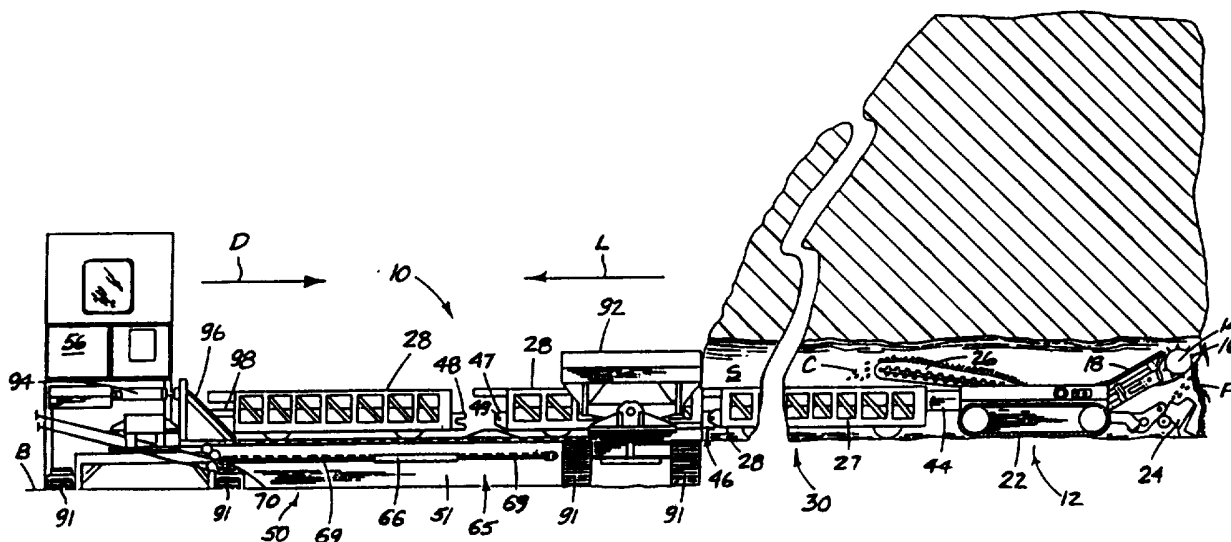




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(54) Title: APPARATUS AND METHOD FOR CONTINUOUS MINING



(57) Abstract

An apparatus (10) for mining aggregate material from a seam includes a miner (12) for cutting material from the seam and a conveyor (30) for conveying the won aggregate material from the miner for recovery. The conveyor is formed by a series of individual conveyor units (27, 28) that are coupled or interconnected in series so as to form a train. The coupling comprises cooperating clevises and tongues interconnected by locking pins. Each unit includes a main frame supported on ground engaging wheels. A belt conveyor is supported in the main frame and a conveyor drive mechanism is provided on each unit. The apparatus also includes a launch vehicle (50). The launch vehicle includes a frame holding a conveyor for receiving won aggregate material from the conveyor train and for delivering that material to a discharge conveyor. Additionally, the launch vehicle includes a reciprocating drive assembly to aid in advancing the conveyor train and miner into the seam face. In an alternative embodiment, the launch vehicle is replaced a self propelled pusher unit.

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INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International Application No.

PCT/US 91/09233

I. CLASSIFICATION OF SUBJECT MATTER (If several classification symbols apply, indicate all) ⁶		
According to International Patent Classification (IPC) or to both National Classification and IPC		
Int.Cl. 5 E21C27/24; E21F13/02; E21C35/20		
II. FIELDS SEARCHED		
Minimum Documentation Searched ⁷		
Classification System	Classification Symbols	
Int.Cl. 5	E21C ; E21F	
Documentation Searched other than Minimum Documentation to the Extent that such Documents are Included in the Fields Searched ⁸		
III. DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT⁹		
Category [*]	Citation of Document, ¹¹ with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages ¹²	Relevant to Claim No. ¹³
X	US,A,3 135 502 (MUEHLMANN) 2 June 1964	1-4, 10, 11, 15, 20-24
Y	see column 2, line 49 - column 3, line 30; figures	5, 13, 14, 16-19, 25-28, 30, 32-34
Y	--- US,A,4 953 915 (JASSER ET AL.) 4 September 1990 see column 11, line 60 - column 13, line 18; figures 1,8 --- -/-	5, 13, 14, 16-19, 25-28, 30, 32-34
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IV. CERTIFICATION		
Date of the Actual Completion of the International Search	Date of Mailing of this International Search Report	
20 MAY 1992	21. 07. 92	
International Searching Authority	Signature of Authorized Officer	
EUROPEAN PATENT OFFICE	RAMPELMANN J. <i>Rampelmann</i>	

III. DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT (CONTINUED FROM THE SECOND SHEET)		
Category *	Citation of Document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to Claim No.
X	US,A,4 014 574 (TODD) 29 March 1977 see abstract; figures ---	1,2,4, 21,25

**ANNEX TO THE INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT
ON INTERNATIONAL PATENT APPLICATION NO.**

US 9109233
SA 55048

This annex lists the patent family members relating to the patent documents cited in the above-mentioned international search report.
The members are as contained in the European Patent Office EDP file on
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US-A-4953915	04-09-90	None	
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