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54 Feeding tobacco.

57 In accordance with the present process and device the tobacco contained in a reservoir is selectively and pneumatically carried to a separator (20) by means of a flow of air inside a feeding tube (10). Within the air separator (20) the air is removed from the stream of particles of tobacco which continues in a direct even path until it reaches the upper open end of a first column (30) of a first tobacco metering and opening set (40, 50, 60).

The metered and opened tobacco stream is then pneumatically carried and injected into an upward flow of air in a vertical duct (100) for separation of the stems and heavy fragments. The upward flow of air containing tobacco leaf particles is accelerated and turned downwards then being decelerated within a closed chamber (150) from where the air is partially extracted while the tobacco leaf particles follow their straight downward course, reaching the lower exit mouthpiece (151) of the mentioned closed chamber (150) and from there to the upper open end of a second column (70) of a second tobacco metering and opening set (40a, 50a, 60) with its exit communicating with the entrance to the machine which is usually one for manufacturing cigarettes.

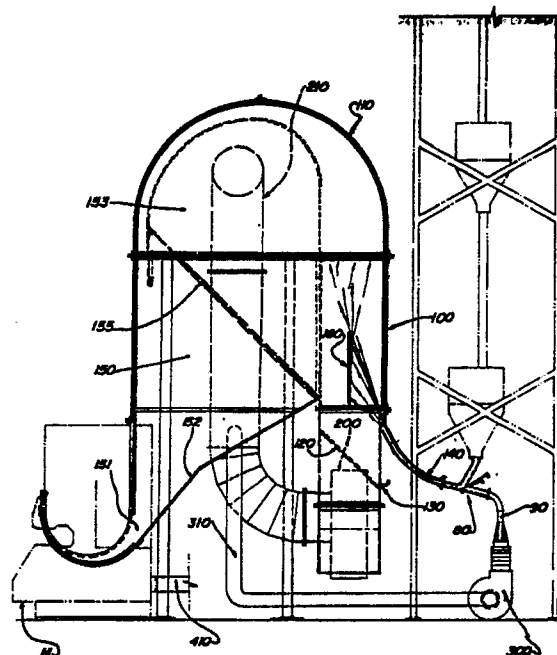


FIG. 8

EP 0 307 070 A3



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DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT			
Category	Citation of document with indication, where appropriate, of relevant passages	Relevant to claim	CLASSIFICATION OF THE APPLICATION (Int. Cl.4)
A	EP-A-202874 (ROTHMANS OF PALL MALL LIMITED) * page 9, line 26 - page 13; figures 1-4 * ---	1, 8	A24C5/39
A	FR-A-2492635 (ROTHMANS OF PALL MALL CANADA LIMITED) * page 3, line 4 - page 4, line 34; figure 1 * ---	1, 8	
A	FR-A-2498898 (ROTHMANS OF PALL MALL CANADA LIMITED) * page 3, line 30 - page 7; figures 1, 2 * ---	1, 8	
A	GB-A-2131672 (ROTHMANS OF PALL MALL CANADA LIMITED) ----		
A	EP-A-0063906 (MOLINS) -----		
			TECHNICAL FIELDS SEARCHED (Int. Cl.4)
			A24C A24B
The present search report has been drawn up for all claims			
Place of search THE HAGUE		Date of completion of the search 23 MARCH 1990	Examiner RIEGL R.E.
CATEGORY OF CITED DOCUMENTS			
X : particularly relevant if taken alone Y : particularly relevant if combined with another document of the same category A : technological background O : non-written disclosure P : intermediate document		T : theory or principle underlying the invention E : earlier patent document, but published on, or after the filing date D : document cited in the application L : document cited for other reasons & : member of the same patent family, corresponding document	