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2,985,266

PORTABLE WARDROBE

Filed Aug. 6, 1959

FIG. 1.

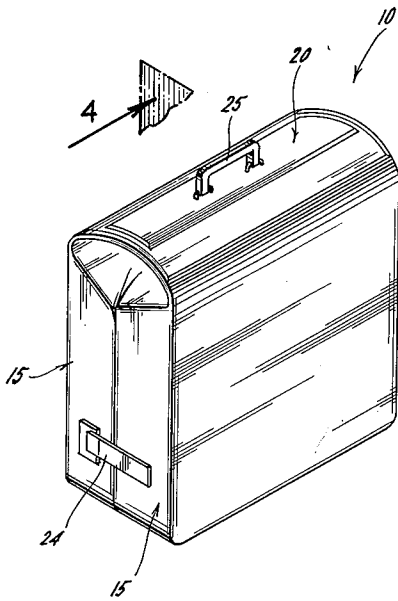


FIG. 2.

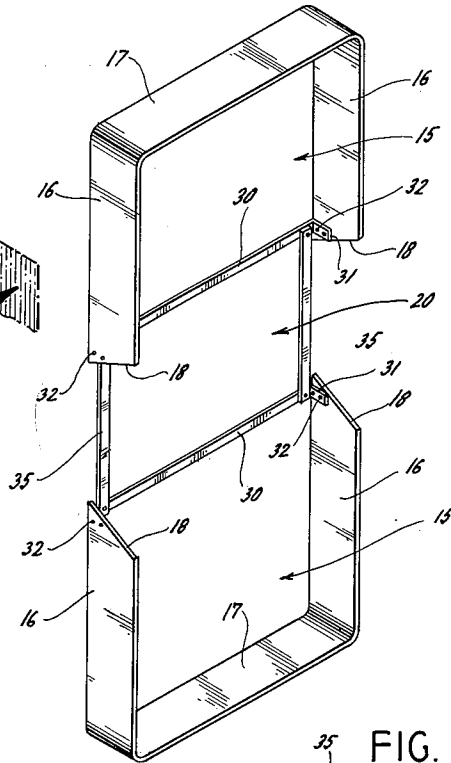


FIG. 4.

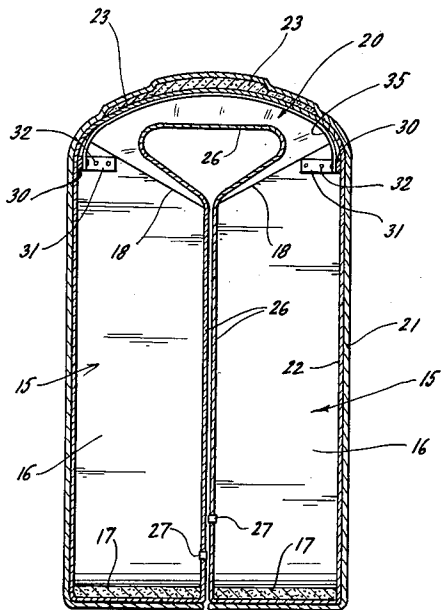
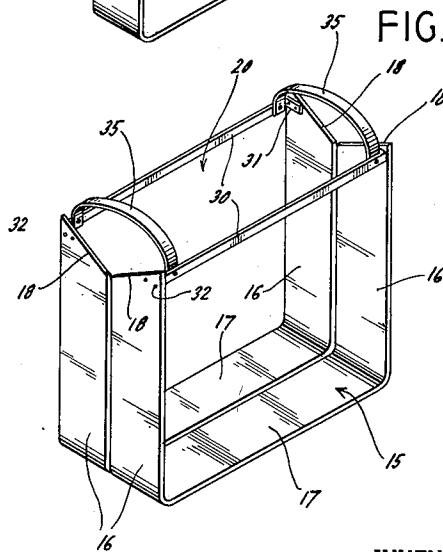


FIG. 3.



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PORTABLE WARDROBE

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2 Claims. (Cl. 190—43)

This invention relates to portable wardrobes and, more particularly, to novel reinforcing means for flexible hinges of such wardrobes.

A known form of portable wardrobe comprises a pair of end packing sections interconnected by a flexible hinge section. This wardrobe may be laid flat, or hung flat in an upright position, and packed flat with clothes, such as suits, coats, dresses and the like. Thereafter, the two end sections are folded unto each other about the hinge section to form a compact carrying case which is usually manipulated by means of a handle secured to the hinge section.

One particular form of such portable wardrobe comprises end sections which are internally reinforced by relatively rigid side walls interconnected by an outer end wall. One or more layers of fabric are used to cover the side walls and the end wall, and these layers are continued between the two sections to form the flexible intermediate hinge section.

When this wardrobe, as well as others of this general type, has its end sections folded onto each other and latched together, the hinge section, when the wardrobe is in an upright position at least, has a tendency to crease and fold, which accelerates deterioration of the fabric at the hinge section, as well as presenting an unattractive appearance of the entire wardrobe.

Various arrangements have been proposed for overcoming this undesirable characteristic, but have generally been either relatively too expensive to incorporate in a wardrobe or have been of such a nature as to interfere with the wardrobe being laid flat on a supporting surface or hung flat in an upright open condition.

In accordance with the invention, a novel reinforcing means is provided for the hinge section which, upon folding of the wardrobe to a closed condition, automatically forces the hinge section into an outwardly bowed condition and maintains the hinge section taut with its outer surface convexly curved between the end sections. This reinforcing means includes at least one, and preferably two, relatively elongated flat strips of resilient material extending across the inner surface of the hinge section and having their ends secured to the end sections and movable therewith. Thereby, upon closure of the wardrobe, the end sections are moved in a direction to bow the strips outwardly to maintain the hinge section with its outer surface convexly curved.

More specifically, a pair of relatively rigid elements, such as metal straps, are arranged to extend across the inner surface of each end section adjacent the hinge section, and these relatively rigid elements have outwardly bent ends which are secured immovably to the rigid side walls of the end sections. The rigid bars or elements lie flat against the inner surface of the outer covering of the end sections, and a pair of spring metal straps are secured to these rigid elements and extend across the hinge section. As the rigid elements are movable with the end sections, they bend the ends of the metal straps in a direction to bow the metal straps outwardly during closing

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movement of the wardrobe end sections. Advantageously, the spring metal strips are secured to the cross bars immediately adjacent the bent ends of the latter.

For an understanding of the invention principles, reference is made to the following description of a typical embodiment thereof as illustrated in the accompanying drawings. In the drawings:

Fig. 1 is a perspective view of a wardrobe, embodying the invention, in closed condition;

Fig. 2 is a perspective view of the internal framing of the wardrobe in upright open position;

Fig. 3 is a perspective view of the internal framing of the wardrobe in the closed condition, with the covering fabric removed; and

Fig. 4 is a sectional view through the wardrobe taken on the line 4—4 of Fig. 1.

Referring to the drawings, a portable wardrobe, of the type to which the hinge section reinforcing means of the present invention is applicable, is illustrated at 10 as comprising a pair of end sections 15 interconnected by a flexible hinge section 20. The end sections 15 are relatively rigid, open box shape sections comprising relatively rigid side walls 16, 16 interconnected by an outer end wall 17, with all three walls preferably being formed of one piece. The inner ends of side walls 16 are preferably bevelled, as at 18.

The end sections 15 are covered by an outer layer of fabric 21, such as natural or artificial leather, plastic or fabric materials having similar properties, and fabric 21 is in a single piece extending over the side and end walls of both sections 15 and over and constituting the outer layer of material of the flexible hinge section 20. Preferably, an inner lining 22 is placed over the frame work, extending over the hinge section 20, and is likewise in a single piece and substantially co-extensive with outer layer 21. Thus, there are two layers of fabric extending across the hinge section 20 and constituting this hinge section.

The intermediate portion of the hinge section may be longitudinally reinforced in any suitable manner as indicated at 23, and a carrying handle 25 may be suitably secured to the reinforced portion of the hinge section. In the closed position of wardrobe 10, as illustrated in Fig. 1, end sections 15, 15 are held together by releasable latches 24 at each end of the wardrobe. A fabric covering 26 extends along the top or outer edges of the walls 16 and 17 and may be in two sections connectible by slide fastener closures such as indicated at 27, 27. While it has been stated that the several fabrics may be in one piece, it should be understood that this does not necessarily mean that these fabrics are woven, cut, or otherwise formed in one piece, as several pieces of fabric may be permanently secured together, as by stitching, to form the layer 21 and 22.

In accordance with the invention, reinforcing means are provided for the hinge section 20 and are adapted to maintain the hinge section taut in the closed condition of wardrobe 10, as well as providing for the end sections 15, 15 to lie flat or be in the same general plane when the wardrobe is open. To this end, relatively rigid elements 30, which may be metal bars, are disposed across the fabric 22, lying flat thereagainst, at the inner end of each section 15. Elements 30 have bent ends 31 which are secured to side walls 16 by two or more screws 32 so that elements 30 are substantially immovable relative to the side wall 16. The reinforcing means per se comprises a pair of relatively elongated flat strips 35 of resilient material, such as spring metal or spring steel, each extending across the end section 20 and lying flat against fabric layer 22. The ends of spring steel strips 35 are secured to bars 30 adjacent the bent ends of 31 thereof.

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In the open position of the wardrobe, bars 30 and strips 35 lie substantially flat and do not interfere with the wardrobe remaining in the flat position. When sections 15, 15 are folded toward each other about hinge section 18, the bars 20 tend to turn and, in so turning, turn the outer ends of strips 35 in a direction such that these strips 35 bow outwardly. As the strips bow outwardly, they likewise bow the hinge section 20 into a condition where its outer surface forms a smooth convex surface across the top of the closed wardrobe 10.

The described reinforcing means has many advantages. In the first place, it is relatively inexpensive to apply to a wardrobe. In the second place, it provides for the wardrobe to lie flat or to remain flat in the suspended position when the wardrobe is open. Thirdly, and most importantly, when the wardrobe is closed, the spring metal strips 35 bow the hinge section 20 outwardly and maintain it taut with its outer surface convexly curved between the end sections 15.

While a specific embodiment of the invention has been described in detail to illustrate the application of the invention principles, it will be understood that the invention may be embodied otherwise without departing from such principles.

What is claimed is:

1. In a portable wardrobe including a pair of end

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sections each having a pair of relatively rigid side walls, and interconnected by a hinge section of flexible material, whereby said wardrobe may be laid or hung flat in an open extended position for packing, with said end sections foldable onto each other about said hinge section to close the wardrobe for compact carriage; reinforcing means for said hinge section comprising a pair of relatively rigid elements each extending between the side walls of one of said end sections adjacent the free ends and outer edges of the side walls and relatively immovably secured to the associated side walls; and a pair of relatively elongated flat strips of resilient material extending across and free from the inner surface of said hinge section and each having its ends substantially permanently and relatively immovably secured to said elements; said elements comprising flat strips overlying the inner surfaces of the outer walls of the end sections and having bent ends secured to said side walls.

2. In a portable wardrobe as claimed in claim 1 in which said resilient strips comprise flat strips of spring metal superposed on said elements adjacent the bent ends thereof.

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