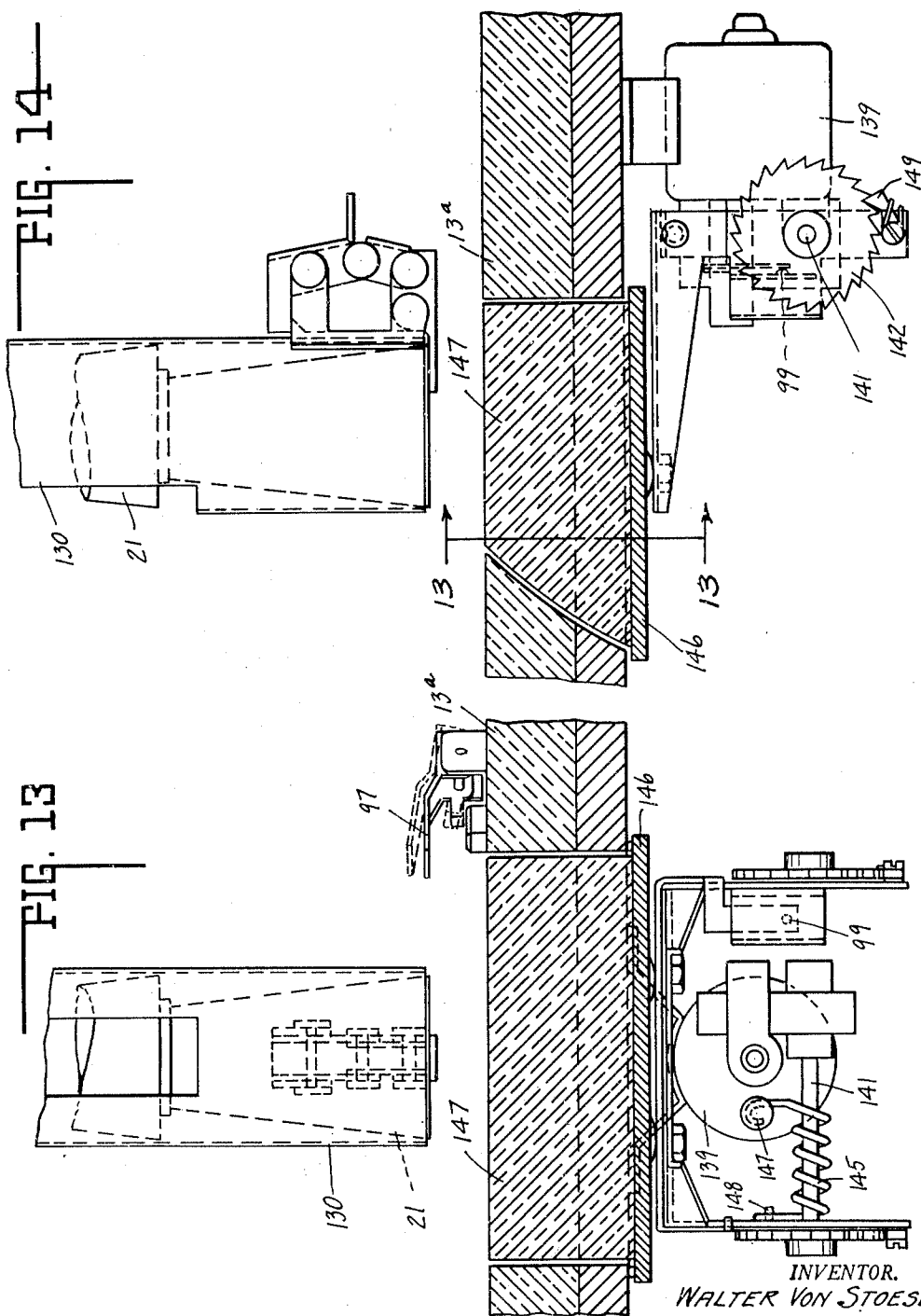
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6 Sheets-Sheet 6



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UNITED STATES PATENT OFFICE

2,497,748

PACKAGE VENDING MACHINE

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Application March 8, 1946, Serial No. 652,869

10 Claims. (Cl. 312—48)

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This invention relates to a package vending machine particularly applicable to the dispensing of bottled beverages, milk or the like. However, any desired commodity packaged in the manner herein set forth may be vended thereby.

It is the object of this invention to provide a vending machine of the above character in cabinet form, preferably including a refrigerated compartment from which bottled beverages, which may be herein considered as including milk or liquid foods, as well as other packaged goods or commodities, may be vended one at a time upon deposit of a coin. This is accomplished by packaging the commodity, whether of liquid or other form, in a container of greater width or diameter at the base than at the top, and which containers are supported in column formation, one upon the other, with the enlarged base supported upon the smaller top. Preferably paper containers are employed in the form of conically shaped bottles with a closure cap at the upper smaller end, which cap may be removed for drinking the beverage or exposing the contents, whereupon the container may be disposed of in any suitable manner.

The principal feature of the invention resides in the provision of a rotatable turret for supporting a plurality of columns of containers and operable to release the lowermost container from one of the columns to the dispensing apparatus upon deposit of a coin or actuation of a control member, and wherein each dispensed container is replaced by another of the same column, all contained within a refrigerated chamber.

A further feature of the invention resides in the automatic control of the turret to successively position columns of containers and release the lowermost container onto a trap door in the bottom of the refrigerating compartment, said door being thereupon automatically operable by the dispensed container for delivery thereby.

Another feature resides in the automatically actuated platform for supporting the containers in their respective column formations, and operable to release the lowermost container at the dispensing station while withholding and supporting the next superimposed container.

The full nature of the invention will be understood from the accompanying drawings and the following description and claims:

Fig. 1 is a central vertical section through the cabinet of the vending machine showing the container supporting turret in elevation with certain columns of containers removed for clarity.

Fig. 2 is an enlarged sectional view of that portion of the machine controlling the dispensing of the packages.

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Fig. 3 is a side elevation of the turret drive.

Fig. 4 is a section taken on the line 4—4 of Fig. 3 with parts removed.

Fig. 5 is a view showing the upper turret spiders with the left-hand side thereof shown in elevation and the right-hand side in central vertical section.

Fig. 6 is a top plan view of the upper turret spiders, as shown in Fig. 5.

Fig. 7 is a top plan view of the lower turret spiders.

Fig. 8 is a plan view of a platform release.

Fig. 9 is a front elevation of the platform release shown in Fig. 8.

Fig. 10 is a side elevation of the platform release in supporting position, as shown in Figs 7 and 9.

Fig. 11 is the same as Fig. 10, showing the platform release in collapsed position.

Fig. 12 is a wiring diagram of the electric control.

Fig. 13 is a section taken on the line 13—13 of Fig. 14 showing a modified form of dispensing mechanism.

Fig. 14 is a central vertical section through a portion of the modified form of Fig. 13, similar to the view shown in Fig. 2.

In the drawings there is shown a package vending machine comprising a cabinet 10 mounted upon a base 11, said cabinet being constructed preferably of insulating material to enclose a refrigerated chamber 13. The front of the cabinet is provided with an insulated door 14 through which access may be had to the interior of the chamber 13 for replenishing the packages contained therein or for other purposes as may be required. At a convenient height on the cabinet there is mounted a coin box indicated at 15, which may be of any suitable type commonly employed for receiving a coin effective to operate the package dispensing mechanism. In the base 11 there is provided a compartment 16 containing the usual refrigerating mechanism indicated at 17 in the form of a motor driven compressor for forcing refrigerant to the usual evaporator indicated at 19. Also, there may be provided in the compartment 16 a series of shelves 20 arranged to support the packages 21, as indicated by dotted lines, for precooling storage thereof.

Supported for rotation within the refrigerating chamber 13 there are two concentric turrets, the outer turret comprising an upper spider 22 and a lower spider 23. The inner turret comprises an upper spider 24 and a lower spider 25. The inner turret, comprising the spiders 24 and 25 is carried by the hollow shaft 26 rotatable about a solid shaft 27. The hollow shaft 26 fixedly supports in spaced

relation the inner turret spiders 24, 25, whereas the solid shaft 27 has its top bearing in a bracket 28, and has secured thereto the top spider 22 of the outer turret. Said shafts extend downwardly through and have their lower bearing in a sleeve 29 secured in the floor of the cabinet 10.

The outer turret, comprising the spiders 22 and 23, rotatably supports the storage tubes 30 carried thereby in spaced arcuate recesses 31 formed about its periphery by the brackets 32, as shown in Figs. 5 and 6. Said tubes 30 are removably mounted on said spiders to extend adjacent each other about their entire periphery in spaced relation, there being shown herein for illustration sixteen such tubes. Similarly supported about the peripheries of the spiders 24 and 25 forming the inner turret, there is a plurality of tubes 33. The upper spider 22 of the outer turret is rotatably supported upon the spider 24 of the inner turret by the ball races indicated at 34, the spiders of the outer turret being secured to each other by the tie rods 35. Each of said tubes is provided with a cutout face intermediate its ends, as indicated at 37, and as shown in Fig. 2.

Suspended from the top of the base 11 by a bracket 38, there is provided an electric door control motor 39 having the usual speed reduction gear box 40 terminating in a drive shaft 41. Secured to said shaft 41 there is a ratchet wheel 42, and pivotally mounted to swing thereon there is a yoke 43. Said yoke supports a biasing lever 44 upon one end of which a counterweight 45 is supported. Said lever 44 is goosenecked at its opposited end 46 to yieldingly support a delivery trap door 47. The trap door 47 is biased toward closed position by the counterweight 45, and acts in the nature of an inclined delivery chute for the packages 21, as hereinafter described. When said door 47 is in its upper position, as shown in Figs. 1 and 2, by full lines, it provides through the flexible strips 48 an air tight bottom closure for the refrigerating chamber 13. In its lowermost position, as shown by dotted lines in Fig. 2, it acts as a delivery chute for a released package. Carried by the yoke 43 there is a pivotally mounted pawl 49 engageable with the ratchet wheel 42 upon actuation of the door 47 by the dropping of a package thereon.

Depending from the top of the base 11 there is a U-shaped frame 50 provided with bracket supporting extensions 51 and 52 (Figs. 2 and 3). Said brackets support the turret driving motors 53 and 54, respectively. Said motors are provided with reduction gearing connected by the flexible couplings 55 and 56 to the pinion shafts 57 and 58, respectively. The latter are provided with pinions 59, 60, respectively, which mesh with their respective gears 61 and 62, said gears being thereby driven in opposite directions.

Gears 61 and 62 have attached to their upper and lower faces, blocks 63 and 64, respectively, on each of which are pivoted the pawls 65 and 66. The pawl 65 engages the ratchet wheel 67 and the pawl 66 engages the ratchet wheel 68, the teeth of said ratchet wheels being oppositely directed. Said gears and ratchet wheels are concentric with shafts 26 and 27, and are supported by suitable ball bearings upon the frame 50. The pinions 59 and 60 are free to revolve about their common axis, but the ratchet wheels 67 and 68 are secured to the shafts 26 and 27, respectively. The rotation of gears 61, 62 by their motors is such that they force their respective pawls into the teeth of the ratchets, 67, 68, to selectively drive the shafts 26 and 27 in opposite directions. 75

Thus, while either shaft must revolve in a given direction, while under power, they and their attached turrets may be freely turned by hand in the opposite direction while the tubes are being manipulated. This permits the turrets to be freely positioned by an operator for convenient access and manipulation in re-loading them through the door 14.

As shown in Fig. 2, the shafts 26, 27 extend through the floor of the cabinet 10. The lower spider 25 of the inner turret is secured to the shaft 26 by a set screw 69. Spider 25, as shown in Fig. 7, is provided with a series of rollers 70 pivotally mounted on its radially-extending arms 71 which define the semi-circular tube receiving recesses. The lower spider 23 of the outer turret having similar semi-circular tube receiving recesses, is provided with an annular inner ring-like wall indicated at 72 engaged by the rollers 70 of the spider 25. Thus, the spider 25 which is carried by the tubular shaft 26, centers the spider 23 in concentric relation therewith and with said shafts while permitting relative rotation therebetween. Each of said spiders 22, 23, 24 and 25 carries a series of upstanding tapered pins 73 aligned with their tube receiving recesses for receiving and interlocking with the brackets 32 secured adjacent the upper and lower ends of each of said tubes 30 and 33. Thus, said tubes may be readily removed by the operator for filling with packages, and set in place about their respective turrets by slipping the brackets 32 over the pins 73.

One of the supporting platforms for the columns of packages contained in the respective tubes is shown in Figs. 8-11 as applied to the tube 33. However, the same support is applied to the tubes 30, being indicated at 74 in Fig. 1. Said platform 74 is fulcrumed at 75 on the bracket 76 which is welded or otherwise secured to the external wall of each tube adjacent the bottom thereof. The free end of the platform extends under the discharge end of the tube for supporting the lowermost package contained therein. The opposite end of said platform is pivoted at 77 to a link 78, which link has its other end pivoted at 79 to a bell crank lever 80 fulcrumed at 81 on an outstanding arm 82 of the bracket. The upper end of the bracket is formed with a head 83 engageable by the leg 84 of the bell crank lever 80, as shown in Fig. 10. Said bell crank lever is also provided with a striker 85 extending outwardly therefrom beveled on one side adjacent its end. This provides a collapsible toggle support for the platform 74. Link 78 and bell crank lever 80 are so related that their pivotal connection 79 lies outside of the plane through fulcrum pins 77, 81. Thus, when in supporting position, as shown in Fig. 10, the platform 74 is locked by the toggle action against downward movement in such manner that the greater the weight supported thereby, the stronger will be the locking action through engagement of the arm 84 with the head 83. However, upon the toggle being collapsed inwardly through the striker 85, the platform 74 will be released to swing downwardly out of supporting position, thereby permitting a package to drop from the tube. Immediately upon release, the spring 86 will force the toggle outwardly, immediately returning the platform through the recess formed by the inward taper of the package to supporting position in time to support the next superimposed package.

For the purpose of engaging the striker 85 to

release the platform 74 from its package supporting position, a trip finger 87 is mounted on the inner wall of the cabinet 10 immediately above the trap door 47. A similar trip finger 88 is mounted on a collar 89 secured to the bearing sleeve 29 mounted in the bottom of the cabinet through which the drive shafts extend. As one or the other of the turrets is revolved, the tubes are progressively moved past said trip fingers to be engaged by the striker 85 with the result that said striker is cammed inwardly to collapse the toggle and release the platform 74. Thereupon the package is permitted to drop from the tube onto the trap door 47. Because of the upwardly tapering walls of the package, the platform is permitted to be returned to its supporting position by the spring 86 as the next above package drops with the released package. By the time this package reaches the bottom of the tube, the platform has resumed its supporting position, the striker 85 having passed its trip finger. Thus, the superimposed column of packages is supported in the tube after release of the lowermost package.

The packages 21 contained in the tubes 30 of the outer turret may be of one size or character of goods and the packages 21a contained in the tubes 33 of the inner turret may be of another size or character of goods. However, they may be of the same goods, but in different sized packages. Where necessary it may be desirable to use smaller tubes in one turret than in the other, which may be set in their respective bays provided about the periphery of the spiders.

A selection may be made by the purchaser as to a package of the outer or inner turrets, by manipulating the selector switch 91 (Fig. 12). Upon dropping a coin in the coin box 15, the coin switch 92 is momentarily closed. This closes the circuit from the source of current S through the main lines 93, 94 to the selected electromagnet 95 or 96. The magnet 95 controls operation of the motor 53, and the magnet 96 controls operation of the motor 54. As noted above, motor 53 drives the shaft 26 which in turn drives the inner turret for dispensing packages 21a, and the motor 54 drives the shaft 27 for dispensing packages 21. Thus, upon moving the selector switch 91 to the left, packages 21a will be dispensed, and upon moving said switch to the right, packages 21 will be dispensed. In series with the circuit to the magnet 95 there is a package controlled switch 97, and a similar switch 98 in series with the magnet 96, both of said switches being normally closed. The circuits to the magnets 95, 96 include the motor 39 and the microswitch 99 (see Fig. 2). The circuit through said microswitch and magnets 95, 96 is normally closed. When the magnet 95 is energized, it closes the switches 100, 101, but opens switch 102. Similarly, when the magnet 96 is energized, it closes switches 103, 104 but opens switch 105. As soon as switch 101 is closed, the inner turret driving motor 53 is energized for rotating shaft 26. Upon rotation of the inner turret, one of the tubes 33 is moved into position over the trap door 47 (Figs. 1 and 2), during which movement the striker 85 of the platform 74 engages the finger 88. The lowermost package 21a is thus released to drop onto the trap door 47. Similarly with the closing of the switch 101, switch 100 is closed which acts to maintain the magnet 95 energized following the momentary closing of the coin switch 92.

When the trap door sustains the weight of the

package 21a, the counterweight 45 is overbalanced, tending to swing the yoke 43 to cause the pawl 49 to engage the teeth of the ratchet wheel 42, rotating it slightly on the shaft 41 of motor 39. This acts to throw the microswitch 99 from its normal position, as shown in Fig. 12, to the reverse position, closing the circuit through motor 39 and breaking the circuit through the magnet 95, whereupon the circuit to the turret driving motor 53 is broken through switch 101. Therefore, immediately upon the package being dropped, further rotation of the turret is stopped, but not before the striker 85 has passed the finger 88. At that point the platform 74 has returned to its supporting position to receive and support the next above package.

The motor 39 serves as a brake for slowly lowering the trap door from the position shown in full lines in Fig. 2 to its dotted line position, since it cannot swing downwardly any faster than the ratchet wheel 42 permits. As the trap door slowly lowers to its inclined position, the package slides down until its upper end strikes the top of the base 11, which causes it to tilt over and slide bottom foremost into package receiving cup 106 mounted in an aperture provided therefor in the front wall of the base 11. As soon as the trap door is relieved of the weight of the package, the counterweight 45 raises it with the pawl ratcheting over the wheel 42 until the door is closed against the tension of the spring 107 supporting it upon the arm 46. The yoke 43 is similarly returned to normal position, acting to throw the microswitch 99 back to its normal position, as shown in Fig. 12, thereby stopping the motor 39 and readying the circuit to again energize magnet 95. This completes the cycle of operation.

If, on the other hand, it is desired to dispense a package 21 from one of the tubes 30 of the outer turret, the switch 91 is thrown to close the circuit through switch 98 to energize magnet 96. It acts to close switches 103, 104 and open switch 105 to energize motor 54. The same sequence of operations then occurs, such as to cause release of the lowermost package 21 through dropping of its platform 74 by engagement with its finger 87.

Electromagnet 108 is utilized to prevent coins from being accepted for closing the coin switch 92 while the magnets 95 or 96 are energized for positioning one of the turrets. Said magnet is controlled by the switches 102 or 105 which are opened to deenergize said magnet while the magnets 95 or 96 are energized. Magnet 108 so operates in the manner disclosed in my application Serial No. 477,068, filed February 25, 1943, as illustrated in Fig. 29 thereof.

The switches 97 and 98 are mounted upon the floor 13a of the compartment 13, as shown in Figs. 7 and 13, being controlled by a spring leaf extending in the direction of travel of the tubes when the turrets are rotated, the outer turret being rotated in a clockwise direction and the inner turret being rotated in a counterclockwise direction, as indicated by arrows in Fig. 7. Each of said tubes is provided with a recess in its wall as indicated at 109. If there is one or more packages contained in the tube, the leaf spring of the switch 97 will be forced downwardly thereby to close the switch so as to permit the circuit to be made through the magnet 95. Similarly, the circuit through the magnet 96 will be closed upon the leaf spring of switch 98 being depressed. However, if the tube is empty, the leaf spring of switches 97 or 98 will not be depressed but will

ride freely up into the tube so that their circuits will remain open and the machine will be inoperative. In this event, the usual warning signal may be displayed or the coin deposited may be returned.

Figs. 13 and 14 are illustrative of a modified form of the invention, particularly in respect to the mechanism for controlling the trap door. Fig. 14 is a section through a portion of the modified machine, showing a view similar to that of Fig. 2, with parts broken away or removed. Fig. 13 is a section taken on the line 13-13 of Fig. 14, with parts removed. In these figures there is illustrated only a single turret embodying the tubes 139 movable in a path over the trap door 147 for dispensing similar packages 21, each of which is released in the manner above described for dropping onto the trap door 147. In this modified form, the trap door is supported by the arm 146 which is fulcrumed upon the motor shaft 141 driven through suitable speed reduction gearing by the motor 139. As soon as the package drops on the door 147, it is depressed, forcing the pawl 149 into engagement with the ratchet wheel 142 keyed to the shaft 141. Thus, the lowering of the trap door is controlled by the motor. This action also actuates the microswitch 99, as above described. However, upon the door being relieved of the weight of the package, it is returned by tension of the spring 145. Said spring is wound about the shaft 141 with one end thereof secured to the motor at 147 and the other end secured to the arm at 148. As the door is lowered, it winds up the spring 145 under sufficient tension to return it to closed position upon discharge of the package. Thus, the spring 145 in effect takes the place of the arm 44 and counterweight 45 above described.

The invention claimed is:

1. A vending machine comprising a series of vertically disposed tubes for containing a column of packages supported one upon the other, each of said packages having its supporting end of less area than its supported end, a toggle link pivotally mounted on each of said tubes operably mounting an inwardly extending platform thereon for supporting the lowermost package of the column, means for effecting collapse of said toggle link upon movement of its supporting tube to a dispensing station, and a spring operable to return said toggle link and platform to supporting position during discharge of its supported package for reception and support of its superimposed package.

2. A vending machine including a vertically disposed tube for containing a column of packages to be dispensed, said packages being supported one upon the other with their upper supporting ends offset inwardly from their lower supported ends, a swinging platform fulcrumed on said tube having one end extending inwardly thereof for supporting the lowermost package but to a less distance from the wall of said tube than the supporting end thereof, and a toggle link pivotally connected to the other end of said fulcrumed platform biased outwardly to normally maintain said platform in its supporting position, said toggle link being collapsible inwardly to permit said platform to swing downwardly for releasing the lowermost package and thereupon return to supporting position to receive and support the next superimposed package.

3. A vending machine including a vertically disposed tube for containing a column of packages, said packages being supported one upon

the other with their upper supporting ends spaced inwardly from their lower supported ends, a swinging platform fulcrumed on said tube with one end thereof extending inwardly of said tube for supporting the lowermost package but to a less distance from the wall of said tube than the supporting end of said package, a toggle link pivotally connected to the other end of said fulcrumed platform, said toggle link being collapsible inwardly to permit said platform to swing downwardly to release the lowermost package and return to supporting position for the next superimposed package, and a spring associated with said toggle link acting to urge it into its supporting position after collapsing.

4. A vending machine including a vertically disposed tube for containing a column of packages, said packages being supported one upon the other with their upper supporting ends spaced inwardly from their lower supported ends, a swinging platform fulcrumed on said tube extending inwardly thereof to engage and support the lowermost package but to a less distance from the wall of said tube than the supporting end of said package, a toggle link pivotally connected with said platform at its end opposite the supporting end thereof, said toggle link including a locking head for preventing outward collapse thereof while permitting inward collapse to drop said platform and release the lowermost package supported thereby, and a spring tending to return said toggle link to its platform supporting position as said package is released for receiving and supporting the next superimposed package.

5. A vending machine comprising a cabinet provided with an elevated floor, means in said cabinet for supporting a plurality of packages to be dispensed, a downwardly swinging trap door in said floor for receiving a package thereon, a motor having a drive shaft upon which said door is freely pivoted, an interlocking connection between said shaft and door operable to interlock for controlling the downward movement of said door upon receiving said package, and means for biasing said door to closed position upon discharge of said package therefrom.

6. A vending machine comprising a cabinet provided with an elevated floor, means in said cabinet for supporting a plurality of packages to be dispensed, a downwardly swinging trap door provided in said floor, means for biasing said door to closed position, an electric motor, a circuit for said motor, an operative connection between said motor and trap door for controlling the lowering thereof to an inclined package discharge position, and a switch controlled by said door effective to close the circuit to said motor upon said door receiving the weight of a package deposited thereon, the biasing of said door being operable to open said switch upon said door being relieved of said package.

7. A vending machine comprising a cabinet provided with an elevated floor, means in said cabinet for supporting a plurality of packages to be dispensed, a downwardly swinging trap door in said floor, an electric control motor supported under said floor having a driving shaft, a supporting arm for said door fulcrumed on said shaft, a ratchet wheel secured to said shaft, a pawl carried by said arm engageable therewith upon downward movement of said door and releasable relative thereto upon the upward movement thereof, a switch movable with said arm to close the circuit to said motor upon downward movement thereof by the weight of a package

received thereon for controlling the lowering of said door to an inclined package discharge position, and means for biasing said door upwardly to closed position upon being relieved of said package, said arm upon the upward movement of said door moving said switch to break the circuit to said motor.

8. A vending machine comprising a cabinet provided with an elevated floor, a series of package supporting members, a downwardly swinging trap door in said floor for receiving a package from one of said members, a motor for moving one of said members into position over said door for releasing a package thereon, a second motor for controlling the downward movement of said door upon receiving said package, control circuits for said motors, a manually controlled switch for closing the circuit through said first motor, and a switch operated by the downward movement of said door to close the circuit through said second motor and open the circuit through said first motor, said second mentioned switch being reversely operated upon the return movement of said door following the discharge of a package therefrom.

9. A vending machine comprising a cabinet provided with an elevated floor, a rotatable turret mounted in said cabinet carrying a series of annularly disposed spaced package containing tubes, means upon each of said tubes for normally supporting the packages therein and operable to release the lowermost of said packages from one of said tubes upon being rotated to a package dispensing station, a downwardly swinging trap door in said floor at said station for receiving a released package thereon, a motor for rotating said turret to a position for releasing a package onto said door, a manually controlled switch for closing the circuit to said motor, a second motor having a driving connection with said door, a control switch operably connected with said door movable to close a circuit to said second motor upon said door being slightly depressed by the weight of a package released thereon for controlling the downward movement thereof to package discharging position, means for biasing said door to closed position independently of said last-mentioned motor and

opening the control switch therefor, and a switch controlled by the initial depression of said door for breaking the circuit to said first-mentioned motor.

10. A vending machine comprising a cabinet provided with an elevated floor, a pair of concentric turrets supported for rotation therein, an annular series of spaced tubes carried peripherally about each of said turrets, a vertically extending shaft for supporting and rotating one of said turrets, a second shaft concentric therewith for rotating the other of said turrets, a driving motor connected with each of said shafts, control circuits for said motors, a selective switch for readying the circuit to one of said motors for operating a selected one of said turrets, a manually controlled switch for closing the circuit through a selected motor for rotating the selected turret to bring one of its tubes to a dispensing station, means at said station for releasing a package from said tube, a trap door at said station for receiving the released package, a switch controlled by said door when depressed by the weight of the released package for breaking said circuit, a motor controlled by said switch and operatively connected with said door during the lowering thereof for controlling its movement to inclined position for discharge of the package released thereon, and means for returning said door to closed position and rendering said last-mentioned motor inoperative upon said door being relieved of said package.

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