Dec. 10, 1935. J. M. HART 2,023,470

MOLDED PULP ARTICLE

Filed Nov. 3, 1933

Fig. 1

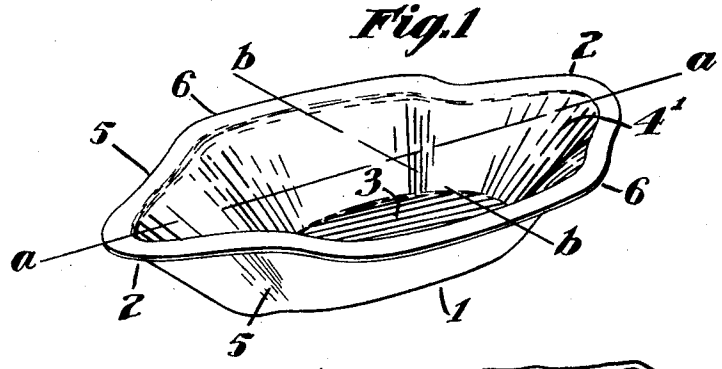


Fig. 2

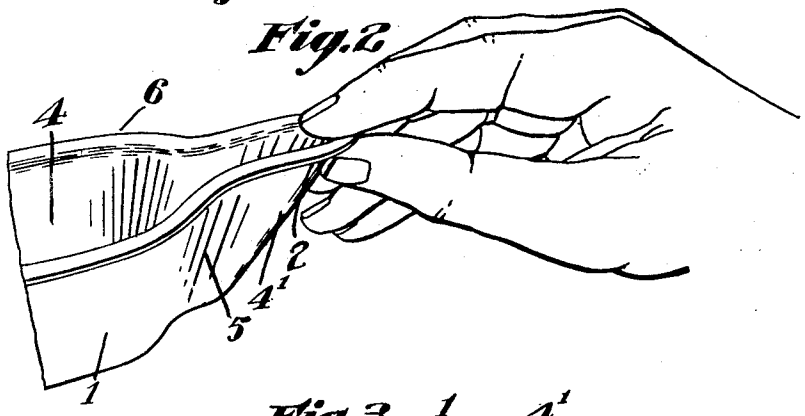


Fig. 3

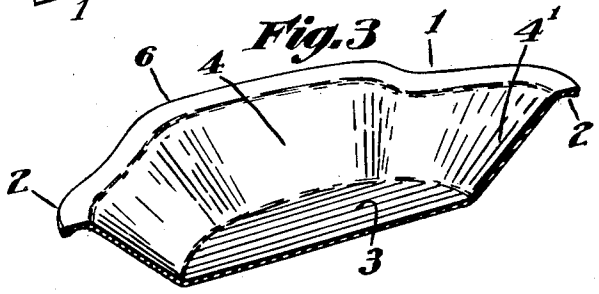
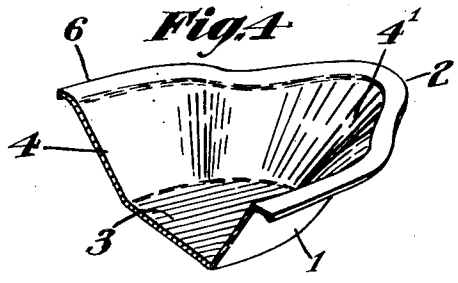


Fig. 4



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MOLDED PULP ARTICLE

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Application November 3, 1933, Serial No. 696,530

4 Claims. (Cl. 229—2.5)

This invention relates to food containers and particularly to a single service food container of fibrous material such as molded pulp.

My present container is designed to fulfill in a single article two essentially different requirements of use.

One of these requirements is for an article of general table-ware as a dish, or tray, in which use it functions simply as a container for the usual food products customarily served at the table, as butter, pickles, gravy, fluid or partially fluid dressings and condiments or sauces.

In such use, the food is adapted to be removed from the container either by a spoon or by the fingers, depending upon whether it is liquid, semi-solid, or solid. In order to meet this requirement, I have provided a container of such design and structure as to be capable of being readily passed from hand to hand when filled without danger of collapse or buckling and without the necessity of the thumb and fingers of the person passing or receiving the container from coming in contact with the contained food. More than this, my container is so designed that if a spoon is used wherewith to serve the contained food, such spoon when not in use will automatically find a convenient, steady and safe resting place within the container itself so as always to be available for use as well as to be so safety retained within the dish against accidental dislodgment therefrom.

The other requirement in a container of this class is that the container shall combine in a single article the functions of both a container for the food to be dispensed and a convenient dispenser itself for the contained food. To meet this requirement, I have provided a container which both adequately retains the food therein as well as permitting it to be directly consumed therefrom without the use of spoon, fork or similar utensil.

With my container, the contents may be conveyed directly into the mouth of the user without danger of spillage. One portion of the container in such use functions as a directing guide or spout for the contents, which guide or spout is of such size and dimension as conveniently to be received between the lips and another portion thereof enabling the container to be grasped between the thumb and fingers and manipulated into pouring position.

The so-called "snow ball" well illustrates a food product which is intended to be both contained and dispensed from my article. This is a concoction greatly favored in some parts of the country by children and others and consists of a ball of shaved ice over which a liquid flavoring has been poured. In its initial state, the shaved ice is a solid which, however, becomes fluid as it melts and consequently it is important to provide for both eating the material as a solid as well as drinking directly from the container as it melts, thus not only salvaging the flavored fluid as it melts but enabling the unmelted portion to be conveniently consumed.

It is usually sold by itinerant vendors for immediate consumption. Spoons are not supplied. Instead the ball is placed on a flat paper sheet, the liquid flavoring poured over it, and the sheet then partially wrapped about the concoction. The technique of eating consists in balancing the sheet in the hand without spilling the contents and applying the lips from above. As the snow ball melts under the heat of the hand, the consumer carefully creases the paper to provide a drainage spout to which he can apply his lips while holding the delicacy sufficiently high to cause the syrup and melted ice to flow down into his mouth.

In the accompanying drawing:—

Fig. 1 is a perspective view of a container in accordance with my invention.

Fig. 2 is a fragmentary perspective showing a characteristic dispenser use, and

Figs. 3 and 4 are sections on the line *a*—*a* and *b*—*b*, respectively, of Fig. 1.

My container is preferably of one-piece construction affording a main container portion 1 of somewhat oval or elongated shape having at the ends of its major axis indicated at *a*—*a*, portions 2 of triple function.

These portions 2 are dispensing or pouring portions and also effective handle members, where the container is both a container and a dispenser. When the article is used as a dish, or tray or similar article of tableware, they are both handle members and spoon rests.

In appearance, the portions 2 are conspicuously of the nose or snout type of formation. This well adapts them for both fluid delivery and as finger or spoon engagements.

When used as a snow ball dispenser, the container is usually held by one portion 2 as a handle and the liquid or semi-liquid contents of the holding part 1 sucked or drained from the opposite portion 2 which is placed between the lips of the user.

The container is wide enough across its minor axis, indicated at *b*—*b*, to permit access to its

contents, as a "snow ball" without using a spoon, if so desired.

I preferably mold my containers on foraminous dies from a fluid pulp suspension. They may be molded in any desired shape and depth and are preferably of substantially uniform thickness throughout. This is important structurally as will appear in certain functions of the article and also in relation to production.

The container portion 1 has a flat bottom 3 for support and flaring side walls 4. The end or terminal members 2 are formed as continuations 4^1 of the side walls 4 of the container portion 1. They are preferably of general conic section merging with the side walls. This flaring form permits the articles to be stacked or nested for shipment.

At their junction or zones of merging with the side walls 4, the terminal portions 2 form reverse indentations or in certain uses finger bearings 5. As previously explained these indentations act as reinforcements or stiffening reversals of curvature and also shoulders for engagement in manually supporting such an article at one end when it is loaded or charged for service or consumption.

When used as a table dish, or tray, these restricted terminal portions 2 act as spoon rests.

Such devices are somewhat flexible as it is not practical or convenient to make them very rigid or thick. In fact, I conceive of a certain degree of flexibility on proper lines is advantageous for certain purposes.

Service devices as shown are preferably longitudinally or on major axis *a*—*a* rigid but transversely or on minor axis *b*—*b* capable of being flexed or rather put under compressive stress.

In practice with a product like a snow ball, so-called, consisting of a body of flavored crushed ice, it is desired to drink the rapid melt. At the same time the slush-like body must be supported. I therefore contemplate a slight lateral compression which narrows the article, makes it more rigid longitudinally (axis *a*—*a*) and emphasizes the trough or gutter effect of the terminals (axis *b*—*b*).

In order to permit a minimum thickness of deposit of fibre for economy in manufacture and yet provide the necessary factors in use, I also provide an outer rim or flange 6 continuously about the upper edge of the flaring side walls 4 and 4^1. This rim or edge member 6 may be of slightly greater thickness of pulp deposit, as indicated in Fig. 3, to act as an edge reinforcement for the container. Such rim normally keeps the article in shape when empty or filled and forms an extra frame member for the structure when the dispenser is stressed as when held by the fingers as shown. In such engagement either terminal portion 2 so engaged becomes a handle and supporting factor for the container 1 and its contents.

These devices may be made in various forms, shapes or designs, and used for any purpose desired. The "snow ball" use is merely cited as peculiarly characteristic and as illustrating the reversible nature of the snout and handle members which are used for partaking of the solid or drinking or pouring the liquid.

What I therefore claim and desire to secure by Letters Patent is:—

1. A container of fibrous material such as a dish, plate or the like, comprising a main container portion of oval shape having a bottom and an inclined side wall, and a spout portion of generally conic section, the curvature of the main container portion being reversed and gradually merging into the curvature of the spout portion thereby providing a reinforced portion at the juncture of said main container portion and the spout.

2. A container of fibrous material such as a dish, plate or the like, comprising a main container portion of oval shape having a bottom and an inclined side wall, and a spout portion of generally conic section at each end of the container, the curvature of the main container portion being reversed and gradually merging into the curvature of the spout portions thereby providing reinforced portions at the juncture of said main container portion and the spouts.

3. A container as claimed in claim 2 wherein a continuous outwardly extending rim encloses the side wall and spout portions.

4. A container of fibrous material, such as a dish, plate or the like, comprising a bottom wall and an outwardly inclined curved side wall disposed continuously about said bottom wall and providing therewith a relatively wide main container portion and a pair of relatively narrower elongated spout portions at the ends of said main container portion, the curvature of the main container portion being reversed and gradually merging into the curvature of the spout portions, and the side wall of the container being indented at the juncture of said main container portion with the spouts to provide adjacent each end of the container oppositely disposed vertically extending reinforcements which serve as finger bearings for grasping the container and as stiffeners to prevent collapse of the container.

JOHN M. HART.