BRIEF CASE SPREADER

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Fig. 1

Fig. 2

Fig. 3

Fig. 4

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This invention relates to a device for maintaining a brief case in an open configuration.

The device of the present invention is applicable to brief cases of the type which include flexible side walls having upper edges that can be spread apart and closed about a hinged pivot. Brief cases of this type have presented a problem in that the side walls will not remain in the fully open configuration when released after the brief case is opened. This problem has been solved, in a novel manner, by the present device which includes a bracket for attachment to the upper edge of one of the side walls. A brace is pivotally mounted to the bracket so as to be selectively movable between a closed position, coextensive with the side wall on which it is mounted and an open position wherein the brace extends across the opening in the brief case and abuts the upper edge of the opposite side wall.

It is therefore an object of the present invention to provide a novel device for maintaining a brief case in an open configuration such that the contents of the brief case are readily accessible without the necessity of manually maintaining the side walls of the brief case in an open configuration.

Further objects and advantages of the present invention will be apparent from the following description, references being had to the accompanying drawings wherein preferred forms of embodiments of the invention are clearly shown.

In the drawings:

Figure 1 is a perspective view of a brief case illustrating the apparatus of the present invention installed thereon;

Figure 2 is a side elevational view of the apparatus of the present invention;

Figure 3 is a top elevational view thereof; and

Figure 4 is an end sectional view of the apparatus of the preceding figures, the section being taken along the line 4—4 of Figure 2.

Referring in detail to the drawings, a typical brief case is indicated generally at 20 and includes opposite side walls 21 and 22 having opposite upper edges 23 and 24. Upper edges 23 and 24 are shown in a fully opened configuration it being understood that edges 23 and 24 can be drawn together in overlapping contact about the hinged pivots 26.

The device of the present invention is indicated generally at 30 and includes a bracket 31, formed of sheet metal or the like. The bracket consists of an inner flange 33 and an outer flange 34 which define a U-shaped slot 36.

In mounting the bracket 31 on the brief case, the flanges 33 and 34 are disposed on either side of the side wall edge 23 so as to frictionally engage the side wall. If desired bracket 31 can be secured to the upper edge 23 by means of rivets or other suitable fastening means.

Bracket 31 further includes two circular hinge sockets 35 which may be formed by rolling projecting portions of inner flange 33 into the looped configuration illustrated.

The device of the present invention further includes a brace 37 provided with oppositely extended ears 39 which are inserted in sockets 35 and form the pivots for the hinge.

As is best seen in Figure 1, the lower edge of inner flange 33 includes an in-turned flange 41 that forms an upwardly facing latch portion 42. When brace 30 is moved into the folded configuration, a latch portion 44 formed by the lower edge of brace 30, urges latch portion 42 downwardly, against the resiliency of in-turned flange 41, whereby the brace 37 is maintained in the folded configuration.

If desired, the latch portion 41—42 can be eliminated and the bracket 31 and/or brace 37 can be fabricated from magnetic metallic sheet stock. In this embodiment the brace 37 will be maintained in a folded configuration by magnetic action.

As is seen in Figures 1 and 3, the outer end 45 of brace 37 is rounded to permit it to move smoothly along the inner side of the upper edge 24 when brace 37 is moved into the opened configuration.

The brace 37 is preferably formed of thin sheet metal stock and may include an integrally formed stiffening rib 48.

In operation, the bracket 31 is slipped down over the upper edge 23 of the brief case and is maintained thereon by frictional gripping engagement of the upper edge 23 by resilient flanges 33 and 34. While the brief case is closed, brace 37 is disposed coextensive with the inner side of upper edge 23. When the brief case is to be maintained open, brace 37 is swung about the pivot 38—39 to the position illustrated in Figure 1.

While the forms of embodiments of the present invention as herein disclosed constitute preferred forms, it is to be understood that other forms might be adopted, all coming within the scope of the claim which follows.

I claim:

A brief case comprising, in combination, laterally movable side walls defining an opening; a bracket attached to one of said side walls, said bracket including an in-turned flange defining a first latch portion; and a brace pivotally mounted on said bracket and movable about a vertically extending pivotal axis between a first position coextensive with said one side wall and a second position wherein an end of said brace engages the other of said side walls and maintains said side walls in an open configuration, said brace including a second latch portion engageable with said first latch portion when said brace is in said first position.

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