214 between the packages 213*d* for partial severing. The knives 224*c* are constructed so as to cut the full heat seal of the strip along edges 215—215. It will be appreciated that another significant difference between the cutter 224 and the cutter 24 is that the cutter 224 has six knives while the cutter 24 has five knives so that the different cutting requirements can be met.

After the composite package 208 has been severed from the strip 213, it is caused to move into the final sealing area where the horizontal sealer 226 forms the longitudinal upper heat seal 213*e* to complete the package. The horizontal sealer 226 is of the same type as the sealer 26.

Although minor modifications might be suggested by those versed in the art, it should be understood that we wish to embody within the scope of the patent warranted herein, all such modifications as reasonably and properly come within the scope of our contribution to the art.

We claim as our invention:

1. The method of continuously forming sealed packages, comprising the steps of

providing a length of strip stock,

forming a series of upwardly opening pockets along the length of the stock separated by upright sealed areas,

engaging the formed strip against a filling station having raised and spaced lands formed thereon with the sealed areas engaging the lands and the pockets extending across depressed areas between adjacent lands,

applying a vacuum to one side of the pockets in the areas between adjacent lands for pulling the sides of the pocket apart to facilitate loading of the package and for retaining the strip in engagement with the filling station, loading the pockets with material to be packaged while continuing to apply the vacuum releasing the vacuum to permit the strip to disengage from the filling station, cutting off the thus formed package while in an upright position, and

sealing the open end of the severed package while in an upright position.

2. Apparatus for packaging comprising,

means for feeding a strip of material having confronting sides,

means for forming spaced pockets along the length of the strip material leaving upper ends of the pockets open,

a filling station having spaced lands and valleys along which the continuous strip is guided and moved,

a series of collapsible bellows disposed about the periphery of the filling station each having one end for engagement with one side of said strip, and which bellows collapses upon being engaged with the strip side for separating the sides for filling,

means overlying said bellows for funneling material into the pockets,

means connectible with an opposite end of each of said bellows for collapsing the bellows and opening the pockets to facilitate filling of the pockets and for subsequently releasing the strip after filling, means for filling the pockets,

cutoff means including knife edges on said lands for severing filled packages from the strip material, and means for sealing upper open ends of the severed packages.

3. Apparatus for packaging comprising,

means for feeding a strip of material having confronting sides,

means for forming spaced pockets along the length of the strip material leaving upper ends of the pockets open,

a filling station having spaced lands and valleys about which the continuous strip is guided and moved,

means disposed about the periphery of the filling station in said valleys for opening the pockets for filling,

means for funneling material into the open pockets,

cutoff means including knife edges on said lands for severing filled packages from the strip material, and

means for sealing upper open ends of said packages.

4. Apparatus for packaging comprising,

means for feeding a strip of material having confronting sides,

means comprising a sealer for forming spaced pockets along the length of the strip material leaving upper ends of the pockets open,

a driven filling station having spaced lands and valleys about which the continuous strip is guided and moved, means in the valleys for opening the pockets for filling,

means on the filling station overlying the open pockets for funneling material into the pockets,

cutoff means including knife edges on said lands and a cutter wheel having circumferentially spaced knife edges engageable with the knife edges on said lands and with said cutter wheel driven by said driven filling station, and

means for sealing upper open ends of said packages.

5. A packaging machine including a package filling wheel having circumferentially spaced lands, a first set of shear knives on the lands, means for holding a film against the lands, a cutter having a second set of spaced shear knives about its periphery, and means for driving the filling wheel causing the cutter to be driven by the frictional engagement occasioned as the knives in the respective sets engage one another.

6. A packaging machine including a package filling wheel having circumferentially spaced lands, a first set of shear knives on the lands, means for holding a film against the lands, a cutter having a second set of spaced shear knives about its periphery, spaced pairs of the knives in the sets being of varied lengths for the partial and complete severance of selective ones of the packages to produce strips of partially severed packages, and means for driving the filling wheel causing the cutter to be driven by the frictional engagement occasioned as the knives in the respective sets engage one another.

7. In combination, a package filling wheel having circumferentially spaced lands with wheel knife edges thereon, suction means between the lands for holding the packaging material against the lands, the lands being divergently disposed on the wheel and more closely spaced relative to one another at upper ends as opposed to lower ends of the lands, a cutter having spaced cutter knife edges thereon, and means for causing relative movement between the filling wheel and the cutter for engaging said knives to cut a film.

8. Apparatus for packaging comprising,

means for feeding a strip of material having confronting sides,

means for forming spaced pockets along the length of the strip material leaving ends of the pockets open,

a filling station having spaced lands and valleys along which the strip is guided and moved,

a series of collapsible bellows disposed about the periphery of the filling station each having one end for engagement with one side of said strip, and which bellows collapses upon being engaged with the strip side for separating the sides for filling,

means connectible with an opposite end of each of said bellows for collapsing the bellows and opening the pockets to facilitate filling of the pockets and for subsequently releasing the strip after filling,

means for filling the pockets,

cutoff means for severing filled packages from the strip material, and

means for sealing open ends of the severed packages.

9. In combination, a package filling wheel having circumferentially spaced lands with wheel knife edges thereon, means between the lands for holding the packaging material against the lands, the lands being divergently disposed on the wheel and more closely spaced