

ABSTRACTMOVEMENT FOR A TIMEPIECE

The movement comprises at least two regulating members with their escapement and means (1, 2, 3, 5, 7, 4a, 4b) for alternately stopping and releasing the operation of the regulating members, a single regulating member being thus driven by means of the energy source of the timepiece.

Fig. 1

MOVEMENT FOR A TIMEPIECE

The embodiments of the invention seek to provide a movement for a timepiece arranged so as to be able to use, on demand or automatically, one escapement or another present in the same watch. The aim is to be able to count the time through one escapement or another in an amusing and practical manner, as for example during two periods of twelve hours. In a preferred embodiment of the invention, the movement proposed will have two regulating members with their escapement, in particular two tourbillon frames that function alternately during two periods of twelve hours, that is to say day and night.

Currently, in order to indicate the day and night (AM/PM), several systems are used. The most simple consists of an hour hand indicating the hour on a dial of twenty four hours distributed over the 360° circumference of the dial. One known variant is a window formed in the dial that indicates whether it is day or night, for example with the indication AM and PM. It is also possible to provide animations on the frame representing

alternately the sun and moon over a period of twice twelve hours. Finally, it is possible to display the hours ranging from one to twenty four hours digitally.

The embodiments of the invention consist of proposing a novel movement that is capable, through its arrangement, of counting the time by means of one or more escapements, but at least two used in alternation.

The embodiments of the present invention applies in principle to a mechanical movement of a timepiece. It can however equip an automatic movement or a small clock. Finally, it can also equip an electrical or electronic watch driven by at least two regulating systems provided with a mechanical escapement.

In accordance with a first aspect of the present invention, there is provided a movement for a timepiece, characterised in that it comprises at least two regulating members with their escapement and means for alternately stopping and releasing the operation of the regulating members, only one of the regulating members being driven at a time by means of an energy source.

The movement can comprise several regulating members.

The energy source is preferably connected to the regulating members by means of a differential.

The mechanism can drive alternately regulating members of the same type and regulating members of different types.

In a preferred embodiment, the regulating members are tourbillons.

The regulating members can drive escapements of the Swiss type, English type or other types of escapement.

The movement can have means for ensuring the change from one escapement to another by means of a manual control.

The change from one escapement to another can also be provided by control means existing in the timepiece and arranged to effect the said change during predetermined periods of time. In this case, the control for the change from one escapement to another will, for example, be effected using a cogwheel connected to the hour wheel of the watch movement.

The means arranged to effect the change from one escapement to another can act over periods of twelve hours representing the day and night.

The regulating members can support a circular sign depicting the sun or representing the moon. The signs representing the sun and moon can be fitted with precious stones, and the sign of the moon can also support diamonds. Alternately, the regulating member depicting the night can be placed above a dish covered with a phosphorescent or fluorescent material arranged to store the light during the day and restore it during the night. The regulating members and their escapement can be visible through a window formed in the dial. Alternatively, the regulating members and their escapement can be visible alternately behind a cut-out part of a disc pivoting in the timepiece and arranged so as to be driven by a mobile of the movement of the piece in order to effect a complete turn according to a predetermined period of time, for example every twenty four hours.

The means for alternately stopping and driving the regulating members and their escapement can comprise a

wheel with arms or lugs placed opposite the seconds mobile of the escapement or the teeth of the tourbillon frame of each of the regulating members of the movement, the wheels with lugs being driven by a setting wheel integral with a star wheel, itself controlled by a pin actuated by the hour wheel of the movement, the positioning of the star being effected, after the advance given by the pin, by the positioning action of the jumper, so as to bring the lug in contact with the teeth of the cage or the seconds wheel of the escapement and lock the said frame or wheel, while the lug of the other regulating members is disengaged from the teeth of the frame or the seconds wheel of the escapement, after having given an impulse to the said frame or to the seconds wheel of the escapement in order to start the regulating member or tourbillon.

The energy source driving alternately the regulating members or the tourbillons may comprise a barrel connected to a differential in kinematic connection with all the escapements or tourbillons, the differential having a roller mounted freely on a spindle and meshing with a pinion driven by the barrel, the pinion meshing another pinion integral with the previous pinion and rotating freely on a spindle parallel to the first spindle, the pinion meshing with another pinion firmly fixed to a toothed wheel in order to drive one of the frames while the other frame is driven directly by the roller, one of the pinions being locked when one of the frames is stopped and rotating freely when the other cage is being driven.

The drawing depicts by way of example an embodiment of the timepiece that is the object of the invention.

In the drawing:

- figure 1 is a schematic view from above of the movement of a timepiece having two tourbillons actuated alternately during periods of twelve hours by a starting and stopping device for the tourbillon frames,

- figure 2 is a view from below of the movement of figure 1,

- figure 3 is a view from above of the movement of figures 2 and 3 showing in particular the alternating energy distribution to the frames of the tourbillons,

- figures 4 and 5 depict sections along the lines IV-IV and V-V of figure 3, the section IV-IV being extended towards the axis of the frame A and the section V-V towards the axis of the frame B, and

- figure 6 is a view of a variant of the device for starting and stopping the tourbillons of figure 1, the variant making it possible to actuate tourbillons alternately by means of a manual control.

The movement depicted in figure 1 comprises a tourbillon frame A and a tourbillon frame B placed one above the other; the two tourbillon frames A and B will be visible through windows, not shown, in the dial of the timepiece and it is accepted that the frame A will represent the twelve hours of the day and the frame B the twelve hours of the night. As depicted in figures 3 and 6, the frames A and B are provided with a figure representing the rays of the sun, or respectively a moon for indicating the day and night. The two tourbillon frames A and B with their escapement are visible all the time on the dial side and merely stop alternately in periods of twelve hours thus indicating the day and night periods. As shown in figures 3 and 6 the design of these

tourbillon frames makes it possible to identify in one case the sun and in the other a moon in the waxing phase.

In a variant, a sector disc of approximately 180° , not shown, could be fixed to a mobile effecting one turn in twenty four hours, pivoting coaxially with the cannon pinion and the standard arrow wheel covering alternately of the two tourbillon frames every twelve hours. In this case, the top one would symbolise the day and the bottom one the night. Irises, not shown and similar to lenses for photographic apparatus, can be integrated in the watch dial in order to open alternately every twelve hours in order to reveal the tourbillon frames for periods of twelve hours.

Finally, the night tourbillon frame can be placed in a dish covered with a phosphorescent or fluorescent material so as to be charged with light during the day when this frame is stopped and to restore it during the night by irradiating diamonds inserted in the frame.

The alternating start and stop function of the frames is controlled from the hour wheel 1 of the movement, which makes one turn in twelve hours.

The hour wheel 1 of the movement of the timepiece (Figure 1) drives a mobile 2 to which a pin 3 is firmly fixed. This mobile 2 executes one turn in twelve hours. The pin 3 every twelve hours drives a star 7 of a tooth. The latter is positioned angularly by the jumper 8. The star 7 is firmly fixed to the setting wheel 6 and when the star 7 is positioned under the action of the jumper 8, the setting wheel 6 drives the setting wheels 5a and 5b.

The wheel with arms 4a is firmly fixed to the setting wheel 5a and the wheel with arms 4b is firmly fixed to the setting wheel 5b.

5 The arms of the wheels 4a and 4b come into collision in the teeth of the toothed top bridges 9a and 9b of the tourbillon frames A and B, alternately every twelve hours.

During one jump of the star 7, the movement is transmitted to the setting wheel 6 meshing with the wheel 10 5a. At this moment, one of the arms of the wheel 4a locks the frame A, while at the same moment the wheel 5b also meshing with the setting wheel 6 releases the frame B by means of the movement of the arms 4b.

15 In addition, when the frame is released by one of the arms of the wheels 4a or 4b, the rapid circular movement executed by the wheels 4a or 4b following the action of the jumper 8 gives alternately an impetus to the frames A and B so as to start or help with the starting of the regulating systems.

20 When the movement of the timepiece is driven alternately by two or more regulating members that are not tourbillons as described by means of figures 1 and 6 of the drawing, the arms or lugs of the wheels 4a and 4b can come into collision and come to lock for example the 25 seconds wheel of the escapement of the regulating members placed between the barrel 10 (fig. 1) and the escape pinion of the regulating member. Moreover, when the arms or lugs of the wheels 4a and 4b release the seconds wheel connected to the escape pinion, the action of the jumper 30 8 at the time of positioning of the star 7 will give an impulse to the arms or lugs 4a and 4b on disengagement,

which will make it possible to restart the regulating member or assist it to restart.

The distribution of energy to the regulating members is shown and described with regard to figures 2, 3, 4 and 5.

The energy of the barrel 10 is transmitted to the centre pinion 11, and the centre wheel 12 is firmly fixed to the centre pinion 11. the energy is transmitted to the free pinion 13 on its spindle a (fig. 3). The pinion 13 meshes with the pinion 14 on the spindle b. The pinion 14 is firmly fixed to the pinion 21 (see also fig 4).

These two pinions 14 and 21 pivot about the spindle b eccentric with respect to the spindle a of the wheel 15 and are free to rotate in the wheel roller 15 about the spindle b and the roller 15 is free on the spindle a. The pinion 21 meshes with the pinion 22 firmly fixed to the wheel 16. This mobile composed of the wheel 16 and pinion 22 is free on the spindle a.

To make the frame A function when the frame B is stopped, the wheel 16 transmits its energy and rotation movement to the setting wheel 24, and then onto the frame pinion 20a (fig. 4).

To make the frame B function when the frame A is stopped, the energy and rotation movement are transmitted from the wheel 15 to the setting wheel 18 and then onto the setting wheel 19 and, finally, onto the frame pinion 20b. Two setting wheels are necessary in this case so that the frame tourbillon B turns in the clockwise direction (Fig. 5).

To understand the principle of changing from one escapement to the other, it is necessary to recall that the mechanism has only one barrel (energy source) but

contains at least two different escapements, functioning alternately.

The amplitude of a balance wheel in a standard mechanism depends, amongst other things, on the energy
5 available in the counting gear train distributed by the barrel. It will therefore be understood that, if the two balance wheels wished to function simultaneously, the barrel would not distribute sufficient energy and, in the converse case, if the barrel distributed twice as much
10 energy, one of the two balance wheels would receive too much energy when the other is stopped. It is therefore essential to manage the force distribution of a single barrel to one or other of the two escapements.

Thus, when the frame A is locked by the arms of the
15 wheel 4a, the frame B turns in the clockwise direction. The transmission of energy from the barrel 10 to the pinion 14 takes place by means of the centre mobile 11, the centre wheel 12 and the pinion 13.

When the frame A is locked, the setting wheel 24,
20 the wheel 16 and its pinion 22 are fixed (fig. 4).

The transmission of energy from the barrel 10 passes through the pinion 14 firmly fixed to the pinion 21 rotating about the pinion 22, which is rotationally
locked, thus driving the roller 15. The roller 15 drives
25 the setting wheels 18 and 19, and then the frame pinion 20b (fig. 5).

When the frame B is locked by one of the arms of the wheel 4b, the frame A turns in the clockwise direction. The setting wheels 18, 19 and the roller 15 are then
30 fixed.

Since the mobiles 14 and 21 are firmly fixed to the roller 15, the spindle b remains fixed angularly, but

free to rotate about its axis (differential gearing). The energy coming from the barrel 10 is transmitted to the mobile 13, and then to the mobiles 14 and 21 driving in rotation the mobile formed by the pinion 22 and the wheel 16. The drive next passes through the setting wheel 24 and then through the frame pinion 20a.

Figure 6 depicts in a variant the principle of the change from one escapement to the other on demand from the user.

Instead of allowing the mechanism to time the change from one escapement to another automatically, as described above in the indication of an AM/PM in figures 1 to 5, it is possible to imagine adapting a control pusher so that, manually and on demand, it is possible to determine which escapement receives the energy from the barrel.

For this purpose it suffices to remove the setting wheel 2 and its pin 3 (fig. 1) and to act directly by means of a pusher 30 (fig. 6), composed of two parts 31 and 32, on the star 7.

The spring 33 has two functions:

- Firstly, it makes it possible to reposition the pusher 30 against the pin 34.
- Secondly, to position the piece 32 in abutment on the piece 30.

In this way, at each impulse from the pusher 30, one frame stops and the other starts.

The mechanism that has just been described with regard to figures 1 to 5 makes it possible, for example every twelve hours, to actuate automatically sometimes one tourbillon frame, sometimes the other. It would also be possible to pass from one frame to the other, for

example every hour, by making one tourbillon frame function all the even hours and the other all the odd hours.

5 The mechanism makes it possible to transmit energy from the barrel of one tourbillon frame to the other without disengaging and without losing energy. In other words, when the counting gear train leaves one of the two frames, it is already meshing the other frame.

10 The end wearer of the watch will thus see a tourbillon frame losing its amplitude in a natural way (the balance wheel will take more than a minute to stop by itself), while in a few seconds the other frame receiving the energy from the barrel will take up amplitude almost instantaneously.

15 As mentioned above, the mechanism makes it possible to stop and actuate all other kinds of escapement, for example a standard Swiss anchor escapement and a standard balance wheel, automatically, programmed or on demand from the user.

20 The mechanism also makes it possible to activate, during a given period of time, one type of escapement, for example a detent escapement, then, during another given period of time, an escapement of another type (standard Swiss anchor escapement or other), etc. It thus
25 gives the possibility of producing a mechanism passing from two to X positions able to supply a veritable "museum of escapements". It would be possible, amongst other things, to show the escapements in a historical fashion, for example by putting an English escapement
30 with a Swiss one and by making them function alternately during a given period of time.

The mechanism that has just been described has the following advantage:

It is possible quite simply to say that the time counted by a watch containing several escapements is more
5 precise than by a watch containing only a single escapement since, at the end of a period of twenty four hours, the time counted is the arithmetic mean of all the times counted by the different escapements. The advantage also consists of causing wear on the components of the
10 assortment at least 50% less than normal.

CLAIMS

1. Movement for a timepiece, characterised in that it comprises at least two regulating members with their escapement and means for alternately stopping and releasing the running of the regulating members, only one of the regulating members being driven at any one time by means of an energy source.
2. Movement according to claim 1, characterised in that it comprises several regulating members.
3. Movement according to claim 1, characterised in that the energy source is connected to the regulating members by means of a differential.
4. Movement according to claim 1, characterised in that it drives alternately regulating members of the same type.
5. Movement according to claim 1, characterised in that it drives regulating members of different types.
6. Movement according to claim 1, characterised in that the regulating members are karussells or tourbillons.
7. Movement according to claim 1, characterised in that the regulating members drive escapements of the Swiss type, English type or other types of escapement.

8. Movement according to claim 1, characterised in that it has means for providing the change from one escapement to the other by means of a manual control.

9. Movement according to claim 1, characterised in that the change from one escapement to the other is ensured by means inherent in the timepiece and arranged to effect at the said change during predetermined periods of time.

10. Movement according to claim 9, characterised in that the means arranged to effect change from one escapement to other act over periods of twelve hours representing day and night.

11. Movement according to claim 1, characterised in that one of the regulating members supports a circular sign representing the sun, the other a sign representing the moon.

12. Movement according to claim 11, characterised in that precious stones decorate the signs placed on the regulating members.

13. Movement according to claim 10, characterised in that the regulating member of time representing the night is placed above a dish covered with a phosphorescent or fluorescent material arranged to store light during day and restore it during the night.

14. Movement according to claim 1, characterised in that the regulating members and their escapement are visible through a window formed in the dial.

15. Movement according to claim 1, characterised in that the regulating members and their escapement are visible alternately behind a cut-out part of a disc pivoting in the timepiece and arranged so as to be driven by a mobile of the movement in order to effect a complete turn according to a predetermined period of time, for example every twenty four hours.

16. Movement according to claim 1, or claim 6, characterised in that the means for alternately stopping and driving the regulating members and their escapement comprise a wheel with arms or lugs placed opposite the seconds mobile of the escapement or the teeth of the tourbillon of each of the regulating members of the movement, the wheels with lugs being driven by a setting wheel integral with a star wheel, itself controlled by a pin actuated by the hour wheel of the movement, the positioning of the star being achieved after the advance given by the pin, by the positioning action of the jumper, so as to bring the lug in contact with the teeth on the frame (B) or the seconds wheel of the escapement and lock the said frame or wheel, while the lug disengages from the teeth on the frame (A) or to the seconds wheel of the escapement, after having given an impulse to the said frame (A) or to the said seconds wheel of the escapement in order to start

the corresponding regulating member or tourbillon.

17. Mechanism according to claim 1 or 4, characterised in that the energy source alternately driving the regulating members or the tourbillons comprises a barrel connected to a differential in kinematic connection with all the escapements or tourbillons, the differential having a roller mounted freely on a spindle (a) with a pinion driven by the barrel, the pinion meshing a pinion integral with a pinion rotating freely on the spindle (b) parallel to the spindle (a) of the roller, the pinion meshing with a pinion firmly fixed to a toothed wheel in order to drive the frame (A), while the frame (B) is driven directly by the roller, the pinion being locked when the frame (A) is stopped and rotating freely when the frame (B) is driven.