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INVENTION

Patents of the Week

Cotton fabrics processed by a new "delayed reaction" chemical method will have crease retention as well as the wrinkle resistance of easy-care cottons—By Ann Ewing

➤ A METHOD for giving cotton fabrics a "memory" so that they will take a crease and keep a shape as well as be wrinkle resistant has been awarded a patent.

One problem with easy-care cottons has been that the process of making them wrinkle-free and easy to care for also makes them hard to crease.

Now a solution has been found. It consists of doing only part of the desired treatment at the textile plant, then finishing it by heat treatment at the garment manufacturing plant after the trousers, dress or shirt is in final shape.

This delayed chemical reaction gives the garment a "memory" of its shape, so that it tries to return to it, and can thus be both wrinkle-proof and creased.

Nelson F. Getchell of Great Falls, Va., earned patent 3,138,802 for his process for "imparting durable creases, wrinkle resistance and shape retention to cellulosic textile articles." He assigned rights to the Cotton Producers Institute of the National Cotton Council of America, where he is a research associate.

In the process, the cotton fibers are chemically pretreated with an aminoplast when the material is wet so that the resin is insoluble, giving them a latent ability to become more resilient. This ability is then developed by simple heat treatment at a later stage or when the garment is completed.

Hydrating Dried Fruit

A two-step method for hydrating dried fruit earned patent 3,139,345 for Fredoon S. Nury of Richmond, Calif., who assigned rights to the Government through the Secretary of Agriculture.

The method can be used with prunes, raisins or figs and actually raises the moisture content of the fruit above what it has in the natural state.

It consists first of exposing the dried fruit to water or steam at about the normal boiling point under normal pressure, then plunging the partially hydrated fruit into cold water, also at normal pressure.

Mr. Nury cites many advantages for using his method, which is now in the pilot-plant stage. Among them:

1. Less damage to the fruit's flavor and color and better retention of soluble solids, since only part of the hydration is in hot water or steam.

2. An increase in the rate of output of the product, because the two-step combination requires less time to reach a specified moisture content than using heat alone.

3. A significant savings in equipment costs, since normal atmospheric pressure is

used, eliminating the need for expensive pressure-resistant equipment.

Pulse Metered With Light

A method for measuring the pulse rates of human beings with light has been granted patent 3,139,086.

The U. S. Government through the Secretary of the Army was assigned rights to the patent awarded to Francis W. Botsch of Framingham, Mass., and Michael J. Sacco of Shrewsbury, Mass., for the process.

The method employs a photoelectric cell that picks up the amount of light passing through certain tissues in the body. By measuring the amount of light that has passed through these tissues, the pulse rate can be found.

Oxygen in the blood and other body functions do not interfere with operation of the hand-held device.

Other Significant Patents

A disposable device that cleans teeth and massages gums merely by inserting it into the mouth. Patent 3,138,820 was awarded to George Sterling August of Silver Spring, Md.

A hydrofoil watercraft that also has wings to give it increased lift for better performance and efficiency. Edgar C. Hanford Jr. of Reynoldsburg, Ohio, assigned rights for patent 3,139,059 to Fairchild Stratos Corporation.

A battery-illuminated portable trouble signal that can be temporarily attached to an automobile by a motorist in trouble. A magnet on the supporting bracket of the light allows the device to be placed anywhere on an automobile, stated patent 3,139,611 awarded to Paul Nelson Fleming of Silver Spring, Md.

A kit for converting rowboats to iceboats, for which John O. Black was awarded patent 3,139,057.

• Science News Letter, 86:46 July 18, 1964

Do You Know?

In deep space, normal *lubricants* break down or disappear, making lubrication difficult.

Air pollution has been found to supply significant amounts of ammonia nitrogen to the soil, increasing crop yields.

A *helmet* mounted control system will help pilots on high-speed, low-level missions track and destroy targets.

• Science News Letter, 86:46 July 18, 1964