[0052] **FIG. 9** is a timing chart showing a relationship between a detection signal, symbol numbers, a drive signal and position data;

[0053] **FIG. 10** is a flowchart showing operation of the slot machine to be performed when the CPU executes a control program;

[0054] **FIG. 11** is a descriptive view showing an example displayed state of a panel display section before a masking operation;

[0055] **FIG. 12** is a descriptive view showing an example displayed state of a panel display section after the masking operation;

[0056] **FIG. 13** is a plan view showing transparent electrodes used for a left reel liquid-crystal panel, a center reel liquid-crystal panel, and a right reel liquid-crystal panel;

[0057] **FIG. 14** is a descriptive view schematically showing mechanical constitution of the panel display section in a slot machine according to a second embodiment of the invention;

[0058] **FIG. 15** is a cross-sectional view of the panel display section shown in **FIG. 14** taken along a line Z1-Z2; and

[0059] **FIG. 16** is a block diagram showing the electrical configuration of principal section of the slot machine shown in **FIG. 14**.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

[0060] Embodiments of the invention will be described hereinbelow by reference to the accompanying drawings. Here, an explanation is given of a case where the invention is applied to a slot machine.

[0061] As shown in **FIG. 1, a** slot machine **1**A according to a first embodiment of the invention comprises a main unit **2** and a front door **3** attached to the front of the main unit **2**. A liquid-crystal display device **62** for providing a player with predetermined information is provided at an upper portion of the front door **3**. A panel display section D disposed at a middle portion of the front door **3** has three vertically-oriented rectangular display windows **4***a,* **4***b,* and **4***c.* The display windows **4***a,* **4***b,* and **4***c* are formed from transparent material; e.g., acrylic resin. Three horizontal paylines L1 through L3 and two inclined paylines L4 and L5 are provided across the display windows **4***a,* **4***b,* and **4***c.*

[0062] In addition, an auxiliary display section **20** is provided on the left side of the display window **4***a.* The auxiliary display section **20** comprises five LEDs assigned to the respective paylines L1 through L5. When a player inserts tokens or performs a betting operation to be described later, one or more of the paylines L1 through L5 are made valid, in a number corresponding to the number of tokens bet. In the slot machine **1**A, when one token is bet, the payline L1 becomes valid. When two tokens are bet, the paylines L1 through L3 become valid. When three tokens are bet, the paylines L1 through L5 become valid. LEDs constituting the auxiliary display section **20** are illuminated when corresponding paylines L1 through L5 are valid. In contrast, the LEDs become extinguished when the corresponding paylines L1 through L5 are invalid. Thus, the player can ascertain valid lines from among the paylines L1 through L5.

[0063] **FIG. 2** shows the structure of the panel display section D and a peripheral configuration thereof. A left reel liquid-crystal panel **21** is laminated on an internal peripheral wall of the display window **4***a;* a center reel liquid-crystal panel **22** is laminated on an internal peripheral wall of the display window **4***b;* and a right reel liquid-crystal panel **23** is laminated on an internal peripheral wall of the display window **4***c.* The left, center, and right reel liquid-crystal display panels **21** through **23** can, adjust transparency, thereby changing a transparent state thereof among an opaque state, a translucent state, and a transparent state.

[0064] Three rows of reels, on whose outer peripheral faces a plurality of kinds of symbols are drawn; that is, a left reel R**1**, a center reel R**2**, and a right reel R**3**, are rotatably disposed at the inside of the panel display section D. Consequently, if the left reel liquid-crystal panel **21**, the center reel liquid-crystal panel **22**, and the right reel liquid-crystal panel **23** are transparent, the player can observe symbols on the left reel R**1** by way of the display window **4***a,* those on the center reel R**2** by way of the display window **4***b,* and those on the right reel R**3** by way of the display window **4***c.*

[0065] A shading piece **491** projects from a portion of a reel main body of the right reel R**3**. When the right reel R**3** spins, the shading piece **491** runs across a photo coupler **492**. As in the case of the right reel R**3**, the shading piece **491** and the photocoupler **492** are provided on each of the left reel R**1** and the center reel R**2**.

[0066] The left reel liquid-crystal panel **21**, the center reel liquid-crystal panel **22**, and the right reel liquid-crystal panel **23** are transparent panels. Each of the panels is formed from first and second substrates with liquid crystal being sandwiched therebetween. The first and second substrates are formed from a transparent, flexible material. For instance, transparent plastic can be used as material for the first and second substrates. In terms of heat-resisting properties, use of polyethersulfone (PES) is more preferable. Liquid-crystal has the property of changing the orientation of molecules in accordance with an applied voltage. Transparent electrodes are formed on mutually-opposing surfaces of the first and second substrates.

[0067] The transparency of liquid crystal changes in accordance with a voltage applied across transparent electrodes. The left reel liquid-crystal panel **21**, the center reel liquid-crystal panel **22**, and the right reel liquid-crystal panel **23** are constructed so as to operate in a normally-white mode. Consequently, when no voltage is applied across the transparent electrodes, each of the panels permits transmission of light. In contrast, when a voltage is applied across the transparent electrodes, each of the panels permits transmission of light at a transparency corresponding to the applied voltage. In the embodiment, a voltage V at which liquid crystal becomes translucent is applied across the transparent electrodes during a predetermined period of time.

[0068] **FIG. 3** shows the appearance of the left reel liquid-crystal panel **21**. As illustrated, the left reel liquid crystal panel **21** has three bored portions. In the following description, bored portions are referred to as non-mask areas