LOCKING DEVICE FOR BRIEF CASES

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3 Claims. (Cl. 70—67)

This invention relates to latching and locking means for holding the flap of a briefcase or cover of a valise to the body of the piece of luggage in whatever form it may be.

According to the present invention the flap or cover of the briefcase or the like is provided with a pair of hook-shaped keeper elements mounted at the part and intended to cooperate with a pair of latch members which are normally spring urged to their outward latching or holding position. These latch elements may be manually compressed or moved toward each other simultaneously to effect the release of the keeper elements from the latch members, thereby to open the briefcase when desired. The keeper elements are actuated together against the force of a spring by external finger engaging grips to release the keepers from the hook-shaped latches.

The outwardly urged keeper elements may be locked in their outward position so that the exposed finger elements are ineffective by means of a conventional form of locking mechanism utilizing a key.

With the above and other objects in view which will appear as the nature of the invention is better understood, the invention consists in the novel construction, combination, and arrangement of parts, hereinafter more fully described, illustrated and claimed.

A preferred and practical embodiment of the invention is shown in the accompanying drawings, in which:

Fig. 1 is a front view of the locking device in closed position;

Fig. 2 is a plan view of the locking mechanism with the cover plate partly removed;

Figs. 3 and 4 are sectional views taken on lines III—III and IV—IV, respectively, in Fig. 2.

Fig. 5 is an outer plan view of the lock casing.

The base plate 1 is provided at its edges with an offset rim 2, and supports, by means of lugs 3, a bridge-shaped housing 4. This housing has slots or holes cut out in its upper flange to admit keepers 5 of the upper or flap portion 9 of the piece of luggage.

Within the housing comprising base plate 1 and front bridge plate 4 move two symmetrically arranged latch elements or slide followers 6, 7 which have lugs 8 to catch and hold keepers 5 of the upper or flap portion 9 of the lock. The slidable followers 6, 7 are fitted near the bottom of their underside with studs 10 which pass through slots 11 of base plate 1. These limit the travel of slidable followers or latch elements 6, 7 which are held spread apart by a spring 12 between them, and, in this position, the studs 10 engage keepers 5.

Near their outer edges the slidable followers 6, 7 have mounted on them by means of dowels 13 finger manipulating grips 14. Cover plate 4 is cut away at its side edges to conform to the travel of dowels 13. In this way slidable followers or latches 6, 7 can be individually moved toward each other, but the two keepers 5 will only be disengaged to permit the lock to open when both slides or latches are moved toward each other.

On its underside base plate 1 has mounted a lock casing 15 which is held by lugs 16 fastened to housing 4 and which contains a latch member 17 which is provided with a nose 18 which may be pushed between the two guide studs 10 of latches 6, 7 when they are in an extended position.

As is more clearly shown in Figs. 4 and 5, and particularly the latter, the lock casing 15 comprises an inset housing having a bottom wall 25, opposed side walls 26, of which the latter referred to anchoring ribs 21 are continuations, and opposite side walls 27.

The latch member 17 is of generally rectangular form and has opposite edges 28 and 29 and a further edge 30 opposed to the nose 18. The latch member is slidable within the housing in contact with the bottom wall 25 and is adapted to assume two alternate positions, in one of which the edge of nose 18 engages a wall 27 and in an alternate position thereof the edge 30 engages the opposite wall 27.

The latch member 17 is provided with an opening 31 and one side edge of such opening is provided with a pair of recesses 32 and 33 for alternate reception of a pin 34 which is rigid with and projects upwardly from the bottom wall 25.

The edge 28 of the latch member is yieldably held in engagement with the wall 26 by means of a leaf spring 17* of elongated U-form with opposed legs thereof engaging a wall 26 and the edge 29 of the latch member 17 and the height of the spring seats on a lug 35 unitary with the latch member 17; said edge of the opening 31 is further provided with a key engageable arcuate cam edge portion 36 and upon turning of the key the latch member 17 is alternately moved from the solid line position to the dotted line position, in the latter of which pin 34 is disposed within the recess 33.

From the above, it will be apparent that when the latch member 17 is in the solid line position, the studs 10 cannot be moved toward each other sufficiently to release the lugs 8 of the followers 6 and 7 from the keepers 5 and accordingly the flap or cover of the briefcase is locked.

Upon key actuation of the latch member 17 to the dotted line position, the studs 10 are free to move toward each other and the lugs 8 may be released from engagement with the keepers 5 whereby the briefcase is unlocked.

It is to be particularly observed that the pin 34 snaps into the recesses 33 and 34 under action of spring 17* and thereby retains the latch member 17 in either of its two positions.

Parts 4, 1 and 15 are provided with matching key hole slots 19 to accommodate a latch tumbler 20. Latch member 17 can be movable positioned in the manner set out above by a key insertable into tumbler 20. The lock casing 15 also has mounted on it the anchoring ribs 21.

I claim:

1. A locking device for securing the cover of luggage to the body thereof, comprising, a housing including a rectangular base plate having an inwardly directed rim, said base plate being provided with a pair of spaced slots and a lock tumbler opening intermediate the slots, a front bridge plate secured to said base plate in spaced parallel relation thereto, a pair of followers slidably disposed between said base plate and said bridge plate, one adjacent end thereof, a finger manipulating grip member on each of said followers accessible from the front of said bridge plate, said followers each being provided with an inwardly projecting stud, adjacent the inner end thereof, said bridge plate including an upper flange having a pair of longitudinally spaced slots therein, and a pair of slots in said base plate through which said follower studs extend, a cover engageable member having recessed keepers extending through said pair of slots in said flange,
lugs on said followers engageable with said keepers when same are in outward slidable position, a latch casing secured to the inner wall of said base plate and being provided with a generally rectangular latch plate member slidably disposed therein, and said latch plate member having a lock tumbler engaging cam surface for movement thereof in said casing, and said latch plate member having a nose adapted for disposal between said follower studs for retaining said lugs and keepers in engagement and for disposal out of range of the follower studs for disengagement of said lugs and keepers.

2. A locking device according to claim 1, wherein said latch casing is of rectangular form and having an inset having defined by a bottom wall and opposed side walls, said latch plate member being slidably disposed within said housing with one edge thereof normally engaging one of said side walls, spring means in said housing between a side wall thereof and an opposed edge of said latch member for yieldably retaining the latch member in either of said two positions thereof relative to said follower studs.

3. A locking device according to claim 2 wherein a pin rigid with said bottom wall projects outwardly therefrom, and a pair of recesses in the wall of said opening in said latch member selectively receiving said pin in either of the two positions of the latch member for retaining same in either position.

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