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PATENT SPECIFICATION

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(54) TWO-WIRE CURRENT TRANSMITTER FOR PROVIDING A DIRECT CURRENT SIGNAL PROPORTIONAL TO A MEASURED PARAMETER

(71) We, ROSEMOUNT INC., of 12001 West 78th Street, Eden Prairie, State of Minnesota, United States of America, a Corporation organised and existing under the laws of the State of Minnesota, United States of America, do hereby declare the invention, for which we pray that a patent may be granted to us, and the method by which it is to be performed, to be particularly described in and by the following statement:—

This invention relates to a two wire current transmitter for providing a direct current signal proportional to a measured parameter. A DC excitation to the transmitter may be, for example, amplitude controlled in response to a varying reactance such as a capacitance pressure sensor so that the DC current serves both as excitation and as the electrical signal representative of the sensed pressure.

Two wire circuitry for converting a varying AC reactive impedance to a current signal is described in our U.S. Patent No. 3,646,538, issued February 29, 1972 and this disclosure shows certain improvements over that prior disclosure.

According to this invention, a two wire current transmitter for providing a direct current signal proportional to a parameter to be measured comprises first and second terminals for connection to a direct current supply means; a resistance network connected to said first terminal; a current controller in series with the resistance network and connected to said second terminal, said current controller providing a first current path between said network and said second terminal, and including amplifier means having an input and an output, said output being coupled to control the current through said first current path as a function of a signal at said input, and second means connected to said resistance network and said amplifier means to provide a signal at the input of said amplifier means which is a function of

the current through said network; an input circuit coupled to said terminals, the resistance network and the input of said amplifier means and including means defining at least two separate current paths between said terminals, at least one of which is a regulated current path, a Zener diode connected in the regulated current path to provide a reference voltage thereacross, a resistance voltage divider connected directly across said Zener diode and coupled to the input of said amplifier means, said input circuit further including a transducer connected to provide a varying electrical signal at the input to the amplifier means as a function of the parameter to be measured to thereby change the output of the amplifier and the current through the first current path as a function of the parameter, said current controller including means to regulate the current in said regulated current path comprising a transistor having a collector, an emitter and a base and being connected to transmit between its collector and emitter at least a portion of the current passing through said first current path, and a resistor connected between the base and emitter of said transistor, said regulated current path being connected to the base of said transistor.

The above-described arrangement is particularly suitable for providing a current signal in proportion to a variable reactance to be measured. The circuit may include an oscillator and rectifying means in circuit with the reactance to provide a DC signal as a function of the reactance, the aforesaid resistance network providing a current signal proportional to the total current drawn by the circuit and the current controller stage varying the total current as a function of the variable reactance.

The circuit of the invention is particularly suited for measurement with a capacitive pressure sensor where only one active capacitor is employed and where the

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total DC level to the circuit is to be linear with the pressure being measured.

This circuit employs current summing in both the oscillator control stage and the output stage to minimize amplifier offset errors. Also, largely due to an improved output stage, the voltage required for circuit operation is relatively low and the required number of components is significantly reduced compared to the prior art while a reference voltage level is precisely maintained across a wide range of output current signal.

Reference is made to the accompanying drawings wherein:

Figure 1 is a schematic representation of a circuit which provides control of the current supplied to the circuit in a functional relation to a variable capacitor; and

Figure 2 is a schematic representation of an alternate oscillator control stage where a variable inductor rather than a variable capacitor provides a signal to the output stage.

Referring to the drawings and the numerals of reference thereon, the preferred embodiment is shown in detail in Figure 1 where C_1 represents a capacitance pressure sensor having only one active capacitor. Such a pressure sensor is described in copending patent application 13498/75, (Serial No. 1,497,212), where a diaphragm moves in response to pressure changes and provides a varying capacitance which is inversely related to pressure and which decreases with increasing pressure. Then it is desirable to provide a circuit which gives an increasing DC signal inverse to decreasing capacitance so the resulting function is an electrical output linearly proportional to pressure. The described circuit performs this function and also discloses a current control stage which when used in conjunction with the DC signal producing circuit provides control of the excitation current amplitude in proportion to the DC signal. This circuit together with a sensor providing the capacitance signal C_1 is referred to as a two-wire transmitter since the total excitation signal and the signal proportional to the parameter being measured comprises a direct current carried on only two wires.

Referring to Figure 1, the complete circuit comprises three main portions separated by dashed lines and generally depicted as an input circuit 10, a current control circuit 60 and an excitation circuit 90.

Operation of the Input Circuit of Figure 1

The input circuit includes a varying

capacitor C_1 and a reference capacitor C_2 ; an oscillator and associated rectifying components to provide DC signals proportional to the capacitors; a source of reference voltage; and connecting circuitry to provide a desired function between C_1 and a DC output signal at line 11.

The oscillator provides repetitive charging and discharging currents or current pulses to each of the capacitors C_1 and C_2 and the oscillator output in terms of the product of frequency and voltage provided thereby, is controlled by the voltages at the inputs to amplifier 12. The output of amplifier 12 connects through a coupling resistor 13 to a first end of an oscillator feedback winding 14. The other end of the feedback winding 14 connects to the emitter of a transistor 15. A capacitor 16 is connected between the base of transistor 15 and the first end of winding 14. An oscillator primary winding 17 is connected between the collector of transistor 15 and a line 18. A resistor 19 is also connected between line 18 and the base of transistor 15. Amplifier 12 is energized by connecting its power terminals between current supply line 18 and power return line 19.

Primary winding 17 is electrically coupled to secondary windings 20 and 21, which provide the repetitive currents to capacitors C_1 and C_2 . Winding 20 is connected at one end to a line 22 and the other end connects through a diode 23 to a first side of capacitor C_1 . The other side of capacitor C_1 connects to line 18 through a coupling capacitor C_3 which provides DC isolation between the grounded sensor (C_1) and the connected circuit. This allows the use of a grounded power supply or receiver and a grounded capacitor C_1 . A first end of winding 21 is connected to a line 24 and a second end of the winding connects to the first side of capacitance C_1 through a diode 25 of opposite polarity to diode 23 so that it conducts current from C_1 . The first end of winding 21 also connects through a diode 26 to a first side of capacitor C_2 . The first side of capacitor C_2 is also connected through a diode 27 to the line 18. The other side of capacitor C_2 is connected to the second end of winding 21. A resistor 28 and a parallel capacitance 29 are connected between line 18 and line 22 and a capacitor 30 is also connected between line 18 and line 24. A capacitor 31 is connected between lines 24 and 22 which lines are connected to the non-inverting and inverting input terminals, respectively, of amplifier 12. A feedback capacitor 32 connects between line 22 and the output of amplifier 12.

In operation the currents associated with capacitors C_1 and C_2 are pulsating DC signals (also called current pulses) having

an average amplitude directly proportional to the product of peak applied voltage, frequency of the pulses and capacitance so long as the peak voltages are of sufficient duration to substantially fully charge the capacitors during each cycle and neglecting the forward volt drop of the connected diodes. The DC current passing through diodes 23 and 25 then is equal to fVC_1 where V is the peak to peak voltage and f is frequency of the AC excitation at windings 20 and 21. Similarly, the DC current through diodes 26 and 27 is fVC_2 . The voltage on line 24 with respect to line 18 is substantially fixed and may be termed V_1 . The polarity of the input signals to amplifier 12 is such that an increased output from amplifier 12 provides increased current through diodes 23 and 25 and a decreased potential at line 22. Thus the potential of line 22 remains substantially equal to V_1 and the DC current through diodes 23 and 25 equals the current through resistor 28 so that

$$(1) \quad fVC_1 = \frac{V_1}{R_{28}}$$

and the oscillator control provides the equality

$$(2) \quad fV = \frac{V_1}{C_1 R_{28}}$$

The input circuit includes a Zener diode 33 connected between line 18 and a power return line 34, and a pair of fixed value resistors 35 and 36 are connected in series across diode 33. The junction of resistors 35 and 36 connects through a resistor 37 to a line 38 and the fixed value voltage at line 38 with respect to line 18 is designated V_R . A zeroing potentiometer 39 is connected between line 18 and line 34 and the wiper of the potentiometer is connected through a resistor 40 to line 11. Potentiometer 41 and a resistor 42 are connected in series between line 11 and line 24. The wiper of potentiometer 41 is connected to one end of the potentiometer so it functions as a variable resistor to provide a linearizing characteristic as further described below.

The direct current i_1 through potentiometer 41 and resistor 42 is made up of currents passing through diodes 23 and 25 and also through diodes 26 and 27 and thus

$$i_1 = fV(C_2 - C_1)$$

This input circuit also includes a zeroing current i_2 which passes from line 11 through

resistor 40 as shown. Then the current on line 11 is

$$i_2 + i_1$$

or

$$i_2 + fV(C_2 - C_1)$$

and since

$$fV = \frac{V_1}{C_1 R_{28}}$$

this current may be expressed as

$$(3) \quad i_2 + i_1 = i_2 + \frac{V_1}{R_{28}} \left(\frac{C_2}{C_1} - 1 \right)$$

The voltage V_1 is somewhat dependent upon

$$\frac{C_2}{C_1}$$

since

$$V_1 = V_R + i_1(R_{41} + R_{42})$$

under the assumption that the voltage on line 11 substantially equals the voltage V_R on line 38. Consequently the value of $R_{41} + R_{42}$ provides a selectable term which may be used to modify the expression for $i_2 + i_1$. This modifying action is actually used to provide linearization to the overall transfer function, that is, the relationship between output current and measured parameter, which is desirable due to unavoidable shunting capacitance across C_1 and other factors such as slight non-linearity of a pressure diaphragm for example. This input circuit as described provides a current signal on line 11 which is a function of the expression

$$\frac{C_2}{C_1}$$

and which includes zeroing and linearizing features. The reference or fixed voltage V_R is supplied on line 38.

Operation of the Current Control Circuit

The current control circuit 60 is powered via power supply line 61 and power return line 62 and its basic function is to provide energization to the input circuit 10 and to provide control of the total circuit current I_T in line 61 as a function of the condition being measured. It can be looked at as

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being connected to the input circuit at terminals 18A, 11A, 38A, 34A and 19A.

The total current I_T passes through a protection diode 63 and thence through a resistor network 64 to line 18 except for a fixed fraction i_3 of the total current I_T which is carried via line 65 to line 11. Resistor network 64 comprises a series combination of a potentiometer 66 and a resistor 67 connected in parallel with a resistor 68 between diode 63 and line 18. The wiper of potentiometer 66 connects through resistor 69 and line 65 to line 11. An amplifier 70 is energized by connection between lines 18 and 19 and has its output connected through a resistor 71 to the base of a current control transistor 72. The non-inverting input of amplifier 70 connects to line 11 and the inverting input is connected to line 38. A capacitor 73 is connected between the inverting input and the output of amplifier 70. The emitter of transistor 72 connects to power supply line 18 via resistor 74 and a current limiting diode 75 is connected between line 18 and the base of transistor 72. If the current through resistor 74 exceeds a certain value, diode 75 will conduct and limit transistor 72 thereby limiting the current and acting as a protective feature. A capacitor 76 is connected across the base and emitter of transistor 72 to provide dynamic stability. The collector of transistor 72 connects to the base of a transistor 77 and the emitter of transistor 77 connects to power return line 62. The collector of transistor 77 connects to line 19 and a resistor 78 is connected between lines 19 and 62. Resistor 78 serves as a current bypass and is active upon energization of the circuit. A resistor 79 and a parallel connected capacitor 80 are connected between the base and emitter of transistor 77 to filter oscillator noise from the output. A resistor 81 is connected between lines 34 and 19 and a transistor 82 has its base connected to line 34 and emitter connected to line 19. The collector of transistor 82 is connected to the emitter of transistor 72. Transistor 82 and resistor 81 serve to stabilize the current through Zener diode 33.

In operation a fixed fraction i_3 of the total current I_T passes to line 11 through resistor 69. An increasing signal on line 11 at the non-inverting terminal of amplifier 70 provides a decreasing signal at the base of transistor 72 and the base of transistor 77 and this reduces the current flow through transistor 77 and network 64. Thus current i_3 also then reduces to tend to maintain a fixed voltage on line 11 equal to the voltage V_R on line 38. Also,

$$i_3 = i_1 + i_2$$

and

where

$$i_3 R_{69} = I_T R_z + V_R$$

$$R_z = \frac{R_{68}(R_{66} + R_{67})}{R_{66} + R_{67} + R_{68}}$$

if potentiometer 66 has its wiper turned up to the top end 66A. Turning the wiper down would modify the expression for R_z and cause it to decrease but the relationship between i_3 and I_T remains linear. Thus potentiometer 66 acts as a span or sensitivity control.

Combining the above expression with the earlier derived expression for $i_2 + i_1$ (equation 3) gives

$$(4) \quad I_T = \frac{V_1 R_{69}}{R_{28} R_z} \left(\frac{C_2}{C_1} - 1 \right) + i_2 \frac{R_{69}}{R_z} - \frac{V_R}{R_z}$$

where V_1 bears the previously described relation to V_R and i_2 is a zeroing current level selected via potentiometer 39.

EXAMPLE

As a specific example an excitation circuit 90 comprising a DC power supply 91 and a load resistor 92 was connected as shown to lines 61 and 62 to provide a positive current flow in the direction of arrow I_T . Capacitor C_1 was varied between approximately 82 pf and 50 pf to represent zero to full scale pressure signals from a capacitive pressure sensor and C_2 was 82 pf. Other component values are given in Table 1. Power supply voltage requirements between lines 61 and 62 was found to be 12 volts minimum and about 35 volts maximum. The output current could be set to 4 ma with potentiometer 39 when C_1 and C_2 were equal and the span could be set with potentiometer 66 to provide 20 ma total current when C_1 was approximately 50 pf. Linearity of I_T versus

$$\frac{C_2}{C_1}$$

could be adjusted with potentiometer 41.

The transmitter provides basically three current paths between lines 18 and 62. The shunt current, which is controlled by amplifier 70 passes from line 18 to resistor 74, and transistor 82, and then through transistor 77, which is the final current control element.

A second regulated current path is provided from line 18 through Zener diode 33 and parallel resistive paths including resistors 35, 36, and 39 to line 34. Line 34 is connected to the base of transistor 82 and to resistor 81, and this combination serves

to regulate the current through Zener diode 33 at a substantially constant level so the reference voltage provided by Zener diode 33 does not vary significantly with increased current. Resistor 81 can be made temperature compensating to compensate for temperature caused changes in the base to emitter voltage drop of transistor 82.

A third current path is not regulated and comprises the paths through the path connections for amplifiers 12 and 70 from line 18 to line 19.

The current control as shown also is accomplished through two stages. The first stage comprises transistor 72 which is directly responsive to the output of amplifier 70. The transistor 72 provides a control signal for the second stage transistor 77, which is the final current control.

The signal provided on line 65 from the resistance network is the current sensitive balancing feedback signal sensed at the input of amplifier 70 when the amplifier has adjusted the current in the shunt path in response to changes in the signal on line 11 due to a change in the output of the transducer.

The use of the particular current regulating circuit disclosed, comprising transistor 82 and resistor 81 is advantageous because it provides necessary regulation with minimum voltage drop. This allows a higher magnitude of feedback voltage developed across resistor 68 and hence at the non-inverting input of amplifier 70 when used in a typical two wire control loop where the voltage available for transmitter excitation is 12 volts minimum, as an accepted standard.

TABLE I

	Symbol	Value and/or Type
Capacitors:	C ₃	0.022 μ f
	16	0.0047 μ f
	29, 30, 73, 80	0.1 μ f
	31, 32, 76	1.0 μ f
Resistors:	13, 37, 74	100 ω
	19	68K
	28	4.53K
	35, 69	13.7K
	36	60.4K
	40	30.1K
	42	750 ω
	67, 68	200 ω
	71	680 ω
	78	8.2K
	79	6.8K
	81	330 ω
Potentiometers:	39	20K
	41	1K
	66	2K
Diodes:	23, 25, 26, 27	1N914
	33	1N4571A
	63	1N4003
	75	1N747A
Transistors:	15	MPS 5172
	72	2N722
	77	2N3019
	82	2N3903
Amplifiers:	12, 70	741C
Transformer Windings:	14	Feedback — 5 turns
	17	Primary — 19 turns
	20, 21	Secondaries — 200 turns
		Bifilar wound
		Core — 768 T 188
		3D3 — Ferroxcube

Operation of the Input Circuit of Figure 2

The circuit of Figure 2 is an alternate arrangement of the oscillator control stage adapted for measurement of a variable inductance. As shown a current signal is

provided which is proportional to the reciprocal of the variable inductance. This relation is applicable for example if the variable inductance is generated by a pressure sensor having a magnetic path passing between a movable diaphragm and

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a stationary pole piece so that the inductance varies inversely with diaphragm deflection.

5 An oscillator similar to the oscillator of Figure 1 comprises a control amplifier 101 energized by connecting it between lines 102 and 103. The output of amplifier 101 connects through a resistor 104 to the junction of a feedback winding 105 and a capacitor 106. The other end of winding 105 connects to the emitter of a transistor 107 and the other side of capacitor 106 connects to the base of transistor 107. A primary winding 108 is connected between the collector of transistor 107 and line 102 and a resistor 109 is connected between the base of transistor 107 and line 102. A capacitor 110 is connected across the inputs to amplifier 101 and a capacitor 111 is connected between the inverting input and the output of amplifier 101. A resistor 112 and a capacitor 113 are connected in parallel and between the non-inverting input of amplifier 101 and line 102. A Zener diode 114 is connected between line 102 and a line 115 and the diode 114 is in parallel with the series combination of resistors 116 and 117. The junction between resistors 116 and 117 is connected to a line 118 and a reference voltage is thus provided thereon. A zeroing potentiometer 119 is also connected between lines 102 and 115 and the wiper of potentiometer 119 connects through resistor 120 to line 121. One end of a linearizing potentiometer 122 connects to the inverting terminal of amplifier 101 and the other end of potentiometer 122 connects through a resistor 123 to line 121. The circuit description and operation to this point is identical to the circuit of Figure 1 and lines 102, 121, 118, 115 and 103 correspond respectively to lines 18, 11, 38, 34 and 19 of Figure 1. Terminals 102A, 121A, 118A, 115A and 103A provide connection for the output stage 60 of Figure 1 in place of terminals 18A, 11A, 38A, 34A, and 19A, respectively.

50 In order to generate the required function from a varying inductor however, the inductors and associated rectifying circuits require changes in circuit when compared to the variable and fixed capacitors C_1 and C_2 of Figure 1.

55 A single secondary winding 124 is connected between line 102 and the junction of DC blocking capacitors 125 and 126 at first sides thereof. The second side of capacitor 126 is connected to a first end of an inductor L_1 and the second side of capacitor 125 is connected to a first end of inductor L_2 . The second end of inductor L_1 is connected to the cathode of a diode 127 and to the anode of a diode 128. The cathode of diode 128 connects to line 102

and the anode of diode 127 connects to the inverting terminal of amplifier 101. The second end of inductor L_2 is connected to the cathode of a diode 129 and to the anode of a diode 130. The cathode of diode 130 connects to the anode of diode 127 and the anode of diode 129 connects to the non-inverting terminal of amplifier 101. Bypass capacitor 131 is connected between line 102 and the non-inverting terminal of amplifier 101 and another capacitor 132 is connected across secondary winding 124 to set the resonant frequency.

The operation of this circuit is similar to the circuit of Figure 1 in that AC impedances are energized by an oscillator circuit and rectifying loops provide DC signals proportional to the inductances. In this example a DC current i_4 passes through diodes 129 and 130 and

$$i_4 = \frac{KV}{L_2}$$

where V is peak voltage from winding 124, and K is a function of frequency and waveform of the voltage. Similarly a current

$$i_5 = \frac{KV}{L_1}$$

passes through diodes 127 and 128. A current i_6 passing through resistor 123 and potentiometer 122 represents the difference between i_5 and i_4 and is seen to be

$$i_6 = KV \left(\frac{1}{L_1} - \frac{1}{L_2} \right)$$

The current through resistor 112 is also i_4 and calling the voltage at the inverting terminal of amplifier 101 V_1 similar to Figure 1 gives

$$\frac{KV}{L_2} = \frac{V_1}{R_{112}}$$

Then substituting in the expression for i_6 gives

$$i_6 = \frac{V_1 L_2}{R_{112}} \left(\frac{1}{L_1} - \frac{1}{L_2} \right) = \frac{V_1}{R_{112}} \left(\frac{L_2}{L_1} - 1 \right)$$

which is the desired signal current as a function of the variable inductor L_1 and which corresponds to the signal current i_1 of Figure 1. If a linear relation was desired between an inductor and i_6 , L_2 could be

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- 5 selected as the variable inductor. If differential deflection of a pressure diaphragm was to be measured and assuming again that deflection is inversely related to inductance, this could also be accomplished with slight circuit changes providing a different combination of rectified current to give

$$I_r \propto X_1 - X_2$$

- 10 where X_1 is the deflection corresponding to L_1 and X_2 is the deflection corresponding to L_2 .

WHAT WE CLAIM IS:—

- 15 1. A two wire current transmitter for providing a direct current signal proportional to a parameter to be measured comprising first and second terminals for connection to a direct current supply means; a resistance network connected to said first terminal; a current controller in series with the resistance network and connected to said second terminal, said current controller providing a first current path between said network and said second terminal, and including amplifier means having an input and an output, said output being coupled to control the current through said first current path as a function of a signal at said input, and second means connected to said resistance network and said amplifier means to provide a signal at the input of said amplifier means which is a function of the current through said network; an input circuit coupled to said terminals, the resistance network and the input of said amplifier means and including means defining at least two separate current paths between said terminals, at least one of which is a regulated current path, a Zener diode connected in the regulated current path to provide a reference voltage thereacross, a resistance voltage divider connected directly across said Zener diode and coupled to the input of said amplifier means, said input circuit further including a transducer connected to provide a varying electrical signal at the input to the amplifier means as a function of the parameter to be measured to thereby change the output of the amplifier and the current through the first current path as a function of the parameter, said current controller including means to regulate the current in said regulated current path comprising a transistor having a collector, an emitter and a base and being connected to transmit between its collector and emitter at least a portion of the current passing through said first current path, and a resistor connected between the base and emitter of said transistor, said regulated

current path being connected to the base of said transistor.

2. The current transmitter as claimed in Claim 1, wherein said resistor comprises temperature sensitive resistance material. 65

3. The current transmitter as claimed in Claim 1, wherein said current shunt path includes a second transistor having its collector-emitter circuit in series with the collector-emitter path of said first mentioned transistor, said second transistor having its base coupled to the output of said amplifier means. 70

4. The current transmitter as claimed in Claim 3 including a third transistor having its collector-emitter circuit connected between the base of said second transistor and the collector of said first mentioned transistor and having its base connected to the output of said amplifier means. 75

5. The current transmitter as claimed in Claims 1 or 4, wherein said input circuit includes an oscillator to provide an alternating excitation signal to said transducer. 80

6. The current transmitter as claimed in Claim 5, wherein said oscillator includes a control amplifier having an input which is a function of the signal provided by said transducer. 85

7. The current transmitter as claimed in Claim 5, wherein said transducer comprises a variable reactance transducer sensitive to a physical condition to be measured, and including means to connect the oscillator output to said variable reactance transducer. 90

8. The current transmitter as claimed in Claim 7 including further means to connect said variable reactance transducer to provide DC signals from said transducer comprising the output signal of said input circuit. 95

9. The current transmitter as claimed in Claim 8, wherein said oscillator includes a control amplifier, and means to connect said further means to an input of said control amplifier. 100

10. The current transmitter as claimed in Claim 7, wherein said variable reactance transducer comprises a variable capacitance element. 105

11. The current transmitter as claimed in Claim 8, wherein said variable reactance transducer comprises a variable reluctance element. 110

12. The current transmitter as claimed in Claim 10, wherein said variable capacitance element reduces in capacitance with respect to an increase in value of the parameter being measured. 115

13. The current transmitter as claimed in Claims 1 or 4, wherein the separate current path, other than said regulated current 120 125

selected as the variable inductor. If differential deflection of a pressure diaphragm was to be measured and assuming again that deflection is inversely related to inductance, this could also be accomplished with slight circuit changes providing a different combination of rectified current to give

$$I_0 \propto X_1 - X_2$$

- 10 where X_1 is the deflection corresponding to L_1 and X_2 is the deflection corresponding to L_2 .

WHAT WE CLAIM IS:—

- 15 1. A two wire current transmitter for providing a direct current signal proportional to a parameter to be measured comprising first and second terminals for connection to a direct current supply means; a resistance network connected to said first terminal; a current controller in series with the resistance network and connected to said second terminal, said current controller providing a first current path between said network and said second terminal, and including amplifier means having an input and an output, said output being coupled to control the current through said first current path as a function of a signal at said input, and second means connected to said resistance network and said amplifier means to provide a signal at the input of said amplifier means which is a function of the current through said network; an input circuit coupled to said terminals, the resistance network and the input of said amplifier means and including means defining at least two separate current paths between said terminals, at least one of which is a regulated current path, a Zener diode connected in the regulated current path to provide a reference voltage thereacross, a resistance voltage divider connected directly across said Zener diode and coupled to the input of said amplifier means, said input circuit further including a transducer connected to provide a varying electrical signal at the input to the amplifier means as a function of the parameter to be measured to thereby change the output of the amplifier and the current through the first current path as a function of the parameter, said current controller including means to regulate the current in said regulated current path comprising a transistor having a collector, an emitter and a base and being connected to transmit between its collector and emitter at least a portion of the current passing through said first current path, and a resistor connected between the base and emitter of said transistor, said regulated

current path being connected to the base of said transistor.

2. The current transmitter as claimed in Claim 1, wherein said resistor comprises temperature sensitive resistance material. 65

3. The current transmitter as claimed in Claim 1, wherein said current shunt path includes a second transistor having its collector-emitter circuit in series with the collector-emitter path of said first mentioned transistor, said second transistor having its base coupled to the output of said amplifier means. 70

4. The current transmitter as claimed in Claim 3 including a third transistor having its collector-emitter circuit connected between the base of said second transistor and the collector of said first mentioned transistor and having its base connected to the output of said amplifier means. 75 80

5. The current transmitter as claimed in Claims 1 or 4, wherein said input circuit includes an oscillator to provide an alternating excitation signal to said transducer. 85

6. The current transmitter as claimed in Claim 5, wherein said oscillator includes a control amplifier having an input which is a function of the signal provided by said transducer. 90

7. The current transmitter as claimed in Claim 5, wherein said transducer comprises a variable reactance transducer sensitive to a physical condition to be measured, and including means to connect the oscillator output to said variable reactance transducer. 95

8. The current transmitter as claimed in Claim 7 including further means to connect said variable reactance transducer to provide DC signals from said transducer comprising the output signal of said input circuit. 100

9. The current transmitter as claimed in Claim 8, wherein said oscillator includes a control amplifier, and means to connect said further means to an input of said control amplifier. 105

10. The current transmitter as claimed in Claim 7, wherein said variable reactance transducer comprises a variable capacitance element. 110

11. The current transmitter as claimed in Claim 8, wherein said variable reactance transducer comprises a variable reluctance element. 115

12. The current transmitter as claimed in Claim 10, wherein said variable capacitance element reduces in capacitance with respect to an increase in value of the parameter being measured. 120

13. The current transmitter as claimed in Claims 1 or 4, wherein the separate current path, other than said regulated current 125



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path, comprises an unregulated current path providing power to said transducer.

5 14. The current transmitter as claimed in Claim 12, wherein said shunt current path includes current amplifier means which carries the current from said separate paths and said first current path.

10 15. The current transmitter as claimed in Claims 1 or 4, wherein said amplifier means comprises an operational amplifier having a pair of inputs, means connected to one of said inputs to provide a reference voltage thereto, said second means being connected to the other of said inputs of said differential amplifier and said other input also being connected to receive said output signal of the input circuit.

20 16. The current transmitter as claimed in Claim 15, wherein said current controller includes transistor means having a base coupled to the output of said operational amplifier, and having its collector-emitter circuit connected to pass current from said separate current paths and said first current path and control the current through said first current path in response to the output of said operational amplifier.

25 17. The current transmitter as claimed in Claim 7, wherein said oscillator includes an oscillator control amplifier, said oscillator control amplifier having an input, means

connected to said variable reactance transducer to provide a pulsating DC current output from said transducer as a function of the reactance thereof and means connecting the output of said variable reactance transducer to the input of said oscillator control amplifier.

35 18. The current transmitter of Claim 17, wherein said variable reactance transducer comprises a single variable capacitor having a capacitance value C_1 , a reference capacitor having a capacitance value C_2 , means connecting said oscillator to both of said capacitors, and means connected to said capacitors to deliver the output of said input stage as a signal proportional to the quantity

$$\left(\frac{C_2}{C_1} - 1\right).$$

40 19. A two wire current transmitter constructed in accordance with Figure 1, or Figure 2 of the accompanying drawings.

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