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ABSTRACT OF DISCLOSURE

A gaming machine for use by a player comprises a variable display for displaying graphical information corresponding to at least one of a plurality of graphical elements necessary for a principal game; a controller coupled to said variable display for causing said variable display to display the graphical information; and a secondary display for displaying an image, the image displayed by the secondary display being necessary for playing a secondary game that is different from the principal game, said secondary display displaying the image when the playing of the principal game results in one of a plurality of predetermined principal game playing states. The secondary display indicates an image necessary for playing a secondary game when the playing of the principal game results in one of a plurality of predetermined principal game playing state. Consequently, a player can obtain a chance of the secondary game in addition to the principal game by the variable display. Besides, the images indicated by the secondary display shows a history recorded as to the predetermined state resulted by the variable display.

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COMPLETE SPECIFICATION

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INVENTION TITLE:

Gaming machine

The following statement is a full description of this invention, including the best method of performing it known to me/us:-

Background of the Invention

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

This invention relates generally to gaming machines, and more particularly to gaming machines such as a slot machine, a "Pachi-Slo", a video poker or the like that have a variable display for displaying image information representative of a plurality of symbols necessary for a game and a controller such as a microcomputer for controlling the variation action of the variable display.

DESCRIPTION OF THE RELATED ART

A gaming machine such as a slot machine or a "Pachi-Slo" usually has a mechanical variable display formed of rotatable display elements that are provided with a plurality of symbols disposed on peripheral surfaces thereof. The symbols are visible through a display window at the front of the slot machine. Alternatively, an electrical variable display is formed of indicating elements with symbols on a display screen. In response to a "start" operation by a player, a controller drives the variable display to start the rotation of each rotatable display element and to stop the rotation of each rotatable display element in a determined sequence automatically after a predetermined period of time has elapsed, or in response to initiation of a "stop" operation by the player. When the rotation of all of the rotatable display elements has ceased, there is shown a specific combination of symbols (winning pattern) in the display window. The player is then given an award by paying out gaming medium such as coins.

In a popular model of a slot machine, a "win" corresponding to a predetermined plurality of winning symbols being completely positioned on the winning line of the display when rotation of the rotatable display elements ceases occurs only when a win has been established by a system internal to the

gaming machine. In a practical machine, this happens when a sampling operation of a random number issued by a microcomputer has been determined to constitute a win.

However, because a result (i.e., win or loss) of the game is determined by an internal procedure of the gaming machine, skill of the player is not reflected to the game result and the game itself becomes monotonous. As the result, there is a problem that the player tends to loose his expectation to play next game and to tire of the game.

Under these circumstances, for dissolving the problem of the gaming machine mentioned above, there can be thought a gaming machine having a variable display additionally provided with a display such as a liquid crystal display or the like by which a secondary game different from the principal game by the reels is executed. For example, there has been known a virtual race game such that three kinds of special symbols are prepared for the principal game and three kinds of images corresponding to the three kind of special symbols, respectively, are prepared for the secondary game and at each time when one of the special symbols stands on a winning line, the image corresponding to the special symbol stood is moved on the liquid crystal display to compete moving rate (frequency of appearance) among these three kinds of the images and when one of the images reaches a predetermined position, a player can be obtain a profit.

In the known gaming machine, however, the secondary game proceeds simply when the special symbol stands on the winning line. In other words, the secondary game proceeds with no relation to the result of the principal game. Accordingly, when a player aims to win the principal game by the reels, the secondary game often proceeds largely without his recognition. As the result, the player can hardly obtain sense of unity between the principal game and the secondary game and hardly elevate his tension to the games.

AUSTRALIAN PATENT OFFICE

The reference to any prior art in this specification is not, and should not be taken as, an acknowledgment or any form of suggestion that that prior art forms part of the common general knowledge in Australia.

Summary of the Invention

An object of this invention is to provide a gaming machine such that a player can obtain a profit or award increased by a secondary game executed in addition to a principal game by a variable display for variably displaying a plurality of symbols necessary for a principal game, and the player can have a feeling of high tension to aim a win of the principal game and a feeling of expectation to coming game by the secondary game that proceeds corresponding to a predetermined state of the principal game, or to at least provide a useful alternative to the prior art.

According to this invention, there is provided a gaming machine for use by a player, the gaming machine including:

a variable display for displaying graphical information corresponding to at least one of a plurality of graphical elements necessary for a principal game;

a controller coupled to said variable display for causing said variable display to display the graphical information; and

a secondary display having a display area for displaying a plural number of a single kind of symbol images, the single kind of symbol image being associated with one of a plurality of predetermined display states displayed as a result of the principal game, the number of the single kind of symbol images displayed in the display area being increased each time when the principal game results in the one of the predetermined display states, thereby advancing a secondary game.

The present invention further provides a gaming machine for use by a player, the gaming machine including:

a variable display for displaying graphical information corresponding to at least one of a plurality of graphical elements necessary for a principal game;

a controller coupled to said variable display for causing said variable display to display the graphical information; and

AUSTRALIAN PATENT OFFICE

a secondary display having a plurality of display areas, each display area for displaying a plural number of an individual single kind of symbol images successively alongside each other, the individual single kind of symbol image being associated to individual one of a plurality of predetermined display states displayed as a result of the principal game, the number of the individual single kind of symbol images displayed in each display area being increased each time when the principal game results in said individual one of the predetermined display states, thereby advancing a secondary game.

The predetermined state includes, for example, predetermined stop display shown when variation action of the variable display is stopped, that is, a predetermined winning combination of symbols (winning pattern) of the principal game and a combination of symbols (pattern) predetermined so as to indicate a symbol image on the secondary display.

The controller controls variation action of the variable display in gaming time. The result of the game, that is, win or loss appears depending on the pattern shown at the time when the variation action has stopped. The secondary display executes indication necessary for secondary game that is different from the principal game performed by the variable display. The indication is appeared when the variation action of the variable display is stopped and the principal game results in any one of a predetermined state.

AUSTRALIAN PATENT OFFICE

Consequently, a player can obtain a chance of the secondary game in addition to the principal game by the variable display. Besides, the secondary display executes indication necessary for the secondary game when the principal game results in the predetermined state, so that the indication by the secondary display shows a history recorded as to the predetermined state resulted.

The secondary game preferably includes a game such that a player can obtain a profit when a plurality of predetermined images stand in a certain direction or at predetermined positions in the secondary display.

The secondary display may include electric displays such as liquid crystal, CRT, and LED, as well as mechanical displays having rotating display elements of structure as are used in conventional slot machines. The image displayed by the secondary display includes those indicated electrically such as various kinds of letters and figures, animations, light flashing on and off, and the like, as well as those drawn on a reel surface such as symbols or patterns.

In a preferred embodiment, the secondary display has a secondary display screen for indicating plural individual of symbol images, each such symbol image corresponding to a respectively associated one of the predetermined principal game playing states, each symbol image being displayed on the secondary display screen when the principal game results in its respectively associated principal game playing state. Consequently, the secondary game can correspond to the result of the game by the variable display. A player tends to pay attention to stop the variation action at the winning state profitable for the secondary game, when he aims a win of the principal game. Also, amusement shops can easily regulate the frequency of execution of the secondary game by adjusting the frequency of appearance of the predetermined state.

In another embodiment, the number of symbol images that are displayed on the secondary display screen is responsive to the resulting

AUSTRALIAN PATENT OFFICE

predetermined game playing state, so that a player can obtain a pleasure to aim a "winning pattern" by which a large number of symbol images are indicated at once on the secondary display screen when the principal game is executed by the variable display.

In another embodiment, the secondary display screen is provided with a plurality of display areas each for displaying a respective plurality of a particular respectively associated one of the symbol images, each of the display areas being adapted to display the plurality of the respectively associated one of the symbol images successively alongside each other, so that a player can notice condition of the secondary game by watching the symbol images indicated successively.

Furthermore, it is determined that a player can obtain a profit or an award when information displayed on the secondary display screen satisfies a predetermined condition. The predetermined condition includes, for example, completion of the secondary game such as a condition where any one of the display areas is filled with the symbol images indicated successively, that means a win of the secondary game. In this case, the player can enjoy the secondary game like a "race game" in which each symbol image competes to reach right terminals of each display areas assumed as a goal. The secondary game has a factor of "race game" mentioned above, as well as indication of history of appearance of the predetermined state as mentioned above. The player can easily recognize what kind of the predetermined state is close to win of the secondary game or not by the area or number of the symbol image indicated.

Accordingly, in the progress of the secondary game, when a profitable state as to a specific symbol image is close, the player expects that the stop display of the principal game may become a pattern for indicating the specific symbol image of the secondary game.

There are provided various secondary games by changing the amount

of profit given to the player corresponding to the kind of the symbol images indicated in the display area filled.

In the preferred embodiments, the controller executes a reset operation of the secondary display screen when the secondary screen indicates that the predetermined condition has been satisfied. In one area clear system, a display area filled with the symbol images is cleared to a blank condition in response to the execution of the reset operation. In all area clear system, all of the display areas are cleared to a blank condition in response to the execution of the reset operation. In optional selection system, the controller is arranged to select between a reset operation for clearing to a blank condition only a display area filled with symbol images or a reset operation for clearing to a blank condition all of the display areas.

When the reset operation of the one area clear system is executed, the player can maintain expectation to get next profit if the remaining symbols indicated in the areas other than the cleared area is close to the completion of the second game, that is, the profitable condition for the player, even after the player had obtain the profit by the secondary game.

When the reset operation of the all area clear system is executed, the player knows the completion of the secondary game very far because the secondary game newly starts.

When the reset operation of the optional selection system is executed, the player expects that a profitable reset operation such as the one area clear system may be executed after completion of the second game. Besides, progress and result of the secondary game can be varied by regulating the frequency of appearance of each system,

In the embodiments mentioned above, the second display has preferably an allotment display portion to indicate a value showing the allotment given to a player by the secondary game corresponding to each kind of the symbol images, the value corresponding to the symbol image in the

display area filled therewith is changed to a new value produced by multiplication or addition of a predetermined number to the previous value after the reset operation. The player can maintain expectation to get next profit because the allotment by the secondary game is increased even if the symbol images have disappeared by the reset operation after the completion of the second game.

Advantageously, probability to win and allotment as a whole game can be easily regulated by adjusting the frequency of appearance of the symbols necessary for the secondary game indicated at the time when variation action of the variable display is stopped.

Brief Description of the Drawing

The foregoing and other features and advantages of the invention will become more apparent from the following detailed description, which is by way of example only, taken in conjunction with the accompanying drawings, in which:

Fig. 1 is an isometric representation of a specific illustrative embodiment of the invention in the form of a slot machine;

Fig. 2 is an example representation of symbol arrangements positioned on the periphery plane of rotatable reels consisting of a variable display device;

Fig. 3 is a front view of appearance of the variable display device and a liquid crystal display device;

Fig. 4 is a block diagram of the circuit construction used for the slot machine;

Fig. 5 is a flow chart showing a part of control operation of the example;

Fig. 6 is a representation that illustrates a winning state by symbol "7" at stop time of variable display and a state of indication of symbol image "7" in a symbol image display portion of the liquid crystal display device:

Fig. 7 is a representation that illustrates a winning state by symbol

AUSTRALIAN PATENT OFFICE

"3BAR" at stop time of variable display and a state of indication of symbol image "3BAR" in a symbol image display portion of the liquid crystal display device

Fig. 8 is a representation that illustrates a winning state by symbol "2BAR" at stop time of variable display and a state of indication of symbol image "2BAR" in a symbol image display portion of the liquid crystal display device;

Fig. 9 is a representation that illustrates a winning state by symbol "3BAR" at stop time of variable display and a state where the symbol image display portion of the liquid crystal display device is filled with symbol images "3BAR;.

Fig. 10 is a representation that illustrates a state of the screen of the liquid crystal display device after execution of reset operation of "one area clear system";

Fig. 11 is a representation that illustrates a state of the screen of the liquid crystal display device after execution of reset operation of "all area clear system";

Fig. 12 is a representation that illustrates change of indication of coin allotment display portion of the liquid crystal display device in "multiplied allotment system" after execution of the reset operation;

Fig. 13 is a representation that illustrates change of indication of coin allotment display portion of the liquid crystal display device in "added allotment system" after execution of the reset operation;

Fig. 14 is a representation that illustrates a state of indication in a symbol image display portion of the liquid crystal display device at the time when "2BAR-2BAR-double 2BAR" are indicated in winning line;

Fig. 15 is a representation that illustrates a state of indication in a symbol image display portion of the liquid crystal display device at the time when "2BAR-double 2BAR-double 2BAR" are indicated in winning line;

Fig. 16 is a representation that illustrates a state of indication in a symbol image display portion of the liquid crystal display device at the time when "3BAR-3BAR-triple 3BAR" are indicated in winning line;

Fig. 17 is a representation that illustrates a state of indication in a symbol image display portion of the liquid crystal display device at the time when "3BAR-triple 3BAR-triple 3BAR" are indicated in winning line;

Fig. 18 is a representation that illustrates a state of indication in a symbol image display portion of the liquid crystal display device at the time when "7-7-double 7" are indicated in winning line;

Fig 19 is a representation that illustrates another embodiment of a variable display for a poker game and the liquid crystal display device thereof.

Detailed Description

Fig 1 is an isometric representation of a specific illustrative embodiment of the invention in the form of a slot machine 1. Slot machine 1 is a gaming machine played using a coin, a medal or a token (not shown), and the like as game media. Hereinafter, the game media will be referred to as "coins".

On the front face of a cabinet 2 forming a housing for slot machine 1, three display windows 3L, 3C, and 3R are arranged in a horizontal line. Additionally, various kinds of symbols (not shown in this figure) are displayed on the central winning line 14 or its upper and lower positions of each display window, as will be described later with respect to Fig. 3. As shown in Fig. 2, these symbols are drawn on the surface of the sheet forming periphery planes of three rotatable reels 4L, 4C, and 4R which are arranged inside of cabinet 2 in correspondence to display windows 3L, 3C, and 3R. In the embodiment shown in Fig. 2, there are twenty-two positions on the surfaces of each sheet along with their length direction. In odd positions, there are arranged symbols including symbols for forming a winning

AUSTRALIAN PATENT OFFICE

combination (winning pattern) such as "7", "BAR" or the like, and the other symbols, respectively, though each even position is remained "blank".

The rotatable reel being wound with such a sheet on the periphery surface is a mechanical moving display means, which is an embodiment of the variable display member constructing the variable display of the gaming machine of this invention. Alternative embodiment for the variable display member includes an electric variable display means, which can display a variety of the symbols and images on the display screen on CRT and a liquid crystal display.

On the side surface of the cabinet 2 is provided a lever 5 for rotating the rotatable reels in response to actuation by a player (not shown). The lever 5 is arcuately displaceable within a predetermined range of angular motion.

A liquid crystal display 6 is provided as an example of the secondary display of this invention at the location of lower center of the display windows of the front face of the cabinet 2.

The display screen of the liquid crystal display 6 has a symbol image display portion 6a on left side and a coin allotment display portion 6b on right side. The symbol image display portion 6a and the coin allotment display portion 6b are divided into upper, middle and lower sections by two lines running in a side direction. In other words, the symbol image display portion 6a consists of upper display area 6a1, middle display area 6a2 and lower display area 6a3. For each display area, a symbol image to be indicated is previously determined. The coin allotment display portion 6b consists of display portions 6b1, 6b2 and 6b3 corresponding to the display areas mentioned above, respectively. In this example, symbol image "7" is indicated in the display area 6a1, symbol image "3 BAR" is indicated in the display area 6a2, and symbol image "2BAR" is indicated in the display area 6a3. In each of the display portion 6b1, 6b2 and 6b3 is indicated a coin

allotment corresponding to each symbol image to be indicated in each display area. Indication of each symbol image is started at a predetermined condition as described below. A plural number of the symbol images can be indicated one by one successively from left to right from front view. When any one of the three display areas is filled with the symbol images, predetermined number of coins are paid out to the player (will be described in detail later).

Below the liquid crystal display 6, there are provided a coin entry slot 7 where coins of game media are inserted, a spin switch 8 for starting the rotatable reels mentioned above by button-pushing operation as an alternative to the actuation of start lever 5, a 1-BET switch 9 for betting only one coin credited on a game to allow a one-time button-pushing operation, a maximum BET switch 10 for betting maximum numbers of coins that can be bet on one time of game, and a C/P switch 11 for changing credit/pay out of coins acquired by the player as a result of the button-pushing operations. Beneath the front face of cabinet 2 there is provided a coin tray 13 for saving coins paid out via a coin chute 12 in response to the actuation of C/P switch 11.

Fig. 4 shows a circuit construction including a controller for controlling operation procedure of games in the slot machine 1 and peripheral equipment, i.e. actuators that are electrically connected thereto.

In this specific illustrative embodiment of the invention, control is effected by a microcomputer 20 and a random number sampling circuit 27 is coupled thereto. Microcomputer 20 includes a CPU 21 that executes control operations according to a preset program, and a ROM 22 and a RAM 23 as system memory. CPU 21 has connected thereto a clock pulse generator 24 for generating a reference clock pulse, a frequency divider 25, a random number generator 26 for generating random numbers to be sampled, and previously mentioned random number sampling circuit 27. The random number sampling may be executed in microcomputer 20, i.e. in an operation

program of CPU 21. In such a case, random number generator 26 and random number sampling circuit 27 either would not be provided as discrete systems, or they would be used to backup the random number sampling operation.

In ROM 22 of microcomputer 20, in addition to the game control system for the slot machine, there are stored information and data necessary for executing procedures to indicate plural numbers of display images described later on the screen of liquid crystal display 6.

In the circuit of Fig. 4, operations of main actuators are controlled by control signals from microcomputer 20. The main actuators include stepping motors 15L, 15C, and 15R for driving each reel 4L, 4C, or 4R mentioned above, a hopper 30 (including a driver for pay out) that accommodates coins of game media and above-mentioned display screen. These actuators are each connected to the outputs of CPU 21 via a motor drive circuit 31, a hopper drive circuit 32 and a liquid crystal drive circuit 16, respectively. These drive circuits receive control signals such as driving commands outputted from CPU 21 and control the operations of the actuators, respectively.

Furthermore, the input signals necessary for microcomputer 20 to generate control signals are provided by coin sensor 7S that detects coins (not shown) inserted into coin entry slot 7, a start switch 5S that detects the operations of start lever 5, spin switch 8, 1-BET switch 9, maximum BET switch 10, C/P switch 11, reel position detector circuit 34 for receiving pulse signals from the reel rotation detector of the variable display and supplying signals for detecting the position of each reel to CPU 21, and signal generator 36 for completion of coin pay out supply signals to CPU 21 when the counted value of coin detector 35 for detecting coins paid out from hopper 30 reaches the predetermined number, which are connected to respective inputs of CPU 21.

In the circuit of Fig. 4, random number generator 26 generates random

numbers in a predetermined range of numerical values, and sampling circuit 27 samples one random number within a predetermined time period after start lever 5 has been operated. The random number thus sampled is evaluated to determine whether it pertains to the predetermined winning area stored in the memory portion of ROM 22, and if it does pertain to the winning area, a "winning request signal" is generated.

After the rotatable reels 4L, 4C, and 4R have been driven into rotation, the number of driving pulses supplied to each of stepping motors 15L, 15C, and 15R is counted, and the counted value is written in a predetermined area (not shown) within RAM 23. A reset pulse is delivered from the reels 4L, 4C, and 4R during every rotation, and these pulses are provided to CPU 21 via reel position detector circuit 34. CPU 21 clears the counted value of the driving pulses stored in RAM 23 to "0" by a reset pulse delivered in this manner. Thus, the counted value corresponding to a rotation position in a range of one rotation with respect to each of rotatable reels 4L, 4C, and 4R is stored within RAM 23.

A symbol table (not shown) is stored within ROM 22 and contains the rotation positions of rotatable reels 4L, 4C, and 4R, and the symbols (not shown in this figure) are correlated to such rotational positions. In addition, a winning symbol combination table is stored within ROM 22. In this winning symbol combination table are stored data corresponding to the winning symbol combinations, the numbers of coins of dividend for winnings, and the winning determination codes that represent the winnings. The winning symbol combination table is accessed when control over rotatable reels 4L, 4C, and 4R is being executed, and the winning confirmation is executed after all rotatable reels have been stopped.

In addition, within ROM 22, there are stored a plurality of image display data for executing the secondary game mentioned later by the liquid crystal display 6.

Figs. 5 is a flow chart showing an example of operation procedure for executing a principal game (first game) of the rotatable reels 4L, 4C, 4R and a game (secondary game) of the liquid crystal display device 6, that is executed separately from the principal game. In the figure, step numbers of the operation procedure are indicated by ST1, ST2, ...

The procedure is executed by CPU 21 within the microcomputer 20 used for the game controlling means of the slot machine 1. However, when the display means such as the liquid crystal display device 6 itself is provided with a CPU as a display controller, such a CPU may be used to determine the display image depending on a display command (e.g., display commands corresponding to the types of wins or losses) from CPU 21 of the game controlling means.

Referring to Fig. 5, in the beginning state, the gaming machine (slot machine 1) has been supplied with power. A player performs necessary operations. The player inserts coins into the coin entry slot 7 (ST1), and then operates the start lever 5 or spin switch 8 (ST2) after operation of the 1-BET switch 9 or the maximum BET switch 10. The reels 4L, 4C, and 4R are caused to rotate and the variable display is started (ST3). At this time, the determinations of winning/not winning and type of stop pattern (combination of symbols) are executed based on the random number extracted by random number sampling (ST4). Thereafter, it is judged whether the "winning request signal" is generated (ST5). Depending on the result of the judgement, the stop control of the rotation of the reels 4L, 4C, 4R is executed. When the "winning request signal" is generated, the stop control is executed so as to indicate a winning pattern (combination of the symbols) (ST7) and when the result of judgment is "NO", that is, when the "winning request signal" is not generated, the stop control is executed so as to indicate a pattern (combination of the symbols) showing "loss" (ST6).

In the procedure mentioned above, the variable display of ST3 is

effected by CPU 21 supplying driving signals to motor drive 31, and thereby driving stepping motors 15L, 15C, and 15R, and rotating reels 4L, 4C, and 4R. In addition, the winning judgement of ST 4 is realized by a random number that is sampled from random number generator 26 on a suitable timing and the value of a random number extracted is evaluated to determine the group to which it belongs, in the predetermined winning area. When the result of judgment is "NO", the CPU 21 delivers signals for controlling to stop rotation of the reels 4L, 4C, and 4R at the symbol display positions corresponding that corresponding to a kind of "loss" to the motor drive 31. When the result of judgment is "YES", the CPU 21 delivers signals for controlling to stop rotation of the reels 4L, 4C, and 4R at the symbol display positions corresponding that corresponding to a kind of "win" to the motor drive 31 (ST7).

The CPU 21 delivers coin pay out command signals corresponding to the kind of wins to a hopper drive circuit 32, and executes the pay out of predetermined number of coins from hopper 30 (ST 8). At this time, a coin detector 35 counts the number of coins paid out from hopper 30, and when the counted value reaches the predetermined number data, the coin pay out completion signal generator circuit 36 generates coin pay out completion signals that are inputted to CPU 21. CPU 21 stops the drive of hopper 30 via hopper drive 32, thereby completing the procedure of paying out coins.

In addition, CPU 21 judges whether or not the secondary game is executed, more specifically, whether or not the pattern (combination of the symbols) indicated as stop pattern is a pattern (combination of the symbols) predetermined so as to indicate a symbol image on the liquid crystal display device 6 (ST 9).

In this case, the secondary game is executed only when one of patterns (combinations of the symbols such as "7-7-7" and others) predetermined from all patterns of the principal game performed by the variable display so as to

execute an indication for the secondary game stands in the central winning line in the display windows 3L, 3C, 3R as stop pattern.

When the judgment of ST9 is "YES", a symbol image selected from the predetermined symbol images is indicated in a display area corresponding to the symbol image selected from the display areas 6a1, 6a2, 6a3 of the symbol image display portion 6a (ST10). For example, as shown in Fig. 6, one of symbol image "7" that looks like the symbol "7" shown on the reels is indicated in the upper display area 6a1 of the symbol image display portion 6a.

On the other hand, when the judgment of ST9 is "NO", the game becomes end without execution of the secondary game.

Then, judgment is performed (ST11) whether the secondary game has become complete or not. The condition for completion of the secondary game includes, for example, a condition where any one of the display areas is filled with the symbol images (the display area does not have space for indication of the symbol image any longer) by repeated indications of the symbol images.

When the result of the judgment of ST11 is "YES", coin pay out command signals are delivered to the hopper drive circuit 32, thereby paying out predetermined number of coins from the hopper 30. Although the number of coins to be paid out may be fixed to a certain number, it may be varied corresponding to the kind of symbol image. For example, as shown in Fig. 3, in the case where the secondary game is completed by the symbol image "7", the number of coins to be paid out is 500, in the case of the symbol image "3BAR", the number is 100, and in the case of the symbol image "2BAR", the number is 50, respectively. Accordingly, interest of the secondary game can be enhanced much.

When the result of the judgment of ST11 is "NO", the game becomes end while the indication of the liquid crystal display 6 remains unchanged.

After completion of coin pay out operation of ST12, CPU21 executes a reset operation of the symbol image display portion 6a (ST13) for a game to be played next, thereby indicating a reset screen in the symbol image display portion 6a to end the game.

As the reset operation, there are provided two kinds of reset operations of "one area clear system" (referring to Fig. 10, detail will be described later) by which only the display area filled with the symbol images is cleared from the symbol images to blank, and "all area clear system" (referring to Fig. 11, detail will be described later) by which all of the display areas are cleared from the symbol images to blank. CPU 21 executes the reset operation by selecting one system from these two systems according to random number sampling. Of course, the execution of the reset operation may be limited to one of both systems. Also, there may be provided a manually operable member for selecting a reset operation by a player's operation.

Also, as to the symbol image indicated in the display area filled therewith, number of coin allotment may be changed by multiplication or addition (referring to Figs. 12 and 13, detail will be described later).

Next, there will be explained symbols shown in the display windows 3L, 3C, 3R as described above and symbol images indicated in the display areas 6a1, 6a2, 6a3 of the symbol image display portion 6a, of the liquid crystal display 6.

Fig. 6 shows a state when rotations of three reels 4L, 4C, 4R are stopped, respectively. At this time, three symbols of "7" stand in winning line 14 of the display windows 3L, 3C, 3R to show a winning state. This winning pattern "7-7-7" is a predetermined state to execute the secondary game. In this case, one symbol image of "7" is indicated in the upper display area 6a1 of the symbol image display portion 6a.

Fig. 7 shows a winning state where three symbols of "3BAR" stand in

winning line 14 as stop display. This winning pattern "3BAR-3BAR-3BAR" is also a predetermined state to execute the secondary game. In this case, one symbol image of "3BAR" is indicated in the middle display area 6a2 of the symbol image display portion 6a.

Fig. 8 shows a winning state where three symbols of "2BAR" stand in winning line 14 as stop display. This winning pattern "2BAR-2BAR-2BAR" is also predetermined state to execute the secondary game. In this case, one symbol image of "2BAR" is indicated in the lower display area 6a3 of the symbol image display portion 6a.

Thereafter, each time when any one of the predetermined states to execute the secondary game is displayed when rotations of three reels 4L, 4C, 4R are stopped, respectively, the symbol image corresponding to the predetermined state displayed is indicated selectively in the display area 6a1, 6a2, 6a3 of the symbol image display portion 6a. At this time, if there is a symbol image previously indicated in corresponding display area, new symbol image is additionally indicated right side the symbol image previously indicated.

Thus, the symbol images are indicated one by one successively in side direction in each display area, and any one of the display areas is filled with a predetermined number of the symbol images to reach a win (goal) of the secondary game, thereby paying out a predetermined number of coins.

The coin allotment is determined corresponding to the symbol image of each display area 6a1, 6a2, 6a3. For example, the coin allotment as to the symbol image "7" is preset as 500, the coin allotment as to the symbol image "3BAR" is preset as 100, and the coin allotment as to the symbol image "2BAR" is preset as 50, respectively. Accordingly, there are indicated "500", "100" and "50" in the upper, middle and lower display portions 6b1, 6b2 and 6b3 of the allotment display portion 6b, respectively.

Fig. 9 illustrates a state where three symbols of "3BAR" stand in

winning line 14 as stop display and symbol image "3BAR" is indicated in the middle display area 6a2, thereby being filled with the symbol images "3BAR". This state means a win of the secondary game. In this case, 100 pieces of coins are paid out.

As mentioned above, the player can enjoy the secondary game such as "race game" in which each symbol image competes a goal that is right end of each display area.

Further, as far as the player plays the principal game repeatedly, the symbol images of the secondary game are indicated until the secondary game becomes completed state. Accordingly, the player can know the history of appearance of each winning state and recognize what kind of winning pattern of the principal game is close to the win of the secondary game.

Figs.10 and 11 show the symbol image display portion 6a after reset operation executed after win of the secondary game, respectively.

Fig. 10 shows the symbol image display portion 6a after execution of reset operation by "one area clear system". In this "one area clear system", only display area filled with symbol images is cleared from the symbol images to blank. In the example of win of the secondary game mentioned above, only the middle display area 6a2 of the symbol display portion 6a is filled with symbol images "3BAR". Accordingly, after execution of the reset operation by "one area clear system", as shown in Fig. 10, the symbol images indicated only in the middle display area 6a2 of the symbol display portion 6a disappear.

Fig. 11 shows the symbol image display portion 6a after execution of reset operation by "all area clear system". In this "all area clear system", all display areas are cleared from the symbol images to blank at the time when the secondary game becomes win. As the result, the symbol display portion 6a has no indication of symbol image at all.

As shown in Fig. 10, after execution of the reset operation by "one

area clear system", many symbol images are still indicated as to the symbol image "7". Accordingly, even after disappearance of all of symbol images "3BAR", expectation to a win of the secondary game can be alive. However, as shown in Fig. 11, after the reset operation by "all area clear system", the player is discouraged by an instant disappearance of all symbol images previously indicated.

Fig. 12 shows an indication of the liquid crystal display 6 in "multiplied allotment system" in which coin allotment is multiplied as to the symbol image, with which a display area is filled, after execution of the reset operation.

In the case where the display area 6a2 is filled with symbol images "3BAR" (Fig. 9), after execution of the reset operation of "one area clear system", indication in middle display portion 6b2 (allotment display portion corresponding to symbol image "3BAR") of the coin allotment display portion 6b on the liquid crystal display 6 is changed from 100 to 200, that is, double number. Thereafter, each time when the reset operation is executed after the display area 6a2 is filled with symbol images "3BAR", the indication is changed to "400", then to "800", ---. As to the other symbols, allotment is changed in the same manner as mentioned above. As to symbol image "7", indication in upper display portion 6b1 of coin allotment display portion 6b is changed from 500 to 1000, ---. As to symbol image "2BAR", indication in lower display portion 6b3 of coin allotment display portion 6b is changed from 50 to 100, ---.

Fig. 13 shows an indication of the liquid crystal display 6 in "added allotment system" in which coin allotment is added by a predetermined number as to the symbol image, with which a display area is filled, after execution of the reset operation.

After execution of the reset operation of "one area clear system" as mentioned above, indication in middle display portion 6b2 of the coin

allotment display portion 6b on the liquid crystal display 6 is changed from 100 to 150, that is, indication becomes a value produced by adding 50 to the previous value. Thereafter, each time when the reset operation is executed after the display area 6a2 is filled with symbol images "3BAR", the indication is changed to "200", then to "250", ---, that is a value produced by adding 50 to each previous value. As to the other symbols, allotment is changed in the same manner as mentioned above. As to symbol image "7", indication in upper display portion 6b1 of coin allotment display portion 6b is changed from 500 to 550, ---. As to symbol image "2BAR", indication in lower display portion 6b3 of coin allotment display portion 6b is changed from 50 to 100, ---.

As mentioned above, allotments indicated in display portions 6b1, 6b2, 6b3 of coin allotment portion 6b are increased, respectively, each time when the secondary game becomes win. Therefore, the player can easily recognize what kind of symbol image has often been indicated in the past (what kind of winning state has often been appeared in the principal game by the reels). In other words, history of each symbol image can be informed by the indication of the coin allotment display 6b.

The above-mentioned "multiplied allotment system" or "added allotment system" can also be executed in the reset operation by "all area clear system".

Also, the allotment may be limited to a predetermined maximum value, and when the allotment reaches the maximum value after repetition of games, the value of the allotment may be returned to the initial value.

Next, there will be explained below another example referring to Figs. 14 to 18. In this example, the secondary game is executed when a predetermined state is appeared as stop pattern of the principal game by the reels, and besides, number of symbol images indicated at once in the symbol image display portion 6a is varied corresponding to each predetermined state

appeared. Each of Figs. 14 to 18 shows a display state in the display windows 3L, 3C, 3R when the rotation of reels is stopped accompanied with indication of symbol image in the symbol image display portion 6a corresponding to the display state.

In this embodiment, the principal game is performed by using rotatable reels 4L, 4C, 4R attached with sheets having symbols that are prepared for execution of the secondary game and that have no relation to a win of the principal game, instead of the symbols arranged on the surface of the sheets shown in Fig. 2.

For example, one of the two symbols of "2BAR" arranged on the reel sheets 4C, 4R of Fig. 2, respectively, is replaced by a symbol ("double 2BAR" mentioned later) prepared for executing the secondary game. Also, one of the two symbols of "3BAR" arranged on the reel sheets 4C, 4R, respectively, is replaced by a symbol ("triple 3BAR" mentioned later) prepared for executing the secondary game. Furthermore, one of the two symbols of "7" arranged on the reel sheet 4R is replaced by a symbol ("double 7" mentioned later) prepared for executing the secondary game. Thus obtained reel sheets are used.

In Fig. 14, a pattern of "2BAR-2BAR-double 2BAR" is displayed in the winning line 14 of the display windows 3L, 3C, 3R. More specifically, in the winning line 14 of the display windows 3L, 3C, 3R is arranged a combination of "2BAR" images including one image of "double 2BAR". In this case, two symbol images of "2BAR" are indicated at once in the display area 6a3 of the symbol image display portion 6a.

In Fig. 15, a pattern of "2BAR-double 2BAR-double 2BAR" is displayed on winning line 14 in the display windows 3L, 3C, 3R. More specifically, on the winning line 14 in the display windows 3L, 3C, 3R is arranged a combination of "2BAR" symbols including two symbols of "double 2BAR". In this case, four symbol images of "2BAR" are indicated at once in

the display area 6a3 of the symbol image display portion 6a. In other words, symbol image of "2BAR" is indicated of double number of "double 2BAR" symbol standing on the winning line 14.

There will be described below a change of number of symbol images indicated at once in each display area 6a1, 6a2, 6a3 of the symbol image display portion 6a when a combination of symbol "3BAR" or "7" including symbols prepared for executing the secondary game mentioned above are arranged on the winning line 14.

In Fig. 16, a pattern of "3BAR-triple 3BAR-3BAR" is displayed on the winning line 14 in the display windows 3L, 3C, 3R. More specifically, on the winning line 14 in the display windows 3L, 3C, 3R is arranged a combination of "3BAR" images including one image of "triple 3BAR" that is prepared for executing the secondary game. In this case, three symbol images of "3BAR" are indicated in the display area 6a2 of the symbol image display portion 6a.

In Fig. 17, a pattern of "3BAR-triple 3BAR-triple 3BAR" is displayed on the winning line 14 in the display windows 3L, 3C, 3R. In this case, six symbol images of "3BAR" are indicated at once in the display area 6a2 of the symbol image display portion 6a. In other words, symbol image of "3BAR" is indicated of triple number of "triple 3BAR" symbol standing on the winning line 14.

In Fig. 18, a pattern of "7-7-double 7" is displayed on the winning line 14 in the display windows 3L, 3C, 3R. More specifically, on the winning line 14 in the display windows 3L, 3C, 3R is arranged a combination of "7" images including one image of "double 7" that is prepared for executing the secondary game. In this case, seven symbol images of "7" are indicated at once in the display area 6a1 of the symbol image display portion 6a. If on the winning line 14 is arranged a combination of "7" images including two or more images of "double 7", symbol image of "7" is indicated of 7 times

number of "double 7" symbol standing on the winning line 14.

As mentioned above, in the case where symbols such as "double 2BAR", "triple 3BAR" and "double 7" that are advantageous for the secondary game though the symbols have no relation to a win of the principal game, are arranged on the reels, a player can expect a win of the secondary game even if a win of the principal game cannot be obtained.

Besides, each symbol of "double 2BAR", "triple 3BAR" and "double 7" may be determined so as to generate an allotment corresponding a win in the principal game when a predetermined combination of the symbol with the other symbols is appeared in the principal game, though the each symbol was determined to have no relation to a win of the principal game in the above-mentioned example.

Further, the secondary game is advanced quickly by increasing number of symbol images indicated at once in the secondary game screen, thereby increasing the frequency of wins of the secondary game. As the result, the player is not tired of the secondary game and can keep a feeling of expectation to the secondary game. It is also achieved to increase the amount of profit given to the player in the case of a predetermined state, that is appeared in a low probability in the principal game, for example, winning pattern of "7-7-7", by increasing number of symbol images indicated at once in the secondary game screen.

Though the above-mentioned embodiment is directed to a slot machine, the present invention may be applied to a video porker (a gaming machine) provided with a variable display for performing a poker game.

For example, when a winning combination of card symbols of poker game such as "three of a kind", "full house", "straight flush" or the like is displayed in variable display portion, corresponding to the combination displayed, a symbol image such as "2BAR", "3BAR", "7" or the like is indicated in the display area 6a1, 6a2, 6a3 of the symbol image display

portion 6a. Further, as a condition to execute the secondary game, without utilizing a winning combination of card symbols of poker game, a specific combination of card symbols may be determined.

Fig. 19 illustrates a front view of display elements constituted by a video screen 4' of variable display for displaying graphical elements for a poker game and the liquid crystal display 6' for executing a secondary game. Though five cards of Ace of spade, Queen of club, 5 of heart, 5 of club and Queen of spade are indicated in the video screen 4' when variation action of the variable display is stopped, the combination of these five cards does not correspond to a winning combination of the poker game. Also, the combination displayed as the result of the poker game is not predetermined as a combination that is to execute the secondary game. As shown in Fig. 19, any symbol image is not indicated in any display area 6'a1, 6'a2,or 6'a3 of a display portion 6'a of the liquid crystal display 6'. Each time when the poker game results in a state that shows a combination of five card predetermined as to execute the secondary game, a symbol image corresponding to the card combination shown is indicated additionally one by one in corresponding display area until the display area is filled with the symbol images. In this embodiment, when any one of the display areas is filled with the symbol images, the secondary game is completed.

Also, if a special combination of card symbols other than the mentioned above is displayed, number of symbol image indicated at once in each display area 6'a1, 6'a2, 6'a3 of the symbol image display portion 6'a may be changed.

As described above, the secondary game by the secondary display screen, that is provided separately from the variable display for displaying the principal game, is related to the result of the principal game by the variable display, thereby enhancing the interest for the entire game. The secondary game by the secondary display screen proceeds while indicating histories of

the (winning) states displayed in the past by the variable display. Therefore, it is possible to know whether the completion of the secondary game is near or not. Also, it is easy for the player to know at glance what kind of (winning) pattern has to be displayed in the principal game for completion of the secondary game so that the player may play the game with extensively high expectation and tension.

The player can aim a win of the principal game by paying attention to progress of the secondary game so that the interest of the game may be elevated much.

Throughout this specification and the claims which follow, unless the context requires otherwise, the word "comprise", and variations such as "comprises" and "comprising", will be understood to imply the inclusion of a stated integer or step or group of integers or steps but not the exclusion of any other integer or step or group of integers or steps.

THE CLAIMS DEFINING THE INVENTION ARE AS FOLLOWS:

1. A gaming machine for use by a player, the gaming machine including:

a variable display for displaying graphical information corresponding to at least one of a plurality of graphical elements necessary for a principal game;

a controller coupled to said variable display for causing said variable display to display the graphical information; and

a secondary display having a display area for displaying a plural number of a single kind of symbol images, the single kind of symbol image being associated with one of a plurality of predetermined display states displayed as a result of the principal game, the number of the single kind of symbol images displayed in the display area being increased each time when the principal game results in the one of the predetermined display states, thereby advancing a secondary game.

2. The gaming machine of claim 1, wherein said display area is arranged to indicate the plural number of the single kind of symbol images successively alongside each other.

3. The gaming machine of claim 1, wherein the number of symbol images that are displayed on said display area is responsive to the number of times when the principal game resulted in said one of the predetermined display states.

4. A gaming machine for use by a player, the gaming machine including:

a variable display for displaying graphical information corresponding to at least one of a plurality of graphical elements necessary for a principal game;

a controller coupled to said variable display for causing said variable display to display the graphical information; and

a secondary display having a plurality of display areas, each display area for displaying a plural number of an individual single kind of symbol images successively alongside each other, the individual single kind of symbol image being associated to individual one of a plurality of predetermined display states displayed as a result of the principal game, the number of the individual single kind of symbol images displayed in

AUSTRALIAN PATENT OFFICE

each display area being increased each time when the principal game results in said individual one of the predetermined display states, thereby advancing a secondary game.

5. The gaming machine of claim 4, wherein an award is given to a player when the number of the symbol images displayed in one of the plurality of the display areas satisfies a predetermined condition.

6. The gaming machine of claim 5, wherein the predetermined condition is satisfied when said display area is filled with the symbol images.

7. The gaming machine of claim 6, the amount of the award is predetermined to be associated to the symbol image of the display area filled therewith.

8. The gaming machine of claim 5, wherein the controller executes a reset operation of the plurality of the display areas of said secondary display when the predetermined condition has been satisfied.

9. The gaming machine of claim 8, wherein the predetermined condition is satisfied when one of the plurality of the display areas is filled with the symbol images.

10. The gaming machine of claim 9, wherein said one of the plurality of the display areas that is filled with the symbol images is cleared to a blank condition in response to the execution of the reset operation.

11. The gaming machine of claim 9, wherein all of the plurality of the display areas are cleared to blank conditions, respectively, in response to the execution of the reset operation.

12. The gaming machine of claim 9, wherein the controller is arranged to select either a reset operation for clearing said one display area filled with symbol images to a blank condition or a reset operation for clearing all of the display areas to blank conditions.

AUSTRALIAN PATENT OFFICE

13. The gaming machine of claim 9, wherein said secondary display is further provided with allotment display portions corresponding to the display areas, said display portion indicating a first value representing an allotment given to a player by winning the secondary game, the first value being converted to another value produced by a multiplication of the first value or augmentation to the first value by a predetermined number after the reset operation.

14. The gaming machine of claim 1, wherein the principal game includes a selectable one of a slot game and a poker game.

15. A gaming machine substantially as hereinbefore described with reference to the drawings.

DATED this 23rd day of January, 2002

Aruze Corporation

by DAVIES COLLISON CAVE
Patent Attorneys for the Applicant

AUSTRALIAN PATENT OFFICE

FIG. 1

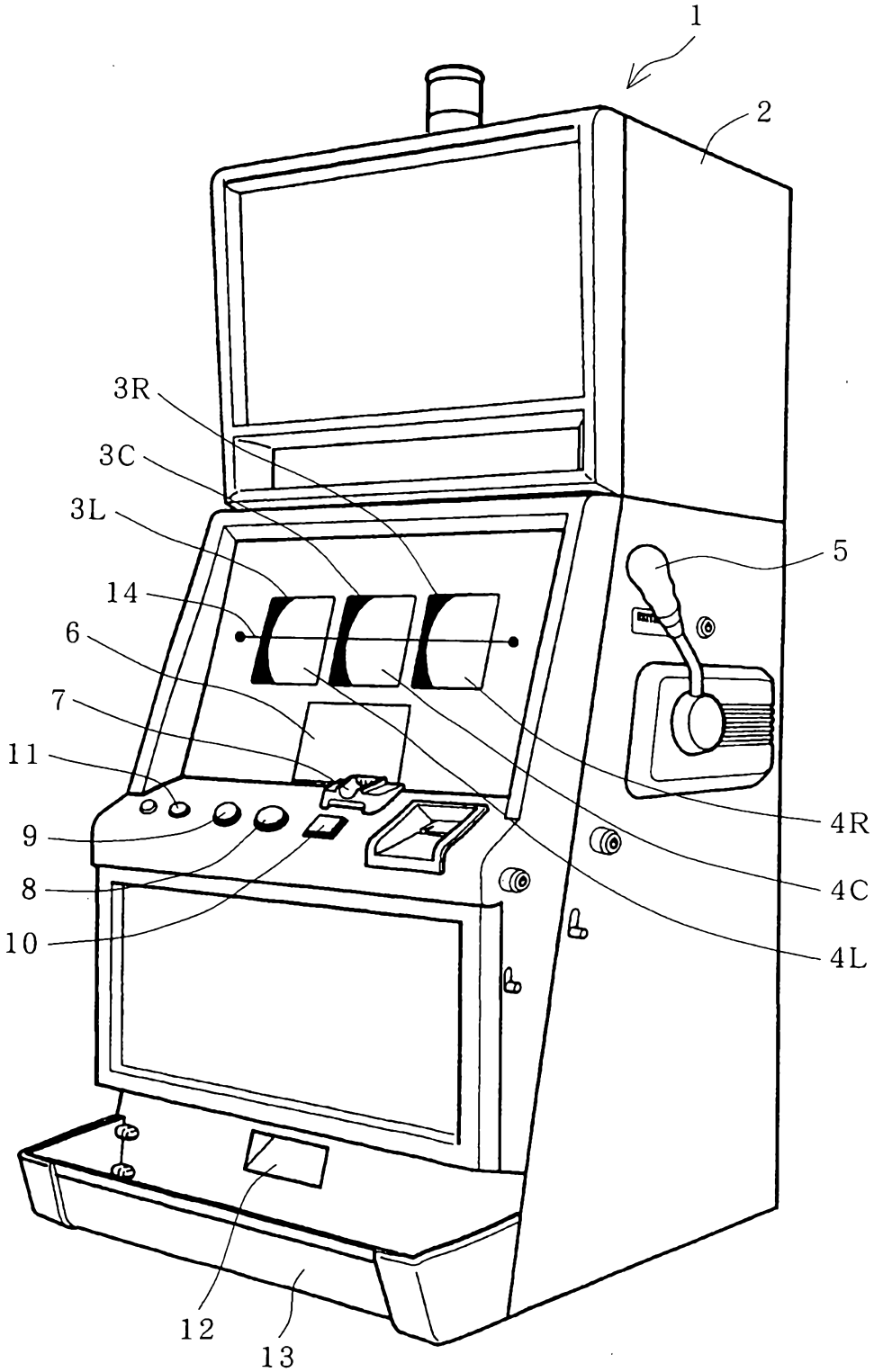


FIG. 2

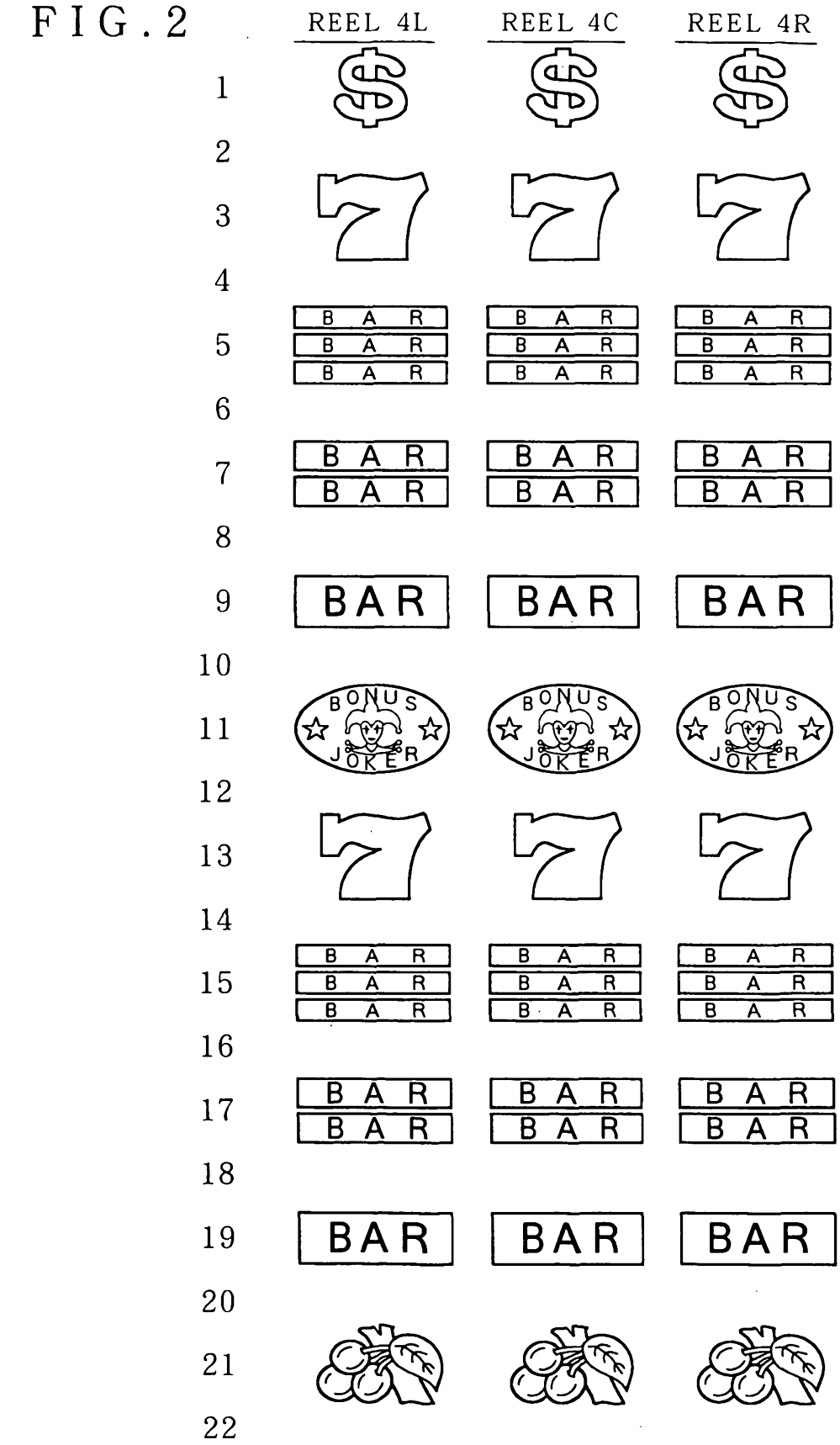

REEL 4L
REEL 4C
REEL 4R
1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
BAR
BONUS
JOKER

FIG.3

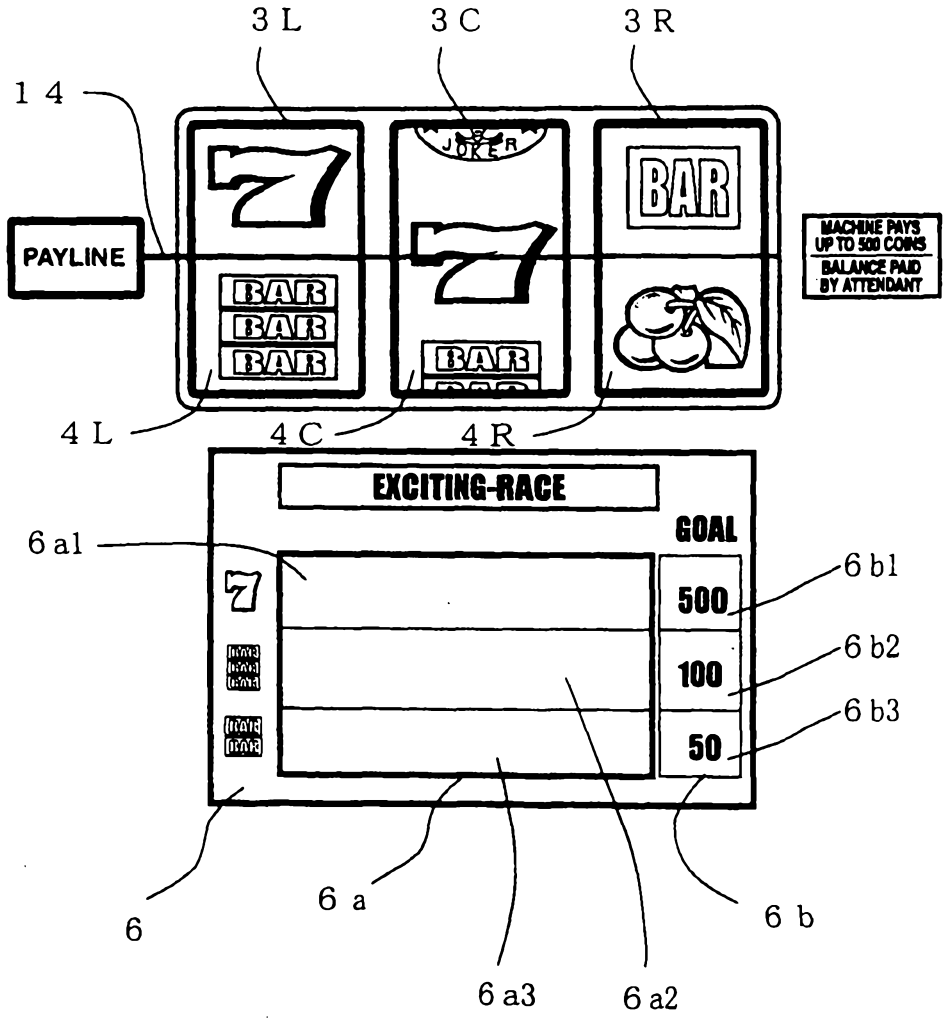

3 L
3 C
3 R
1 4
PAYLINE
BAR
BAR
BAR
BAR
JOKER
7
7
BAR
MACHINE PAYS UP TO 500 COINS
BALANCE PAID BY ATTENDANT
4 L
4 C
4 R
EXCITING-RACE
GOAL
6 a1
500
100
50
6 b1
6 b2
6 b3
6
6 a
6 a3
6 a2
6 b

FIG. 4

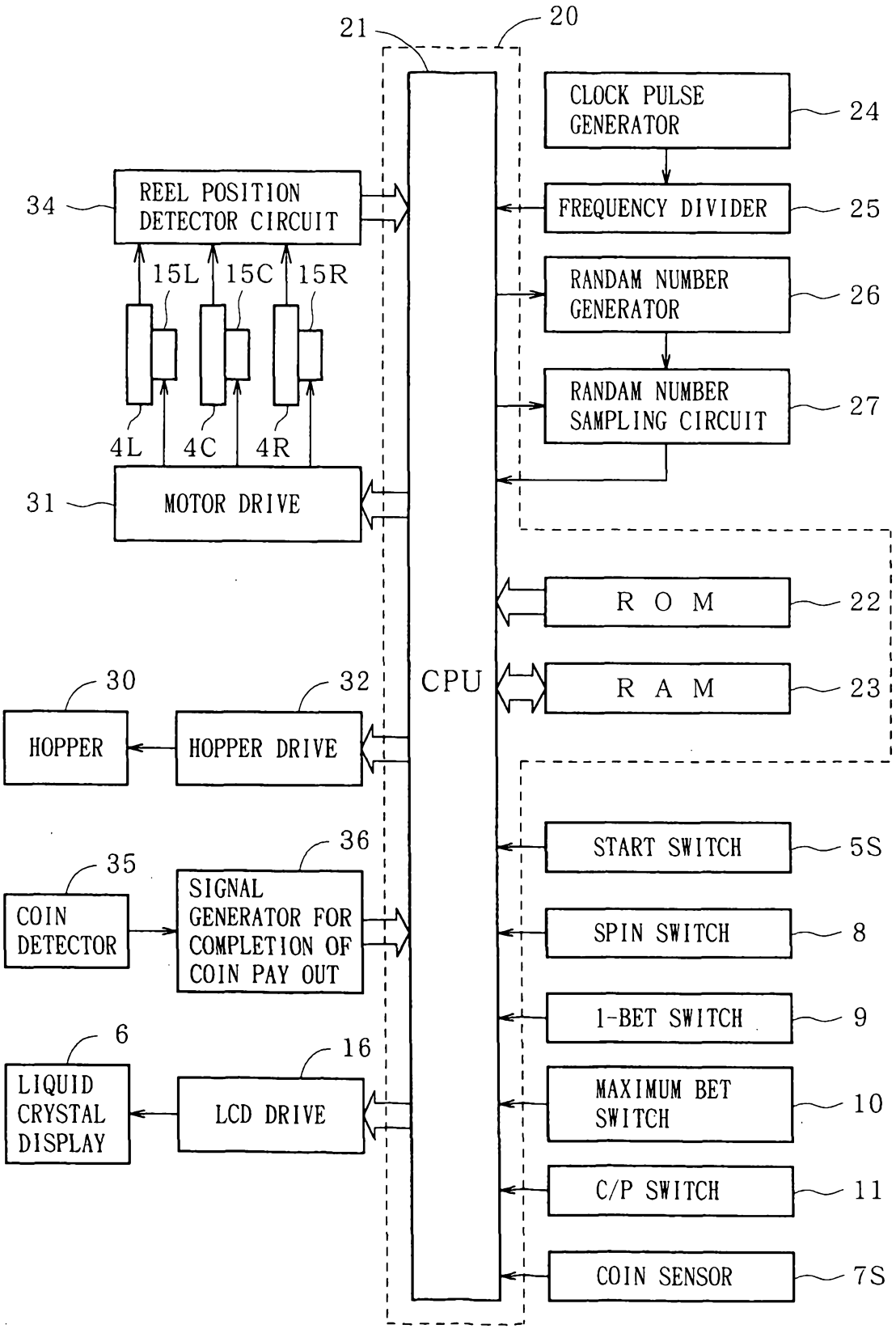

21
20
CLOCK PULSE GENERATOR
24
34
REEL POSITION DETECTOR CIRCUIT
FREQUENCY DIVIDER
25
15L
15C
15R
RANDAM NUMBER GENERATOR
26
RANDAM NUMBER SAMPLING CIRCUIT
27
4L
4C
4R
31
MOTOR DRIVE
R O M
22
30
32
CPU
R A M
23
HOPPER
HOPPER DRIVE
START SWITCH
5S
36
35
SIGNAL GENERATOR FOR COMPLETION OF COIN PAY OUT
COIN DETECTOR
SPIN SWITCH
8
1-BET SWITCH
9
6
16
MAXIMUM BET SWITCH
10
LIQUID CRYSTAL DISPLAY
LCD DRIVE
C/P SWITCH
11
COIN SENSOR
7S

FIG. 5

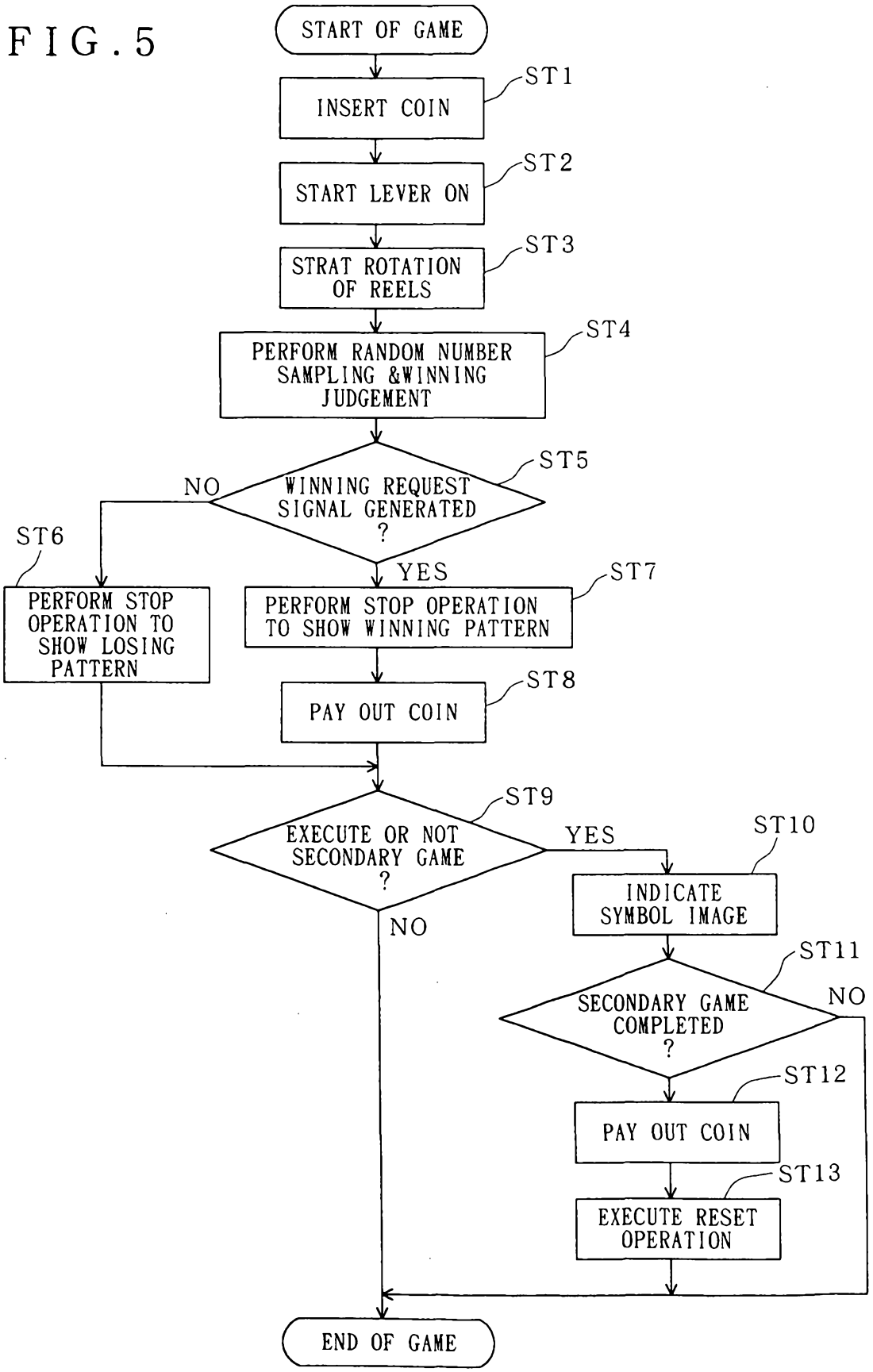

START OF GAME
INSERT COIN
ST1
START LEVER ON
ST2
STRAT ROTATION OF REELS
ST3
PERFORM RANDOM NUMBER SAMPLING &WINNING JUDGEMENT
ST4
WINNING REQUEST SIGNAL GENERATED ?
ST5
NO
YES
ST6
PERFORM STOP OPERATION TO SHOW LOSING PATTERN
PERFORM STOP OPERATION TO SHOW WINNING PATTERN
ST7
PAY OUT COIN
ST8
EXECUTE OR NOT SECONDARY GAME ?
ST9
YES
NO
ST10
INDICATE SYMBOL IMAGE
SECONDARY GAME COMPLETED ?
ST11
NO
ST12
PAY OUT COIN
ST13
EXECUTE RESET OPERATION
END OF GAME

FIG.6

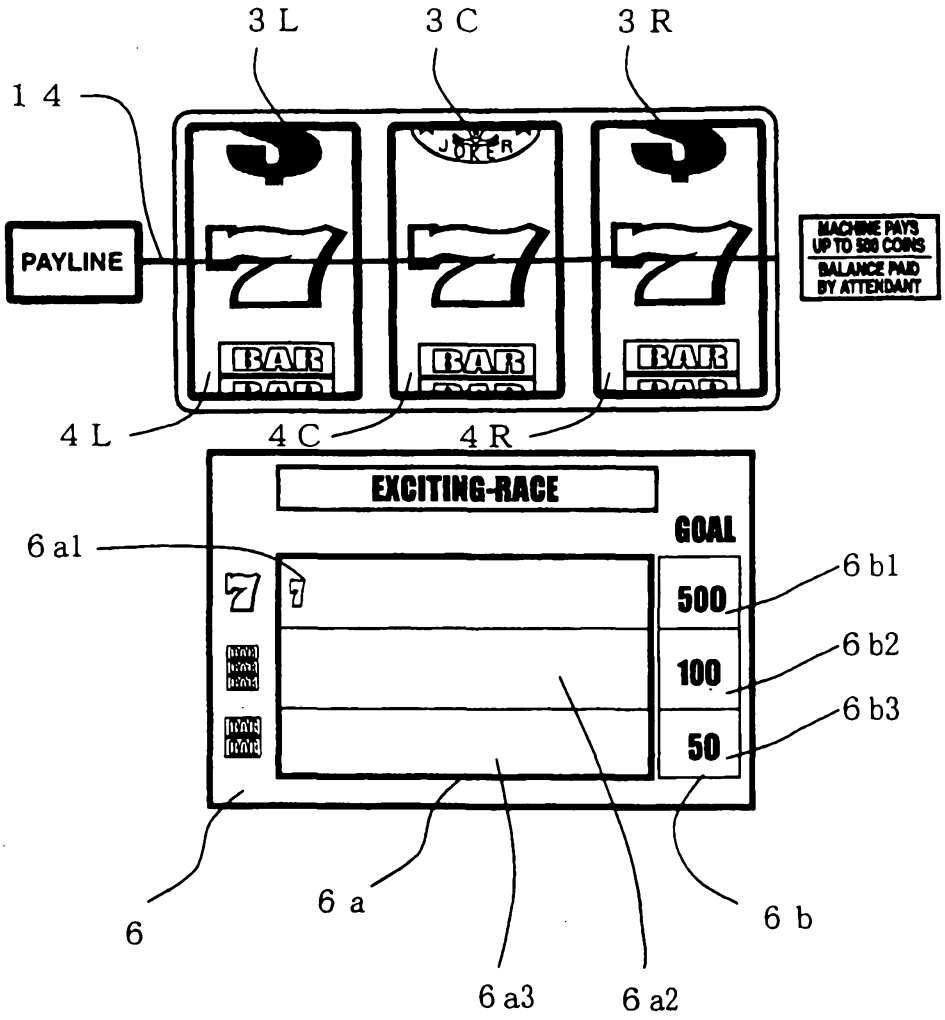

3 L
3 C
3 R
1 4
PAYLINE
JOKER
BAR
MACHINE PAYS UP TO 500 COINS
BALANCE PAID BY ATTENDANT
4 L
4 C
4 R
EXCITING-RACE
GOAL
6 a1
500
100
50
6 b1
6 b2
6 b3
6
6 a
6 b
6 a3
6 a2

FIG.7

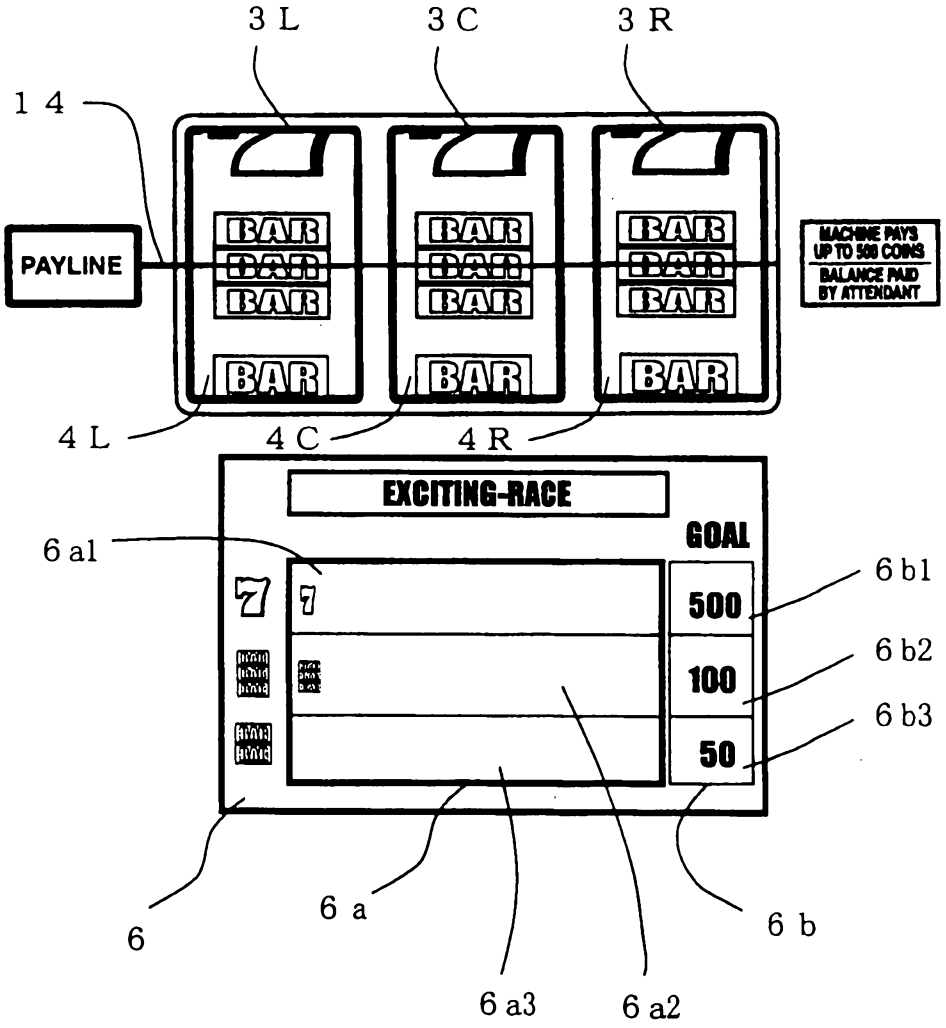

3 L
3 C
3 R
1 4
PAYLINE
BAR
MACHINE PAYS UP TO 500 COINS
BALANCE PAID BY ATTENDANT
4 L
4 C
4 R
EXCITING-RACE
GOAL
6 a1
7
500
100
50
6 b1
6 b2
6 b3
6
6 a
6 b
6 a3
6 a2

FIG.8

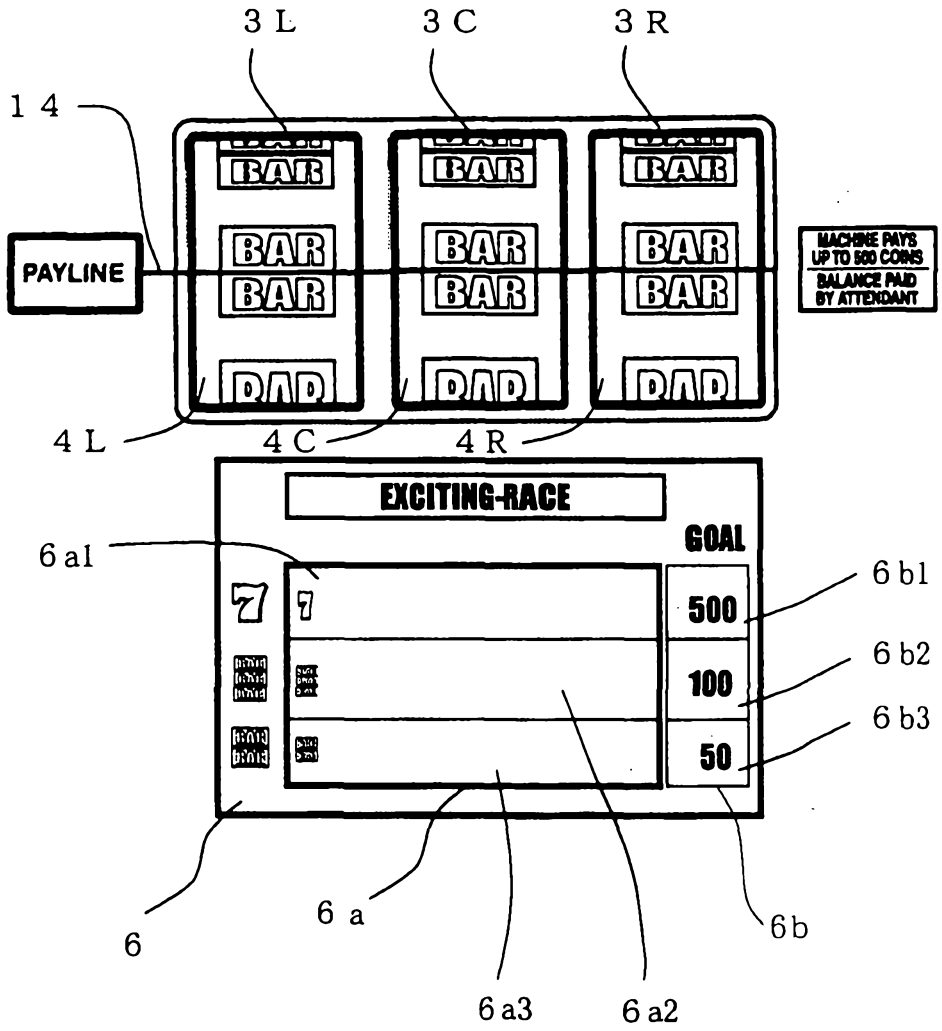

3 L
3 C
3 R
1 4
BAR
PAYLINE
MACHINE PAYS UP TO 500 COINS
BALANCE PAID BY ATTENDANT
4 L
4 C
4 R
EXCITING-RACE
GOAL
6 a1
7
500
100
50
6 b1
6 b2
6 b3
6
6 a
6 a3
6 a2
6 b

FIG.9

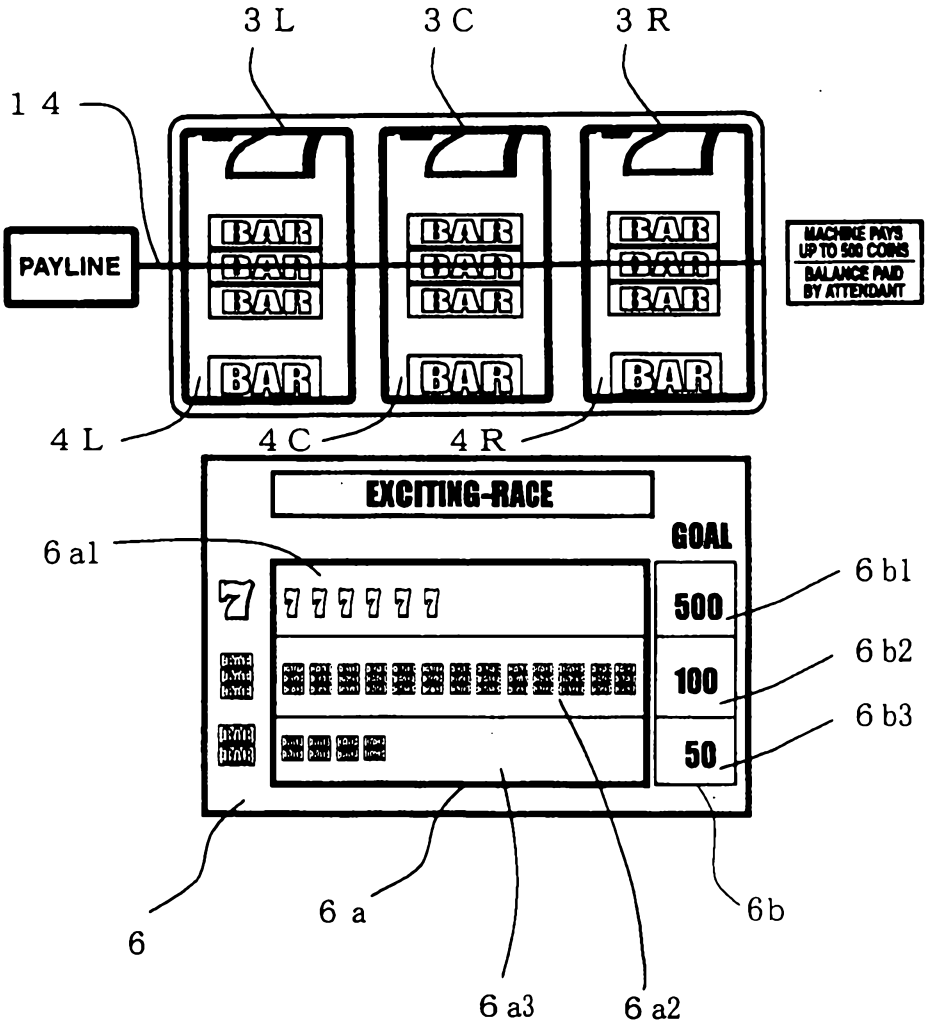

3 L
3 C
3 R
1 4
PAYLINE
BAR
MACHINE PAYS UP TO 500 COINS
BALANCE PAID BY ATTENDANT
4 L
4 C
4 R
EXCITING-RACE
GOAL
6 a1
6 b1
6 b2
6 b3
500
100
50
6
6 a
6 a3
6 a2
6b

FIG.10

ONE AREA CLEAR SYSTEM

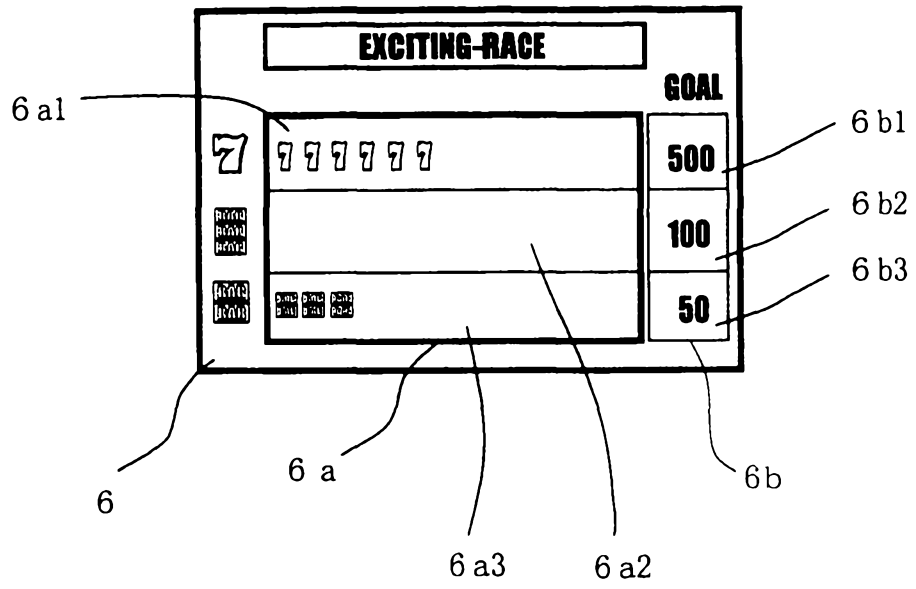


FIG.11

ALL AREA CLEAR SYSTEM

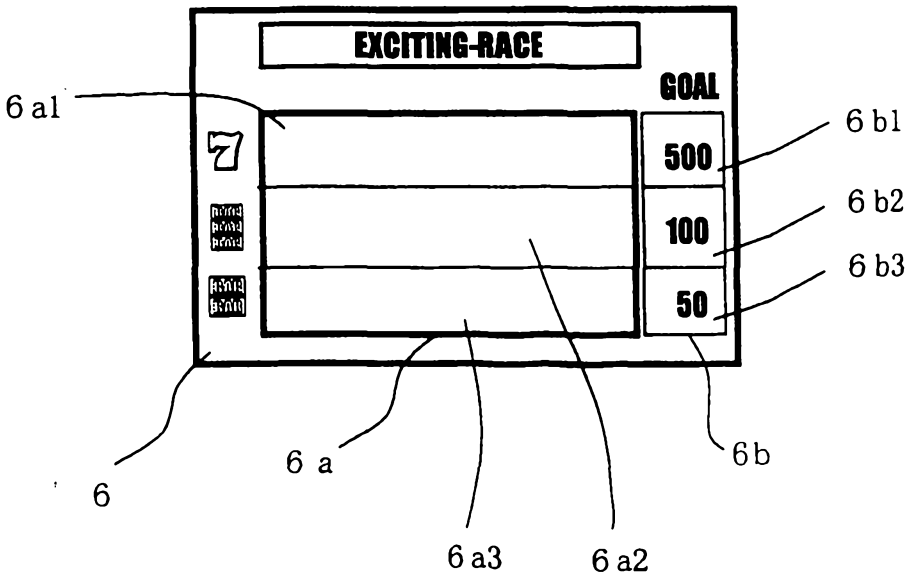


FIG.12

MULTIPLIED ALLOTMENT SYSTEM

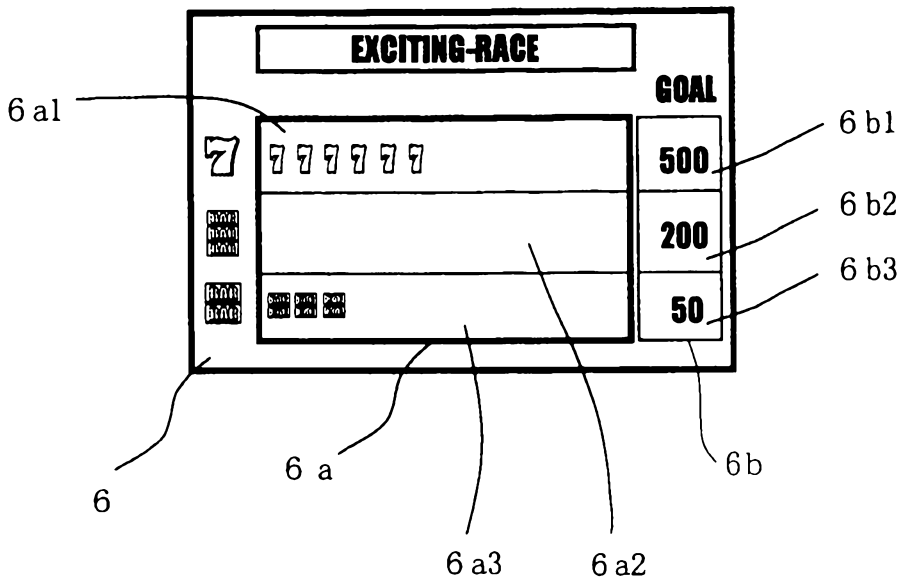


FIG.13

ADDED ALLOTMENT SYSTEM

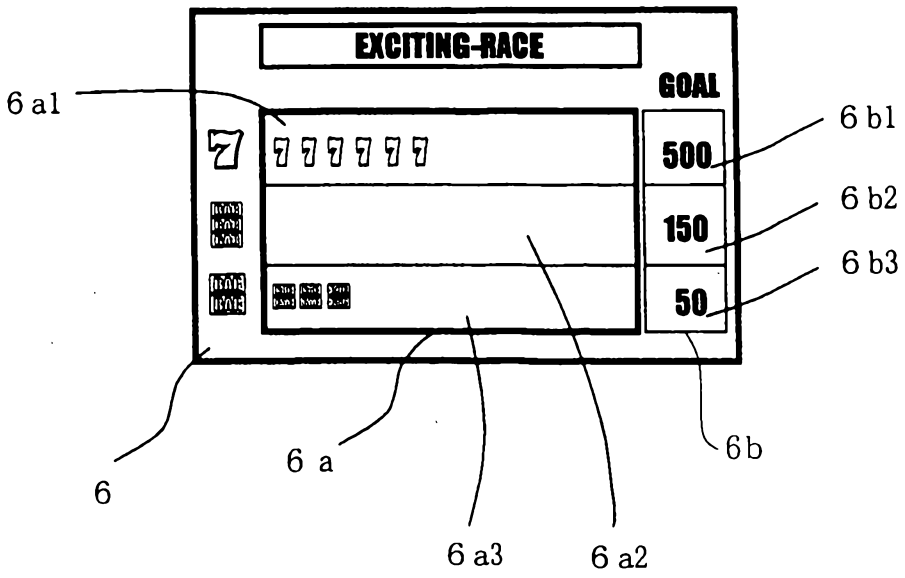
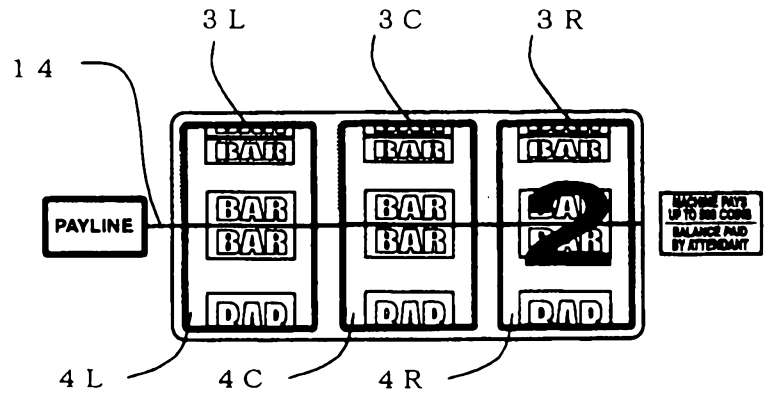


FIG.14



NUMBER OF IMAGE INDICATED : 2

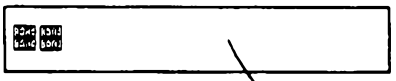
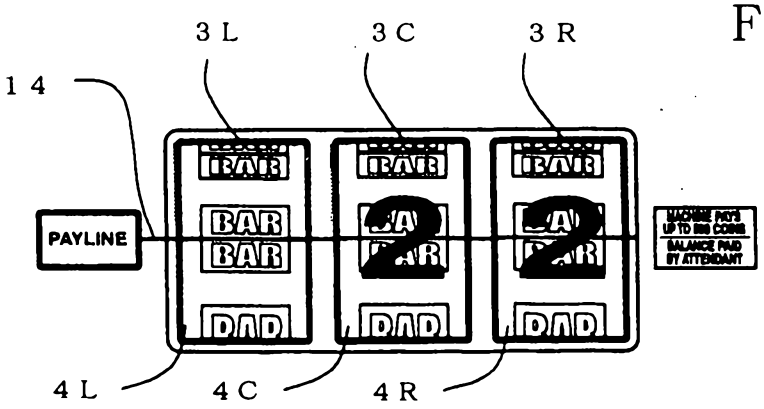


FIG.15



NUMBER OF IMAGE INDICATED : 4

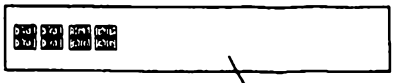


FIG.16

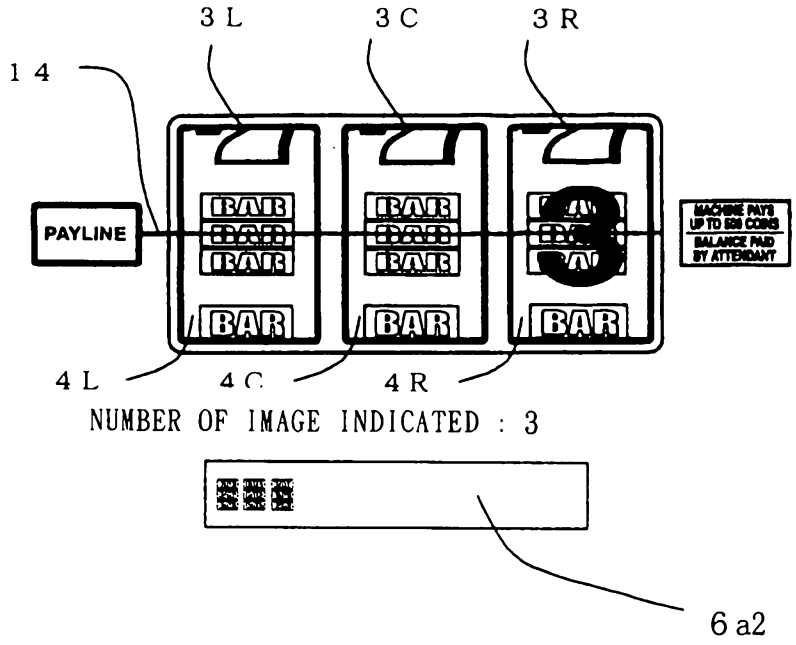

3 L
3 C
3 R
1 4
PAYLINE
BAR
4 L
4 C
4 R
NUMBER OF IMAGE INDICATED : 3
6 a2

FIG.17

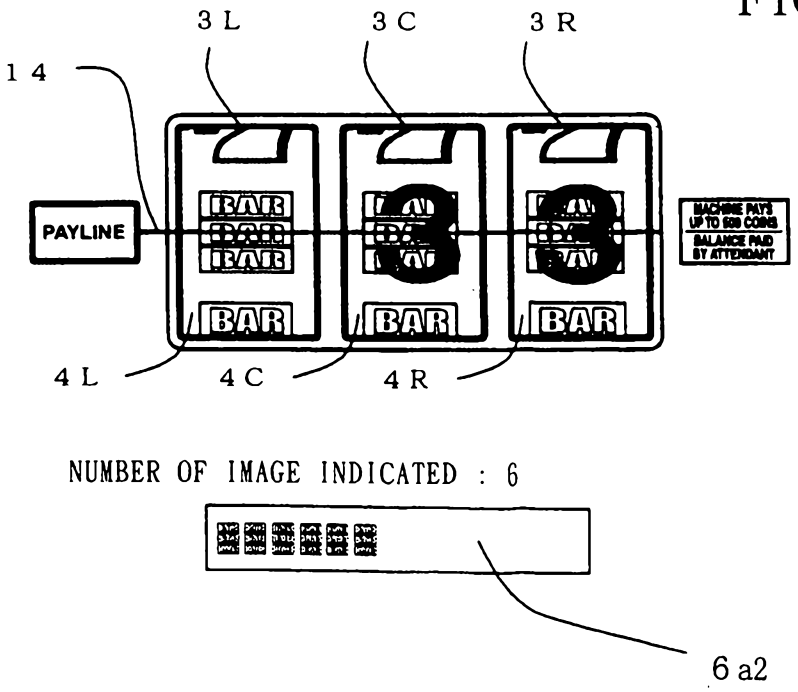
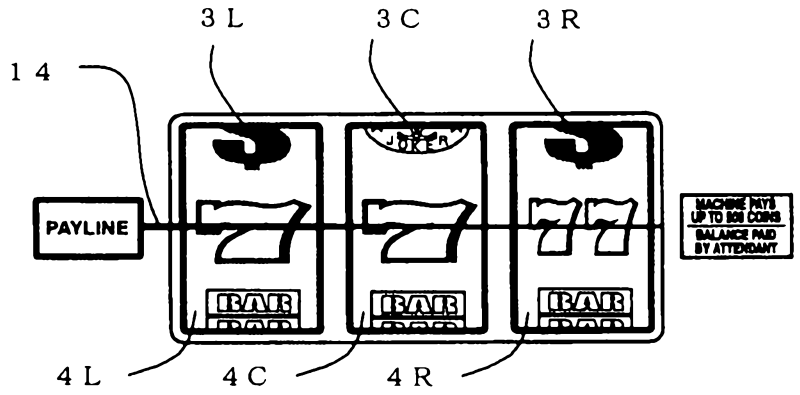

3 L
3 C
3 R
1 4
PAYLINE
BAR
4 L
4 C
4 R
NUMBER OF IMAGE INDICATED : 6
6 a2

FIG.18



NUMBER OF IMAGE INDICATED : 7

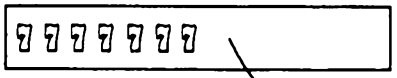


FIG. 19

