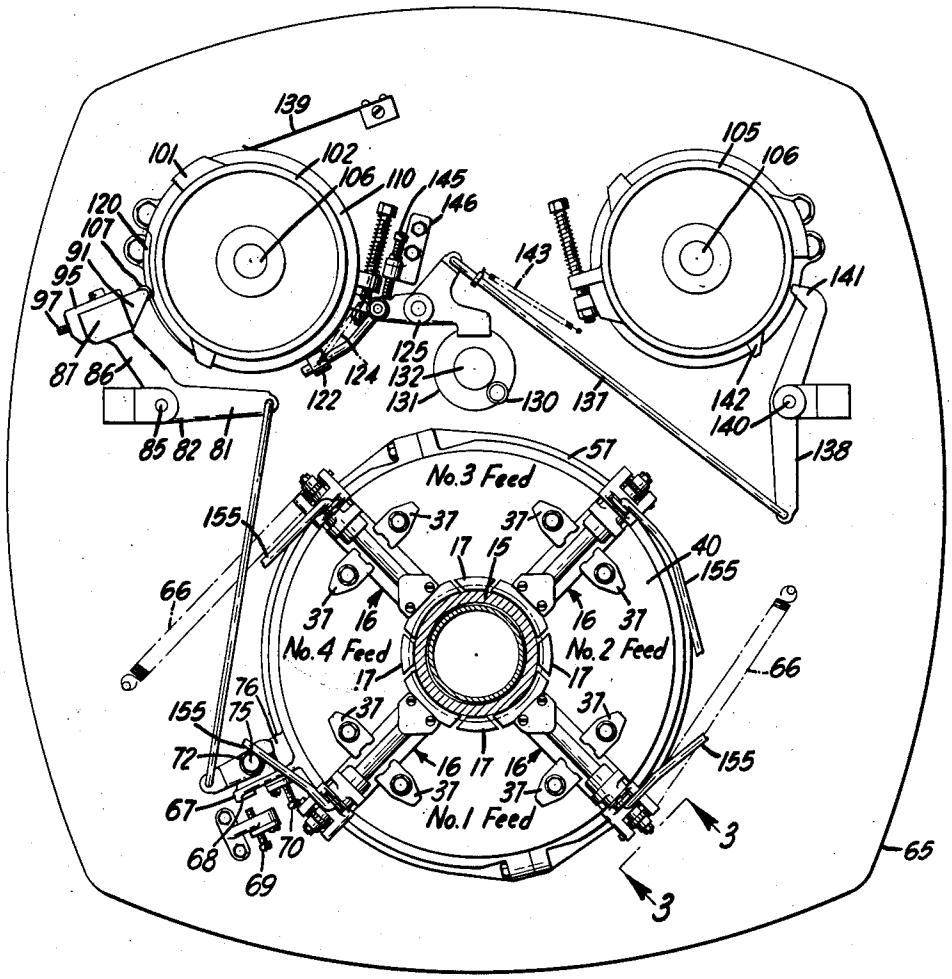
Feb. 5, 1963 B. F. COILE 3,076,327

STITCH LENGTH CONTROL FOR CIRCULAR KNITTING MACHINES

Filed July 15, 1960 4 Sheets-Sheet 1

Fig. 1



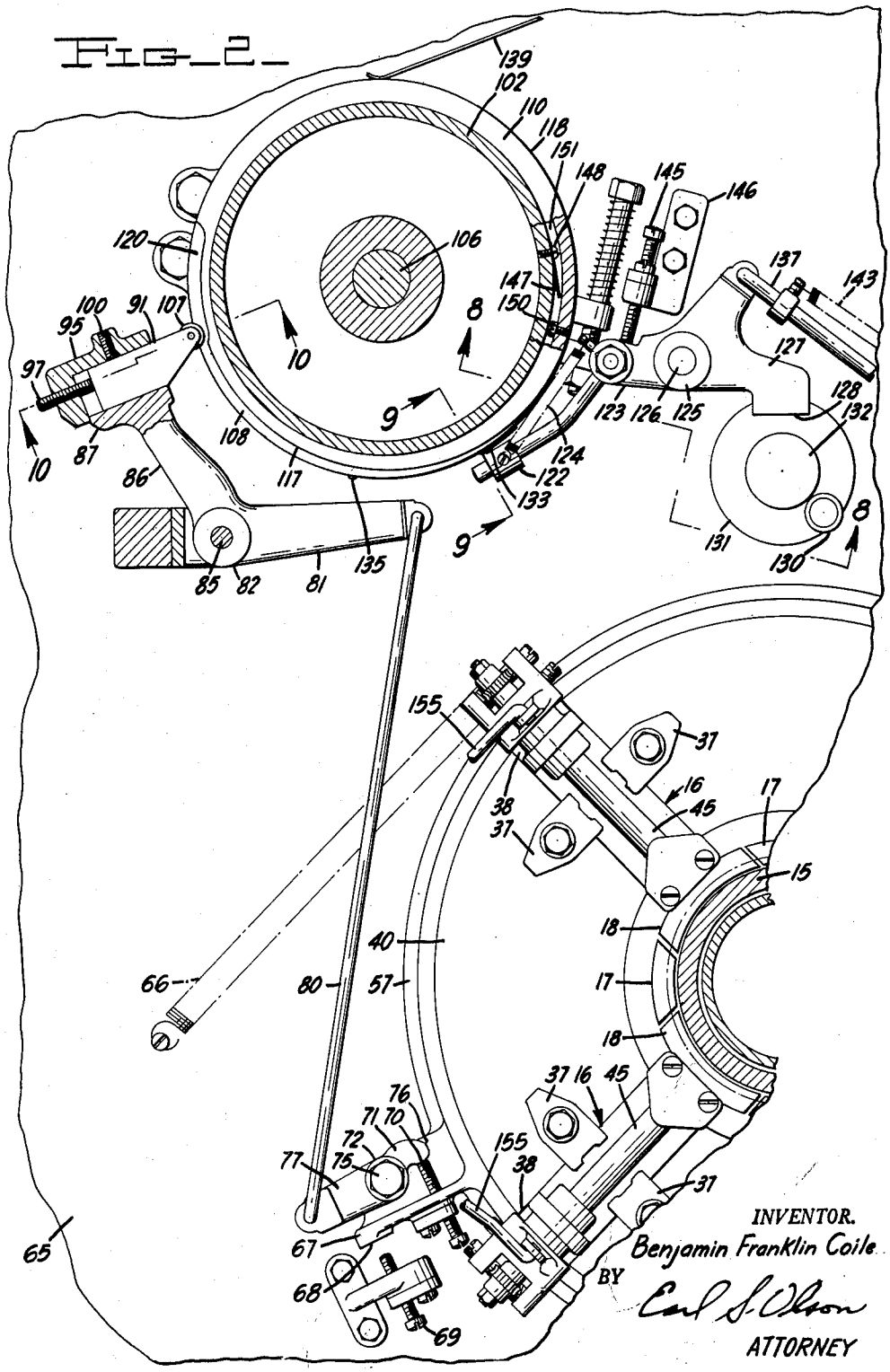
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STITCH LENGTH CONTROL FOR CIRCULAR KNITTING MACHINES

Filed July 15, 1960 4 Sheets-Sheet 2

FIG. 2



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STITCH LENGTH CONTROL FOR CIRCULAR KNITTING MACHINES

Filed July 15, 1960 4 Sheets-Sheet 3

FIG. 3

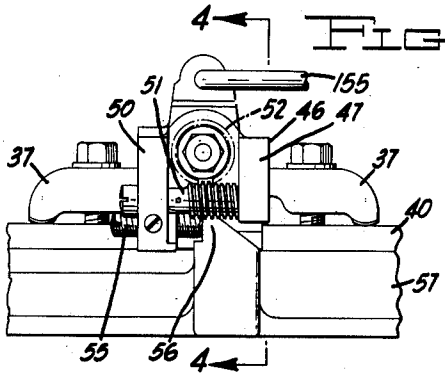


FIG. 5

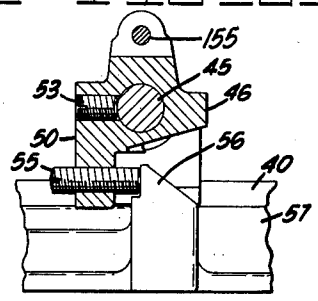


FIG. 4

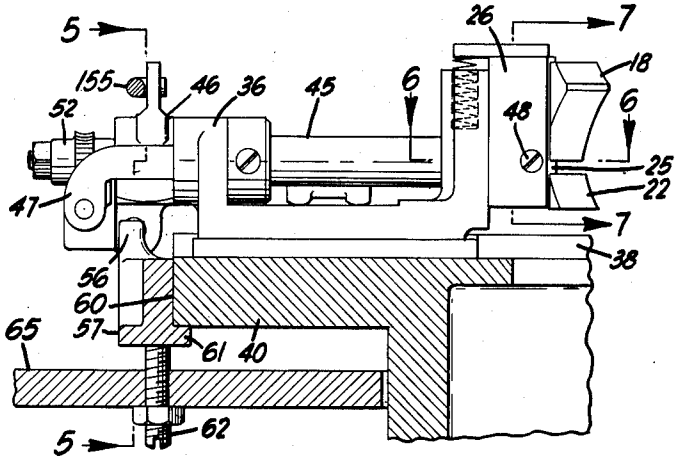


FIG. 6

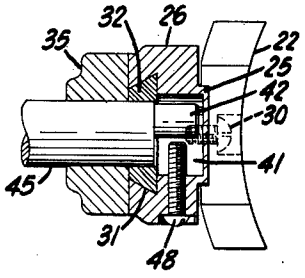
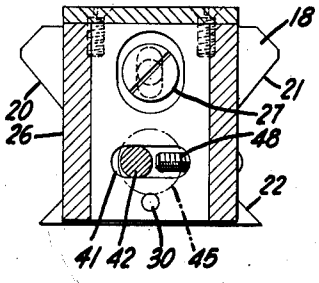


FIG. 7



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STITCH LENGTH CONTROL FOR CIRCULAR KNITTING MACHINES

Filed July 15, 1960 4 Sheets-Sheet 4

Fig. 8

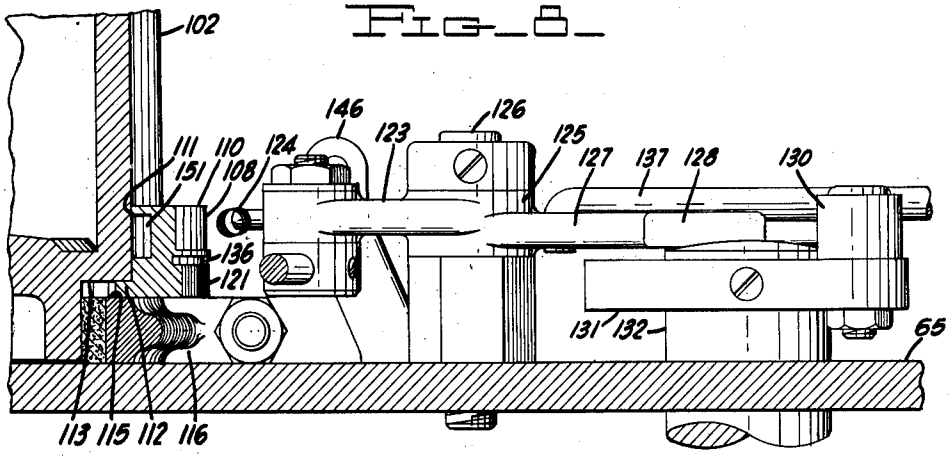


Fig. 9

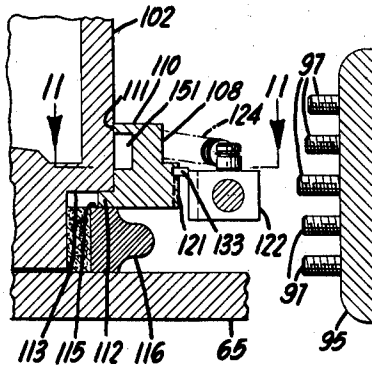


Fig. 10

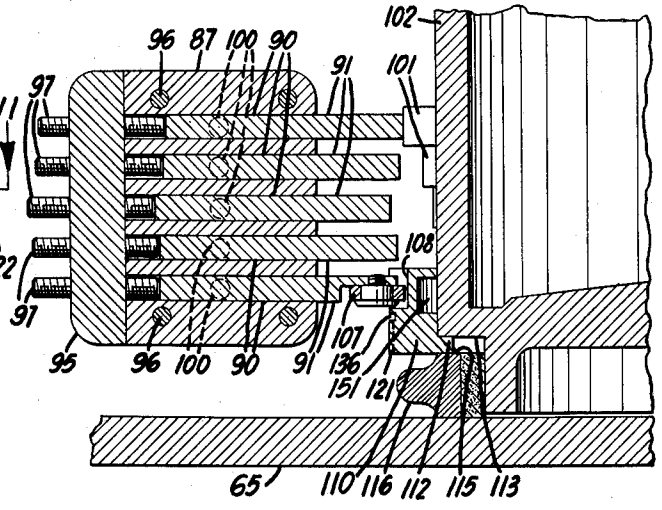
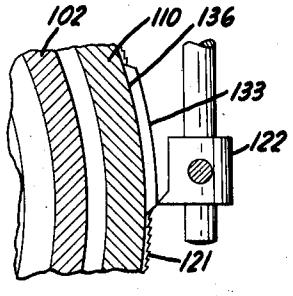


Fig. 11



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3,076,327

STITCH LENGTH CONTROL FOR CIRCULAR KNITTING MACHINES

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Filed July 15, 1960, Ser. No. 43,142
11 Claims. (Cl. 66—54)

The instant invention relates to multifeed circular knitting machines and more particularly to the provision of means for simultaneously adjusting the vertical positions of the cam assemblies for the several feeds to obtain graduated stitch lengths throughout the knitting of a fabric section.

The invention is particularly applicable to machines of the general type of that of my co-pending application Serial No. 329,801, filed January 6, 1953 and corresponding British Patent No. 790,141. The machine herein disclosed is of the multifeed, specifically four-feed, type the needle operating mechanism comprising four cam block assemblies each assembly being adapted to be adjusted vertically as a unit to control stitch length. The adjustment of each cam block assembly is under the control of pattern means, namely, two pattern control drums each of which operates through cams, cam followers, and suitable linkage to adjust the position of the assemblies at one or more of the feeding stations whereby the stitch length to be drawn at each of the feeding and knitting stations is under individual pattern control.

In the present commercial embodiment of the machine of my said copending application the stitch control mechanism has been modified so that each cam block assembly is located intermediate the yarn feeding stations and each comprises a forward and reverse stitch cam for the stations to right and left of the assembly respectively. Also in lieu of the individual cam assembly control employing the pattern drum as disclosed in my said co-pending application common means under the control of one of the pattern drums is employed for adjusting the heights of all of the assemblies simultaneously. The mechanism above referred to is disclosed for example in the booklet entitled "The Reading CK–A Circular Knitting Machine" issue of August 1957 published by Textile Machine Works of Reading, Pennsylvania, the assignee of my said co-pending application, a copy of which is available in Division 21 of the Patent Office. The common adjusting mechanism includes a ring surrounding the cam block assemblies and so related and connected thereto that shogging or oscillation of the ring in one direction raises and in the other direction lowers all of the cam assemblies simultaneously. Shogging of the ring is effected by the movement of a pattern lug on one of the control drums beneath a follower member which through suitable linkage imparts a shogging or oscillating movement to the ring. Inasmuch as the pattern control drum has but a relatively few moves, suitably 24, during the entire cycle of knitting a garment such as a sock, and such shogging movements of the drum are required to control various of the machine operations, only relatively few drum moves are available for stitch length control with the result that the adjustment of the cam assemblies can be made only at relatively wide intervals.

The instant invention has for its principal object the provision of means for incorporation in a circular knitting machine of the type described above of means for securing more frequent changes in stitch length. Thus an object of the invention is the incorporation in such a machine of means for varying the stitch length in successive courses or small groups of successive courses knit at each feed.

A further object of the invention is the provision of a

stitch length control mechanism particularly adapted for machines generally of the type of my said co-pending application but including a common adjustment means for the several cam assemblies the mechanism including a pattern cam track and cooperating follower means, with means in part under the control of the main pattern drum or drums to cause relative movement between the cam track and the follower means during any desired interval of knitting.

Briefly stated my invention resides in a stitch control mechanism employing a cam ring mounted for rotation relatively to a main pattern drum of the machine, and continuously operating means to actuate a pawl to rotate the cam ring past a follower, the periods of actuation of said pawl by said continuously operating means being in part under the control of one or more of the pattern drums and in part controlled by the position of pawl blanking means associated with the cam ring. The follower operates through known mechanism to simultaneously adjust the elevations of the several cam assemblies.

My invention will be more fully understood and further objects and advantages thereof will become apparent when reference is made to the more detailed description thereof which is to follow and to the accompanying drawings in which:

FIGURE 1 is a plan view of the upperdeck of a multifeed circular knitting machine embodying the instant invention;

FIG. 2 is a plan view on an enlarged scale of a portion of the machine shown in FIG. 1;

FIG. 3 is an elevational view on an enlarged scale of a stitch cam assembly viewed in the direction of the arrows **3—3** of FIG. 1;

FIG. 4 is a sectional view taken on a line **4—4** of FIG. 3;

FIG. 5 is a sectional view taken on a line **5—5** of FIG. 4;

FIG. 6 is a sectional view taken on a line **6—6** of FIG. 4;

FIG. 7 is a sectional view taken on a line **7—7** of FIG. 4;

FIG. 8 is a sectional view on an enlarged scale taken on the line **8—8** of FIG. 2 and looking in the direction indicated by the arrows;

FIG. 9 is a sectional view on an enlarged scale taken on the line **9—9** of FIG. 2 looking in the direction indicated by the arrows;

FIG. 10 is a sectional view on an enlarged scale taken on the line **10—10** of FIG. 2 looking in the direction indicated by the arrows; and

FIG. 11 is a sectional view taken on the line **11—11** of FIG. 9 looking in the direction indicated by the arrows.

In the following description and in the drawings the invention is illustrated as incorporated in a four-feed knitting machine generally of the type of my said co-pending application Serial No. 329,801 to which reference may be made for information as to the general construction and operation of the machine. However it will be understood that my invention is not to be considered as limited in use to the machine of my said co-pending application as it may be employed in other knitting machines presenting similar opportunities for needle cam control.

Referring now to the drawings and particularly to FIGS. 1, 2 and 3 there is shown a portion of a knitting machine including a needle cylinder **15** carrying conventional needles (not shown) for movement through knitting cycles adjacent each of the four feeding stations indicated by the legends No. 1 feed, No. 2 feed, No. 3 feed and No. 4 feed, respectively. In the machine of the instant invention as well as the commercial machine previously described the movements of the needles in performing their knitting function is imparted thereto by cam means in-

cluding stitch cam block assemblies **16**, one such assembly being located intermediate adjacent feeding stations and center cams **17**, one of which is carried in fixed position on the machine between each pair of cam block assemblies. Each of the assemblies **16** (FIGS. 5, 6 and 7) include certain of the cams required for the operation of the needles at the adjacent feeds. Thus for example the assembly **16** located between Nos. 1 and 2 feeds and hereinafter referred to as the assembly at feed No. 1, includes a cam **18** having a stitch drawing surface **20** for operating the needles during rotary and forward reciprocatory strokes of the needle cylinder at No. 1 feed and a stitch drawing surface **21** for operating the needles during reverse reciprocatory strokes of the needle cylinder at No. 2 feed, and a guard cam **22**. Likewise, the cam **18** of each of the other assemblies **16** at feeds Nos. 2, 3 and 4 includes a forward stitch drawing surface for its own feed and a reverse stitch drawing surface for an adjacent feed.

The cams **18** and **22** of each assembly **16** are grooved to receive a portion **25** of a block **26** (FIGS. 4 and 6) and the cams are secured to the block by suitable means such as studs **27** and **30** (FIGS. 6 and 7). Block **26** is provided with a vertically extending dovetailed groove **31** for receiving a dovetailed extension **32** of an upright portion **35** of a bracket **36**. The bracket **36** of each assembly **16** is held in fixed adjusted position by clamps **37** (FIG. 1) in radially extending slots **38** formed in the upper surface of a table member **40** surrounding the needle cylinder and forming a part of the framework of the machine. Block **26** with the cams **18** and **22** is vertically adjustable on the upright portion **35** to vary the length of the stitches drawn by the needles. For this purpose block **26** is provided with a horizontally extending slot **41** for receiving one end **42** of a shaft **45** which is rotatably mounted in the bracket **36**, the center of the end **42** being offset or eccentric to the center of the shaft, as shown in FIGS. 6 and 7. A stop screw **48** carried in the block **26** acts to determine the initial position of the end **42** in the slot **41**. At its other end the shaft **45** carries a member **46** having projecting ears **47** and **50** which are adapted to rotatably support a worm **51** (FIGS. 3 and 4). The teeth of the worm **51** are in meshing engagement with the teeth of a worm wheel **52** secured in fixed position on the end of the shaft **45** for rotation therewith. The position of the member **46** on the shaft **45** is initially adjusted by turning the worm **51** and the member is then secured to the shaft by a set screw **53** (FIG. 5).

The shafts **45** of the assemblies **16** are adapted to be simultaneously rotated to adjust cams **18** and **22** to vary the stitch length formed thereby at each of the feeds Nos. 1 to 4. For this purpose the ear **50** of the member **46** associated with each shaft **45** adjustably carries a stop screw **55** for engagement with a vertically extending lug **56** of a ring member **57** (FIG. 5). Ring member **57** is provided with a central opening **60** for engaging the outer periphery of the table member **40** and an inwardly projecting flange portion **61** adapted to engage the underside of the table member, as shown in FIG. 4. The ring member is supported in such position for rotation relative to the table member **40** and the assemblies **16** by spaced studs, one of which is shown at **62**, adjustably carried in an upper plate **65** also forming a part of the framework of the machine. The ring member **57** is rotated in a counterclockwise direction, as viewed in FIGS. 1 and 2, by springs **66** connected between the ring member and a fixed part of the machine during which movement the stop screw **55** is caused to follow the lug **56**, by any suitable means (not shown), thereby rotating the shaft **45** counterclockwise, as viewed in FIG. 3, to lower the cams **18** and **22** to increase the length of the stitches. Likewise rotation of the ring member **57** in a clockwise direction acts through the stop screw **55** to turn the shaft **45** clockwise to raise the cams **18** and **22** to decrease the length of the stitches.

For rotating the ring member **57** clockwise, the ring member is provided with an L-shaped projection one wall **67** of which adjustably carries a stop screw **70** for engagement with one arm **71** of a lever **72**. Wall **67** is provided with an abutment portion **68** for contact with a stop screw **69** whereby to limit the extent of rotation of ring member **57** in a counterclockwise direction, and hence the maximum stitch length drawn may be adjustably determined. The lever **72** is pivotally mounted on a stud **75** secured in the other wall **76** of the projection. A second arm **77** of the lever **72** is connected by a link **80** to one arm **81** of a lever **82** mounted for pivotal movement on a pin **85** carried in an upright portion of the framework of the machine. A second arm **86** of the lever **82** is provided with an enlarged head portion **87** having slots **90** for receiving follower members **91** (FIGS. 2 and 10). The follower members **91** are retained in the slots **90** by a cover member **95** which is secured to the head portion **87** by screws **96**. Each follower member **91** is adjustable in its associated slot **90** by means of an adjusting screw **97** threadably carried in the cover member **95** and the follower member is retained in such adjusted position by a set screw **100** (FIG. 2). The upper four follower members **91** are adapted to engage circumferential rows of cam lugs **101** on a left pattern drum **102** and, except as hereinafter set forth, one or another of the four follower members is always in engagement with the particular row of cam lugs associated therewith to control the length of the stitches being formed in the various parts of a stocking fabric. The left pattern drum **102** and a corresponding right pattern drum **105** are mounted on vertical shafts **106** and the drums are constructed and operated the same as set forth in said application Serial No. 329,801.

In accordance with the instant invention the ring member **57** is also moved clockwise to progressively adjust the cam block assemblies **16** to gradually reduce the length of the fabric stitches as for example in the calf portion of the stocking. For this purpose the lower member **91** rotatably carries a roller **107** which is adapted to ride on a cam track **108** formed on a ring **110**. The ring **110** is mounted on the drum **102** to permit its rotation relatively thereto and for this purpose is provided with a bore **111** having an inner periphery engaging the outer periphery of the drum **102**. Axial movement of the ring relative to the drum is prevented by a flange **112** which projects inwardly from the bore between a lower surface **113** formed on the drum and an upper surface **115** of a braking device **116** for the drum as shown in FIG. 10. Preferably the cam track **108** has a gradual rise portion **117** which acts to turn the ring member **57** clockwise to gradually decrease the length of the stitches from the upper portion of the leg of the stocking to the ankle portion thereof, a concentric portion **118** which controls the length of the stitches in the ankle portion and a low portion **120** (FIG. 2). It is to be understood, however, that the configuration of the cam track **108** to gradually decrease the length of the stitches, as above described, is only representative of one form that may be employed and the cam track may include camming portions to both gradually decrease and increase the length of the stitches as desired.

The ring **110** is adapted to be independently rotated relative to the pattern drum **102** and at times is also rotated by the pattern drum. For rotating the ring **110** relative to the pattern drum the ring is provided with spaced teeth **121** which are adapted to be engaged by a pawl **122** pivotally mounted on one arm **123** of a lever **125**. A spring **124** connected between the pawl **122** and arm **123** biases the pawl toward engagement with the teeth **121**. The lever **125** is pivotally mounted on a pin **126** carried in the plate **65** (FIG. 8) and is provided with a second arm **127** having a follower surface **128** which is engaged by a roller **130** to turn the lever counterclockwise and advance the pawl **122** from a stopped position, indicated in FIG. 2, to index the ring **110** a distance of one of the teeth **121**. The roller **130** is mounted on a collar **131** secured to a shaft **132** which is the so-called quarter turn

shaft of the machine and which makes one complete revolution for four revolutions of the needle cylinder. Thus, in the construction shown, the ring **110** is indexed one tooth for each four revolutions of the needle cylinder although it is to be understood that the indexing movements may occur at intervals of less than four cylinder rotations when desired by providing additional rollers **130** on the collar **131**. At times the pawl **122** is held out of indexing engagement with the teeth **121**, for purposes hereinafter set forth, by pawl blanking means comprising cam lugs **133** and **135** which are secured in an annular groove **136** formed in the outer periphery of the ring **110** intermediate the teeth and the cam surfaces thereof (FIGS. 2, 9 and 11). At such times, the pawl merely moves idly back and forth between the cam lug with which it is engaged and the last tooth indexed by the pawl and the ring **110** is held against rotation by a plate spring **139** which is mounted on the plate **65** for engagement with the teeth **121** in the ring.

In order to move the cam lug **135** out of engagement with the pawl to again permit it to advance the ring **110** the pawl is given a movement of greater than normal extent by a cam lever **138** which is connected to the lever **125** by a link **137**. The cam lever **138** is pivotally mounted on a pin **140** carried in a fixed part of the machine and is provided with a nose portion **141** for engagement with one or more cam lugs **142** on the right pattern drum **105**. A spring **143** connected between the link **137** and a fixed part of the machine acts to bias the link to turn the lever **125** clockwise to its stopped position against a stop screw **145** adjustably carried in a bracket **146** secured to the plate **65** (FIG. 1) and to turn the nose portion **141** of the lever **138** toward the pattern drum **105**. The ring **110** is adapted to be rotated with the pattern drum **102** also for the purpose of moving the cam lug **133** out of engagement with the pawl **122**, by engagement of a plate member **147**, secured to the drum by a screw **148**, with a pin or stud **150** secured to the ring within an annular groove **151** formed in the inner bore **111** of the ring.

At the start of the stocking knitting cycle, the ring member **57** is positioned by engagement of one of the four upper follower members **91** with a cam lug **101** in its associated cam row on the pattern drum **102** to control the length of the stitches. Also at this time the pawl **122** is disengaged from the teeth **121** by the cam lug **133** and the ring **110** is stopped with the low portion **120** of the cam track **108** aligned with the roller **107** on the lower follower member **91**, as shown in FIG. 2. As the knitting of the stocking fabric progresses the pattern drum **102** is indexed relative to the ring **110** until the plate member **147** overtakes the pin **150** and the ring is then moved with the pattern drum to remove the cam lug **133** from beneath the pawl **122**, this action occurring at the point in the stocking fabric at which the length of the stitches is to be gradually reduced. The pawl **122** then operates to index the ring **110** and as the roller **107** rides up the gradual rise portion **117** of the cam track **108** ring member **57** is turned clockwise to gradually decrease the length of the stitches. As the pawl **122** continues to index the ring member **110** the roller **107** engages and rides along the concentric portion **118** of the cam track **108** to control the length of the stitches in the ankle portion of the stocking. As the end of the concentric portion **118** approaches the roller **107** the cam lug **135** is moved beneath the pawl **122** to disengage it from the teeth **121**, thereby stopping the ring member.

At the start of the heel of the stocking or shortly prior thereto, a cam lug **142** of drum **105** is moved to engage and operate the cam lever **138** to turn the lever **125** sufficiently counterclockwise as viewed in FIG. 2 to move the pawl beyond the cam lug **135** and advance the ring **110** to an extent that the cam lug is advanced to a position in which it is out from under the pawl in the normal operative position of the latter. Thereupon, as the lug **142** is moved from engagement with the cam lever **138**, the lever **125** is again returned to its stopped position of FIG. 2 in which position the lever and the pawl **122** are operated by the roller **130** to index the ring **110** to align the low portion **120** of the cam track **108** with the roller **107** on the lowermost follower member **91**. Also at this time a cam lug **101** on the pattern drum **102** is moved to engage one of the upper follower members **91** to position the ring member **57** and the appropriate cam **18** to control the length of the stitches in the heel of the stocking. The pawl **122** then continues to advance the ring until the cam lug **133** is moved to position to disengage the pawl **122** from the teeth **121** to idle the ring **110**.

In addition to the operation of the ring member **57** to simultaneously control the cam block assemblies **16** at the several feeds, as hereinbefore set forth, the assemblies are also adapted to be individually controlled by means including links **155** connected to the members **46** of the cam block assemblies and associated operating means substantially as shown in my said co-pending application. Inasmuch as these individual control mechanisms form no part of the instant invention and are not effective during the operation of the device of the invention no further description thereof will be given.

Having thus described my invention in rather full detail it will be understood that these details need not be strictly adhered to and that various changes and modifications may be made all falling within the scope of the invention as defined by the subjoined claims.

I claim:

1. In a multifeed circular knitting machine adapted to knit successive fabric courses and having a plurality of yarn feeding and knitting stations and a plurality of cam assemblies adjustable between raised and lowered positions to vary the lengths of the stitches drawn at said stations, a common control element for simultaneously adjusting the positions of said cam assemblies, and means for operating said common control element, the improvement comprising a second means under patttern control for operating said common control element during the knitting of a plurality of courses for gradually adjusting said cam assemblies between raised and lowered positions.

2. In a multifeed circular knitting machine adapted to knit successive fabric courses and having a plurality of yarn feeding and knitting stations and a plurality of cam assemblies to vary the length of stitches drawn at said stations, said cam assemblies being adjustable between raised and lowered positions to vary the length of stitches drawn at said stations, common means for simultaneously adjusting said cam assemblies, a rotatable pattern drum having cams thereon and a follower means for cooperation with said cams on said drum, for operating said common means, the improvement comprising graduated means movable at times independently of said pattern drum and cooperant with said follower means for operating said common means for gradually adjusting the position of said cam assemblies during the knitting of a plurality of courses.

3. In a multifeed circular knitting machine adapted to knit successive fabric courses and having a plurality of yarn feeding and knitting stations and a plurality of cam assemblies adjustable between raised and lowered positions to vary the lengths of the stitches drawn at said stations, and a common control element for simultaneously adjusting the positions of said cam assemblies, the improvement comprising means under pattern control for operating said common control element during the knitting of a plurality of courses for gradually adjusting said cam assemblies and a pattern means, said means under pattern control including a cam ring mounted for rotation, a cam ring advancing means con-

trolled in part by said pattern means, and a follower for said cam ring cooperating with said common control element.

4. In a multifeed circular knitting machine adapted to knit successive fabric courses and having a plurality of yarn feeding and knitting stations and a plurality of cam assemblies adjustable between raised and lowered positions to vary the length of stitches drawn at said stations, a rotatable pattern drum having cams thereon and a follower means for cooperation with said cams on said drum, the improvement comprising graduated means movable at times independently of said pattern drum and cooperant with said follower means for gradually adjusting the position of said cam assemblies during the knitting of a plurality of courses, said graduated means comprising an arcuate cam mounted for rotation about a center common to said pattern drum and said follower means includes a follower element for cooperation with said arcuate cam.

5. A machine as defined in claim 4 having a second rotatable pattern drum and in which said graduated means comprises an arcuate cam mounted for rotation about a center common to said first mentioned pattern drum and said arcuate cam is rotated about said center in part under the control of said second pattern drum and said follower means includes a follower element for cooperation with said arcuate cam.

6. A machine as defined in claim 4 having a second rotatable pattern drum and a constantly rotating shaft and in which said improvement further includes an arcuate cam comprising said graduated means, means mounting said cam for rotation about a center common to said first mentioned pattern drum, a ratchet associated with said cam, a pawl for cooperation with said ratchet for advancement thereof, means operated by said constantly rotating shaft for driving said pawl through ratchet advancing movements at certain times, and means under the control of said second pattern drum for causing a ratchet advancing movement of said pawl at other times.

7. A machine as defined in claim 4 having a second rotatable pattern drum and in which said improvement further includes an arcuate cam comprising said graduated means, a ratchet associated with said cam, a pawl for cooperation with said ratchet for advancement thereof, means for driving said pawl through normal ratchet advancing movements, means associated with said ratchet for preventing cooperation between said ratchet and pawl at certain times during normal advancing movement of the pawl, and means under the control of said second pattern drum for imparting an abnormal ratchet advancing movement to said pawl.

8. A machine as defined in claim 4 having a second rotatable pattern drum and in which said improvement further includes an arcuate cam comprising said graduated means, a ratchet associated with said cam, a pawl for cooperation with said ratchet for advancement thereof, means for driving said pawl through normal ratchet advancing strokes, pawl blanking means associated with said ratchet at a certain location thereon to prevent cooperation of said pawl with said ratchet during normal advancing movements of said pawl and means under the control of said second pattern drum for imparting an abnormal ratchet advancing movement to said pawl.

9. A machine as defined in claim 4 having a second rotatable pattern drum and in which said improvement further includes an arcuate cam comprising said graduated means, a ratchet associated with said cam, a pawl for coopertion with said ratchet for advancement thereof, means for driving said pawl through normal ratchet advancing strokes, pawl blanking means associated with said ratchet at a certain location thereon to prevent cooperation of said pawl with said ratchet during normal advancing movements of said pawl and means comprising a pattern lug on said second pattern drum, a follower for contact by said lug and linkage between said follower and pawl for imparting an abnormal ratchet advancing movement to said pawl.

10. A machine as defined in claim 4 having a second rotatable pattern drum and in which said improvement further includes an arcuate cam comprising said graduated means and mounted concentrically of said first pattern drum and for rotation relative thereto, a ratchet associated with said cam, a pawl for cooperation with said ratchet for advancing movements thereof, means for driving said pawl through normal ratchet advancing strokes, a first pawl blanking means carried by said ratchet at a certain location thereon to engage said pawl and prevent cooperation thereof with said ratchet during normal advancing movements of said pawl at said locations, means associated with said first pattern drum for causing advancing movements of said ratchet at certain times to advance said first pawl blanking means out of engagement with said pawl.

11. A machine as defined in claim 10 in which said ratchet carries a second pawl blanking means and there is means under the control of said second pattern drum for imparting an abnormal ratchet advancing movement to said pawl to advance said second pawl blanking means out of engagement with said pawl in the normal operative position thereof.

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