March 3, 1953 A. E. RICE 2,630,254

GARMENT SHIELD AND SUPPORT

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Fig. 1

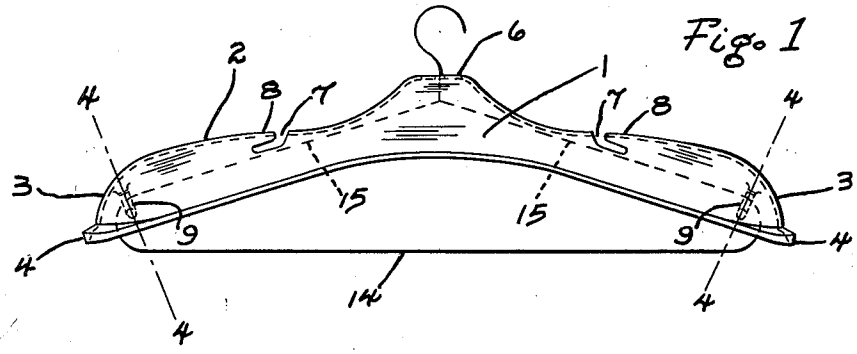


Fig. 2

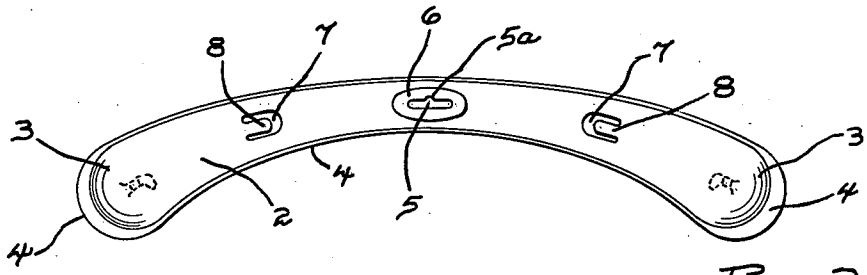


Fig. 3

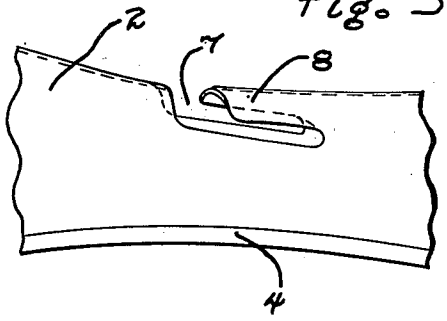
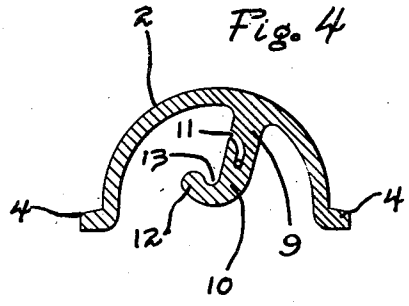


Fig. 4



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GARMENT SHIELD AND SUPPORT

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2 Claims. (Cl. 223—98)

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This invention relates to a device adapted to serve both as a protective shield for garments and as a support therefor. In one of its embodiments the invention is adapted for use in conjunction with a conventional coat hanger of the wire variety.

Coat hangers made of wire are cheap, easy to use, occupy little space, and are very frequently met with in households, laundry and dry cleaning establishments, hotels and many other places. Such coat hangers made of wire while performing a very useful function, nevertheless, have certain disadvantages. For instance, when used to support damp or perspiration laden garments, there is always a tendency of rust discoloration of the garments. There is also a tendency for discoloration by detachment of the enamel coating of the hanger and its deposition on the garment. Another disadvantage is that the relatively thin gauge used in constructing such wire coat hangers tends to impart pronounced and undesired creases or fold lines particularly with respect to sheer garments or freshly pressed garments. This is true not only with respect to the upper and sloping shoulders of the coat hanger, but also to the conventional generally horizontal cross arm customarily used to support skirts, trousers, etc.

The present invention has for one of its objects the provision of a supplemental shield preferably made of plastic adapted to be used in conjunction with a conventional wire coat hanger and to modify and supplement the uses of the wire coat hanger as well as to avoid the disadvantages described above. Another object of the invention is the provision of a shield which is placed over and supported by the wire coat hanger so as to utilize the supporting hook thereof while providing sufficient body to support the upper portions of garments of all types, such as dresses, coats, blouses and the like without permitting contact between the garment and the sloping edges of the wire coat hanger. A still further object is the provision of a shield and attachment which has sufficient width and conformation to support garments such as described above without forming in the garment the undesired creases, fold lines or discolorations. A still further object is the provision of additional means associated with the shield to permit its use in supporting garments such as skirts, trousers, and the like without necessitating the use of the wire cross arm of the wire coat hanger. A still further object of the invention is the provision of other means for supporting wearing apparel such as nightgowns or slips, customarily provided with straps of ribbon, lace, or the like material, in a manner which permits such garments to be hung together with the outer garments supported by the present invention. These and other objects will be made more fully apparent from the accompanying drawings and will be more fully appreciated from the accompanying specification.

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In the drawings, Figure 1 represents a side elevational view of the shield and garment support positioned over a conventional wire coat hanger. Figure 2 is a top plan view of the garment support, without the coat hanger, illustrated in Figure 1. Figure 3 is a detail and side elevation showing more clearly the means for supporting garments such as slips, nightgowns and the like by means of their shoulder straps. Figure 4 is a detail in cross section as taken along the lines of 4—4 of Figure 1 showing the means for supporting skirts, trousers and the like as well as means for supplementing the attachment to the wire coat hanger.

Referring to Figure 1 of the drawings, 14 represents the bottom cross arm of a conventional wire coat hanger which cross arm is part of and integral with a pair of sloping arms 15 which form a roughly triangular-shaped loop. The upper ends of the arms 15 are generally twisted into the shank of an overturned and upwardly extending hook member. In Figure 1 there is shown positioned upon the aforesaid wire coat hanger one embodiment of the invention consisting of a unitary plastic member generally designated 1. For the purpose of simplifying the description in this specification, the member 1 will be designated as a "shield," although it is to be understood that the member performs additional functions and is designed to accomplish desirable ends other than those of a mere shield.

Shield 1 has a pair of generally dome-shaped, downwardly curving (with respect to a horizontal plane), and arcuate (with respect to a vertical plane) shoulders 2 which terminate in ends 3 which in turn desirably terminate in a base stiffening rim or flange 4. It is understood that shield 1, although of somewhat irregular shape, is generally symmetrical and is hollow in that it is open at the bottom, and shoulders 2 and ends 3 define, beneath the shield, a hollowed out recess. A suitable aperture 5 is preferably medially and centrally located with respect to shoulders 2. Aperture 5 is of an elongated oval shape, preferably so proportioned as to permit the insertion of the hook support of a conventional wire coat hanger. Further, to accommodate the hook support and its shank the aperture 5 may be provided

with a small marginal indent 5a. Preferably, the central portion of shield 1 along its upper surface is flattened to provide a flat top 6 which defines a marginal rim around aperture 5. Suitably and preferably symmetrically located on the upper surface of the shield 1 is a pair of roughly L-shaped notches 7. It will be understood that such notches may be formed in the preliminary fabrication of the shield as by stamping or by means of dies. The reference to L-shaped notches was with relation to their appearance as viewed from the side as in Figures 1 and 3. Viewed from above the apertures are substantially U-shaped with the legs of the U defined by a protruding lip member 8. It is to be understood that the gap in the upper surface of arm 2 will be wide enough to accommodate a suitable ribbon or strap for a slip, nightgown, or the like garment, so that such a supporting strap or ribbon may be inserted in the notch 7 and then slid along the space under the protection of lip 8.

Adjacent the under, outer end of shield 1 are disposed a pair of hook members 9. It will be understood that the hook members may be formed in the unitary molding of the shield but, since the shield is made of plastic the hook member may be bonded or fused to the under surface of the shield in a well-known manner. The form and disposition of the hook member 9 are matters of considerable importance. Reference to Figure 4 of the drawings will show that the hook members are desirably formed with a downwardly, depending, inclined shank 10 which terminates in an outwardly inclined extension 12 on the upper surface of which there is formed a groove or notch 13. On the inner side, that is the side adjacent the center line of the shield, the shank 10 will have formed in it a curved notched recess 11.

The manner of fabricating and utilizing the shield which comprises the present invention will now be discussed. The statement has been made above that the shield is preferably formed of plastic. This statement may be amplified by saying that the shield may be preferably formed of a moldable plastic which may be colorless, tinted or pigmented and may be clear or opaque. In this period of the advanced uses of synthetic plastic materials, the art of molding and forming objects of plastic is well understood. The precise nature of the plastic composition may be varied in accordance with the properties desired. Merely by way of illustration the plastic may be a methacrylate resin, a resin formed from vinyl polymers or co-polymers, resins formed from phenolic condensation products, and similar moldable, thermo plastic, essentially resinous material. It will be understood that the entire shield may be formed in single molding operation intended to produce the aperture 5, the slots 7 and the hooks 9 as original and integral parts of the shield. On the other hand, it is possible to make the shield as a blank and by die stamping or well-known operations later form the aperture 5 and the slots 7. The hook members 9 may be separately fabricated and fused or bonded to the under surface of the shield either by heat fusion or by the use of suitable adhesive formulations.

Apart from the method of fabrication of the shield, the shield is adapted for use, as briefly discussed above, in conjunction with a conventional wire coat hanger. It will be noted with reference to Figure 2 of the drawings that a top plan inspection of the shield reveals that it has an arcuate or somewhat curved configuration. This shape represents the approximate shape of the average human shoulders, including the neck, and therefore tends to support garments such as coats, tailored outer garments and the like in a position which the garment naturally assumes when worn on the individual wearer. The shape discussed just above, however, has another purpose. It will be noted that when the shank and hook of the coat hanger is inserted in notch 5 the wire coat hanger will assume the position, viewed from the side, shown in Figure 1 of the drawings. However, the hook members 9 are not in the same vertical plane as aperture 5 and the outer shoulders 15 of the wire coat hanger will be required to be bent and inserted in the slots 11 in the hook members 9. This places the shoulders 15 of the wire coat hanger under some tension and, it being understood that the wire coat hanger is made of metal which is capable of being bent, will generally result in having the lower cross-tie member 14 of the coat hanger disposed in a vertical plane which intersects hook members 9 yet is offset from but parallel to a vertical plane running thru aperture 5. Similarly, shoulders 15 of the wire coat hanger being bent at their ends to permit insertion in the slots 11 will generally lie in two intersecting vertical planes which each intersect a hook member 9 and the substantial center of aperture 5. In such a position the shoulders 15 of the wire coat hanger are not directly under the slots 7 and the cross-tie 14 of the wire coat hanger is largely uncovered by shield 1 except at the ends adjacent hooks 9. This arrangement permits the user to insert the shoulder straps or ribbons of slips or similar garments into slots 7 where the ribbons will be supported by shoulders 2 and protected by the lips 8, yet such garments will not be in contact with any part of the wire coat hanger, and will be free from any possible discoloration from that source.

Most nether garments, such as trousers or slacks worn by men, are provided with belt loops or similar loops and most skirts and slacks, worn by women, are provided with equivalent loops, many of which are disposed on the inside of the waistband. The loops of such garments may conveniently be placed over the extension 12 and retained within the groove or notch 13 on the hook members 9. When so supported, such garments are in contact with the plastic material and are out of contact with the wire of the coat hanger. The shield when supported by a wire coat hanger in the manner described above still provides access to the cross arm 14 upon which may be hung small objects such as neckties, socks, stockings and the like.

It will thus be seen that the present invention contemplates a shield adapted to be supported by a wire coat hanger and which may be used to support, simultaneously, outer garments, such as coats, blouses and the like, nether garments, such as skirts, trousers, slacks and the like and under garments, such as slips, nightgowns and the like, all supported on a surface which may readily be kept clean, may be used without risk of spotting or soiling the garments as a result of dirt, rust or other sources of such damage normally produced by the wire coat hanger. In addition to accomplishing the foregoing result, the shield is so shaped as to provide proper support for garments which have either been freshly pressed or which may be of such a sheer or fragile nature as to warrant considerable care in supporting the gar-

ment after it has been cleaned, pressed, ironed and before wearing. A further advantage of the present invention is that the shield may conveniently be carried in small luggage by travelers so as to be available for use in hotels, sleeping cars and like places which are notoriously hard on transported personal clothing.

I claim:

1. A plastic protective sheath for garment hangers of the conventional wire type of triangular form, adapted to be mounted upon and supported by the wire hanger, comprising a substantially rigid, longitudinally curved, plastic shell, said shell having a pair of outwardly extending shoulders which slope downwardly from the center portion of the shell and which, with the center portion, form an arcuate, outwardly flaring, clothes-supporting body, the cross-section of said arcuate, outwardly extending shoulders being substantially semi-circular, the said shell being open at the bottom and centrally apertured to accommodate the hook and shank of a wire coat hanger, the plastic shell around the apertured portion being sloped upward to simulate the neck shape of the human body, whereby the combination of the upward sloping portion and outwardly extending shoulders closely simulate the shoulder and neck shape of a human body and thereby tend to keep garments

in proper shape, said shell having a downwardly depending hook member disposed on the underside of the shell adjacent the outer end of each shoulder, each hook member being provided with an upwardly extending portion extending upward from the lower portion of the hook member, the two upwardly extending portions thereby furnishing a means for supporting garments therefrom, each hook member having a slot in the shank thereof adapted to receive and detachably hold a portion of the shoulder of the wire coat hanger.

2. The sheath as recited in claim 1, the shell having a notch on the upper surface of each of said shell shoulders, said notches being spaced from the central aperture to provide protective support for shoulder straps and the like.

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