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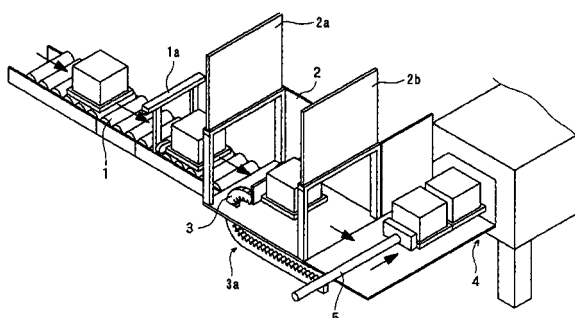
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(54) **Material feeding mechanism in association with continuous sintering apparatus**

(57) In a material feeding mechanism in association with a continuous sintering apparatus, a material (S) carried by a transporting conveyer (1) into an atmosphere-displacement chamber (2) is fed into a furnace casing (4) of the continuous sintering apparatus by using a loading pusher (3). The transporting conveyer (1), the atmosphere-displacement chamber, and the loading pusher (3) are arranged in such a manner that a direction in which the material is carried by the transporting conveyer and a direction in which the material is fed from the atmosphere-displacement chamber into the furnace

casing by the loading pusher are linearly aligned, and the loading pusher and a drive unit (3a) thereof are installed under a floor of the atmosphere-displacement chamber (2) so that the loading pusher moves up over the floor surface of the atmosphere-displacement chamber and moves forward and backward on the floor surface of the atmosphere-displacement chamber when the material is fed into the furnace casing (4). By such a construction, the longitudinal dimension of the continuous sintering apparatus can be made as short as possible to realize a compact design as a whole.

FIG. 2



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EUROPEAN SEARCH REPORT

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| Place of search MUNICH | | Date of completion of the search 25 September 2003 | Examiner González-Junquera, J |
| 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 | | | |

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**ANNEX TO THE EUROPEAN SEARCH REPORT
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