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(54) Blank feeder

(57) A blank feeder comprising a magazine (13) having an outlet (12) at a lower end thereof for accommodating a plurality of blanks (B) as arranged from the lower end to an upper end thereof in the form of a stack so that the blanks (B) are movable inside the magazine (13) toward the outlet (12) under gravity, a conveyor (14) providing a path of transport for supporting the lower ends of a plurality of blanks (B) as arranged closely face-to-face on the conveyor (14) from a terminal end of the path to a starting end thereof without allowing the blanks (B) on the conveyor (14) to move on the conveyor (14) under gravity, the blank (B) at the terminal end of

the path being supported at its upper end by the uppermost blank (B) within the magazine (13), a sensor (41-43) for producing a non-detection signal when the quantity of blanks (B) remaining within the magazine (B) has decreased to not greater than a predetermined value and producing a detection signal upon the quantity of remaining blanks exceeding the predetermined value, and drive means for driving the conveyor (14) in response to the non-detection signal of the sensor (41-43) and discontinuing the operation of the conveyor (14) in response to the detection signal.

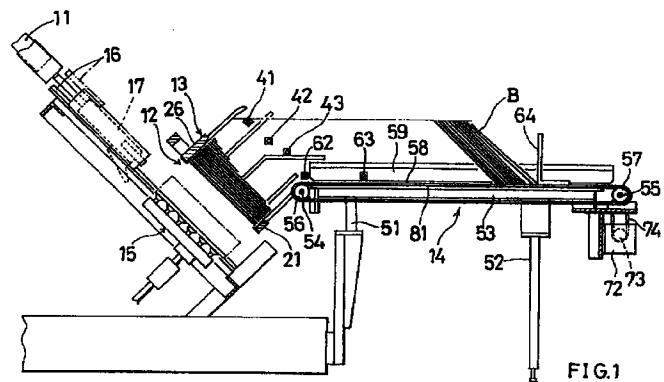


FIG.1



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EUROPEAN SEARCH REPORT

Application Number

EP 96 20 2864

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.6)
X	US 4 596 545 A (GREENWELL JOSEPH D) * column 8, line 1 - line 41; figure 1 * ----	1,2	B31B1/06 B31B1/74 B31B5/80
A	EP 0 574 079 A (SHIKOKU KAKOKI CO LTD) ----	1-3	B65H1/24
A	EP 0 034 797 A (UNILEVER NV ;UNILEVER PLC (GB)) -----		
The present search report has been drawn up for all claims			
Place of search	Date of completion of the search	Examiner	
THE HAGUE	10 February 1998	Pipping, L	
CATEGORY OF CITED DOCUMENTS		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	
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