

Nov. 29, 1960

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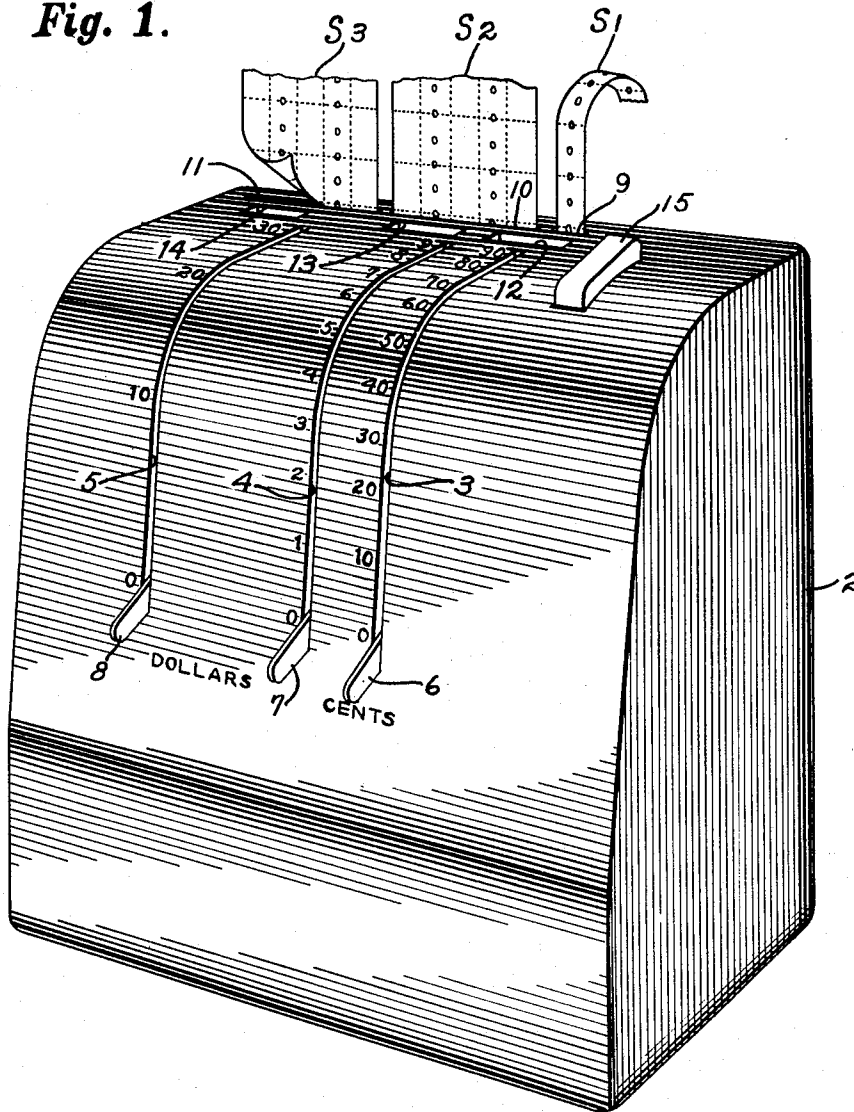
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TRADING STAMP DISPENSING APPARATUS

Filed May 28, 1956

6 Sheets-Sheet 1

**Fig. 1.**



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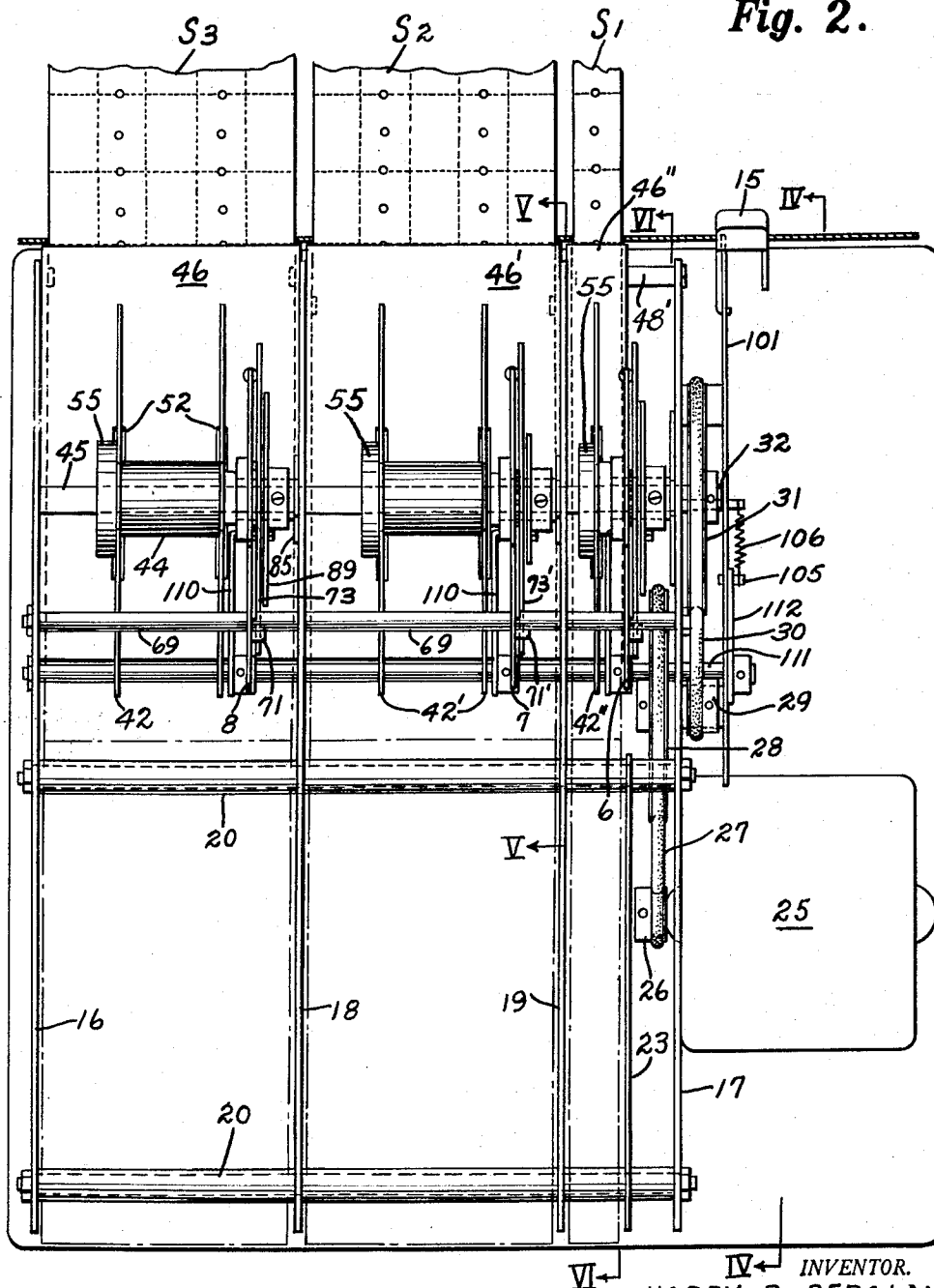
2,962,282

TRADING STAMP DISPENSING APPARATUS

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Fig. 2.



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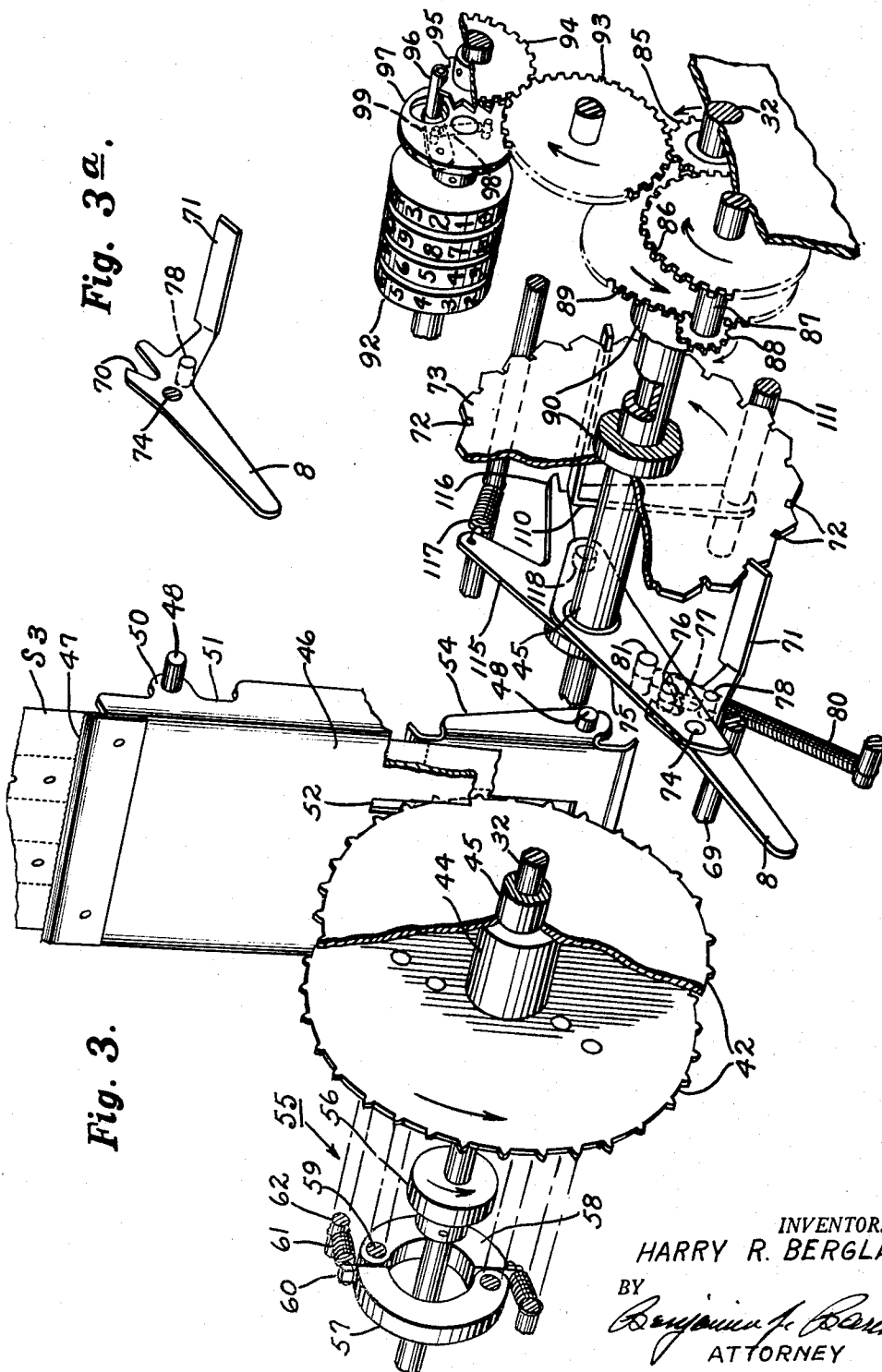
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TRADING STAMP DISPENSING APPARATUS

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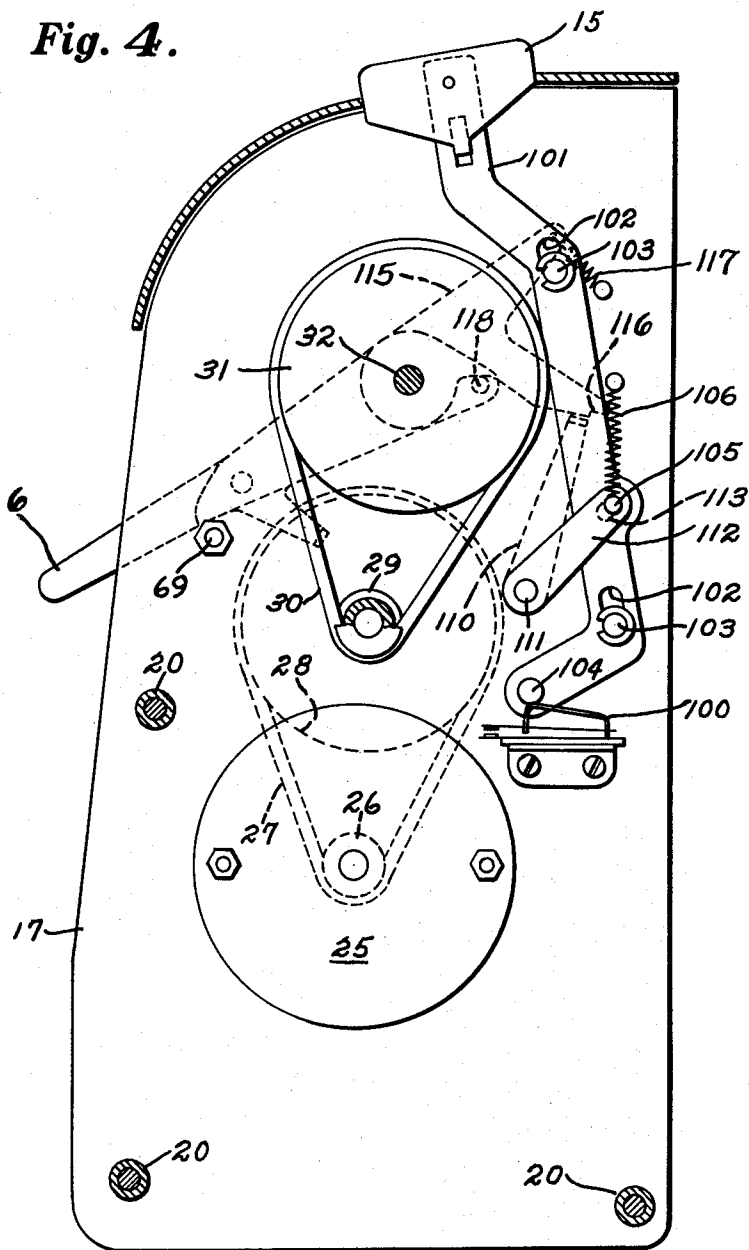
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# TRADING STAMP DISPENSING APPARATUS

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**Fig. 4.**



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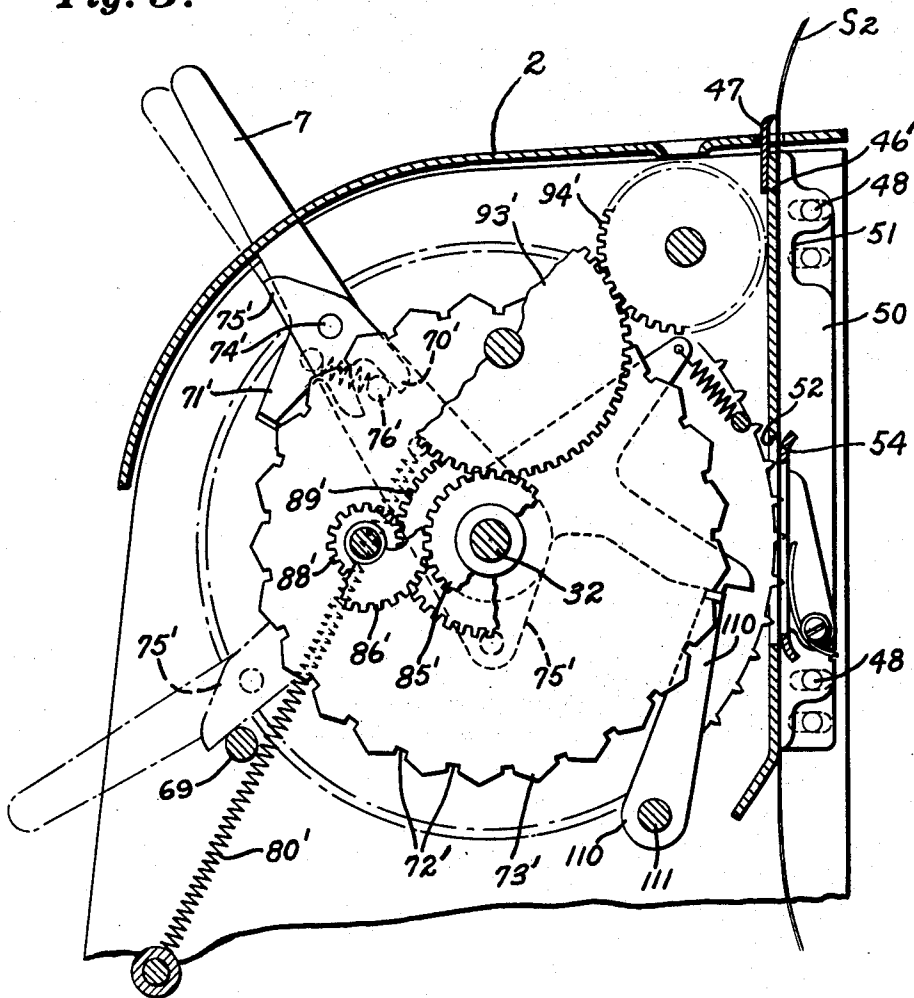
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TRADING STAMP DISPENSING APPARATUS

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**Fig. 5.**



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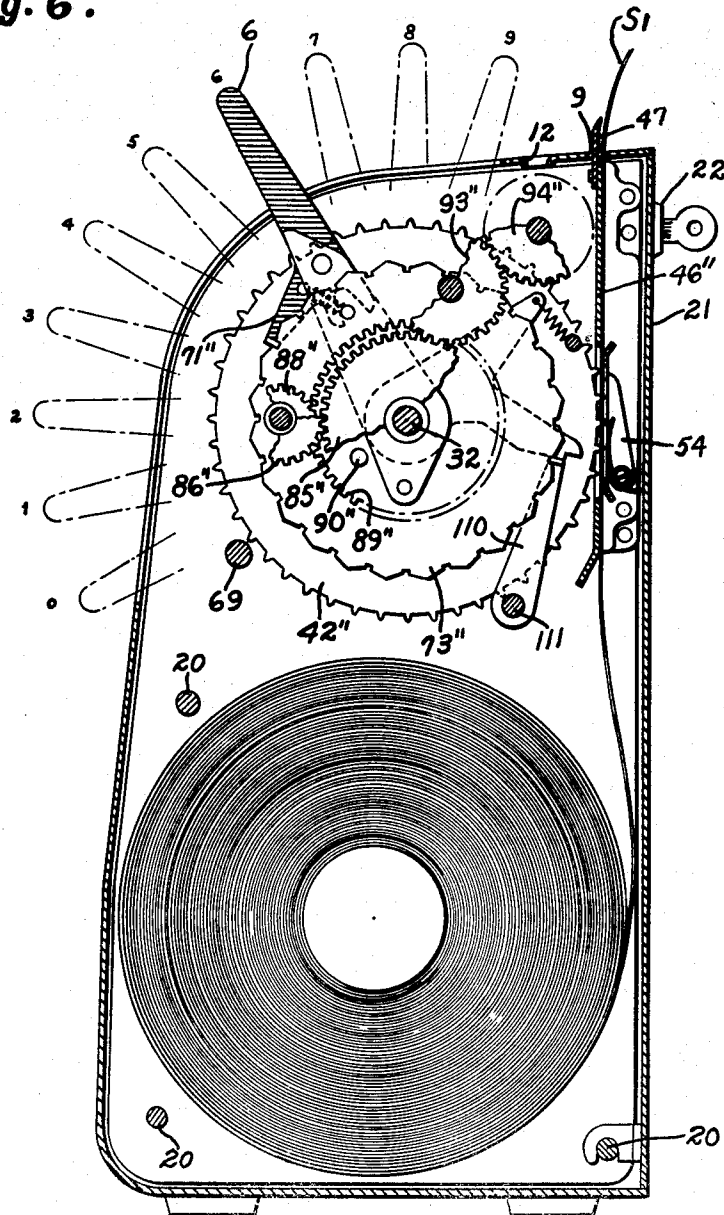
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TRADING STAMP DISPENSING APPARATUS

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**Fig. 6.**



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2,962,282

## TRADING STAMP DISPENSING APPARATUS

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11 Claims. (Cl. 226—109)

This invention relates to strip dispensing or feeding apparatus. It is particularly applicable for use in apparatus for dispensing trading stamps of various retail merchandising plans, and is therefore hereinafter described as embodied in this type of apparatus.

Under such plans, the stamps are given to customers without extra charge according to the dollar value of their merchandise purchases, for example one stamp per ten cents of purchase, and are redeemable for gifts when certain numbers have been accumulated. The stamps are generally supplied to the retail stores in pre-printed strips (which have heretofore been more commonly in sheet form but can be in roll or fanfold form) and, therefore, given numbers of such stamps can be issued by measured lengths of such stamp strips.

A broad object of this invention, therefore, is to provide improved apparatus for dispensing or feeding a predetermined length of strip material.

Another important object of the invention is to provide apparatus for dispensing a large number of stamps in a minimum of time; also to provide apparatus having a capacity for a large number of stamps before refilling is required.

A further object is to provide stamp dispensing apparatus which is simple and inexpensive to construct and which is easy and efficient to operate.

These and other objects and advantages are obtainable by the novel stamp dispensing apparatus herein described as a preferred embodiment of the invention. The described apparatus utilizes three distinct stamp dispensing sections each having its own feeding and indexing mechanisms for determining the number of stamps to be dispensed thereby. The machine illustrated is designed for dispensing one stamp for each ten cents of sales, this being a popular trading ratio. At least one dispensing section is provided graduated in "cents" increments, and at least one other section is provided graduated in "dollars" increments. The described machine uses one of the former-type sections, hereinafter called the "tens of cents" section, to dispense the stamps from a strip of single-stamp width, and uses two of the latter-type sections, hereinafter called the "dollars" section and the "tens of dollars" section, respectively, to dispense the stamps from strips of multiple-stamp width.

The indexing mechanism of the "tens of cents" section is graduated in increments of ten cents, up through ninety cents, and controls its stamp feeding means to dispense one stamp in the strip for each ten cents indexed. In the same manner, the indexing mechanism of the "dollars" section dispenses ten stamps of the multiple-stamp width strip for each increment indexed, and that of the "tens of dollars" section dispenses one hundred stamps for each increment indexed. Once the indexing mechanisms have been set to represent the amount of the sale determining the total number of stamps to be dispensed, the motor drive is initiated to cycle the machine, whereupon all the feeding mechanisms of the three sections are operated concurrently to dispense the proper to-

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tal number of stamps. By this arrangement, any given number of stamps from one up to many hundreds may be dispensed in a minimum amount of time. This arrangement of so distributing the stamps between a plurality of sections also permits the construction of relatively small and compact machines having a capacity for dispensing a large number of stamps before refilling is required.

In the drawings:

Fig. 1 is a perspective view of a stamp dispensing machine constructed in accordance with the invention;

Fig. 2 is a front elevational view of the machine of Fig. 1 with the casing removed and also with the counting, and part of the gearing, mechanisms omitted;

Fig. 3 is an exploded perspective view of the "tens of dollars" dispensing section illustrating the feeding, indexing and counting mechanisms for that section, these mechanisms being substantially duplicated in each of the other two sections;

Fig. 3a is a detail perspective view of the indexing lever utilized in the indexing mechanism of Fig. 3;

Fig. 4 is an end elevational view along the lines IV—IV of Fig. 2 illustrating in particular the motor drive for the feeding means of all the sections and the mechanism for controlling the motor;

Fig. 5 is an elevational view of the "dollars" dispensing section along the lines V—V of Fig. 2 illustrating in particular its indexing mechanism and the arrangement for normalizing same; and

Fig. 6 is an elevational view of the "tens of cents" dispensing section along the lines VI—VI of Fig. 2 illustrating in particular its indexing mechanism.

The stamp dispensing machine constructed in accordance with the invention is shown in Fig. 1 and comprises a casing 2 formed with three elongated slots 3, 4 and 5. Slot 3 is graduated in "cents" increments of ten cents per increment, this slot being allotted to the indexing mechanism for the "tens of cents" dispensing section which dispenses a single stamp from a strip  $S_1$  of single-stamp width for each ten cents indexed. Slot 4 is graduated in "dollars" increments of one dollar per increment, and is allotted to the indexing mechanism for the "dollars" section which dispenses ten stamps from a strip  $S_2$  of multiple-stamp width for each dollar indexed. Similarly, slot 5 is graduated in "dollars" increments, but of ten dollars per increment, and is allotted to the "tens of dollars" section which dispenses one hundred stamps from a strip  $S_3$  of multiple-stamp width for each ten dollars indexed. As illustrated in Fig. 1, the strips  $S_2$  and  $S_3$  of the latter two sections each contains five stamps in each row. The stamp dispensing capacity of the machine illustrated is 399 stamps which is the number of stamps that would be dispensed for sales of \$39.90 to \$39.99.

It will, of course, be appreciated that more or less dispensing sections could be used and that the indexing mechanisms could be graduated in different "cents" and "dollars" increments for feeding single-stamp width and multiple-stamp width strips, respectively. The arrangement and capacity of the machine illustrated are particularly suitable for use in food markets where the size of the sales are frequently more than \$10.00 but are normally less than \$40.00.

For introducing amounts in the indexing mechanism of each of the three sections, three indexing levers 6, 7 and 8 are provided. These levers are settable along their respective slots in positions designating the amount of the sale, thereby controlling their respective sections to dispense the proper number of stamps corresponding to the amount of the sale. The stamp strips  $S_1$ ,  $S_2$  and  $S_3$  are fed through three openings 9, 10 and 11 in casing 2 and are removed by severing. The casing is further provided with sight openings 12, 13 and 14 through

which are viewable counters registering the number of stamps dispensed.

The disclosed machine is motor-driven and contains a depressible key 15 controlling a switch within the casing to initiate operation of the motor. As will later be described in detail, after levers 6, 7 and 8 are indexed to represent the amount of the sale, depression of motor key 15 will cycle the motor which drives the three sections of the machine concurrently to dispense the proper number of stamps corresponding to the amount indexed, after which time the motor drive will be automatically terminated.

As shown in Fig. 2, the machine frame is formed with a pair of end plates 16 and 17 and a pair of internal separator plates 18 and 19 dividing the frame into the three separate dispensing sections. Each section contains its strip of stamps in roll or fanfold form (the former being illustrated in Fig. 6), feeding means for the stamps, an indexing mechanism and a counter. Frame plates 16-19 are secured together by cross shafts 20 extending through the machine. A panel 21 (Fig. 6), closing the back of casing 2, is pivotally mounted on one of the cross shafts to provide access into the machine for refilling it with stamps and for resetting the counters. To enable only authorized personnel to have this access, a lock 22 may be provided. A further separator plate 23 (Fig. 2) is used to partition off the "tens of cents" section from the drive mechanism.

The motor drive is shown in Figs. 2 and 4 and includes an electric motor 25 driving a pulley wheel 26 coupled by a belt 27 to a larger intermediate wheel 28. Secured to the latter is a smaller wheel 29 coupled by belt 30 to another larger wheel 31 to which is secured the drive shaft 32 of all the dispensing sections. The motor is adapted to drive the shaft 32 in the counterclockwise direction as viewed in Figs. 3 and 4.

The drive shaft 32 extends through the machine, being supported by frame plates 16-19, and drives the feeding, indexing and counting mechanisms of all three sections. Fig. 3 illustrates these mechanisms in the "tens of dollars" section, the remaining two sections being of substantially the same design.

As shown in Fig. 3, the feeding mechanism includes a pair of sprocket wheels 42 fixed on connecting hub 44. Hub 44 is secured to a sleeve 45 extending the distance of the dispensing section. Sleeve 45 is free on drive shaft 32 and serves to couple the sprockets 42 to the indexing mechanism as will be later described.

The stamps are fed from a supply roll through a chute member 46 having a tear plate 47 secured at its upper end for tearing off the strip of stamps dispensed. Chute member 46 is removably secured to frame plates 16 and 18 by fasteners 48 passing through openings at the top and bottom of its two flanged ends 50. Chute members 46' and 46" for the "dollars" and "tens of cents" sections are similarly secured between frame plates 18, 19 and 19, 17, respectively. The upper fastener 48' for supporting member 46" to frame plate 17, is elongated as shown in Fig. 2 to provide the necessary space for the indexing mechanism of that section.

As shown in Figs. 3 and 5, the flanged ends 50 of the chute members are cut away at 51 where the adjacent chute member would be secured to the same frame plate, in order to facilitate the removal of each chute member individually. Each chute member 46 is further formed with a pair of slots 52 through which the teeth of the sprocket wheels 42 project to engage sprocket holes in the stamp strip. A pressure plate 54 disposed at the back of each chute member urges the stamps against the sprocket wheels.

Returning to Fig. 3, the feeding sprocket wheels 42 are not driven directly by drive shaft 32 but are coupled thereto through a shoe clutch 55. Drive section 56 of the clutch is pinned to shaft 32, whereas the two clutch shoes 57 and 58 are each pivotally mounted on a stud

59 secured to one of the sprocket wheels 42. Each shoe is formed with a lug 60 to which one end of a coil spring 61 is fastened, the other end of the spring being secured to a pin 62 fixed to the same sprocket wheel 42. Springs 61 thereby urge clutch shoes 57 and 58 into engagement with clutch section 56 to frictionally couple the sprocket wheels 42 with drive shaft 32, this coupling being ineffective when the sprocket wheels are locked against rotation by the indexing mechanism to be described.

The indexing mechanism controls its respective feed sprockets 42 to terminate the operation of the latter when the number of stamps dispensed thereby corresponds to the amount indexed. As mentioned earlier, the amounts are introduced into the machine by indexing lever 8 for the "tens of dollars" section of Fig. 3 and by levers 6 and 7 for the other two sections. Lever 8 and an indexing arm to be described normally rest against a cross rod 69 extending through all three sections of the machine and are movable to a position representative of the amount to be indexed. This lever is formed with a bifurcated end 70 (Fig. 3a) opposite to the end projecting through the casing 2, and is also formed with an element or tooth 71 depending therefrom. As lever 8 is moved, tooth 71 is seatable in one of a plurality of notches 72 formed on an indexing wheel 73 freely mounted on sleeve 45. Pivoted to lever 8 by pin 74 is an indexing arm 75 having a stud 76 seated in the bifurcated end 70 of the lever 8. A light spring 77 fastened at one end to stud 76 and at its opposite end to a pin 78 carried by indexing lever 8 urges the latter lever and its depending tooth 71 to the position shown in Fig. 3, wherein it would normally be seated in a notch 72 of indexing wheel 73. Arm 75 is freely mounted on sleeve 45 and is urged to its normal position against cross rod 69 by a coil spring 80 fixed between the frame and a pin 81 carried by this arm.

Indexing lever 8 and its indexing arm 75 rest against cross rod 69 when in their normal or home position, with depending tooth seated in a notch of the indexing wheel 73. To index an amount, lever 8 is moved upwardly to the position representative of that amount. The early initial movement of lever 8 causes the latter to pivot on pin 74 thereby withdrawing tooth 71 from the notch 72 in which it is seated. For this purpose, lever 8 is slightly spaced from cross rod 69 when in its normal position, with its arm 75 resting against the cross rod. (See Fig. 5.) Further movement of the lever causes its bifurcated end 70 to engage stud 76 of arm 75 thereby carrying the latter arm along with lever 8. (This is more clearly shown in Fig. 5 illustrating the "dollars" section, similar elements being correspondingly numbered in this section but with a "prime" symbol to distinguish the two sections.) Tooth 71, being free of the notches 72, is moved by its lever 8 along the circumference of the notched wheel 73 and, upon release of the lever at the proper position, is seated in a corresponding notch 72 by spring 77.

The circumferential surface of the indexing wheel 73 may be sloped between its notches to guide tooth 71 into the proper notch. If the wrong amount is indexed, lever 8 may be raised slightly to withdraw tooth 71 and then moved upwardly or downwardly to the correct position.

A driving connection is provided between the feeding sprocket wheels 42 and the indexing mechanism to return the latter to its normal or home position as the sprocket wheels are operating. This connection includes the sleeve 45 fixed at one end to hub 44 of the sprocket wheels and extending through the dispensing section free on shaft 32. The other end of sleeve 45 is secured to a gear 85 of a speed-reduction transmission, this gear also being free on drive shaft 32. Gear 85 meshes with a transfer gear 86 fixed to a stub shaft 87 carrying a transfer pinion 88. The latter meshes with another gear 89 free on sleeve 45 but connected to the indexing wheel

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73 by a hub 90. It will thus be seen that as sprocket wheels 42 are rotated counter-clockwise to feed the stamp strip  $S_3$ , the indexing wheel 73 is driven also counter-clockwise through sleeve 45 and gearing 85-89. Since tooth 71 of indexing lever 8 is seated in one of the notches 72 of indexing wheel 73, lever 8 is thereby returned in the direction of its normal or home position until it limits against cross rod 69 locking the indexing wheel against further rotation. Also, since the sprocket wheels 42 are rigidly coupled to the indexing wheel, through the drive-connection above described, the sprocket wheels are also locked against further rotation thus causing slipping at its clutch 55 if the drive motor 25 is still operating.

In the described machine, the indexing wheel 73 is driven by the sprocket wheels 42 at a lesser speed than the latter is rotated. This is to enable the sprocket wheels to be driven a larger rotational movement than the indexing wheel, in order to permit the dispensing of a large number of stamps controlled by a relatively small movement of indexing lever 8. In the design illustrated in Fig. 3 for the "tens of dollars" dispensing section, indexing wheel 73 is notched at increments of  $15^\circ$  along its circumference (for the sake of uniformity with the other dispensing sections as will be described), and the foot 71 of indexing lever 8 is seatable in every third notch of the wheel for each ten dollars increment. Thus, the indexing wheel would be moved merely  $135^\circ$  to dispense its capacity of \$30.00 worth of stamps, i.e. 300 stamps. In this design, the ratio of the speed of the sprocket wheels 42 to that of the indexing wheel 73 is 10:1 as determined by the transmission ratio of gearing 85-89, so that the sprocket wheels would be driven  $1350^\circ$ , i.e.  $3\frac{3}{4}$  complete revolutions, to dispense the corresponding number (300) of stamps.

The machine also includes a counter 92 to register the number of stamps dispensed by each section individually. The counter may be driven from gear 85 of the drive connection between the sprocket wheels 42 and the indexing wheel 73, gear 85 meshing with an idler gear 93 coupled to another gear 94 of the counter mechanism. The latter gear 94 carries a star wheel 95 coupled by a roller 96 on a reset wheel 97, the latter wheel being fixed to the counter 92. The roller 96 is urged, by a spring 98 fastened to its roller arm 99, to be seated in the star wheel 95. Accordingly, as counter gear 94 is driven by the drive connection to the indexing mechanism, the counter 92 will register the amount of movement and thereby the number of stamps dispensed. Reset wheel 97 may be manually rotated in the opposite direction to reset the counter, roller 96 riding over the star wheel 95 during resetting, as gear 94 would then be locked against rotation by the indexing mechanism.

The above-described feeding and indexing mechanisms are substantially duplicated in the "dollars" dispensing section illustrated in Fig. 5. In this section of Fig. 5, as indicated earlier, the same elements found in the "tens of dollars" section of Fig. 3 are correspondingly numbered but with a "prime" symbol to distinguish the elements of the two sections. As in the "tens of dollars" section of Fig. 3, the indexing wheel 73' of the "dollars" section is similarly notched every  $15^\circ$ , but the tooth 71' of indexing lever 7 is seatable in every notch 72' (rather than every third notch, in Fig. 3) of the indexing wheel for each dollar to be indexed. As mentioned earlier, Fig. 5 illustrates in full lines the indexing lever 7 in the position it occupies when it has been pivoted slightly with respect to indexing arm 75' on pin 74' at the early part of its indexing movement, to withdraw tooth 71' from the notches of the indexing wheel 73', this action being the same in all three sections.

The transmission, in Fig. 5, of the driving connection between the sprocket wheels 42' and the indexing wheel 73', is ratioed to drive the latter also at a reduced speed, as in the dispensing section of Fig. 3. How-

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ever, in Fig. 5 the transmission ratio is such to return it at a faster speed than that of Fig. 3, as the amount of rotational movement of its sprocket wheels 42' to dispense the capacity of that section (90 stamps) is less than that of the "tens of dollars" section of Fig. 3. The ratio of the speed of sprocket wheels 42' to the indexing wheel 73', in Fig. 5, may be 3:1, and may be conveniently provided by suitably designing the transmission ratios of speed reduction gearing 85'-89'. Accordingly, in order to dispense the capacity of stamps (90) in the "dollars" section, the indexing lever 7 is moved  $135^\circ$  along its indexing wheel and the feeding sprocket wheels are driven  $405^\circ$ , i.e.  $1\frac{1}{2}$  complete revolutions.

The "dollars" dispensing section also contains a counter (not shown) for registering the number of stamps dispensed, this counter being driven by speed-reduction gearing 85'-89' and is coupled to gear 85' through idler gear 93' and counter gear 94', as in the arrangement of Fig. 3.

The "tens of cents" dispensing section is illustrated in Fig. 6 and contains the similar feeding, indexing and counter mechanisms as in the previously-described two dispensing sections. The same elements in Fig. 6 are correspondingly numbered as in Figs. 3 and 5 but carry a "double-prime" symbol to distinguish the different sections.

Fig. 6 illustrates in dotted lines the indexing lever 6 for that particular section in its ten positions, from 0 to 9, designating the indexed amounts in increments of ten cents each, up to ninety cents. As shown in Fig. 6, the zero or normal position of the indexing lever 6 is against cross rod 69.

Since the stamps in the "tens of cents" section are dispensed from a single-stamp width strip  $S_1$ , only one sprocket wheel 42'' is necessary in the feeding section (see Fig. 2). As in the other two sections, indexing wheel 73'' of the "tens of cents" section is also notched every  $15^\circ$ , but the tooth 71'' of indexing lever 6 is seatable in every notch for each indexing increment (as in Fig. 5). Also in Fig. 6, the driving connection between the sprocket wheel 42'' and the indexing wheel 73'' drives the latter at a speed less than that of the sprocket wheel, as in Figs. 3 and 5. However, in this section, the speed of return of the indexing mechanism is greater than the other two sections and may be designed for a 3:2 transmission ratio between the sprocket speed and indexing wheel speed, by the gearing 85''-89''. Accordingly, to dispense the capacity of the "tens of cents" section, which is nine stamps corresponding to sales from \$.90 to \$.99, indexing lever 6 is moved also  $135^\circ$  along the circumference of its indexing wheel, and the feeding sprocket wheel 42'' would be rotated  $202\frac{1}{2}^\circ$ , i.e.  $\frac{9}{16}$  of a complete revolution.

The dispensing section of Fig. 6 also contains a counter (not illustrated) registering the number of stamps dispensed thereby, this counter being coupled to gear 85'' through idler gear 93'' and counter gear 94'', as in the sections of Figs. 3 and 5.

It will be appreciated that this arrangement for dispensing the stamps from single-stamp width and multiple-stamp width strips concurrently, including the different speed reduction transmissions for the indexing mechanisms of the three dispensing sections, permits the dispensing of from one to many hundreds of stamps in a minimum of time. The disclosed arrangement is such that most transactions will require only one or two cycles of the machine and in no instance will more than  $3\frac{3}{4}$  cycles be required. The disclosed arrangement also permits the construction of relatively small and compact machines having a capacity for dispensing a large number of stamps before refilling is required.

The means for controlling the motor 25 which drives all three dispensing sections concurrently is shown in Fig. 4. This means includes an electric switch 100 controlling the circuit to the motor which switch is

closed upon depression of key 15. A switch-actuator slide 101 is secured to the key 15 and is formed with a pair of elongated slots 102 engaged in a pair of studs 103 projecting from the frame. The lower end of the slide is provided with a roller 104 which actuates the switch when key 15 is depressed and the slide is moved to its lower position. Accordingly, upon depression of key 15, switch 100 is closed to initiate cycling of the drive motor 25. Slide 101 is also provided with a stud 105 to which is secured one end of a coil spring 106, the opposite end of the spring being fastened to the frame. Spring 106 thereby urges slide 101 to the upper, switch-opening, position when key 15 is released. Further means are provided, as will be described below, to retain switch 100 closed when key 15 is released until all the sections have dispensed the proper number of stamps indexed in the indexing mechanisms.

The machine also includes means for locking all the dispensing sections against rotation when the machine is not cycling. This means includes a bail 110 for each section fixedly secured to a shaft 111 (see Figs. 3 and 4). Shaft 111 extends through all three sections of the machine and is fixedly secured at one end to one end of a link 112 (Fig. 4). The opposite end of this link is formed with an elongated slot 113 in which is seated stud 105 of switch actuator 101. Bails 110 carried by shaft 111 cooperate with the indexing mechanisms of their respective dispensing sections and are each seatable in a notch of its indexing wheels 73, 73' and 73". All the bails 110 would be so seated, as shown in Fig. 3, to lock all the dispensing sections when the actuator slide 101 is in its upper, switch-opening position under the influence of spring 106. Upon the lowering of this slide when switch 100 is actuated to cycle the motor, link 112 is rocked (clockwise as viewed in Fig. 4) to similarly rock shaft 111 to unseat all the bails 110 from all the indexing wheels, thereby freeing the dispensing sections to be driven by the motor. The structure so far described would also permit the switch to open, by spring 106 acting on the slide 101, as soon as the key 15 is released.

However, the machine also includes further means controlled by the indexing mechanisms to maintain switch 100 closed while amounts are still indexed, and to open the switch when all the indexing mechanisms have been normalized, thereby terminating the operation of the motor drive. For this purpose, each of the dispensing sections is provided with a latch member 115 (Fig. 3) in the form of a bell crank freely mounted on sleeve 45. One arm of the latch 115 is provided with a notched end 116 normally disposed in the path of its respective bail 110 by a spring 117 secured to its other arm and to the machine frame. In addition, indexing arm 75 in the indexing mechanisms of each of the three sections is provided with a stud 118 engageable with arm 116 of the latch 115 to maintain the latter out of the path of bail 110 when indexing arm 75 and its indexing lever 8 are in their normal home positions. Accordingly, when an amount is not indexed in a dispensing section, stud 118 prevents latch 115 from engaging bail 110 to lock the indexing mechanism of that particular section. However, when indexing lever 8 is moved to any position, other than its normal home position, for indexing an amount, latch 115 is urged by spring 117 to move its notched end 116 into the path of bail 110, and when the latter is unseated from the index wheel 73 upon depression of the motor-key 15 as described above, the notched end 116 of the latch will retain the bail in its unlocking position. It will also be apparent that as the indexing mechanism is returned to its normal position upon operation of its feeding sprocket wheels 42, stud 118 of indexing arm 75 will once again engage latch 115 to move its notched end 116 out of the path of bail 110, releasing the latter to move under influence of spring 106 to its locking position again seated in the notched wheel of its respective indexing mechanism.

As each of the dispensing sections is provided with its own latch 115 controlled by its respective indexing mechanism, it will also be appreciated that bails 110, all being fixed on shaft 111, will not be permitted to lock any of the indexing wheels, nor to open the motor switch 100, until all the latches have been moved by the return of all the indexing mechanisms to their normal home position, thereby permitting shaft 110 to be rocked by spring 106 to raise actuator slide 101. Upon the return of the last indexing mechanism, the motor drive will be automatically terminated and the dispensing sections will be automatically locked.

The invention has been described as embodied in a machine for dispensing predetermined numbers of stamps from a plurality of strips, which is presently considered to be a preferred embodiment. However, it will be appreciated that the invention could be utilized in other forms of machines for dispensing predetermined amounts of strip material. Also, while the invention has been disclosed as a separate self-contained unit, it will be appreciated that its features could be incorporated in existing machines such as cash registers. In addition, the machine could be manually-driven rather than motor-driven as disclosed. Other applications, variations and modifications will be apparent to those skilled in the art coming within the scope of the invention as defined in the following claims.

What is claimed is:

1. Apparatus for dispensing stamps and the like comprising first means for feeding a strip of stamps of single-stamp width, second means for feeding a strip of stamps of multiple-stamp width, a settable indexing mechanism graduated in amount increments for controlling said first feeding means to dispense a length of the strip of single-stamp width corresponding to the number of stamps representative of the amount therein indexed, a settable indexing mechanism graduated in larger-value amount increments for controlling said second feeding means to dispense a length of the strip of multiple-stamp width corresponding to the number of stamps representative of the amount therein indexed, means for driving both said feeding means concurrently, means for returning the indexing mechanism of the first feeding means, means for returning the indexing mechanism of the second feeding means at a speed less than that of the first feeding means, and means controlled by each of said indexing mechanisms when returned to its normal position for terminating operation of its respective feeding means.

2. Apparatus for dispensing stamps and the like comprising a plurality of rotary means each engageable with a continuous strip of stamps for individually feeding same, an indexing mechanism for each of said feeding means including a movable member settable from its normal position for indexing an amount representative of the number of stamps to be dispensed by its respective feeding means, means for driving all said feeding means concurrently and at the same speed, a driving connection between each of said feeding means and its respective indexing mechanism for returning the movable member to its normal position as its feeding means is in operation, said driving connection including speed-reduction gearing to return its respective movable member at a lesser speed than its feeding means, the transmission ratios of said gearing for all said connections being different to return the movable members at different speeds, means controlled by each movable member when returned to its normal position for terminating operation of its respective feeding means, and means controlled by said movable members when all are returned to their normal positions for terminating operation of said drive.

3. Apparatus for dispensing stamps and the like comprising first rotary means engageable with a continuous strip of stamps of single-stamp width for feeding same, second rotary means engageable with a continuous strip

of stamps of multiple-stamp width for feeding same, an indexing mechanism for each of said feeding means including a movable member settable from its normal position for indexing an amount representative of the number of stamps to be dispensed by its respective feeding means, means for driving both said feeding means concurrently and at the same speed, a driving connection including speed-reduction means between each of said feeding means and its respective indexing mechanism for returning its movable member to its normal position at a reduced speed as its feeding means is in operation, the speed-reduction transmission ratio of said driving connection of the first feeding means being lower than that of the second feeding means to return its movable member at a greater speed than that of the first, and means controlled by each movable member when returned to its normal position for terminating operation of its respective feeding means.

4. Apparatus for dispensing stamps and the like comprising a plurality of rotary means each engageable with a continuous strip of stamps for individually feeding same, drive means therefor, an indexing mechanism for each of said feeding means including a settable member and an indexing wheel having a plurality of notches, said member being movable along the circumference of the wheel from a normal position and having an element seatable in one of the notches for indexing an amount corresponding to the number of stamps to be dispensed by its respective feeding means, a driving connection between each of said feeding means and its respective indexing wheel for returning the movable member to its normal position as its feeding means is in operation, a limit engageable by each movable member when returned to its normal position for terminating operation of its respective feeding means, and means controlled by said movable members when all are returned to their normal positions for terminating operation of said drive.

5. Apparatus for dispensing stamps and the like comprising first rotary means engageable with a continuous strip of stamps of single-stamp width for feeding same, second rotary means engageable with a continuous strip of stamps of multiple-stamp width for feeding same, an indexing mechanism for each of said feeding means including a movable member settable from its normal position for indexing an amount representative of the number of stamps to be dispensed by its respective feeding means, means for driving both said feeding means concurrently and at the same speed, a driving connection including speed-reduction means between each of said feeding means and its respective indexing mechanism for returning its movable member to its normal position at a reduced speed as its feeding means is in operation, the speed-reduction transmission ratio of said driving connection of the first feeding means being lower than that of the second feeding means to return its movable member at a greater speed than that of the second, means controlled by each movable member when returned to its normal position for terminating operation of its respective feeding means, and means controlled by said movable members when all are returned to their normal positions for terminating operation of said drive.

6. Apparatus as defined in claim 5 including individual counters actuated by each of the driving connections for registering the amount of movement thereof which is representative of the number of stamps dispensed by its respective feeding means.

7. Apparatus for dispensing stamps and the like comprising a plurality of rotary means each engageable with a continuous strip of stamps for individually feeding same, an electric motor drive therefor including a control switch, an indexing mechanism for each of said feeding means including a settable member and an indexing wheel having a plurality of notches, said member being movable from a normal position and having an element seatable in one of the notches for indexing an

amount corresponding to the number of stamps to be dispensed by its respective feeding means, means for closing said switch to initiate operation of said drive, a driving connection between each of said feeding means and its respective indexing wheel for returning the movable member to its normal position as its feeding means is in operation, means controlled by each movable member when returned to its normal position for terminating operation of its respective feeding means, a bail seatable in a notch of all the indexing wheels for opening said switch to terminate operation of said drive and for locking said indexing wheels against rotation, and means controlled by said movable members when all are returned to their normal positions for seating said bail in a notch of all of said indexing wheels.

8. Apparatus for dispensing a predetermined amount of strip material comprising rotary means engageable with a continuous strip of the material for feeding same, drive means therefor, an indexing mechanism for said feeding means including an indexing wheel having a plurality of notches formed about its circumference, an indexing lever settable from a normal position, said indexing lever having an element movable along the circumference of the indexing wheel and seatable in one of the notches for indexing an amount corresponding to the predetermined amount of material to be dispensed by the feeding means, a driving connection between said feeding means and the indexing mechanism for rotating said indexing wheel during operation of said feeding means in a direction to return the indexing lever to its normal position as the feeding means is in operation, said driving connection including speed-reduction means to rotate the indexing wheel at a speed less than the rotational speed of the feeding means, and a limit engageable by the indexing lever when returned to its normal position for terminating operation of the feeding means.

9. Apparatus of the character described for dispensing a predetermined amount of strip material comprising means for feeding the strip material including a drive therefor, indexing mechanism comprising a settable member and an indexing wheel having a plurality of equally spaced notches about its circumference, said member being movable along the circumference of the indexing wheel from a normal position and having an element seatable in one of the notches for indexing an amount corresponding to the predetermined amount of material to be dispensed, a driving connection between said feeding means and said indexing wheel for rotating said indexing wheel during operation of said feeding means in a direction to return the movable member to its normal position as the feeding means is in operation, and means including a limit engageable by the movable member for terminating operation of the feeding means when the movable member has been returned to its normal position.

10. Apparatus of the character described for dispensing a predetermined amount of strip material, comprising rotary means engageable with the strip material for feeding same, drive means therefor including a slip clutch, indexing mechanism including a movable member and an indexing wheel having a plurality of notches, said member being manually settable from its normal position for indexing an amount corresponding to the predetermined amount of material to be dispensed and having an element seatable in one of the notches for representing that amount, a driving connection between said rotary feeding means and said indexing wheel for returning the movable member to its normal position as the feeding means is in operation, and a limit engageable by the movable member when the latter has been returned to its normal position for blocking the indexing wheel and the feeding means against rotation thereby causing the feeding means to slip on its clutch to terminate its operation while the drive is still operating.

11. Apparatus of the character described for dispensing

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ing a predetermined amount of strip material comprising rotary means engageable with the strip material for feeding same, an electric motor drive therefor, indexing mechanism including a manually movable member and an indexing wheel having a plurality of notches, said member being settable from its normal position for indexing an amount corresponding to the predetermined amount of material to be dispensed and having an element seatable in one of the notches in the indexing wheel for representing that amount, a driving connection between said rotary feeding means and said indexing mechanism for returning the movable member to its normal position as the feeding means is in operation, a limit engageable by the movable member when the latter has been returned to its normal position for terminating operation of the

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feeding means, a second element seatable in a notch of the indexing wheel when the movable member is in its normal position for locking the indexing wheel against rotation, and an electric motor switch controlled by said second element when seated in a notch of the indexing wheel for opening the circuit to the motor.

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