Sept. 30, 1952 L. T. NELSON 2,611,899

CONVERTIBLE LAP ROBE

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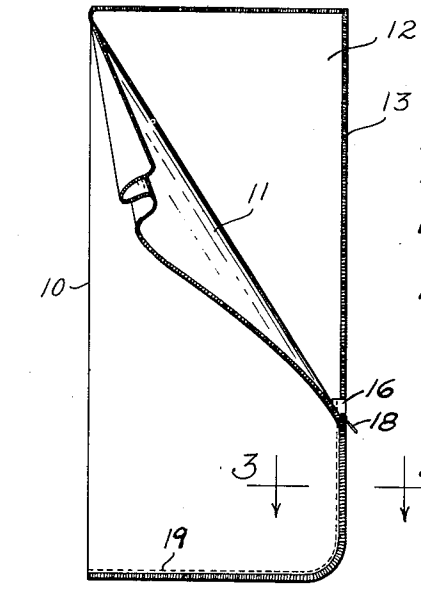


Fig. 1.

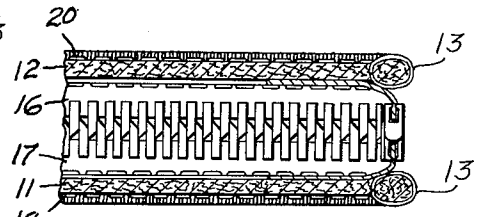


Fig. 3.

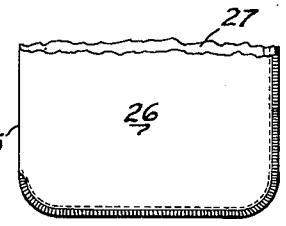


Fig. 4.

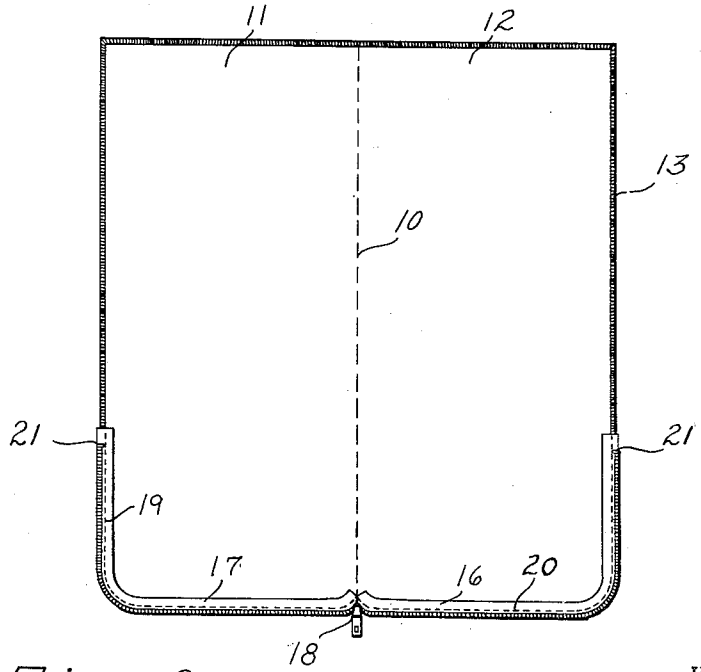


Fig. 2.

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CONVERTIBLE LAP ROBE

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1 Claim. (Cl. 2—69.5)

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The present invention comprises a laprobe of particular utility in protecting the legs and torso of a traveler in airplanes, ships, trains, automobiles or other conveyances. The invention may be used as a throw or shawl about the home and is of extreme usefulness to spectators of games or other outdoor events. A further purpose of the present invention is to protect convalescents from dangerous exposure to the elements. The invention is specifically designed to permit its use as a complete coverage for the feet, legs and lower portions of the body of the user when it is impossible, impractical or inconvenient to wrap these portions of the body in a blanket.

A further object of the present invention is to provide an article of manufacture which may be used in the form of a pocket into which the feet and legs may be thrust or which may be used in an open and flattened condition as a blanket, throw or shawl.

A further object of the present invention is to provide a device of the foregoing type wherein a foot-receiving pocket is provided at one end of a blanket when folded upon itself, such pocket being formed by interlocking the separable elements of a slide fastener device, and in which the slide fastener device is so associated with the blanket that it may be easily removed to permit thorough cleaning of the blanket and subsequent ironing thereof or to replace defective fastener members.

A further object of one form of the present invention herein disclosed is to provide a device of the foregoing character wherein the edge of the blanket to which the separable fastener elements are attached is provided with rounded corners whereby the device may be opened and used as a blanket without the formation of a recess in which dust and lint may collect.

Many prior protecting devices or comforts of the laprobe type have been conceived. All of such devices have been subject to the drawback that the device is capable of utility only as a boot-type laprobe and cannot be opened up for use as a blanket or throw. Further than that, if the pocket-forming means were removed from such devices the remaining fabric portions would not be of any useful shape or configuration, whereas in the present invention the separable fastener may be released or removed with the result that a perfectly normal and normally functioning blanket, spread, throw or shawl remains. The device therefore has great appeal and utility since a number of functions may be

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performed. It may be opened and used as a wall hanging or covering, as a couch spread, or as a sleeping blanket, and instantly converted to a traveling comfort or laprobe or otherwise used. For example, one of the devices may be permanently left in the tonneau of an automobile and may be used by a plurality of occupants as an open laprobe or steamer rug would be used, or instantly converted to a pocket-type laprobe for the use of an individual passenger.

A further object of the present invention is to provide a laprobe of the foregoing character which may achieve the purpose of blankets normally supplied by airlines for the comfort of passengers. In such surroundings a blanket is desired intermittently for short periods of time as the airplane travels through higher strata, especially in the larger planes capable of high flights at great speeds. Passengers quite often desire leg protection and demand a blanket to wrap about their legs or throw aside from time to time. The placing of such a blanket is very awkward for the passenger to achieve himself, especially when strapped to the seat by a safety belt, with the result that the stewardess spends a great deal of time assisting the passengers, and when other duties require her attention the passengers complain because she cannot attend to their personal comfort. An object of the present invention is to provide a pocket-type laprobe in which the feet may be placed without requiring the user to raise himself from the seat, and with which it is not necessary to place overlapping portions of the device beneath himself in order to retain it in protecting position. With the present invention the user may slip his feet into the pocket portion and pull the free portion of the device over his lap and even enclose his entire torso and arms underneath the blanket, his back being protected by the cushions of the seat. It is a simple matter for the user to remove the laprobe entirely or merely to drop the upper portion thereof around his feet if he so desires.

A further object of the present invention is to provide a laprobe of the foregoing type which may achieve all of the functions outlined above and yet may be smaller than a simple blanket which would be wrapped about the body of the user when used as a single person's warmth-providing means. This feature is of great importance to airlines due to the elimination of unnecessary weight resulting from the reduction in size of the blanket. It is also of advantage to other users in decreased initial cost and the cost

of upkeep as represented by periodical dry-cleanings or washings.

A further object of the present invention is to provide a device of the foregoing character in which the pocket is provided by separable fastener element tapes which are so joined to the blanket material as to be readily removable therefrom without in any way disrupting the binding normally provided on a blanket or laprobe.

A further object of the present invention is to provide a device of the foregoing character in which the separable slide fastener elements are so positioned when the laprobe is in normal use as a pocket-type lap robe that the legs of the wearer are not likely to come in contact with the slide fastener elements. This is of extreme importance in commerical applications due to the propensity of such metallic elements to tear stockings and other fine fabrics, resulting in damage claims by paying passengers or other users.

The foregoing and other objects and advantages of the present invention will be more readily ascertained from inspection of the following specification taken in connection with the accompanying drawings wherein like numerals refer to like parts throughout, while the features of novelty will be more distinctly pointed out in the appended claim.

In the drawings:

Fig. 1 is a view of one form of the present invention when closed in readiness for use as a pocket-type laprobe;

Fig. 2 is a view of the form of the invention shown in Fig. 1 when opened in readiness for use as a blanket, throw or shawl;

Fig. 3 is an enlarged, partial section taken substantially along line 3—3 of Fig. 1; and

Fig. 4 is a partial view of an end of a modified form of the invention.

In Figs. 1, 2 and 3 the invention is illustrated as comprising a substantially rectangular piece of blanket material such as woven, knitted or felted fabric, the material being folded upon itself along a longitudinal median line indicated at 10 to provide two overlying portions 11 and 12. The entire circumferential edge of the piece of material is preferably bound by a suitable form of binding such as the whip-stitching indicated at 13, such binding being provided for decorative effect as well as to prevent certain types of material from unraveling or otherwise disintegrating.

A slide fastener device separably joins the adjacent surfaces of the piece along an L-shaped line beginning at one end of the fold, extending parallel to one end edge of the piece normal to the fold, then parallel to the fold for a minor portion of the length of the piece to provide a pocket at one end of the folded piece. This is preferably accomplished by stitching a pair of tapes of separable slide fastener elements along the adjacent surfaces of the edges of the part to be formed into a pocket. In the present instance a tape 16 extends from the fold point, along the end edge of one portion and around a corner, then upwardly along the side edge parallel to the fold for a distance substantially equal to the width of the portion 12. The distance to which the tape extends upwardly may vary depending upon individual desires, but it should be such as to equal about the length of a normal person's lower leg from the heels of his shoes to the knee, or slightly less. In any event, the tape extends upwardly along the side edge for a minor portion of the length of the piece of material only, so as to economize on both material and labor going into the manufacture of the article or of its repair. An opposed tape 17 of flexible slide fastener elements extends from the fold in the opposite direction along the end edge and upwardly along the outer edge of the portion 11 for a corresponding distance. A slide fastener element interlocking member 18 is permanently engaged with the first few of the separable slide fastener elements at the adjacent ends of the tapes and is adapted to be slid along the end and side edges to the upper ends of the tapes, when the blanket is folded upon itself along the line 10, to form a pocket as shown in Fig. 1. The tape 16 is preferably attached to the portion 12 by a single line of stitches 20 parallel to and inside of the binding 13, and the tape 17 is joined to the section 11 by a single line of stitches 19 parallel to and inside of the binding on that portion of the blanket material. The single line of stitches is quickly applied and may be as quickly removed to permit replacement of defective slide elements or laundering of the blanket without having the slide fastener tapes attached thereto. Each of the tapes is preferably provided with a stop element 21 to prevent the interlocking member 18 from leaving the upper ends thereof when the elements are being interlocked. The greater part of the portions 11 and 12 are unconnected to each other except along the fold line 10.

In using the present invention as a laprobe, the interlocking member 18 is drawn upward to the limiting members 21 to form a pocket at one end of the device. The upper edge of the blanket may be held with the pocket depending therefrom and the portions of the tapes adjacent the limiting abutments 21 toward the person, who would be seated in a chair or on a similar support. The feet may be lifted into the corner of the pocket adjacent the fold 10 and the free upper portion of the blanket drawn over the lap. In this position it is not likely that any portion of the slide fastener will come in contact with the stockings or clothing of the user or of persons sitting in adjacent chairs. By reason of the tapes being attached inside of the edge portions the metallic elements of the slide fasteners are embraced between the relatively heavy and relatively stiff binding of the blanket as a further precaution against ruining the garments of others.

In Fig. 4 I have illustrated a portion of a modified form of the present invention wherein it is shown that both corners of the lower end of the blanket are rounded in order that the interlocking member may be permanently retained at a point along the fold line 25 joining two overlapped portions 26 and 27 at a point upwardly removed from the lower end edges thereof. By reason of the notch so formed at the lower end of the fold 25 the interlocking member does not prevent the blanket from being completely flattened out into a smooth plane. Although the construction shown in Figs. 1 and 2 does not mutilate a blanket to the extent that the notch necessary to round the inner corner as in Fig. 4 mutilates the blanket, this construction may be more preferable to some users due to the fact that the pocket remaining when the first form of the invention is flattened out is not present in the second form. This pocket is relatively immaterial as to appearance and utility of the device as a blanket or throw, but does provide a corner in which dust and lint may collect. The form shown in Fig. 4 may be completely brushed or shaken clean between casual uses.

While I have herein illustrated the separable fastener device as being attached in an L-shaped line with the toe of the L at the bottom of the fold and the leg of the L extending along the side edges, it is to be appreciated that various other modifications in spacing and alignment may be devised within the purview of my invention. Any such modification is within the aspects of the invention which, to the best of my knowledge, is the first such device consisting solely of a rectangular piece of fabric and a separable slide fastener device. I claim as my invention all such modifications in arrangement and detail as come within the purview of the appended claim.

I claim:

A laprobe consisting of a substantially rectangular blanket having two opposed side edges and two opposed end edges, a first tape of separable slide fastener elements fastened to said blanket and extending continuously along one of said end edges from the center thereof toward one of said side edges and then along said one side edge for a distance equal to approximately one-third the length of said side edge, a second tape of separable slide fastener elements fastened to said blanket and extending continuously along said one end edge from the center thereof toward the other of said side edges and then along said other side edge for a distance equal to approximately one-third the length of said other side edge, and a slide fastener element interlocking member permanently engaging the first few of said separable slide fastener elements on both of said tapes adjacent the center of said one end edge and adapted to interlock the remainder of said separable slide fastener elements thereby to form a pocket at one end of said blanket when folded upon itself along a central line normal to said end edge, intermediate portions of said tapes being directed along curved lines at the corners of said blanket defined by said one end edge and said side edges whereby said interlocking member may interlock said separable fastener elements from end to end of said tapes, said blanket having a notch therein at the center of said one end edge with the inner end of said notch lying along said central line of the blanket, and said tapes extending along curved lines at the sides of said notch to the tip thereof and having their adjacent ends substantially meeting along said central line of said blanket whereby, when said separable elements are disengaged except for said first few permanently engaged by said slide member, the blanket may be spread smoothly in an entirely flattened condition.

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