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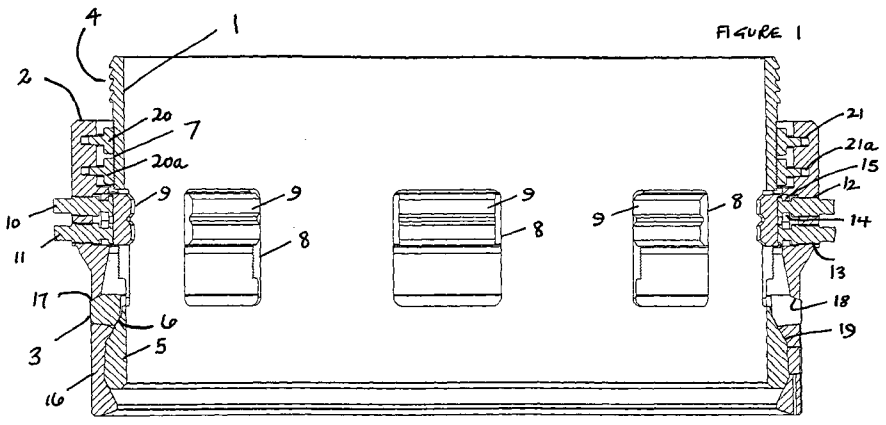
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(54) **Title**: PRELOADING DEVICE



(57) **Abstract**: A device for the application of a preload between a subsea wellhead and a conductor housing comprises an activating member (1), a support housing (2), a locking member (3), and means (9) for securing the support housing relative to the wellhead. Movement of the activating member causes an inclined lateral movement of the locking member. The activating member carries a ratchet (7) comprising a multiplicity of serrations which have a regular pitch in the activating direction and the support housing (1, 2) carries at least two latches (19, 20) which allow the relative movement and can engage the ratchet to inhibit movement reverse to the activating direction. The discrete locking positions provided by one of the latches are positionally out of phase with the discrete locking positions provided by the other latch or latches. A support member (16) is positioned to be moved laterally in response to movement of the activating member and to support the locking member (3) against the engagement zone (18) of the datum member (2).

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