The present invention relates to infants' and children's wearing apparel, and in particular to improved children's wear specifically adapted to allow for feeding of an infant or child without detracting from the normal appearance and functional aspects of the garment.

Many children's garments are manufactured of the type including a lower body and leg portion terminating in a waist band, a bib portion extending upwardly from the front side of the waist band and shoulder straps extending upwardly from the rear side of the waist band and detachably secured to the upper end of the rib.

This general type of garment is suitable as a creeper, jumperall, playsuit, suntissle or the like for use by both infants and children. Many suggestions have been made to adapt these garments to facilitate feeding the child, for example by the provision of a removable bib or by the construction of the garment to include a partially hidden bib. For reasons which will appear hereinafter, this general approach to the problem has not been too successful and has not been adopted by manufacturers of children's and infants' wear.

BROADLY, it is an object of the present invention to provide an improved infants' and children's garment which is constructed to serve, when required, as a bib and apron for feeding. Specifically, it is within the contemplation of the present invention to incorporate a combined bib and apron into an infants' or children's garment, without in any way detracting from the appearance or interfering with the styling of the garment.

In accordance with an illustrative embodiment demonstrating features of the present invention, the bib portion or section of the garment is constructed of a pair of panels which are joined together at their lowermost end and normally disposed in face to face relation. The confronting panels may be shaped in accordance with the style of the garment, and for all intents and purposes has the appearance of a conventional bib section. The outer one of the panels is arranged to be releasable independently of the inner panel so that it may be dropped to a position extending below the inner panel and in front of the lower portion of the garment. Thus exposed surface of the inner panel provides a large area bib extending above the waist band of the garment; and the exposed surface of the dropped outer panel provides a large area apron which extends generally below the waist band of the garment. Advantageously, these exposed surfaces have an integral or separate protective layer of water repellent material, for example a nylon or polyester fabric, thus making it easy to clean the bib and apron after feeding of the infant or child. The combined function of the bib and apron is to protect the large area which is likely to be soiled while feeding the child. This protection is afforded without in any way detracting from the appearance of the garment and without imposing limitations in the styling of a line of children's and infants' garments.

The above brief description as well as further objects, features and advantages of the present invention, will be best appreciated by reference to the following detailed description of several presently preferred embodiments of the present invention, when taken in conjunction with the accompanying drawings, wherein:

Fig. 1 is a front elevational view, with parts folded back, showing a creeper or jumperall incorporating features of the present invention.

Fig. 2 is a rear elevational view of the jumperall or creeper shown in Fig. 1.

Fig. 3 is a fragmentary sectional view on an enlarged scale taken substantially along the line 3—3 of Fig. 1 and looking in the direction of the arrows; and,

Fig. 4 is a perspective view showing the garment illustrated in detail in Figs. 1 to 3 as worn by a child during periods of normal use and play;

Fig. 5 is a perspective view showing a child seated in a high chair (parts of the high chair being removed for clarity) with the combined rib and apron of the present invention exposed to protect a large area of the garment for feeding;

Fig. 6 is a perspective view showing a modified garment in accordance with the present invention as normally worn by a child, a portion of the bib being folded back for the purposes of illustration; and,

Fig. 7 is a perspective view showing a child seated in a high chair (parts of the high chair being broken for illustration) with the modified bib and apron of Fig. 6 shown in tied position for feeding.

Referring now specifically to the drawings, there is shown in Fig. 1 to 5 a creeper suit or jumperall 10 in accordance with the present invention. Although the drawings illustrate one particular type of garment only, it is to be expressly understood that the invention finds application in many types of infants' and children's wear as will occur to those skilled in the art. The illustrative creeper suit 10 includes a lower body portion 12, a bib portion or section 14 and respective shoulder straps 16, 18. The lower body portion 12 of the garment comprises leg sections 20, 22 joined by front, back and side seams and having a gripper crotch or bottom 24 which includes a number of spaced separable fasteners 26. Along the front of the lower body portion 12 there is a front waist-band section or tape 28; while along the back of the lower body portion 12 there is a gathered waistband or tape 30 including an elastic insert (not shown). It must be emphasized that the details of the garment construction and styling are subject to a wide latitude of change. For example, the lower body and leg covering portion may be a skirt, a combined skirt and panties, as well as other variations and types presently on the market.

In accordance with the present invention, the bib section or portion 14 of the garment 10 includes a pair of confronting panels 32, 34 which are joined together at their common lower end or margin, which has been generally designated by the reference numeral 36. The panels 32, 34 are exactly of the same outline and for all intents and purposes (when the garment is in normal use as shown in Fig. 4) has the appearance of but a single bib or bodice section of a conventional garment. Since the panels are essentially of like structure, it will suffice to describe only one in detail. The front panel 32 includes curved sides 32a, 32b which are joined by a curved neck or yoke 32c. The side edge 32e and the adjacent portion of the neck or yoke 32c cooperate to define one shoulder extension 32d. Similarly, the opposite side edge 32f and the adjacent portion of the neck 32c cooperate to define a further shoulder extension 32g. Conveniently, the outer or front panel 32 and the inner or rear panel 34 are fabricated of a single piece of ma-
material (see Fig. 3) which is stitched along its transverse or midline 35 to the upper end of the front of the body portion 12 of the garment contiguous to the wrist band 28, as represented by the stitch line.

In the illustrative embodiments, the confronting inner faces of the panels 32, 34 are covered by coextensive waterproof sheets or layers 36, 38 which consist of a single sheet of waterproof or water repellent material (i. e. polyethylene) of the same shape as the piece of fabric making up the panel 32, 34 and joined marginally therein appropriate piping 40 and stitching 42. In lieu of the separate protective waterproof or water repellent sheeting 36, 38 it is equally within the contemplation of the present invention to employ a fabric for panels 32, 34 which has its inner face coated with a waterproof or water repellent film or layer. Such fabrics are available on the market and on their outer faces have the normal appearance of the fabric, giving no indication that the inner face thereof is waterproof or water repellent.

On the shoulder extensions of the panels 32, 34 are confronting pairs of button holes, one such pair being designated by the reference numerals 44, 46. The pairs of button holes 44, 46 cooperate with one or more buttons 50 on the shoulder strap 16, 18 to allow the panels 32, 34 to be detachably secured in confronting relation with respect to each other and to the adjacent one of the shoulder straps. The cooperating means provided by the registering button holes 44, 46 and the one or more buttons 50 on the shoulder strap 16, 18 as shown in paragraph 14 to be dropped when the garment is to be put onto the child; provides for the releasable attachment of the panels 32, 34 in confronting relation during normal use, as illustrated in Fig. 4; and allows the front or outer panel 32 to be dropped independently to the depending position of Fig. 5 when engaged by the button 46 in the button hole 44 of the inner panel 34, as illustrated in Fig. 5. In the feeding position of Fig. 5, the inner panel 34 provides a bib extending generally upwards from the waistband of the garment, while the dropped outer panel 32, which has been swung about the fold or commissure 36 as a pivot, provides an apron extending below the waistband of the garment. The thus exposed panels 36, 38 cover a large garment area. Experience indicates that the apron and bib 36, 38 are strategically positioned to catch food dribblings or droppings from the mouth of the child during feeding. The apron and bib are also useful as a protective means when the child is not seated in a high chair or other similar feeding tables, as may be well appreciated.

Appropriate provision is made on the body portion of the garment to secure the outer panel 32 in its dropped position, as shown in Fig. 5. In this illustrative form of the garment, a pair of buttons 48, 50 are secured on the leg sections 20, 22 of the garment in position to be engaged by the button holes on the dropped front or outer panel 32 to hold the apron in place. As illustrated, the buttons 48, 50 may be incorporated into any suitable attractive design on the garment body, for example, as the eyes of an animal, so as not to detract from the appearance of the garment.

In Figs. 6 and 7 there is illustrated a modified tie means for securing the apron panel 32 in its depending or downward position. The modified means of Figs. 6 and 7 also serve for securing the child into a chair or similar feeding device to prevent the child from moving about while being fed. In this form of the invention, the structure is essentially the same as previously described and accordingly will be designated by the same reference characters with primes affixed thereto. The tie means in this embodiment includes a pair of tie springs 52, 54 which are fixed to the inner face of the front or outer panel 32 at a location approximately three quarters of the way down the panel from the fold or stitch line 35'. In this location, the tie strings 52, 54 may be engaged behind the child as illustrated in Fig. 7; or may be secured to the sides of the chair, the tray of the chair or at any other convenient location. When not in use, the strings 52, 54 are tied in a bow and lie between the panels 32', 34' at a location normally obscured from view by the front panel 32'.

From the foregoing detailed description, the many uses of combined bibs and aprons constructed according to the present invention should be appreciated. In achieving a large protective area over the front portion of the garment, the structure of the present invention is at the same time compatible with esthetic requirements. To the average observer viewing the garment in its normal mode of use, as seen in Fig. 4, there is no tell-tale evidence or hint that the garment incorporates the protective bib and apron, as seen in Figs. 5 and 7. Further, in achieving the protective function, no serious limitations are imposed upon the construction of the garment, thus making it possible to incorporate a bib and apron as a standard accessory to a complete line of infants' and children's wear.

A latitude of modification, change and substitution will occur to those skilled in the art. Accordingly, it is appropriate that the appended claims be construed broadly and in a manner consistent with the spirit and scope of the present invention. In some instances some features of the invention will be used without a corresponding use of other features.

What I claim is: 1. In a child's garment including a garment body having a lower body and leg covering portion and a waistband portion, a bib section extending upwardly from said waistband portion, the improvement comprising inner and outer substantially coextensive panels disposed in a confronting position with respect to each other above said waistband portion and shaped to provide said bib section, said panels having lower marginal portions secured to said waistband portion, said outer panel being adapted to be dropped into a depending position to extend below said waistband portion to expose the inner surfaces of said panels which are normally hidden from view, and means for releasably supporting said panels in said confronting position above said waistband portion, a continuous sheet of water-repellent material confronting substantially the entire inner surfaces of said inner and outer panels whereby said inner surfaces function respectively as a feeding bib and a water-repellent apron for said garment. 2. In a child's garment including a garment body having a lower body and leg covering portion and a waistband portion, a bib section extending upwardly from said waistband portion, the improvement comprising inner and outer substantially coextensive panels disposed in a confronting position with respect to each other above said waistband portion and shaped to provide said bib section, said panels having lower marginal portions secured to said waistband portion, said outer panel being adapted to be dropped into a depending position to extend below said waistband portion to expose the inner surfaces of said panels which are normally hidden from view, means for releasably supporting said panels in said confronting position above said waistband portion, a continuous sheet of water-repellent material confronting substantially the entire inner surfaces of said inner and outer panels whereby said inner surfaces function respectively as a feeding bib and a water-repellent apron for said garment.
adapted to be dropped into a depending position to extend below said waistband portion to expose the inner surfaces of said panels which are normally hidden from view, means for releasably supporting said panels in said confronting position above said waistband portion, said inner surfaces of said panels being water repellent whereby said inner surfaces function respectively as a feeding bib and apron for said garment, and means for releasably securing said outer panel in said depending position, the releasable securing means including cooperating interengaging buttons and buttonholes on said lower body and leg covering portion and on said outer panel.

4. In a child's garment including a garment body having a lower body and leg covering portion and a waistband portion, a bib section extending upwardly from said waistband portion, the improvement comprising inner and outer substantially coextensive panels disposed in a confronting position with respect to each other above said waistband portion and shaped to provide said bib section, said panels having lower marginal portions secured to said waistband portion, said outer panel being adapted to be dropped into a depending position to extend below said waistband portion to expose the inner surfaces of said panels which are normally hidden from view, means for releasably supporting said panels in said confronting position above said waistband portion, said inner surfaces of said panels being water repellent whereby said inner surfaces function respectively as a feeding bib and apron for said garment, and means for releasably securing said outer panel in said depending position, said releasable securing means including tie strings fixed to said outer panel at its opposite sides.

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