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(72) Inventor CHEONG LAITONG

(54) PACKAGE DISPENSER

(71) We, ROTHMANS OF PALL MALL (MALAYSIA) BERHAD, a Company organised under the laws of Malaya, of 2 Benteng, Kuala Lumpur, Selangor, Malaya, 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 package dispenser of the kind which can be used, for example, by a tobacconist for dispensing cigarettes behind the counter in a shop.

According to the present invention a package dispenser comprises a rigid container provided with vertically extending partitions which act to divide the interior of the container into a number of vertically extending compartments in each of which packages to be dispensed can be stacked, a vertically extending front which extends over the compartments apart from a horizontally extending strip at the bottom which provides dispensing openings for withdrawing the bottom package from any of the stacks in the container, and a closure device for closing the dispensing openings without disturbing the vertically extending front.

The invention thus provides a package dispenser having dispensing openings which can be closed when desired thus providing a shopkeeper with means for closing such openings when he is not in the shop and thus preventing pilfering. The openings could also be closed at night when the shop is closed to prevent the contents of the dispenser being stolen.

Preferably therefore means are provided for locking the closure device in its closed position.

In a convenient construction the closure device comprises a hinged cover pivoted to the container and movable between an operative position in which it closes the openings and an in-operative position clear of said openings.

In a preferred embodiment the hinged cover is channel-shaped in cross section

and it may be arranged to be raised to its operative position and when it is not required it lies below the dispensing openings.

Thus, with this construction the hinged cover may be carried by hinges provided in the lower corners of the container.

The locking means may take many forms but preferably comprises a catch one part of which is carried on the hinged cover and another co-operating part of which is carried on the said front.

Thus, the catch may be of the hasp and staple type which is held in a locked position by means of a removable padlock or the like.

In any case, at least part of the front may be made from a transparent material to reveal the contents of the compartments, preferably the lower part of the front is made in this manner so that when the stack of packages is almost finished this can be seen through the front.

At least part of the front is preferably removable to enable the compartments to be loaded with packages to be dispensed and thus the removable part of the front may be hinged to the container, and it can be arranged to pivot downwardly to open the compartments.

Means may be included for locking the removable part of the front in its closed position.

The invention may be performed in many ways but one embodiment will now be described by way of example and with reference to the accompanying drawings in which:—

Figure 1 is an isometric front view of a package dispenser according to the invention.

Figure 2 is a side elevation of the package dispenser shown in Figure 1, and

Figures 3 and 4 are isometric part views of details of construction.

As shown in the drawings the package dispenser is for storing and dispensing packets of cigarettes and comprises a rigid container made from wood or metal or any

other suitable substance in the form of a rectangular box and indicated by reference numeral 1. In the example being described the container has overall longitudinal dimensions of approximately thirty inches, 18½ inches high and has a width of approximately five inches. The interior of the container is divided into thirteen separate vertically extending compartments 2 by vertically extending partitions, 3. The horizontally extending dimensions of the partitions is varied so that they can accommodate cigarette packs of different sizes. Thus, the compartments shown at the right hand end of Figure 1 are of larger dimensions to accommodate packets of twenty or twenty-five cigarettes whilst those at the left hand are of smaller dimensions to accommodate packets of ten cigarettes.

The compartments are closed by a front the lower part 4 of which is made from a length of transparent plastic material and above which is a hinged portion 5. The details of the hinges are shown in Figure 3 and comprise angled brackets 6 connected to the lower edges 7 of the hinged portion of the front which are connected by pivot pins 8 to projecting lugs 9 secured to or mounted in the end wall 10 of the rectangular box 1. The hinged portion of the front can therefore be moved downwardly to an open position to allow the compartments to be loaded with vertically extending stacks of packets of cigarettes. In Figure 1 the removable hinged portion of the front is shown in a partially open position. The upper edge 11 of the portion 5 of the front is provided with two brackets 12 which have openings 13. These brackets 12 are aligned with further brackets 14 carried on the front edge 15 of the upper wall of the container 1 and these brackets 14 have holes 15 so that when the portion 5 is in its operative closed position padlocks can be passed through the holes in the brackets to lock the front closed. In order to hold the removable portion 5 of the front in position whilst locking takes place, a catch (not shown) can be provided which engages an eye screw 16 provided on the portion 5 of the front.

Beneath the transparent material 4 the partitions 3 are cut back as shown at 17 to assist in dispensing the lower packets through dispensing openings 19 provided beneath the transparent material 4, these dispensing openings being provided by the open strip left in the front of the container beneath the transparent material 4.

A closure drive comprising a hinged cover 18 is connected by means of angle brackets 20 connected by pivot pins 21 to plates 22 connected to the side walls 10 of the container in such a manner that the cover, provided by a length of channel

section material, can pivot downwardly to an inoperative position in which the openings 19 are open and packets can be dispensed and upwardly to an operative position in which the cover closes the dispensing openings 19. The upper side 23 of the hinged cover 18 carries a hasp 24 which can co-operate with a staple 25 secured to the transparent material 4 so that when the cover 18 is in its operative closed position the hasp can engage the staple and a padlock or the like can be passed through the opening 26 in the staple to lock the cover in position.

The cover 18 thus provides means for closing the dispensing openings 19 and it can be locked in position to prevent pilfering of the contents of the dispenser.

WHAT WE CLAIM IS:—

1. A package dispenser comprising a rigid container provided with vertically extending partitions which act to divide the interior of the container into a number of vertically extending compartments in each of which packages to be dispensed can be stacked, a vertically extending front which extends over the compartments apart from a horizontally extending strip at the bottom which provides dispensing openings for withdrawing the bottom package from any of the stacks in the container, and a closure device for closing the dispensing openings without disturbing the vertically extending front.

2. A package dispenser as claimed in Claim 1 including means for locking the closure device in its closed position.

3. A package dispenser as claimed in Claim 1 or Claim 2 in which the closure device comprises a hinged cover pivoted to the container and movable between an operative position in which it closes the openings and an in-operative position clear of said openings.

4. A package dispenser as claimed in Claim 3 in which the hinged cover is channel-shaped in cross section.

5. A package dispenser as claimed in any one of Claims 2, 3 or 4 in which the hinged cover is raised to its operative position.

6. A package dispenser as claimed in Claim 5 in which the hinged cover is carried by hinges provided at the lower corners of the container.

7. A package dispenser as claimed in Claims 3, 4, 5 or 6 when dependent upon Claim 2 in which the locking means comprises a catch one part of which is carried on the hinged cover and another co-operating part of which is carried on the said front.

8. A package dispenser as claimed in Claim 7 in which the catch is of the hasp



other suitable substance in the form of a rectangular box and indicated by reference numeral 1. In the example being described the container has overall longitudinal dimensions of approximately thirty inches, 18½ inches high and has a width of approximately five inches. The interior of the container is divided into thirteen separate vertically extending compartments 2 by vertically extending partitions, 3. The horizontally extending dimensions of the partitions is varied so that they can accommodate cigarette packs of different sizes. Thus, the compartments shown at the right hand end of Figure 1 are of larger dimensions to accommodate packets of twenty or twenty-five cigarettes whilst those at the left hand are of smaller dimensions to accommodate packets of ten cigarettes.

The compartments are closed by a front the lower part 4 of which is made from a length of transparent plastic material and above which is a hinged portion 5. The details of the hinges are shown in Figure 3 and comprise angled brackets 6 connected to the lower edges 7 of the hinged portion of the front which are connected by pivot pins 8 to projecting lugs 9 secured to or mounted in the end wall 10 of the rectangular box 1. The hinged portion of the front can therefore be moved downwardly to an open position to allow the compartments to be loaded with vertically extending stacks of packets of cigarettes. In Figure 1 the removable hinged portion of the front is shown in a partially open position. The upper edge 11 of the portion 5 of the front is provided with two brackets 12 which have openings 13. These brackets 12 are aligned with further brackets 14 carried on the front edge 15 of the upper wall of the container 1 and these brackets 14 have holes 15 so that when the portion 5 is in its operative closed position padlocks can be passed through the holes in the brackets to lock the front closed. In order to hold the removable portion 5 of the front in position whilst locking takes place a catch (not shown) can be provided which engages an eye screw 16 provided on the portion 5 of the front.

Beneath the transparent material 4 the partitions 3 are cut back as shown at 17 to assist in dispensing the lower packets through dispensing openings 19 provided beneath the transparent material 4, these dispensing openings being provided by the open strip left in the front of the container beneath the transparent material 4.

A closure drive comprising a hinged cover 18 is connected by means of angle brackets 20 connected by pivot pins 21 to plates 22 connected to the side walls 10 of the container in such a manner that the cover, provided by a length of channel

section material, can pivot downwardly to an inoperative position in which the openings 19 are open and packets can be dispensed and upwardly to an operative position in which the cover closes the dispensing openings 19. The upper side 23 of the hinged cover 18 carries a hasp 24 which can co-operate with a staple 25 secured to the transparent material 4 so that when the cover 18 is in its operative closed position the hasp can engage the staple and a padlock or the like can be passed through the opening 26 in the staple to lock the cover in position.

The cover 18 thus provides means for closing the dispensing openings 19 and it can be locked in position to prevent pilfering of the contents of the dispenser.

WHAT WE CLAIM IS:—

1. A package dispenser comprising a rigid container provided with vertically extending partitions which act to divide the interior of the container into a number of vertically extending compartments in each of which packages to be dispensed can be stacked, a vertically extending front which extends over the compartments apart from a horizontally extending strip at the bottom which provides dispensing openings for withdrawing the bottom package from any of the stacks in the container, and a closure device for closing the dispensing openings without disturbing the vertically extending front.

2. A package dispenser as claimed in Claim 1 including means for locking the closure device in its closed position.

3. A package dispenser as claimed in Claim 1 or Claim 2 in which the closure device comprises a hinged cover pivoted to the container and movable between an operative position in which it closes the openings and an in-operative position clear of said openings.

4. A package dispenser as claimed in Claim 3 in which the hinged cover is channel-shaped in cross section.

5. A package dispenser as claimed in any one of Claims 2, 3 or 4 in which the hinged cover is raised to its operative position.

6. A package dispenser as claimed in Claim 5 in which the hinged cover is carried by hinges provided at the lower corners of the container.

7. A package dispenser as claimed in Claims 3, 4, 5 or 6 when dependent upon Claim 2 in which the locking means comprises a catch one part of which is carried on the hinged cover and another co-operating part of which is carried on the said front.

8. A package dispenser as claimed in Claim 7 in which the catch is of the hasp

- and staple type which is held in locked position by means of a removable padlock or the like.

9. A package dispenser as claimed in any one of the preceding claims in which at least part of the front is made from a transparent material to reveal the contents of the compartments.

10. A package dispenser as claimed in Claim 9 in which the lower part of the front is made from a transparent material.

11. A package dispenser as claimed in any one of the preceding claims in which at least part of the front can be removed to enable the compartments to be loaded with packages to be dispensed.

12. A package dispenser as claimed in Claim 11 in which the removable part of

the front is hinged to the container.

13. A package dispenser as claimed in Claim 12 in which the removable part of the front pivots downwardly to open the compartments.

14. A package dispenser as claimed in any one of Claims 11, 12 or 13 including means for locking the removable part of the front in its closed position.

15. A package dispenser substantially as described herein with reference to and as shown in the accompanying drawings.

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- For the Applicants,

G. F. REDFERN & CO.,

Chansitor House,

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London, WC2A 1EL.
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