United States Patent [19]

Duncan

[11] **3,791,550**

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[54] **TABLE SERVICE**

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[73] Assignee: **Duncanlite Laboratory, Inc.,** Villa Park, Ill.

[22] Filed: **Dec. 28, 1970**

[21] Appl. No.: **101,947**

Related U.S. Application Data

[63] Continuation-in-part of Ser. No. 36,879, May 13, 1970, abandoned.

[52] **U.S. Cl.** ..... **220/23.86,** D44/14, 46/11, 46/223, 220/69, 220/97 C

[51] **Int. Cl.** ... **A63h 7/00,** A47g 19/00, B65d 21/02

[58] **Field of Search** ..... 220/23.4, 23.83, 23.86, 69, 220/97 C; 46/11, 22, 32, 103, 223; 229/2.5; D44/14

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Primary Examiner—George E. Lowrance

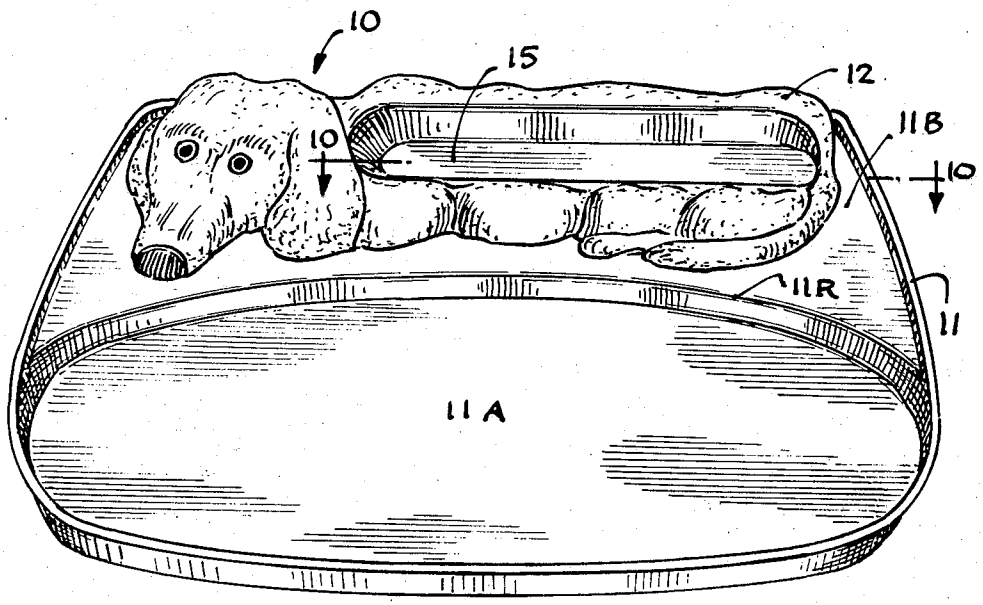
Attorney, Agent, or Firm—Lockwood, Dewey, Zickert & Alex

[57] **ABSTRACT**

A table service assembly includes a food receptacle and a member presenting an animal caricature coupled thereto. The animal caricature may have a recess in its back for holding a food item; the receptacle may be a tray or a basket, but it may be otherwise.

The caricature is detachably presented by the assembly and may be converted into a wheeled toy.

2 Claims, 16 Drawing Figures



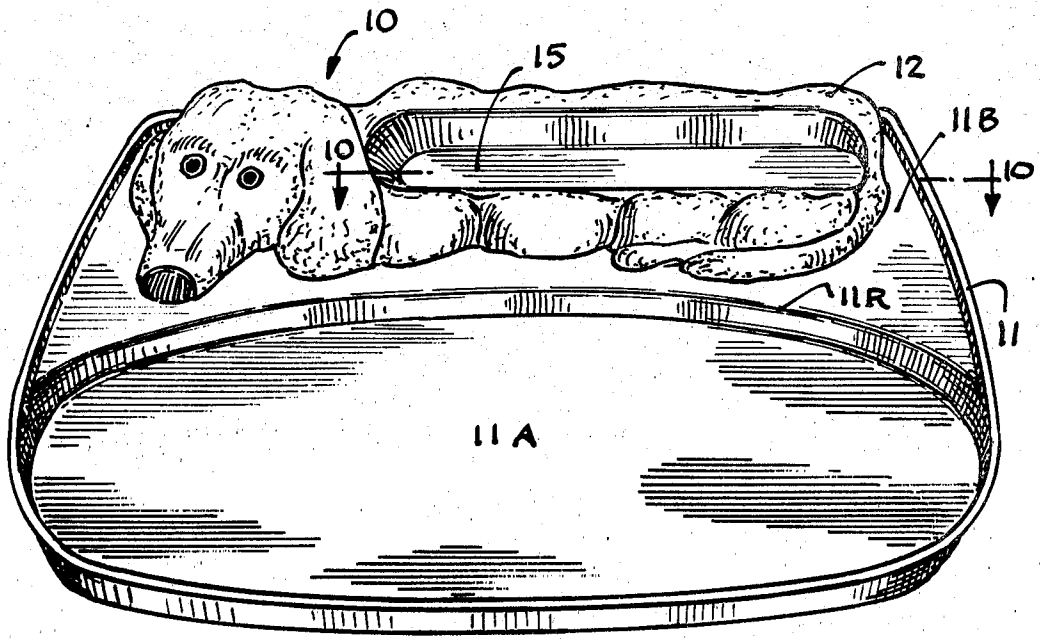
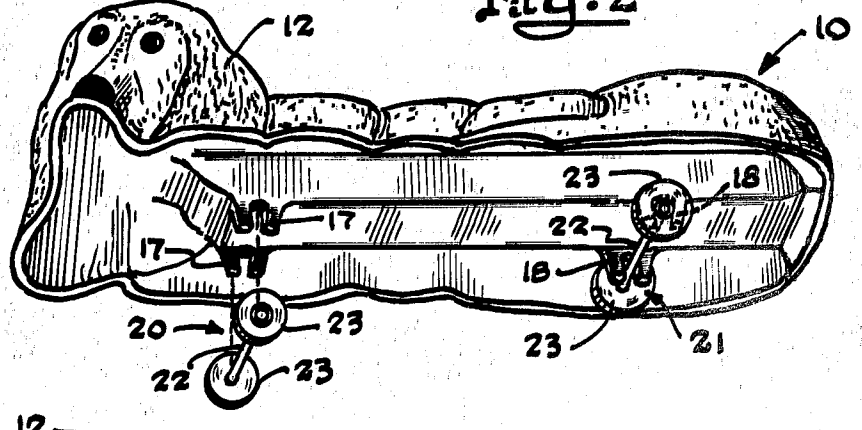


Fig. 1

Fig. 2



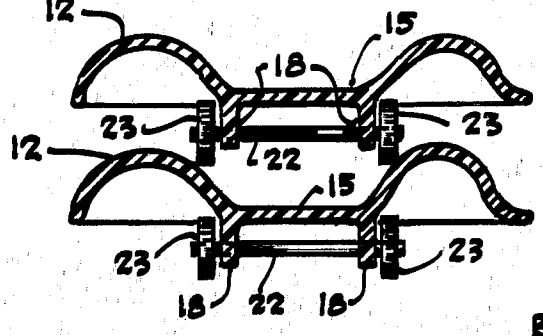


Fig. 3

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Fig.4

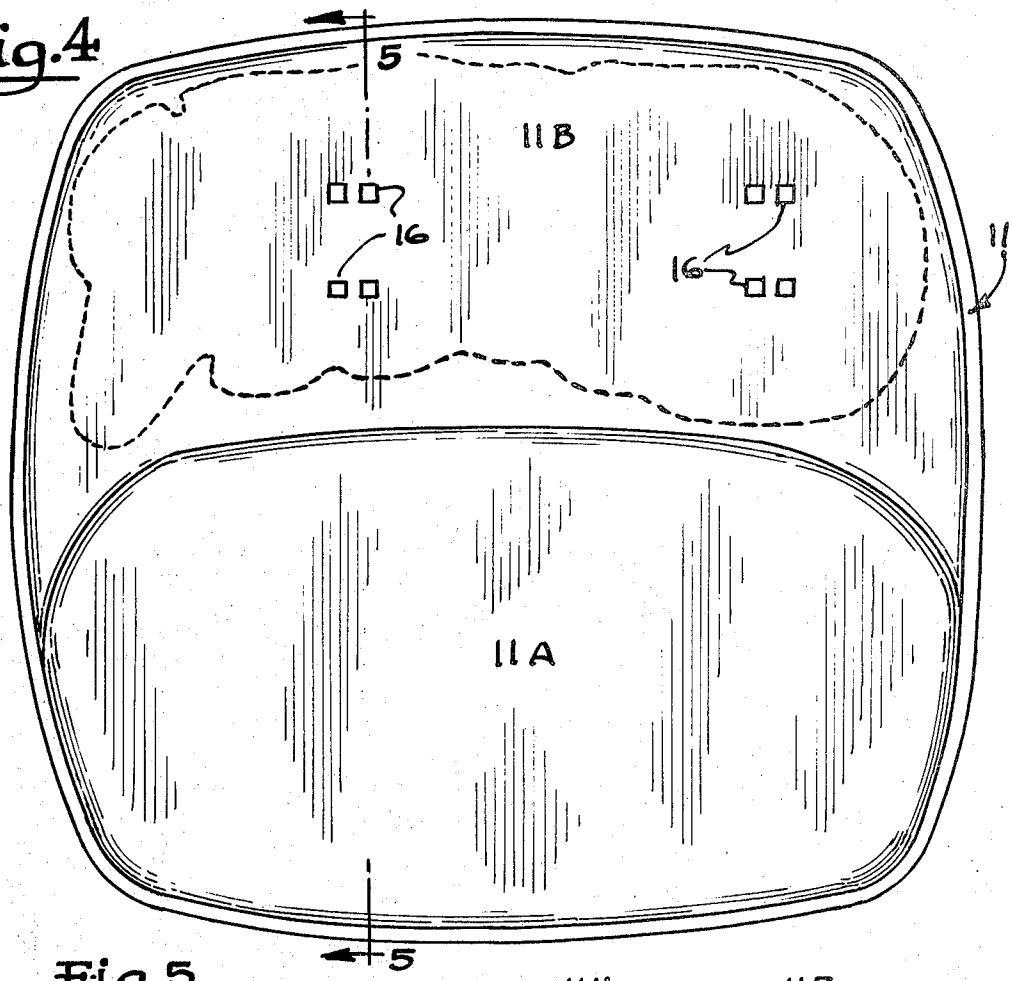
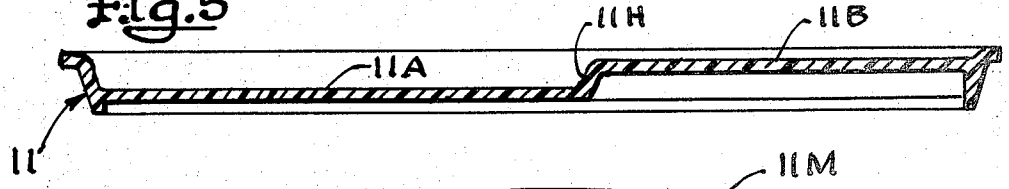


Fig.5



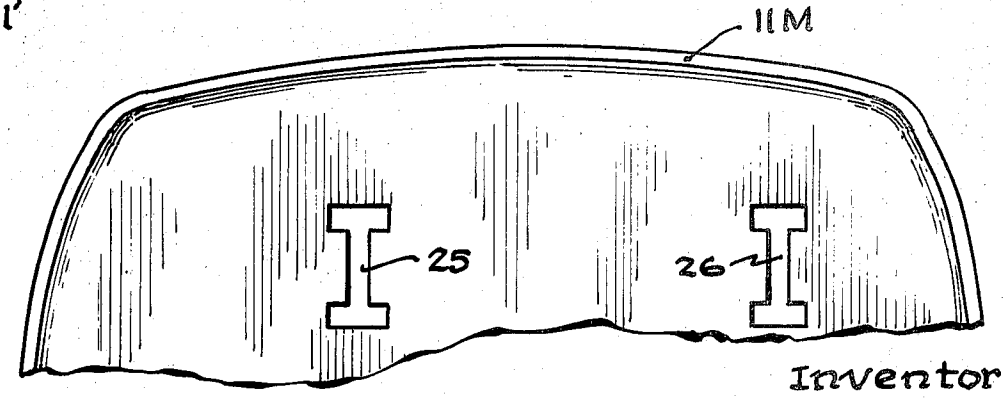


Fig.6

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Fig.7

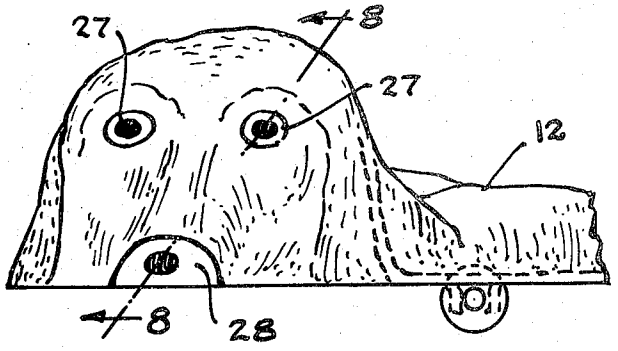
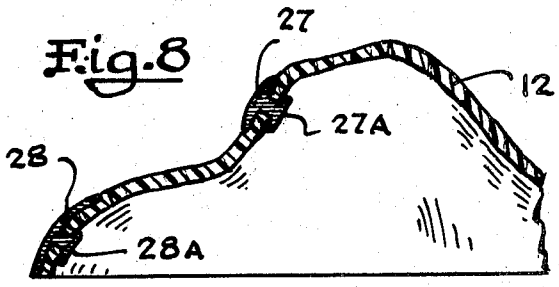


Fig.8



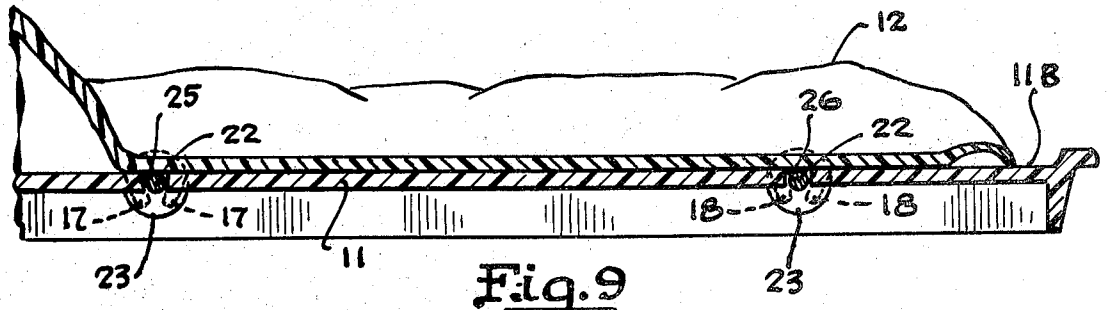


Fig.9

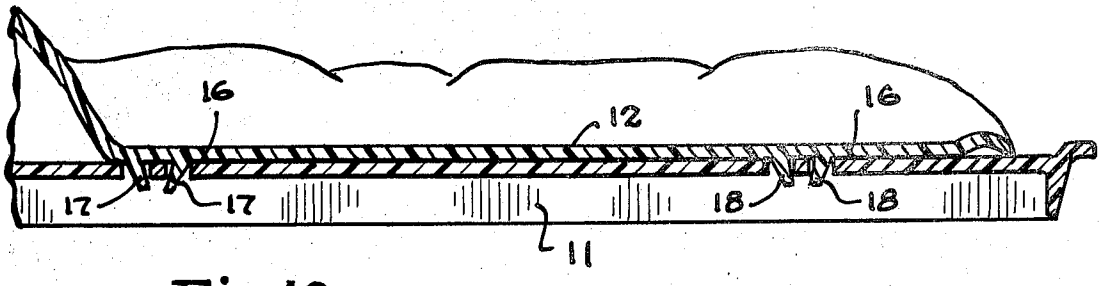


Fig.10

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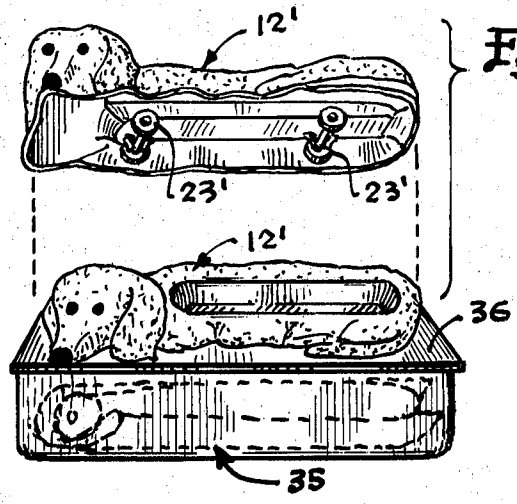


Fig.11

Fig.12

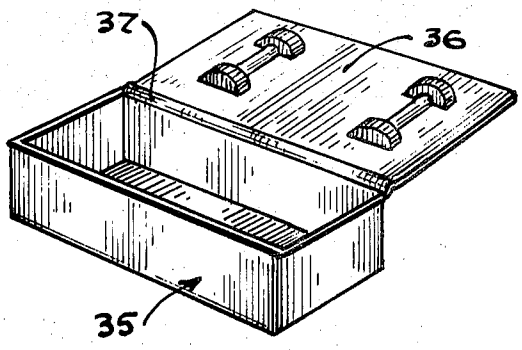


Fig.13

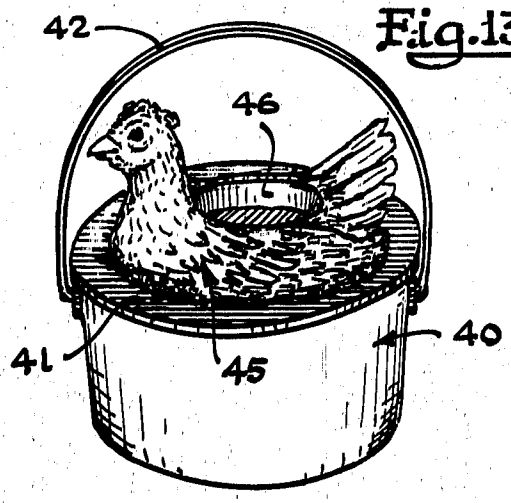


Fig.14

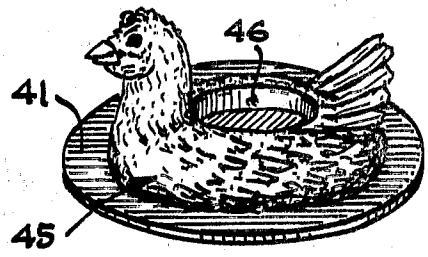
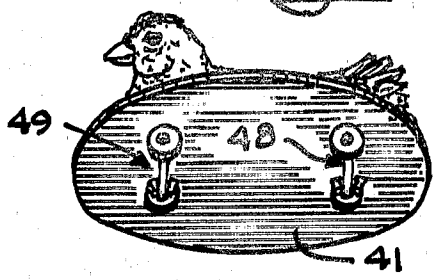


Fig.15



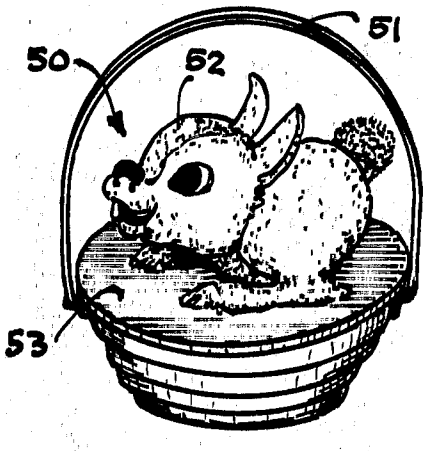


Fig.16

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TABLE SERVICE

This application is a continuation-in-part of application Ser. No. 36,879 filed May 13, 1970.

This invention relates to table service of a novelty sort, especially for serving meals of the so-called fast food type.

The present invention is primarily concerned with a novelty which may be used to promote the sale or distribution of comestibles at retail food stores, to promote fast food service (franchised food stands or counters) and which may be useful for table service at home or on picnics, and the primary object of the present invention is to originate a unique form of table service which conforms to the foregoing. An ancillary object of the present invention is to originate a form of table service, especially suited to serving hot dogs, including a dog caricature detachable from a tray and convertible into a wheeled toy. The service of hot dogs is emphasized only to generate a ready appreciation of how the invention may be applied to one kind of service, which is to say that other forms of animal life may be caricatured within the principle of the invention, and in this connection another object of the invention is to devise lunch or picnic baskets in which the lid is caricatured as an animal, with wheels, for conversion to a toy. In the drawings:

FIG. **1** is a perspective view of one form of table service constructed in accordance with the present invention;

FIG. **2** is a perspective of the caricatured animal detached from the tray and converted to a toy;

FIG. **3** is a sectional view showing the nestable feature of the detached animal caricatures;

FIG. **4** is a plan view of the tray with the caricature attached;

FIG. **5** is a sectional view on the line **5—5** of FIG. **4**;

FIG. **6** is a partial plan view of a modified tray;

FIG. **7** is a partial elevation of the head of the caricature;

FIG. **8** is a sectional view on the line **8—8** of FIG. **7**;

FIG. **9** is a partial sectional view showing the caricatured animal attached to the modified tray;

FIG. **10** is a partial sectional view substantially on the line **10—10** of FIG. **1**;

FIGS. **11** and **12** are views of another embodiment of the invention;

FIGS. **13–15** are views of still another embodiment of the invention; and

FIG. **16** is a view of still another embodiment of the invention.

While the present invention is aptly identified as table service, in one form of utility, it will be appreciated that the invention in practice may not always be so used, but may be used as a premium item to promote retail sales of hot dogs, for example, to promote fast food sales or as an item for the picnic basket.

A table service assembly conforming to the present invention is identified in FIG. **1** by reference character **10** and includes a food receptable in the form of a tray **11** and a dog caricature **12** presented by a separate piece on the tray, each of inexpensive molded plastic (e.g. high impact styrene) of sufficient rigidity to support various food items, including relishes, condiments, and side orders which may be served. In any event, the caricatured dog **12** is so molded as to present an elongated recess **15** in its back conforming generally to the contour of a hot dog, although it will be appreciated

that the recess **15** may be used for other food items as well. The dog **12** is viewed in a reclining attitude, but the attitude may be otherwise. However, the reclining attitude is purposely selected for reasons explained below.

The tray **11** includes a recessed section **11A** for the food and an elevated section **11B** for the dog **12**, the two sections being separated by a shoulder **11H**, FIG. **4**.

The underside of the dog and the top side of the tray are molded to afford interfitting plug-and-socket attachments whereby the animal may be readily detached incidental to cleaning the service or as an incident to converting the dog to a toy, as will hereinafter be described.

Thus, the tray **11**, FIG. **4** is provided with two sets of paired openings or sockets **16**, and the underside of the dog, FIGS. **2** and **10**, is provided with pairs of spaced prongs or plugs **17** and **18** so spaced as to conform to the geometry of the opening **16**. The prong set **17** (fore) is spaced from the prong set **18** (aft) by a distance equal to that separating the two sets of openings **16**, FIG. **10**, such that the former snap easily into the latter. Equivalent snap-on or press-fit attachments may be used.

As an additional feature of utility, and consistent with the preference for the dog being in a reclining attitude, the caricature may be readily and easily converted to a toy as will be apparent in FIG. **2**. Thus, the degree of utility is enlarged by furnishing a pair of wheel and axle sets **20** and **21**, FIG. **2**, each being of one-piece molded form to include an axle **22** and a pair of wheels **23** molded to the ends thereof. The dimensioning is such that when the dog is removed from the tray, the axles **22** may be readily and easily snapped into the sockets or journals presented by the prongs **17** and **18**, which then become journal supports so that the axles easily rotate therein when the animal is accelerated by a push along some suitable surface.

The caricatured animal is molded as a shell, FIG. **3**, so that when detached from the tray one caricature can be nested in and easily stacked with another. While the wheels and axles are shown as attached in FIG. **3**, they may be removed if desired.

A modified form of the tray is illustrated in FIGS. **6** and **9**, and referring first to FIG. **6** the tray may be a modified tray, **11M**, having fore and aft slots **25** and **26** of a dimension that will neatly receive the wheel and axle sets at the underside of the caricatured dog, this mode of attachment being shown in partial section in FIG. **9**.

The animal, of whatever form, may be advantageously embellished by snap-on eyes and nose or other features of attraction to children, and in this connection attention is directed to FIGS. **7** and **8** wherein the eyes **27** of the dog and the nose **28**, appealingy shaped and colored, may be of detachable form, FIG. **8**, each characterized by a snap-on extension **27A** and **28A** adapted to be press-fitted into corresponding apertures in the head of the animal. Different features may be thus interchanged, and it may be desirable, in fact, to afford comic features, interchanging features of birds and mammals for example.

The food receptacle may be of a form other than a serving tray and in this connection attention is directed to FIG. **11** where the receptacle is in the form of a lunch box **35** which may be of molded, inexpensive

plastic having a lid **36** attached thereto by an integrally molded hinge strip **37.** The box is typical of what may be dispensed by a fast food service. For purposes of disclosure it is assumed that the lunch box **35** contains several hot dogs, as indicated by dashed line in FIG. **11,** and in keeping with this idea the caricature is that of a dog **12'** of the character already shown in FIG. **2,** but in this instance the dog sets on the lid of the receptacle. Further, and consistent with the embodiment of the invention above described, FIG. **2,** the caricatured animal **12'** is provided with wheels **23',** FIG. **12,** fitted detachably in corresponding openings in the lid **36.**

Another embodiment of the invention is shown in FIG. **13** in which the food receptacle **40** is of basket form having a lid **41** and a bail or handle **42.** In this instance, the assumption is that chicken is the food item intended to be served or dispensed by a fast food service, and accordingly the caricature of a chicken **45** is integrally molded as part of the lid. Preferably the back of the chicken is provided with a recess **46** for accepting relishes and the like.

The lid **41,** presenting the caricatured animal, is a separate piece as in all embodiments of the invention, but the lid itself, FIG. **15,** is provided with wheel and axle sets **48** and **49** which may be precisely of the form shown for the caricature of the dog in FIG. **2** of the disclosure.

FIG. **16** shows the invention as embodied in an Easter basket **50.** The handle **51** may be fixedly attached rather than pivotally attached. The caricatured bunny **52** is presented by the lid **53** of the basket. The lid **53** at its underside may be provided with wheel and axle sets as described above in connection with FIG. **15.**

It will be seen from the foregoing that under the present invention a receptacle for food includes the caricature of an animal, presented by a separate detachable part of the receptacle. The detachable part may be the caricature itself, FIGS. **2** and **11,** or it may be the lid of a basket or box, FIGS. **14** and **16.** In any event, the detachable part presenting the caricature is equipped with wheels so that the animal may be used as a toy, and hence many variations are possible.

I claim:

1. A table service assembly comprising a tray and a food serving and toy device, said tray being relatively flat and including a shallow recessed section adapted to receive food or the like and a platform section slightly elevated from the recessed section, said platform section having a plurality of sockets formed therealong, said food serving and toy device including an elongated body in the form of an animal caricature having a dish-shaped recess in the top of the body extending longitudinally thereof along the back of the animal caricature adapted for receiving and serving food or the like, and a plurality of prong sets projecting from the underside of the body and receiving in snap-fit relation a plurality of wheel and axle units, all of which are received in the sockets on the platform section of the tray wherein the body of the device otherwise bottoms flushly on the platform section of the tray but may be removed therefrom so that the device may be used as a wheel supported toy after it has functioned to hold and serve food, wherein said wheel and axle units in mounted position on the prong sets coact with the sockets to prevent relative sliding movement between said device and said tray.

2. The table service assembly as defined in claim **1,** wherein the device is further characterized in that it is shaped to be nestable.

* * * * *