This invention relates to a supporting device for garment bags and particularly to a supporting device which may be folded into compact form when it is desired to ship or store the garment bag.

Garment bags for storing or protecting garments are well known and usually consist of a fabric in the shape of a rectangular box suspended from a rectangular frame which in turn is suspended from a hook or other means suitable for holding the bag suspended in a closet or on a rack. The fabric itself is relatively thin and when folded occupies a relatively small volume. Normally the limiting factor in the size of a garment bag when collapsed for shipment or storage is the size of the supporting device. It is, therefore, desirable to reduce the size of the supporting device when not in use to the smallest size possible consistent with its function and with mechanical requirements as to rigidity.

The size of the supporting device in its storing or shipping form may be reduced by making the device foldable. However, the device should be simple to fold and unfold and in its unfolded or operating condition, it must be rigid and strong.

In addition to the above features, it is desirable that the device be arranged so that the covering fabric may be easily removed and so that only a small opening in the covering fabric is required for any part of the device to extend through the covering. Also, the covering fabric should be able to snugly engage any part extending therethrough so as to prevent the ingress of dust, vermin, etc.

It is an object of the invention to provide a supporting device for garment bags which may be easily folded to a small and compact size and which is both sturdy in construction and light in weight.

It is a further object of my invention to provide a supporting device for garment bags which may be easily and economically manufactured. Other features and objects of the invention will be apparent from the description of a preferred embodiment of the invention given hereinafter.

In accordance with my invention, I provide a garment bag supporting device comprising a pair of generally C-shaped frame members held together at their open ends by a plate member which also serves as a hanger rack. The expression "C-shaped" member as used herein is intended to include a member of square or rectangular configuration having one partially open side, as well as other configurations having an opening in their peripheries.

Short arms perpendicular to the planes of the C-shaped members are formed at the ends of these members, and the members are so held together that the arms of one member oppose the arms of the other member when the device is in use. An eye bolt is screwed into the plate member in such a manner that the eye bolt is substantially locked and the plate member is reinforced.

My invention accordingly comprises a novel garment bag supporting device construction, a specific embodiment of which showing the manner in which I now prefer to practice the invention is described herein by way of example only.

My invention may be better understood by referring to the following detailed description of the invention and the accompanying drawing, in which:

Fig. 1 is a perspective view of a supporting device, constructed in accordance with the invention and shown in operative relationship to a garment bag and garment hangers to be supported therefrom;

Fig. 2 is a plan view of a portion of the device shown in Fig. 1;

Fig. 3 is a vertical sectional view taken along the line 3—3 of Fig. 2;

Fig. 4 is a vertical sectional view taken along the line 4—4 of Fig. 3;

Fig. 5 is a fragmentary perspective view showing the manner in which the supporting device may be folded into compact form; and

Figs. 6 and 7 are fragmentary vertical sectional views taken along the lines 6—6 and 7—7 respectively of Figs. 1 and 2.

Referring to Figs. 1—3, the supporting device comprises a pair of generally C-shaped frame members 10 and 11, preferably formed from stiff, heavy wire, mounted on a plate member 12 with their partially open sides facing the plate member 12. Each of the frame members 10 and 11 has a pair of arms 13 and 14 and 15 and 16 at the free ends of the frame members, the arms extending parallel to the plane of the plate member 12 and abutting the plate member. The arms 13—16 are preferably formed by bending the ends of the frame members at an angle substantially perpendicular to the planes of the frame members and by twisting the tips of the arms back on the arms so as to provide rounded, smooth ends for the arms. The frame members are so mounted on the plate member that the arm 13 is adjacent to and facing arm 15 and arm 14 is adjacent to and facing arm 16. In this manner, the pressure of the arms 13 and 14 against the plate member 12 is opposed by the pressure of the arms 15 and 16 against the opposite side of the frame members 10 and 11.

The plate member 12 is preferably made of sheet metal and has a plurality of apertures 17 therein for receiving clothes hanging devices, such as a hanger 18. The plate member also has a portion 19 thereof bent at right angles to the plane of the plate member so to encircle portions 20, 21, 22 and 23 extending along the partially open sides of the frame members 10 and 11 and so as to provide a point of attachment for an eye bolt 24. The eye bolt 24 along with a hook 25 serve to hold the supporting device suspended from a hook or clothes rack. A link 26 and a chain 27 may also be provided to assist in holding the supporting device in a hanging position.

Although the portion 19 of the plate member 12 encircles the portions 20—23 of the frame members 10 and 11, the portion 19 does not encircle the portions 20—23 so tightly that the frame members 10 and 11 cannot be rotated about parallel axes passing through the portions 20—23. In other words, the frame members 10 and 11 are attached to the plate member 12 in such a manner that a hinge is formed at substantially the longitudinal midpoint of the frame and the frame members may be rotated in an upward direction, as seen in Fig. 1. Thus, the frame may be reduced to approximately one half its length when it is desired to store or ship the supporting device.

A garment bag 28 surrounds the supporting device which holds the bag in a distended condition. The supporting device is assembled with the garment bag by placing the device with the eye bolt 24 removed inside the bag and under the top panel thereof. The eye bolt 24 is then inserted through an aperture 29 in the top
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panel of the bag and turned into a threaded member held within the portion 19 of the plate member 12 in a manner later described in detail herein. The top panel of the bag 28 snugly engages the eye bolt at the point where it passes through the top panel and thus prevents ingress of dust, vermin, etc. around the shank of the eye bolt member in the body part of the supporting device extending through the walls of the garment bag 28.

As more clearly shown in Fig. 4, the arms 14 and 16 face each other on opposite sides of the plate member 12 and are adjacent each other so that the force of the frame member 10 is opposed by the force of the frame member 11 caused by the weight of the frame members and the garment bag 28 suspended from the frame members.

The plate member 12 may, therefore, be made of relatively thin sheet metal because there are no forces tending to bend the plate member 12, and the frame composed of the members 10 and 11 will be more rigid than if the arms were spaced from each other laterally of the frame.

In Figs. 1-4, the supporting device has been shown in the unfolded or operating position. When it is desired to store or ship the garment bag, the garment bag 28 is repositioned from the supporting device of Fig. 1 by removing the eye bolt 24 from the plate member 12 and by subsequently removing the supporting device from inside the garment bag 28. The garment bag may then be folded to compact size and one of the frame members may be folded on top of the other by rotating the frame member in the manner described above.

Alternatively, the frame may be folded without removing the garment bag. In this case, the garment bag is folded on top of the frame subsequent to the folding of the frame.

Fig. 5 illustrates the relative positions of the frame member 11 when the frame has been folded for storage or shipment. As indicated in Fig. 5, the frame member 11 lies on top of the frame member 10 and the arms 13 and 15 lie in substantially the same plane. The plate member 12 may lie in the plane of the frame members 10 and 11 or it may be rotated so that it is substantially parallel to one of the arms 13 and 15.

Because the plate member 12 is preferably made of relatively thin sheet metal, I prefer to attach the eye bolt 24 to the plate member 12 by inserting a threaded member 36 inside of the portion 19 of the plate member, as shown in Figs. 6 and 7. The threaded member 36 may be inserted in the portion 19 before the edge 31 of the portion 19 is rolled or otherwise formed on the portion 19. In this manner, the threaded member 36 is tightly held within the portion 19.

The threaded member 36 has a hole 32 therein having threaded walls for engagement with the threads on the eye bolt 24. In addition, the plate member 12 has a slot 33 therein for receiving the end 34 of the eye bolt 24. When the bolt 24 is tightened, the end 34 is forced against the end of slot 33 and not only prevents looseness of the eye bolt 24 but also makes the portion 19 relatively rigid with respect to the downward extending portion 35 of the plate member 12. The engagement of the end 34 with the end of slot 33 thereby assists in keeping the plate member 12 rigid in preventing bending of the plate member along the line where the portion 19 joins the portion 35.

Although I have described my invention with particular reference to the preferred form thereof, it will be obvious to those skilled in the art to which the invention pertains, after understanding my invention, that various changes and modifications may be made therein without departing from the spirit and scope of my invention, as defined by the claims appended hereto.

What is claimed is new and desired to be secured by Letters Patent of the United States is:

1. A foldable supporting device adapted, when unfolded, to provide a frame for supporting the top of a garment bag at its periphery while supporting garment hangers within said bag comprising a pair of generally C-shaped frame members that are coextensive with the periphery of the top of said garment bag when placed end to end in a single plane, the inturnd ends of each of said frame members terminating in stop elements normal to the sides of said frame member and comprising means for the support of garment hangers, said plate member being bent at the upper longitudinal edge in the form of a tube having outermost portions extending from the inturnd ends of the frame members, said tube being apertured for free rotation of the stop elements, whereby said frame members are pivotable upwardly to a juxtaposed position and downwardly to an extended position with said stop members in paired opposing positions.

2. A foldable supporting device adapted, when unfolded, to provide a frame for supporting the top of a garment bag at its periphery while supporting garment hangers within said bag comprising a pair of generally C-shaped frame members that are coextensive with the periphery of the top of said garment bag when placed end to end in a single plane, the inturnd ends of each of said frame members terminating in stop elements normal to the plane of the respective frame member, a plate member narrower than the open space between the sides of said frame members and pivotally associated with said frame members so that said frame members are pivotable upwardly to a juxtaposed position and downwardly to an extended position with said stop members bearing on said plate member to maintain it in a vertical position, said plate member being apertured for the reception of garment hangers and comprising a tubular portion centrally positioned on the upper edge of said member, and a threaded member fixedly encircled by said tubular portion and adapted to engage the threads of an eyepet bolt, said tubular portion being apertured for the insertion of said eyepet bolt in said threaded member.

3. A foldable supporting device adapted, when unfolded, to provide a frame for supporting the top of a garment bag at its periphery while supporting garment hangers within said bag comprising a pair of generally C-shaped frame members that are coextensive with the periphery of the top of said garment bag when placed end to end in a single plane, the inturnd ends of each of said frame members terminating in stop elements normal to the plane of the respective frame member, a plate member pivotally associated with said frame members and comprising means for the support of garment hangers, said plate member being bent at its upper longitudinal edge in the form of a tube, and a threaded member fixedly encircled by the central portion of said tube and adapted to engage the threads of an eyepet bolt, said central portion of the tube being apertured at top and bottom for the passage of said eyepet bolt therethrough and the portion of the plate member adjacent the bottom aperture being shaped to bear against the projecting end of said eyepet bolt and maintain said plate member and said eyepet bolt in fixed position.

4. A foldable supporting device adapted, when unfolded, to provide a frame for supporting the top of a garment bag at its periphery while supporting garment hangers within said bag comprising a pair of frames each having the shape of a rectangle with a partially open side and having inturnd ends terminating in stop elements substantially normal to the plane of the respective frame, said frames being coextensive with the periphery of the top of said garment bag when placed end to end in a single plane, and a hanger-supporting member comprising a web apertured for the reception of garment hangers and a tube positioned at the upper longitudinal edge of said web and having outermost portions extending around the inturnd ends of the frames, said tube being
shorter than the space between the sides of the frames that are perpendicular to the axis of said tube and being apertured for free rotation of the stop elements, whereby said frame members are pivotable upwardly to a juxtaposed position and downwardly to an extended position with said stop members bearing on said web to maintain it in a vertical position.

5. In a garment bag having an outer collapsible enclosing envelope for containing garments, a frame for supporting the bag, positioned inside and at the top thereof, comprising two wire sections conforming to the cross-sectional configuration of the garment bag, the ends of the wire sections inwardly extending to form pivots and shaped beyond said pivots in the form of stop portions, and a sheet metal frame member extending transversely across the top of the garment bag, said sheet metal being arranged in the form of a tube for holding the adjacent pivoting ends of the wire sections in side by side relationship and having a flat downwardly extending section, said stop portions engaging said flat downwardly extending section of the sheet metal frame member to support the wire sections in the cross-sectional configuration of the garment bag.

6. In a garment bag having an outer collapsible enclosing envelope for containing garments, a frame for supporting the bag positioned inside and at the top thereof, comprising two wire sections, conforming to the cross-sectional configuration of the garment bag, pivotally mounted to a sheet metal frame member extending transversely across the top of the garment bag, said sheet metal frame member wrapped about a nut, and a hook having a threaded end for engagement with the nut, said hook extending through an aperture in said bag at the top thereof.

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