body 21 is started. The transfer operation is generally performed as follows.

[0045]

First, the elevation mechanism 55 is driven to raise the elevatable member 3 in each of all the movable bodies 21 to a predetermined position. Next, at least one movable body 21 including the selected pickup arm 11, among the movable bodies 21 in the wait portion 23, is driven by the moving motor 26 to move to a position, on the first-stage table 14, corresponding to a specific part 13. After the movable body 21 is stopped, the extension motor 59 and the motor 66 of the rotation mechanism 65 are driven to move the adsorption hand 52 to a position above the part 13 to be picked up or to a position above a portion, of the part 13, to be adsorbed by the adsorption hand 52.

[0046]

In an initial state before the transfer operation starts, it is preferred that the adsorption hand 52 of the pickup arm 11 is located below the tip link 56b with the absorption opening 72 being directed rearward as represented by the phantom line in FIG. 5. With this arrangement, the pickup arm 11 before being extended has a shortest possible length.