April 1, 1941. J. R. DORMAN 2,237,176

MERCHANDISE CONTAINER

Filed Dec. 22, 1938

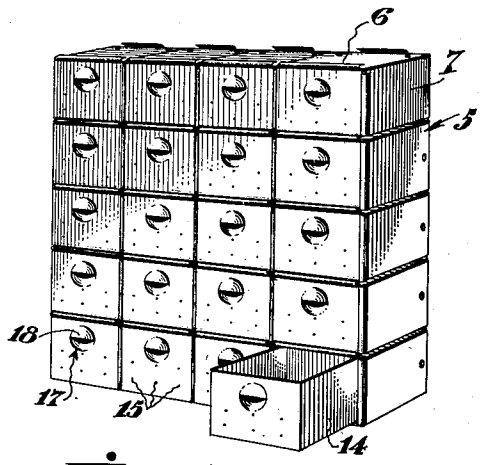

Fig. 1

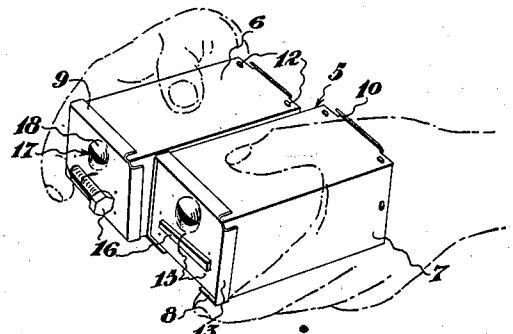

Fig. 2

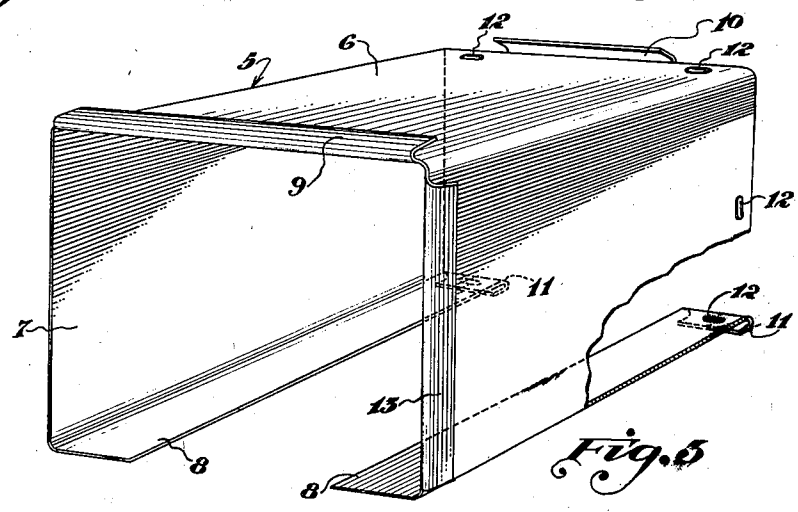

Fig. 5

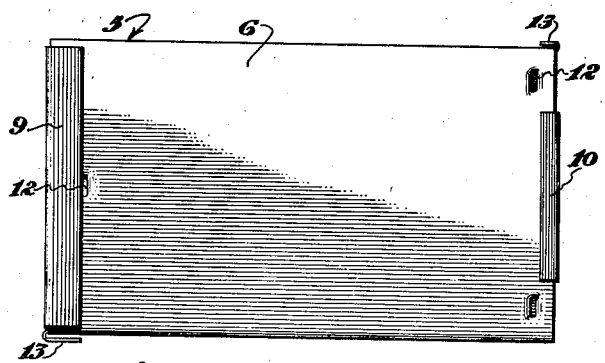

Fig. 4

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MERCHANDISE CONTAINER

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Application December 22, 1938, Serial No. 247,184

4 Claims. (Cl. 312—107)

This invention relates to the packaging and dispensing or storage of merchandise.

It has been the object of the inventor to provide a series of containers or compartments for merchandise which compartments can be sold separately to the distributor or user, with the contained merchandise, and assembled by him to constitute an extensible cabinet. This invention has utility in connection with the sale and handling of metal parts such as those sent to repairmen to be used in motor cars. Supplies of this sort must of necessity be sold in heavy boxes for shipment and handling. It has been the concept here to provide the package in the form of a small cabinet including a drawer and to arrange these cabinets so that they may be interconnected either at the top or bottom or at the sides. That is to say, the sectional cabinet may be formed by attaching a plurality of the containers extended in any direction.

It has been a further object of the inventor to provide part containers of this sort which, when assembled to make up the cabinet, constitute a cabinet of extreme rigidity and compactness and one which has the neat appearance of a finished cabinet.

Other objects and certain advantages will be more fully apparent in a description of the accompanying drawing in which:

Figure 1 is a perspective view of a cabinet fabricated by assembling a multiplicity of the merchandise containers showing one of the drawers in open position.

Figure 2 is a perspective view showing the user assembling two of the containers in side by side relationship.

Figure 3 is a perspective view of the compartment structure of an individual container with the drawer removed.

Figure 4 is a top plan view of the compartment.

Generally described, each of the packages or containers, as originally sold to the automobile dealer or repairman, consists of a metal shell of rectangular box-like form which constitutes the means for receiving the drawer in which the parts are contained. These shell elements or housings include properly turned flanges at the end edges which interconnect, as between adjacent compartments, for constituting a staunch and neat bank of containers. The receptacles or packages are arranged in tiers and are interconnected in any direction. Thus, the cabinet may be made up of the boxes as supplied by the part wholesaler or manufacturer, to constitute an extensible cabinet of any general shape. That is to say, the height and width of the cabinet may be determined by the shape of the space available.

Referring specifically to the drawing, the shell or container compartment is indicated at **5**. It is formed from a sheet of plate steel to provide a full top wall **6** and full side walls **7**. Inwardly turned flanges **8** constitute the bottom. Each compartment is provided with a rearwardly turned lip **9** along the forward edge of the upper wall **6** and a forwardly turned lip **10** along the rear edge of the upper wall.

The rearwardly disposed lip is disposed centrally and is of a width corresponding to the spacing of the lower flanges of the compartment. This lip serves, therefore, as a spacer for the next compartment above. The rear end of each flange includes a forwardly turned lip **11**. Thus, in the operation of assembling the compartments, the base flanges **8** are engaged against the top wall of the compartment next beneath, and the top compartment is shoved forwardly so as to engage these flanges under the forward lip and so as to cause the lower rear lips **11**, **11** to engage around the rear end of the upper wall of the lower compartment. The metal of the adjacent parts at each lip is formed to provide registering detent portions **12** which cause the elements to snap into position when assembled.

The forward edge of one side wall and the rear edge of the other side wall of each compartment are provided with a lip **13**. Thus, when the elements are placed as shown in Figure 2 and slid upon each other to bring the front faces into flush position, the lips **13** engage around the adjacent edges of the adjacent compartment. Likewise, the metal is formed adjacent these connections to provide detents **12**.

The drawer **14** is of relatively simple construction and need not be of any particular design or shape other than that fitting the compartment. The forward wall of the drawer is perforated as at **15** to permit the attachment of a sample **16** of the contained merchandise to be attached thereto exteriorly. The forward wall is also formed to provide a fingerhold **17** for withdrawing the drawer. To form this fingerhold, the metal is pressed in opposite directions above and below a split to provide an overhanging gripping edge **18**.

Now, as shown in the drawing, twenty of these compartments have been assembled in four tiers, five compartments high. The arrangement may be varied to suit the occasion. It will be apparent that all of the compartments may be placed side

by side, if desired, or they may be set up in one stack or tier. The attachment means is relatively inconspicuous and the sides, top, and bottom of the assembled cabinets virtually unobstructed.

Having described my invention, I claim:

1. A container, comprising; a rectangular compartment adapted to receive a drawer and having inwardly turned flanges constituting its bottom, said container having externally turned lips disposed along the forward edge of one of its sides, the rear edge of its upper wall and rear edge of the other side, said lip at the rear edge of the upper wall being of approximately the same width as the space between the flanges at the bottom of the compartment.

2. A container for merchandise, comprising; a rectangular box-like compartment open at the front and rear and having inwardly disposed flanges constituting its base, said compartment adapted to receive a drawer, the top wall of the compartment having an external rearwardly disposed lip along its forward edge and an external forwardly disposed lip along its rear edge of the same length as the space between said flanges, one of the side walls of the compartment having an external rearwardly disposed lip at its forward edge and the other side wall having an external forwardly disposed lip at its rear edge.

3. Container means, comprising, two rectangular compartments, each adapted to receive a drawer and each including side walls, a bottom and a top wall, one of the side walls of the first compartment having an external rearwardly disposed lip at its forward edge forming a slot of substantially the same thickness as the side wall, the forward edge of the adjacent side wall of the second compartment being fitted into said slot, and the adjacent side wall of the second compartment including an external forwardly disposed lip at its rear edge providing a slot of substantially the same thickness as the side wall and engaging over the rear edge of said side wall of the first compartment.

4. Container means, comprising, two rectangular compartments, each adapted to receive a drawer and each including side walls, a bottom and a top wall, the top wall of one compartment having an external rearwardly disposed lip at its forward edge forming a slot of substantially the same thickness as the wall, the forward edge of the bottom of the second compartment being fitted into said slot and the bottom of the second compartment including an external forwardly disposed lip at its rear edge providing a slot of substantially the same thickness as the bottom and engaged over the rear edge of the top wall of the first compartment.

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