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MIXING CHAMBER ASSEMBLY

The present invention relates in general to apparatus for mixing and dispensing of synthetic foams, and more particularly to a mixing chamber assembly for such apparatus.

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As is well-known to those skilled in the art, the preparation of many synthetic foams, such as polyurethane foams, requires uniform mixing of liquid organic resins with polyisocyanates in a so-called mixing chamber. In this regard, it is often desirable to dispense the polyisocyanate resin mixture into a receptacle, such as a package or the like, before it is reacted to form the polyurethane foam, particularly when attempting to build up a foam structure around an object as in packaging. One particular problem associated with the handling of polyurethane foam is that the organic resin and polyisocyanate tend to react relatively rapidly, and can accumulate in the openings through which the organic resin and polyisocyanate are supplied to the mixing chamber. The accumulated foam in these openings are then most difficult to remove, generally requiring the disassembling of the apparatus for cleaning of the mixing chamber before continued use is possible.

It has been considered desirable, but never commercially feasible, to incorporate the dispensing apparatus in a system for packaging objects. In this regard, the dispensing apparatus would be located at one or more work stations overlying a conveyor belt and positioned in a downwardly-facing direction. Objects to be packaged would be indexed along the conveyor belt and subsequently stopped at each work station under the dispensing apparatus. The dispensing apparatus is activated to fill each receptacle with polyurethane foam so as to encapsulate the object therein. Because the openings in communication with the mixing chamber become obstructed with accumulations of polyurethane foam, the dispensing apparatus will generally become inoperable. In

16

particular, the accumulation of foam therein will prevent the proper controlled flow of organic resin or polyisocyanate to the mixing chamber for production of suitable polyurethane foam. Once this condition has occurred, the dispensing apparatus must be disassembled and the mixing chamber cleaned prior to continued operation. As thus far described, the disassembling of the dispensing apparatus results in unnecessary system interruption and the associated loss of productivity and has thus made automated dispensing apparatus unfeasible.

In accordance with one known prior art dispensing apparatus, the mixing chamber is formed from a Teflon core having a bore longitudinally extending therethrough and a plurality of openings arranged therein in communication with the bore for supplying the organic resin and polyisocyanate thereto. A valving rod is slideably provided in interference fit within the bore to control the flow of organic resin and polyisocyanate from the openings into the bore and the subsequent discharge of the foam therefrom. Such interference fit between the valving rod and bore of the mixing chamber often results in the "cold forming" of the Teflon material forming such bore and openings therein. The cold forming of the Teflon material causes the loss of the interference fit resulting in the inability of the valving rod to effectively seal the openings to prevent the leakage of organic resin and polyisocyanate into the bore of the mixing chamber where they ultimately react to obstruct the mixing chamber with polyurethane foam, rendering the dispensing apparatus generally inoperable. Once this condition has occurred, the dispensing apparatus must be disassembled such that the mixing chamber can be replaced or rebuilt prior to continued operation of the dispensing apparatus. ("Teflon" is a registered trade mark.)

Accordingly, it can be appreciated that there is a need for a dispensing apparatus which incorporates a mixing chamber which is readily detachable therefrom for replacement thereof with a minimum of system disruption and associated loss of productivity. Further, it can also

(17)

be appreciated that there is a need for a mixing chamber incorporating a core constructed of Teflon or other such material which overcomes the associated problems with cold forming of such material during operation of the dispensing apparatus, i.e., loss of interference fit between the valving rod and bore of the mixing chamber.

The present invention provides a mixing chamber assembly for receiving a plurality of fluid components from a source thereof for forming a fluid to be discharged therefrom and including a core constructed from deformable material and having an axial bore therein, a plurality of inlet openings arranged in communication with the bore for supplying the fluid components from the source to the bore, a valving rod axially movable within the bore between positions closing and opening the inlet openings, and a housing surrounding the core, comprising maintaining means for maintaining the core within the housing under a compressive force in both an axial and radial direction so as to maintain an interference fit between the bore and the valving rod, the maintaining means being resilient and arranged under compression to continuously exert a compressive force against a portion of the core irrespective of dimensional changes of the core during use of the mixing chamber assembly.

In order that the invention may be fully understood, it will now be described with reference to the accompanying drawings, in which:

5 Figure 1 is a perspective view of a fluid dispensing system including a work station provided with a fluid dispensing apparatus having a detachable mixing chamber assembly;

10 Figure 2 is a front elevation of the fluid dispensing apparatus as shown in Figure 1 having a detachable mixing chamber assembly secured thereto;

15 Figure 3 is a rear elevation of the fluid dispensing apparatus as shown in Figure 2 wherein such apparatus is shown having means for supplying organic resin and polyisocyanate to the mixing chamber of such apparatus;

20 Figure 4 is a partial cross-sectional side elevation taken along line 4-4 of the fluid dispensing apparatus as shown in Figure 3 wherein such apparatus is shown in an inoperative position to prevent discharge of fluid therefrom;

Figure 5 is a partial cross-sectional side elevation of the fluid dispensing apparatus as shown in Figure 4 wherein such apparatus is shown in an operative position for discharging a fluid therefrom;

25 Figure 6 is a partial cross-sectional side elevation of the detachable mixing chamber as shown in Figure 4 wherein such chamber is shown to include means for maintaining the core thereof under a compressive force in an axial and radial direction, and further showing such chamber including a reservoir containing a solvent for the polyurethane foam;

30 Figure 7 is a cross-sectional side elevation taken along line 7-7 of Figure 6 showing the detachable mixing chamber including a pair of inlet openings formed from an inlet member in the core adapted to maintain the dimensions and shape thereof during use of the dispensing apparatus; and,

35 Figure 8 is a cross-sectional side elevation taken along line 8-8 of Figure 5 showing the detachable

mixing chamber removably secured to the dispensing apparatus wherein the inlet openings are arranged in communication with passageways provided in the fluid dispensing apparatus for supplying the organic resin and polyisocyanate to the bore formed in the core of the mixing chamber.

Referring now to the drawings in which like reference characters represent like elements, there is shown in Figure 1 a foam dispensing system designated generally by reference character 100. The foam dispensing system 100 includes at least one work station 102 located along a conveying apparatus 104. The conveying apparatus 104 transfers receptacle 106 having an object 108 therein to be packaged from a remote location to the work station 102. Located at each work station 102, there is provided a foam dispensing apparatus 110 for mixing and dispensing of chemical reactants in forming a polyurethane foam 112. The construction and operation of the dispensing apparatus 110 in accordance with the present invention will be described hereinafter. In this regard, the operation of the dispensing apparatus

is generally similar to the operation of the dispensing apparatus disclosed and described in the United States Patent Application Serial No. 159,369, filed June 13, 1980, and assigned to the same assignee of the present invention.

The chemical reactants for the polyurethane foam 112 are dispensed from suitable containers 114, respectively containing a liquid organic resin designated as chemical A and a polyisocyanate designated as chemical B. Chemicals A and B are each supplied to the dispensing apparatus 110 through suitable feed lines 116. The organic resin and polyisocyanate are mixed within a detachable mixing chamber 118 removably secured to the dispensing apparatus 110 to form the polyurethane foam 112 which is discharged therefrom.

There will now be described a general explanation of the operation of the foam dispensing

system 100. The conveying apparatus 104 indexes receptacles 106 to the work station 102 under the dispensing apparatus 110, which is now positioned over the receptacle 106. The dispensing apparatus 110 is
5 mounted to a fixture 120 which allows movement of the dispensing apparatus over the receptacle 106 in a desired manner. The fixture 120 can be constructed of an assembly known to those skilled in the art, such as that disclosed in the United States Patent No. 4,196,160 which is
10 incorporated by reference herein.

As the conveying apparatus 104 positions each receptacle 106 under the dispensing apparatus 110, the dispensing apparatus is activated to discharge polyurethane foam 112 from the mixing chamber 118 into
15 the receptacle so as to encapsulate the object 108. The fixture 120 is operatively moved such that the polyurethane foam 112 fills all voids in the receptacle 106 and completely encapsulates the object 108. The movement of the dispensing apparatus 110
20 by the fixture 120 may be by manual manipulation or by programmed control. Upon filling of the receptacle 106 with polyurethane foam 112, the foam dispensing operation is terminated.

Although the foam dispensing system 100 has
25 been described with reference to packaging objects, it is evident to one skilled in the art that such system may be incorporated for other purposes. For example, the foam dispensing system 100 can be used for depositing polyurethane foam 112 into preshaped dies for forming
30 shaped objects therefrom.

A description of the dispensing apparatus 110 for dispensing one or more fluids and which is particularly well suited, although not limited thereby, for mixing two liquids such as a liquid organic resin and
35 a liquid polyisocyanate, which react to form a polyurethane foam 112, will now be described initially with reference to Figures 2 and 3. The dispensing apparatus 110 generally includes a control assembly generally designated by reference numeral 122 and a

detachable mixing chamber 119. The control assembly 122 is adapted to control the supplying of organic resin and polyisocyanate to the mixing chamber 118 and the discharging of the polyurethane foam 112 therefrom. The control assembly 122 is externally constructed from a handle section 124, a hollow barrel section 126 and a head section 128. The barrel section 126 and head section 128 are secured to the handle section 124 in a manner to be described hereinafter. A trigger 130 is provided in the control assembly 122 attached to the handle section 124 via screw 132.

As shown in Figure 3, a pair of liquid entry openings 134, 136 are formed in the head section 128 extending along opposite sides thereof and having a sleeve 138 inserted therein of Teflon or other deformable material which will not be chemically attacked by the organic resin or polyisocyanate. At the terminal end of the liquid entry openings 134, 136, within the head section 128, are provided openings 140 in communication with a pair of control valves 142, 144 for controlling the respective supplying of liquid organic resin and polyisocyanate from a source thereof to the mixing chamber 118, which chamber is removably secured to the head section 118 via knob 146. The source of liquid organic resin and polyisocyanate are respectively introduced into the liquid entry openings 134, 136 via liquid connectors 148 provided in the head section 128 in communication with the liquid entry openings 134, 136.

Referring to Figure 4, the internal construction of the control assembly 122, in particular the handle section 124 and the barrel section 126, will now be described in detail. The barrel section 126 is secured to the top of the handle section 124 by an alignment pin 150 and a threaded bolt 152. Likewise, the head section 128 is secured to the top of the handle section 124 by an alignment pin 154 and a threaded bolt 156. The mixing chamber 118 is removably secured to the top portion of the head section 128 by the engagement of the knob 146 with a threaded rod 158 secured to the

mixing chamber and extending through an opening provided in the head section.

5 The head section 124 of the control assembly 122 has been generally described with reference to Figures 2 and 3. The attachment of the mixing chamber 118 to the head section 128 in a manner to communicate with the liquid entry openings 134, 136 via control valves 142, 144 to a source of liquid organic resin and polyisocyanate will be described hereinafter
10 with reference to Figure 8. The barrel section 126 of the control assembly 122 includes a movable piston 160 slideably arranged within the bore of the barrel section. The piston 160 includes an O-ring 162 circumferentially circumscribing one end thereof in a manner to engage the
15 inner surface of the barrel section 126 to form a seal thereto. The open end of the barrel section 126 is sealed by a plug 164 having an O-ring 166 circumferentially circumscribing the plug to form a seal to the inner surface of the barrel section. The plug 164 is retained
20 within the barrel section 126 via a retaining clip 168 as best shown in Figure 3. The piston 160 is pneumatically driven within the barrel section 126 and controls the movement of a piston rod 170 secured within the piston by a retaining pin 172. The piston rod 170 extends through a
25 seal assembly 174 provided at the forward end of the barrel section 126. The seal assembly 174 is generally constructed from one or more O-rings and retaining rings to provide a sliding seal for the piston rod 170. A full description of the nature of operation for moving the
30 piston 160 by means of a pressurized source is generally provided in United States Patent No. 4,023,733 which patent is hereby incorporated by reference.

The handle section 124 of the control assembly 122 will now be described. The handle
35 section 124 includes a bore 176 which receives the trigger 130 and which communicates with the surrounding atmosphere by channels 178, 180 formed in the lower section of the handle section. The bore 176 is further provided in communication with the interior of the barrel

section 126 by passageways 182, 184. The passageway 182, 184 are formed within the handle section 124 and barrel section 126, including an O-ring seal 186 provided at the interface between the handle section and barrel section where the passageways are maintained in aligned relationship by the alignment pin 150. A source of pressurized gas is supplied to the handle section 124 via opening 188 and supplied to the bore 176 by passageway 190. A pair of O-ring seals 192, 194 are provided on the trigger 130 within the bore 176 to divide the bore into a left annular chamber 196, a middle annular chamber 198 and a right annular chamber 200.

The construction of the detachable mixing chamber 118 will now be described generally with reference to Figures 6 and 7. Specifically referring to Figure 6, the mixing chamber 118 is constructed from first and second shell halves 202, 204 formed of stainless steel or other such suitable metal material which will not be chemically attacked by the organic resin, polyisocyanate or polyurethane foam, in addition to withstanding the mechanical stresses imparted thereon during operation of the dispensing apparatus 110. The first and second shell halves 202, 204 are arranged in colinear alignment as illustrated in Figure 6 to form a longitudinally extending cavity 206 therein. A core 208 of Teflon or other deformable material is inserted in the left side of the cavity 206 formed by the second shell half 204. The core 208 is confined within the cavity 206 by the walls forming the second shell half 204 and a retaining plate 210.

The core 208 is continuously maintained under a compressive force in an axial and radial direction by the walls of the second shell half 204 and the retaining plate 210 being urged against the core by a plurality of compressed Belleville washers 212 maintained in their appropriate location by the lip 214 formed at the sealed mating portion of the first and second shell halves 202, 204. The core 208 is provided with an axial bore 216 longitudinally extending therethrough in communication

(24)

with the exterior of the mixing chamber 118 and a reservoir 218 formed within the right side of the cavity 206 defined generally by the first shell half 202. Contained within the reservoir 218 is a cleaning fluid or solvent 219 for the polyurethane foam such as Cellosolve solvent.

A valving rod 220 longitudinally extends through the reservoir 218 and is slidably received in interference fit within the bore 216 of the core 208. A stop ring 222 is secured around the valving rod 220 within the reservoir 218. The first shell half 202 is provided with an opening through which the valving rod 220 moves and which is sealed thereto by an O-ring 224 and a retaining ring 226. The valving rod 220 is suitably constructed at one end 228 thereof to releasably engage the piston rod 170 in the manner as illustrated in Figure 4. The mixing chamber 118 and the valving rod 220 together constitute a mixing chamber assembly.

Referring to Figure 7, the mixing chamber 118 includes a pair of apertures 230,232 extending radially therethrough in communication between the exterior of the mixing chamber and the bore 216 of core 208. Inserted within each of the apertures 230,232 is an inlet member 234,236 of stainless steel or other such suitable material as noted above, having an inlet opening 238,240 in communication with the bore 216.

The inlet openings 238,240 provide for the entry of

the organic resin and polyisocyanate into the bore 216 of the mixing chamber 118 to form the polyurethane foam 112 therein. In this regard, it is desirable that the inlet openings 238, 240 be arranged with respect to each other to provide optimum mixing of the organic resin and polyisocyanate within the bore 216, yet at the same time, to avoid the problem referred to as "cross-over". Cross-over is the condition wherein, for example, organic resin entering through inlet opening 238 crosses over the bore 216 and interacts chemically with the polyisocyanate entering through the inlet opening 240 to form polyurethane foam 112 at the mouth of the inlet opening 240 in a manner to cause polyurethane foam

accumulations thereat. The accumulation of polyurethane foam 112 at one of the inlet openings 238, 240 often prevents the proper controlled flow of the organic resin or polyisocyanate to the bore 216 for production of suitable polyurethane foam 112 therein. Once this condition has occurred, the mixing chamber 118 must be removed from the dispensing apparatus 110, disassembled and the mixing chamber cleaned or replaced prior to continued operation.

It has been found that the problems described above in regard to cross-over of the organic resin or polyisocyanate can be effectively overcome by arranging the inlet openings 238, 240 in radial alignment in other than opposed relationship. Specifically, it has been found that arranging the inlet openings 238, 240 radially spaced from each other in the range of about 120 to 130 degrees minimizes the above-mentioned cross-over problem and maximizes the mixing efficiency between the organic resin and polyisocyanate within the bore 216 of the mixing chamber 118. In accordance with the preferred embodiment, it has been found that the preferred radial spacing for the inlet openings 238, 240 is in the amount of approximately 125 degrees. Although the inlet openings 238, 240 have been described as being arranged in radial alignment and spaced from each other in the above manner, it is contemplated that such openings may be arranged in other relationships without departing from the scope of the present invention.

The inlet members 234, 236 are generally constructed of stainless steel which, in addition to being chemically inert to the organic resin, polyisocyanate or polyurethane foam, also maintain their dimensions and shape during operation of the mixing chamber 118. It has been found that the interference fit between the so-called valving rod and the bore of the prior art dispensing apparatus resulted in the cold working of the Teflon material forming the core resulting

27

in extrusion of such material out through the opening thereof, thereby causing loss of the interference fit and, in addition, causing cold forming of the apertures provided in the core. These disadvantages resulting from the use of a core of Teflon or other such material have been overcome in accordance with the present invention by maintaining the core 208 under a continuous compressive force in the radial and axial direction.

As described, such continuous compressive forces result from the core 208 being dimensionally stabilized by the walls of the second shell half 204 and the compressive force imposed on the core by the Belleville washers 212 acting upon the retaining plate 210. In addition, the construction of the inlet members 234, 236 of stainless steel or other such suitable metal material results in the inlet openings 238, 240 retaining their dimensions and shape during operation by avoiding the problems associated with the cold forming of the Teflon core 208. As such, it has been found that the prior art dispensing apparatus as noted above required the rebuilding of the mixing chamber after approximately two thousand pounds of polyurethane foam had been produced by the dispensing apparatus whereas the mixing chamber 118 has been found to allow the production of approximately twenty thousand pounds of polyurethane foam before the necessity of rebuilding such chamber. The ability of the mixing chamber 118 to provide a tenfold output of polyurethane foam 112 prior to being rebuilt minimizes the system interruption and the associated loss of productivity, not to mention the associated cost of rebuilding the mixing chamber 118.

The mixing chamber 118 is removably secured to the control assembly 122 in a manner to be accessible from outside of the dispensing apparatus 110 for detachment thereof from the control assembly. Specifically referring to Figure 8, the mixing chamber 118 is shown removably secured to the head section 128 of the control assembly 122 by the engagement

of the knob 146 with the threaded rod 158 of the detachable mixing chamber 118. The mixing chamber 118 is arranged such that the apertures 230, 232 are provided in communication with passageways 242, 244 formed in the head section 128 which respectively communicate with the control valves 142, 144 for the organic resin and polyisocyanate. O-rings 246, 248 provided within a recessed portion surrounding the mouth of the passageways 242, 244 provide a seal between the passageways and the mixing chamber 118 at the respective apertures 230, 232. In this regard, organic resin or polyisocyanate from the control valves 242, 244 can be supplied to the bore 216 of the mixing chamber 118 via the passageways 242, 244 and the inlet openings 238, 240. As is readily apparent from the above description of the construction of the detachable mixing chamber 118 and its being accessible from outside of the dispensing apparatus 110, the chamber is readily detachable therefrom by unscrewing the knob 146 thereby allowing replacement of the mixing chamber with a minimum of system interruption and loss of associated productivity.

The operation of the dispensing apparatus 110 in a dispensing system 100 as shown generally in Figure 1 will now be described. Referring to Figure 3 in operation of the dispensing apparatus 110, a pressurized source of liquid organic resin and polyisocyanate is coupled to the liquid entry openings 134, 136 via liquid connectors 148. The organic resin and polyisocyanate, from their respective containers 114, fill the liquid entry openings 134, 136 under pressure. In addition, the organic resin and polyisocyanate, from their respective liquid entry openings 134, 136, fill the passageways 242, 244 in communication with the inlet openings 238, 240 upon opening of the respective control valves 142, 144. In this regard, a continuous supply of organic resin and polyisocyanate is supplied to the bore 216 of the mixing chamber 118 via the liquid entry openings 134, 136, control valves 142, 144, passageways 242, 244 and inlet openings 238, 240.

5 A source of pressurized gas is connected to opening 188 which communicates with the bore 176 in which the trigger 130 is inserted via passageway 190. The trigger is maintained in an outwardly extending position by the action of a bias spring 250 inserted within the bore 176. The trigger 130 is operative to communicate the pressurized gas from passageway 190 alternatively to one of passageways 182, 184 while maintaining the other passageway at substantially atmospheric conditions. As shown in Figure 4, a dispensing apparatus 110 is shown in an inoperative position. The trigger 130 is maintained in an outward position such that passageway 182 is in communication with the middle annular chamber 198 which is pressurized by its communication with passageway 190 and opening 188. The pressurized gas from passageway 182 operates to slide the movable piston 160 within the hollow barrel section 126 as shown. Movement of the piston 160 is aided by the barrel section 126 to the left of the piston being maintained at substantially atmospheric pressure via passageway 184 and its communication to the external atmosphere via the right annular chamber 200 and channel 180. The movement of the movable piston 160 as described causes the valving rod 220 to assume a closed position in the mixing chamber 118 such that its forward end extends past the inlet openings 238, 240 in the core 208 of the mixing chamber 118 thereby preventing the flow of organic resin or polyisocyanate into the bore 216 of the mixing chamber from the inlet openings.

30 In order to activate the dispensing apparatus 110 for mixing or spraying, the control valves 142, 144 are opened and the trigger 130 is then pressed inward, see Figure 5, to move the piston 160 to its rearward position adjacent the plug 164. As the piston 160 moves backward, the valving rod 220 is retracted and moves past the inlet openings 238, 240 in the bore 216, thereby permitting the inflow of pressurized organic resin and polyisocyanate. The valving rod 220 moves within the reservoir 218 except for the

30

front end thereof which is maintained within the bore 216 thereby functioning to seal off the reservoir by closing the back end of the bore defined in the core 208 from the liquid inrush. When polyisocyanate and organic resin flow into the bore 216 of the mixing chamber 118, they will mix due to their respective pressure, and will be forced or sprayed outward from the tip of the dispensing apparatus 110.

The movement of the valving rod 220 is restricted by the stop ring 222 engaging the rear wall of the first shell half 202 of the mixing chamber 118. As such, the valving rod 220 is prevented from being removed totally from the bore 216 defined in the core 208 of the mixing chamber 118. During the dispensing of the polyurethane foam 112, that portion of the valving rod 220 which had previously been within the bore 216 to seal the mouth of the inlet openings 238, 240 is now in contact with the solvent 219 within reservoir 218. The solvent 219 removes any accumulated polyurethane foam 112 therefrom which would otherwise clog the inlet openings 238, 240 and render the dispensing apparatus partially or totally inoperative.

The movement of the piston 160 in a rearward direction is accomplished in a similar manner to the movement of the piston in a forward direction. The pressing inward of the trigger 130 causes passageway 182, which had previously been pressurized and in communication with the middle annular chamber 198, to be vented to the surrounding atmosphere via its communication with the first annular chamber 196 and channel 178. Passageway 184 now becomes pressurized by its communication with the middle annular chamber 198 and the pressurized gas via channel 190 while being isolated from the surrounding atmosphere through channel 180 via the O-ring seal 194. Accordingly, it is seen that the pressurized gas via the movement of the trigger 130 is operative to move the piston 160 in a sliding back and forth motion to move the valving rod 220 into and out of the bore 216 of the mixing chamber 118 to either allow or

31

prevent the inrush of organic resin and polyisocyanate thereto in the formation of polyurethane foam 112.

5 When it is desired to stop the dispensing, either the operator or some mechanical means releases the trigger 130 and the air pressure built up in the passageway 182 causes the piston 160 and the valving rod 220 to move forwardly, and the valving rod closes off the liquid inlet openings 238, 240 as shown in Figure 4.

10 The operation of the dispensing apparatus 110 can be controlled in a manner known to those skilled in the art. Thus, as each receptacle 106 is indexed to the work station 102 under the dispensing apparatus 110, the dispensing apparatus is activated to discharge polyurethane foam 112 into each receptacle. From the
15 foregoing it can be appreciated that, if the occasion arises, the mixing chamber 118 can be readily and quickly detached from the control means 122 by simply unscrewing knob 146 which holds the mixing chamber thereto. The ability to quickly replace mixing chambers by the simple
20 and quick unscrewing of a single knob minimizes system downtime and the associated loss of productivity.

In the above description, there has been presented a dispensing apparatus 110 for discharging a foam 112 therefrom. The dispensing
25 apparatus 110 is constructed from a chamber 118 adapted to receive a plurality of fluid components from a source thereof to form the foam 112 therein. The chamber 118 includes a core 208 having a bore 216 extending therethrough and a plurality of inlet openings 238, 240
30 arranged in communication with the bore for supplying the fluid components from the source to the bore. A control assembly 122 is provided for controlling the supplying of the fluid components from the source to the bore 216 and discharging of the foam 112 therefrom. The chamber 118 is
35 constructed and arranged in operative association with the dispensing apparatus 110 in a manner to be detachable from the control assembly 122 and the source of the fluid components.

Still further, in the above description, there has been presented a chamber 118 adapted to receive a plurality of fluid components from a source thereof for forming a foam 112 to be discharged therefrom. The chamber 118 is constructed from a core 208 having an axial bore 216 longitudinally extending therethrough and a pair of inlet openings 238, 240 arranged in the core in communication with the bore for supplying the liquid component from the source to the bore. The pair of inlet openings 238, 240 are arranged in radial alignment in the core 208 in other than opposed relationship and constructed from inlet members 234, 236 adapted to maintain the dimensions thereof during use of the chamber 118. Further, means are provided for maintaining the core 208 under a compressive force in an axial and radial direction.

Although the invention herein has been described with reference to particular embodiments, it is to be understood that these embodiments are merely illustrative of the principles and application of the present invention. It is to be understood that numerous modifications may be made in the illustrative embodiments and other arrangements may be devised without departing from the scope of the present invention as defined by the appended claims.

The above-described fluid mixing and dispensing apparatus is the subject of our co-pending application No. 8225050 (GB 2 106 793 A) from which the present application has been divided.

CLAIMS

1. A mixing chamber assembly for receiving a plurality of fluid components from a source thereof for forming a fluid to be discharged therefrom and including a core constructed from deformable material and having an axial bore therein, a plurality of inlet openings arranged in communication with the bore for supplying the fluid components from the source to the bore, a valving rod axially movable within the bore between positions closing and opening the inlet openings, and a housing surrounding the core, comprising maintaining means for maintaining the core within the housing under a compressive force in both an axial and radial direction so as to maintain an interference fit between the bore and the valving rod, the maintaining means being resilient and arranged under compression to continuously exert a compressive force against a portion of the core irrespective of dimensional changes of the core during use of the mixing chamber assembly.

2. A mixing chamber assembly as claimed in claim 1, wherein the maintaining means is constructed from material which is non-deformable relative to the material of the core.

3. A mixing chamber assembly as claimed in claim 1 or 2, wherein the inlet openings are constructed from inlet



34

members positioned in the core and constructed to maintain the dimensions thereof during use of the chamber.

4. A mixing chamber assembly as claimed in claim 3,
5 wherein the maintaining means and the inlet members are constructed from material which is non-deformable relative to the material of the core.
5. A mixing chamber assembly as claimed in any of
10 claims 1 to 4, further containing a reservoir for storing a solvent for the said fluid.
6. A mixing chamber assembly as claimed in claim 5, wherein the valving rod has a portion slidably arranged in interference fit within the core and extending into the reservoir for contact with the solvent therein.
- 15 7. A mixing chamber assembly as claimed in any of claims 1 to 6, further including a retaining plate positioned between the core and the maintaining means.
8. A mixing chamber assembly as claimed in claim 7, wherein the core is of unitary construction.
- 20 9. A mixing chamber assembly as claimed in claim 7 or 8, wherein the retaining plate and the maintaining means



are arranged within a space provided between one end of the core and a portion of the housing.

10. A mixing chamber assembly as claimed in claim 9, wherein the said portion of the housing includes a lip engaging the maintaining means, whereby the maintaining means exerts the continuous compressive force against the retaining plate.

11. A mixing chamber assembly as claimed in any of claims 1 to 10, wherein the housing is constructed of a first and a second half joined together, the first half containing a solvent for the said fluid and the second half containing the core.

12. A mixing chamber assembly adapted to receiving a plurality of fluid components from a source for forming a fluid to be discharged therefrom, substantially as described and shown in the accompanying drawings.
