

(12) PATENT
(19) AUSTRALIAN PATENT OFFICE

(11) Application No. AU 199746421 B2
(10) Patent No. 712387

(54) Title
Fitting as well as table and table system with such fitting

(51)⁶ International Patent Classification(s)
F16B 012/48

(21) Application No: **199746421**

(22) Application Date: **1997.10.10**

(87) WIPO No: **WO98/16750**

(30) Priority Data

(31) Number	(32) Date	(33) Country
9603723	1996.10.11	SE

(43) Publication Date : **1998.05.11**

(43) Publication Journal Date : **1998.07.02**

(44) Accepted Journal Date : **1999.11.04**

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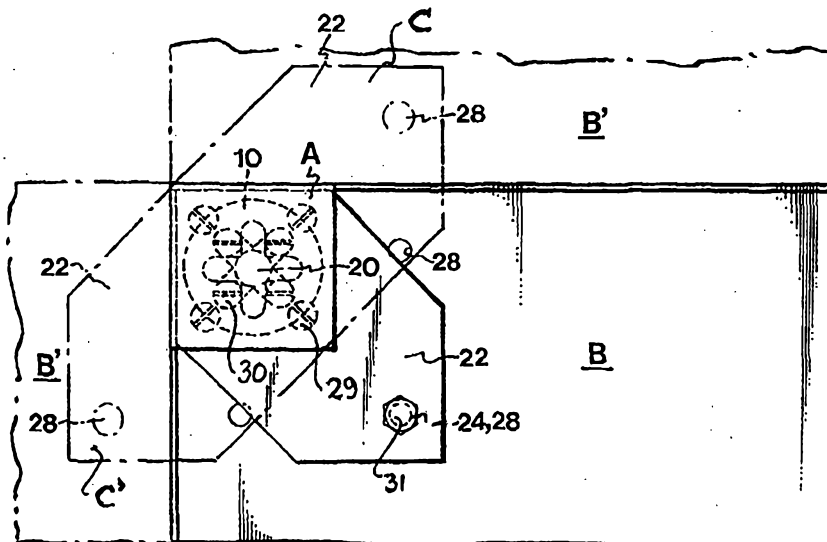
(56) Related Art
FR 1200640
FR 1467964
EP 476315



IN.

<p>(51) International Patent Classification ⁶ : F16B 12/48</p>	<p>A1</p>	<p>(11) International Publication Number: WO 98/16750 (43) International Publication Date: 23 April 1998 (23.04.98)</p>
<p>(21) International Application Number: PCT/SE97/01695 (22) International Filing Date: 10 October 1997 (10.10.97) (30) Priority Data: 9603723-9 11 October 1996 (11.10.96) SE (71) Applicant (for all designated States except US): INRED- NINGSFORM GUNNAR OTTOSSON AB [SE/SE]; P.O. Box 5055, S-100 71 Malmö (SE). (72) Inventors; and (75) Inventors/Applicants (for US only): ALM, Karl-Erik [SE/SE]; Hedvägen 155, S-231 66 Trelleborg (SE). EKSTRAND, Ruud [SE/SE]; Carl Hillsgatan 14 B, S-217 56 Malmö (SE). (74) Agent: AWAPATENT AB; P.O. Box 5117, S-200 71 Malmö (SE).</p>		<p>(81) Designated States: AL, AM, AT, AT (Utility model), AU, AZ, BA, BB, BG, BR, BY, CA, CH, CN, CU, CZ, CZ (Utility model), DE, DE (Utility model), DK, DK (Utility model), EE, EE (Utility model), ES, FI, FI (Utility model), GB, GE, GH, HU, ID, IL, IS, JP, KE, KG, KP, KR, KZ, LC, LK, LR, LS, LT, LU, LV, MD, MG, MK, MN, MW, MX, NO, NZ, PL, PT, RO, RU, SD, SE, SG, SI, SK, SK (Utility model), SL, TJ, TM, TR, TT, UA, UG, US, UZ, VN, YU, ZW, ARIPO patent (GH, KE, LS, MW, SD, SZ, UG, ZW), Eurasian patent (AM, AZ, BY, KG, KZ, MD, RU, TJ, TM), European patent (AT, BE, CH, DE, DK, ES, FI, FR, GB, GR, IE, IT, LU, MC, NL, PT, SE), OAPI patent (BF, BJ, CF, CG, CI, CM, GA, GN, ML, MR, NE, SN, TD, TG).</p> <p>Published With international search report. Before the expiration of the time limit for amending the claims and to be republished in the event of the receipt of amendments. In English translation (filed in Swedish).</p>

(54) Title: FITTING AS WELL AS TABLE AND TABLE SYSTEM WITH SUCH FITTING



(57) Abstract

An assembly fitting for coupling a table leg to a table top comprises on the one hand a leg attachment (20) for attaching to a table leg (A) and, on the other hand, a table top attachment (10) for attaching to a table top (B). A bayonet coupling (10, 20) is arranged between the table top attachment (10) and the leg attachment (20) and is lockable by means of a plate (22), which projects laterally from the table leg (A), in one or more turning positions for positioning the table leg (A) in relation to the table top (B). The plate (22) has a shape such that it projects beyond the table top (B) in at least one of the lockable turning positions of the bayonet coupling (10, 20). In a table, the table top (B) and the table legs (A) are connected to each other with the aid of such assembly fittings. In a table system with table legs (A) and two or more table tops (B, B'), the table legs (A) are connected to the table tops (B, B') with the aid of such assembly fittings in such a manner that a plate (22) of an assembly fitting, in a joint of two table tops (B, B'), supports and is connected to the two table tops (B, B').

FITTING AS WELL AS TABLE AND TABLE SYSTEM
WITH SUCH FITTING

Field of the Invention

The present invention generally relates to the coupling of table parts, and more particularly the invention relates to an assembly fitting for coupling a table leg
5 to a table top. The fitting according to the invention is also usable for coupling together two tables. Moreover, the invention relates to a table and a table system with table tops, table legs and fittings as stated above.

Background of the Invention

10 In meeting-places, such as conference rooms and restaurants, the number of visitors may vary considerably from one time to another. Consequently, the number of tables required will also vary. Accordingly, before a meeting, tables which will not be needed must be taken
15 to a storage room or the like or, alternatively, tables which are needed must be brought from the storage room to the meeting-room. In the case of tables with fixed legs, the tables must be stacked on top of each other both when being stored and when being transported. This is complicated, and, in addition, the stacked-up tables take up a
20 great deal of space. It is true that folding tables take up only a small amount of storage space, but, on the other hand, folding and unfolding them is often a complicated and time-consuming operation. Moreover, when
25 unfolded, such tables are often unstable and rickety.

According to another common construction, the table leg has a threaded end and the table top has a corresponding threaded receiving means, so that the leg can be screwed to the table top. While it is true that such
30 tables can be disassembled for storage and transportation, they also have the drawback that the table legs must have a circular cross-section, since the table legs

cannot be positioned in a defined turning position when being fitted to the table top.

In the meeting-place, the tables are subsequently placed in different formations depending upon the number
5 of seats required on each occasion. On such occasions, when the tables are placed in a row, double table legs are obtained where two tables abut. These double legs take up a great deal of space and are inconvenient for the individuals who are seated where the tables abut.

10 A prior art table system, disclosed in US-A-5,341,749, consists of mounting plates, which are fitted to the corners of a number of table tops, and a number of supports, each fixedly connected to a respective table leg. Four supports are rotatably attached by means of one
15 screw each to one mounting plate each in a first table top. In a first application position, the table legs are turned in under the first table top and are fixed in a mounting plate by means of screws, enabling the table to stand on four legs in the normal manner. In a second
20 application position, the table legs and the associated supports are turned out from the table top and thereby form contact surfaces for further table tops, which are fixed to the supports of the table legs by means of screws. In this way, the occurrence of double legs where
25 two tables abut is eliminated.

SE-B-445,945 describes a device, which enables several table tops to be joined by means of a fitting formed by two disc-shaped pieces, which is fastened around projections in each table top and which bridges the joint
30 of these table tops. A leg shared by the adjoining table tops can subsequently be attached to this fitting by means of a bayonet grip. The detachment of the leg is simple, but in order to the disassemble the table tops it is necessary to loosen and detach the disc-shaped parts
35 of the fitting.

A drawback of the above construction is that several screws are required for attaching a table leg to a table

top by the intermediary of the support. The large number of screws makes the assembly operation more difficult and also increases the likelihood of a screw being lost after a certain period of use. In addition, in the known construction, each table leg must make a turning movement when two table tops are to be assembled. This turning movement can be made more difficult by friction between the end surface of the table leg and the floor surface, e.g. a wall-to-wall carpet. Furthermore, it is not possible to join these tables in more than one way. For example, tables cannot easily be coupled together at an angle to each other with this prior art construction.

SE-B-329,524 shows a framework, whose tube-shaped means are joined with the aid of connecting pieces. Upon insertion of the end portions of the connecting pieces into the tube-shaped means, a support plate can be slipped over the end portions and be fastened between the end of the tube-shaped means and the connecting piece. This support plate can then serve as a supporting surface for e.g. a shelf. The support plate can be used in different directions to permit e.g. a shelf to be supported on an optional side of the tubes of the framework.

EP-A-0 476 315 shows a table construction, in which a coupling member is attached to the upper end of the legs to permit a table top to be supported or to support two or four table tops placed next to each other. The coupling member has four holes for mounting pins placed in a square, making it possible to fit the leg so that it rests completely inside the edge of a table top, or half-way underneath two adjoining table tops, or so that it extends under the corners of four table tops placed adjacent to each other.

FR-A-1,200,640 shows the use of bayonet grips for joining framework components and fastening shelves or plates between adjoining leg parts.

FR-A-1,467,964 shows a table construction, in which one half of a bayonet grip is fitted to the top end of

a leg and the other half is attached to the underside of the table top. Consequently, the legs can be easily attached or detached, but the construction is such that the components attached to the table top project from the underside of the table top and therefore make it difficult to stack individual table tops on top of each other. There is no possibility of connecting adjoining table tops to each other.

Summary of the Invention

10 In light of the above, it is an object of the present invention to provide a fitting which, when used in a table system, permits the quick and easy assembly and disassembly of the same. Another object is to permit space-saving storage and transportation of such a table system.

15 It is also an object to provide a fitting which results in a stable coupling between a table leg and a table top, which can be placed as close as possible to the outer edge of the table top, and which allows the cross-sectional shape of the table legs to be quadrangular.

A further object is to minimise the number of components included in the fitting.

25 It is also an object to provide a fitting, which, when used in a table system, minimises the number of table legs in order to provide as much space as possible for the users, and which, more particularly, eliminates the occurrence of double table legs where two table tops abut.

30 A further object is to provide a fitting which permits the quick and stable coupling of adjoining table tops.

In addition, it is desirable to be able to use the fitting to easily connect table tops and table leg so that both longitudinal and angled table formations can be formed.

These and other objects, which can be seen from the description below, have now been completely or partially achieved by an assembly fitting, a table, and a table system according to the appended claims 1, 11 and 12.

5 Preferred embodiments are stated in the subclaims.

To sum up, the invention relates to an assembly fitting intended for a table or a table system, a table equipped with such assembly fittings, and a table system with such assembly fittings. The assembly fitting has a
10 leg attachment and a table attachment for attaching to a table leg and a table top, respectively. Both attachments are connectable to each other with the aid of a bayonet coupling, whose sleeve part is formed in the table top attachment and whose insertion part is formed in the leg
15 attachment. The leg attachment has a plate projecting laterally from the leg attachment and the table leg. The bayonet coupling is lockable in at least two turning positions for positioning the projecting plate (22) in relation to the table top. Depending upon the locking
20 position chosen for the bayonet coupling, this plate sits completely under the table top or projects beyond the edge of table top. When this fitting is used for a single table top, the leg and the leg attachment are fitted to the table top attachment (10) so that the projecting
25 plate sits underneath the table top. If two or more adjoining table tops are to be connected to each other, the bayonet coupling is locked in a position such that the plate bridges the joint of two adjoining table tops in order to connect them to each other.

30 An advantage of an assembly fitting according to the invention is that table legs and table tops equipped with the fitting can be stored and transported individually and subsequently be assembled quickly and easily when needed by virtue of the bayonet coupling.

35 In addition, by virtue of the bayonet coupling, the table leg can be locked in a predetermined turning position in relation to the table top. As a result, it is

possible to ensure that, for instance, a table leg with a quadrangular cross-section has an attractive and defined position in relation to a quadrangular table top.

5 The bayonet coupling in combination with a support, which is connected to the table leg and projects from the same, make it possible to connect two table tops and a table leg in such a way that the table leg is placed close to the joint of two connected table tops and as a result supports them in a stable manner.

10 By virtue of the employment of a bayonet coupling, the table leg can be rotated around its longitudinal symmetry axis and consequently does not need to perform a pivot motion when two table tops are being connected. The combination of a support and a bayonet coupling also
15 makes it possible for the table to stand alone or to be easily and stably connected to other table tops to make up both longitudinal and angular formations.

Brief Description of the Drawings

20 The invention and its advantages will be described in more detail below with reference to the accompanying drawings, which by way of example show a presently preferred embodiment.

Figs 1a and 1b are perspective views of a fitting according to the invention with a sleeve part and an
25 insertion part.

Fig. 2 is a view of a fitting according to the invention, where the sleeve part is attached to a table top and the insertion part is attached to a table leg.

30 Fig. 3 is a plan view of a part of a table system seen from below after the coupling of a table leg to one or two table tops and shows three of the lockable turning positions of the fitting.

Description of a Preferred Embodiment

35 A fitting according to the invention can be seen in Figs 1a and 1b. The fitting comprises a cylindrical sleeve part 10, preferably made of metal, in which a cavity 11 is formed. This cavity is preferably essential-

ly cylindrical. One end surface 12 of the sleeve part 10 has an opening 13, which communicates with the cavity 11 and is formed as two slots, which intersect at right angles and consequently form a cross-shaped opening 13 with four uniformly distributed opening branches. In the opposite end surface 14 of the sleeve part 10, recesses 15 are formed for receiving fastening means (not shown), such as screws, for attaching the sleeve part 10 in an indentation close to an edge of a table top, preferably in a corner of the table top. The recesses 15 are preferably located directly opposite the branches of the opening 13 so that a tool, such as a screwdriver, can be inserted into the opening 13 for attaching the sleeve part 10 to the table top.

The fitting additionally comprises an insertion part 20, preferably made of metal, to be received by the sleeve part 10. The insertion part 20 has a guide pin 21 which is adapted to extend down into the upper part of a table leg. The guide pin 21 is connected to a supporting plate 22, which has a number of recesses 23 for receiving fastening means (not shown), such as screws, for attaching the insertion part 20 to one end surface of the table leg. The supporting plate 22 is elongated and in one end exhibits a fixing recess 24, whose function will be described in connection with Figs 2-3. A projection 25 is formed in the other end of the supporting plate 22 and extends in the extension of the guide pin 21. In the end portion which is spaced apart from the supporting plate 22, the projection 25 supports an engagement means 26 in the shape of four tongues 27, which are uniformly distributed circumferentially and which project perpendicularly from the projection 25. As a result, the engagement means 26 and the opening 13 have matching shapes. In terms of size, the engagement means 26 is somewhat smaller than the opening 13, which means that the engagement means 26 is insertable into the cavity 11 by the intermediary of the opening 13, which cavity preferably is formed so that

the engagement means 26 is rotatable over a whole revolution therein.

The sleeve part 10 and the insertion part 20 of the fitting are adapted to each other so that they function
5 as a bayonet coupling subsequent to the insertion of the engagement means 26 into the cavity 11. By rotating the insertion part 20 through 45° in relation to the sleeve part 10, a frictional engagement is achieved between
10 these two. The distance between the tongues 27 and the supporting plate 22 is adjusted in relation to the wall thickness of the opening-containing end surface 12 of the sleeve part 10 so that frictional engagements are obtained between those surfaces of the tongues 27 which are facing the supporting plate 22 and those surface portions
15 of the cavity 11 which are located between the branches of the opening. The fitting illustrated thus has four angular positions with frictional engagement, corresponding to a 45° , a 135° , a 225° , and a 315° rotation after the insertion of the insertion part 20 into the sleeve
20 part 10.

The use of the fitting according to the invention for coupling a table leg to a table top will be described below with reference to Figs 2-3. Fig. 2 shows a fitting attached to a table leg and a table top, and Fig. 3 shows
25 three of the lockable turning positions of the fitting.

The insertion part 20, which is fixedly connected to a table leg A with the aid of fastening members, in this case screws 29, is inserted into the sleeve part 10, which by means of fastening members 30, in the form of
30 screws in this case as well, is non-rotatably arranged in an indentation in a table top B. Subsequently, the user rotates the table leg A around its symmetry axis until the table leg A and the supporting plate 22, which projects essentially perpendicularly from the table leg A, have a desired orientation relative to the table top B.
35 By virtue of the above-mentioned angular positions with frictional engagement between the parts 11, 26 of the

bayonet coupling, the user can find the desired turning position among a number of predetermined turning positions, in this case four.

5 If the table is to stand alone, the user finds a turning position, which is indicated by full lines in Fig. 3 and in which the supporting plate 22 projects under the table top B. In this turning position, in which one large face of the supporting plate 22 is arranged against the table top B, the table leg A is subsequently
10 locked in relation to the table top B by the user arranging a fastening member 31, such as a screw, to extend through the fixing recess 24 of the supporting plate 22 and into a receiving means 28, such as a threaded insert non-rotatably arranged in the table top B.

15 If tables are to be placed in a certain formation, the user finds a different turning position, in which the supporting plate 22 projects beyond the table top B. Two such turning positions C, C' are indicated by dot-dash lines in Fig. 3. Subsequently, a second table top B' is
20 placed on that portion of the supporting plate 22 which projects from the table top B. In this turning position, the table leg A is subsequently locked in the manner described above by the user arranging a fastening means to extend through the fixing recess 24 of the supporting
25 plate 22 into a receiving means 28 of the adjoining, second table top B'. In this way, both a turning position fixing of the table leg A in relation to the table top B and a coupling of the two table tops B, B' to each other are obtained in a single operation.

30 It will be appreciated that other types of bayonet couplings can be used in a fitting according to the invention. However, it is preferred that the engagement means 26 of the insertion part 20, which is intended for insertion into the sleeve part 10, have a non-circular
35 shape. The cross-shaped engagement means 26 in coaction with a cavity 11 of a sleeve part 10 as stated above has the advantage that four mutually perpendicular turning

positions with frictional engagement can be obtained. This means that a table leg A with a quadrangular cross-section can be exactly positioned in relation to a table top B. In addition, the four tongues 27 of the engagement means 26 provide a stable coupling with a frictional engagement uniformly distributed circumferentially.

When the fitting is to function as an assembly fitting for connecting table tops it is particularly advantageous if the engagement means 26 is rotatable through 360° within the cavity 11 of the sleeve part 10 and is formed with at least three-phase rotation symmetry, and preferably four-phase rotation symmetry, since this makes it easy for the user to find a turning position with a frictional engagement, in which both the table leg A and the supporting plate 22 have the desired orientation in relation to the table top B.

Moreover, it should be pointed out that the above-mentioned locking of the turning positions of the bayonet coupling can be effected in alternative ways within the scope of the invention. For example, spring-biased pins can be arranged in the table top, which pins are intended to snap into the fixing recess 24 of the supporting plate 22 and which in that case replace the screws 31. In this case, the above-mentioned angular positions with frictional engagement of the bayonet coupling can be dispensed with since the supporting plate 22 is locked automatically when its recess 24 is rotated directly opposite said pin. However, the locking of the turning position according to the embodiment illustrated is preferred by virtue of its simplicity and stability and it can simultaneously provide both the locking of the turning position of the table leg A and the coupling of two table tops B, B'.

The engagement between the sleeve part 10 and the insertion part 20 can also be realised in other ways, for example by stops being formed in the cavity 11, and the

engagement means 26 being moved to abut against or engage with these stops.

As can be seen from the drawings, the centre of rotation of the bayonet coupling is eccentrically located on the plate 5 22, so that the latter can be placed completely inside the edges of a table top or be placed so that it projects from the edge or edges of the table top. In the preferred shape of the assembly fitting shown in the drawings, the plate 22 has a hexagonal shape and the centre of rotation of the bayonet 10 coupling 11, 26 is located eccentrically on the plate approximately at the centre of a connecting line between two corners. It is preferable for the plate 22 to be given an elongated shape by two opposite edges of the plate 22 having a greater length than the other edges, the centre of rotation of 15 the bayonet coupling 11, 26 being located on a connecting line between one end of the long edges.

Other shapes of the projecting plate are possible, however, as long as the plate can be optionally placed completely inside the edges of the table top or projecting 20 from the edge of the table top by the selection of a mounting position for the bayonet coupling.

Throughout this specification and the claims which follow, unless the context requires otherwise, the word "comprise", and variations such as "comprises" and 25 "comprising", will be understood to imply the inclusion of a stated integer or step or group of integers or steps but not the exclusion of any other integer or step or group of integers or steps.

The reference numerals in the following claims do not in 30 any way limit the scope of the respective claims.



CLAIMS

1. An assembly fitting comprising a leg attachment
5 (20) intended for fastening to a table leg (A), as well
as a table top attachment (10) intended for fastening to
a table top (B), the leg attachment (20) and the table
top attachment (10) being connectable to each other with
the aid of a bayonet coupling (11, 26), whose sleeve part
10 is formed in the table top attachment (10) and whose
insertion part is formed in the leg attachment (20),
c h a r a c t e r i s e d in that the leg attachment (20)
has a plate (22) projecting laterally from the leg
attachment and the table leg, and that the bayonet coup-
15 ling (10, 20) is lockable in at least two turning posi-
tions for positioning the projecting plate (22) in rela-
tion to the table top (B) in order for the plate to be
located completely under the table top or project beyond
the edge of the latter, depending upon the locking posi-
20 tion chosen for the bayonet coupling (10, 20).

2. An assembly fitting according to claim 1, wherein
the centre of rotation of the bayonet coupling (10, 20)
substantially coincides with the centre of the table leg
(A).

25 3. An assembly fitting according to claim 1 or 2,
wherein the projecting plate (22) has a recess (24) for
receiving fastening means for locking the plate and con-
sequently the bayonet coupling (10, 20) in a chosen lock-
ing position.

30 4. An assembly fitting according to claim 1, 2 or
3, wherein the engagement parts (11, 26) of the bayonet
coupling (10, 20) are formed for reciprocal frictional
engagement in at least one angular position.

35 5. An assembly fitting according to claim 4, where-
in said angular position substantially coincides with a
lockable turning position.

6. An assembly fitting according to any one of the preceding claims, wherein the bayonet coupling (10, 20) has at least three lockable turning positions.

5 7. An assembly fitting according to any one of the preceding claims, wherein the lockable turning positions of the bayonet coupling (10, 20) are substantially perpendicular in relation to each other.

10 8. An assembly fitting according to any one of the preceding claims, wherein the insertion part (20) of the bayonet coupling (10, 20) has an engagement means (26) with a non-circular shape.

9. An assembly fitting according to claim 8, wherein the engagement means (26) has at least three projecting tongues (27).

15 10. An assembly fitting according to any one of the preceding claims, wherein the plate (22) has a shape such that it projects beyond the table top (B) in at least one of the lockable turning positions of the bayonet coupling (10, 20).

20 11. An assembly fitting according to claim 10, characterised in that the plate (22) is hexagonal, and that the centre of rotation of the bayonet coupling (11, 26) is located eccentrically on the plate approximately at the centre of a connecting line between
25 two corners.

12. An assembly fitting according to claim 11, characterised in that two opposite edges of the plate (22) have a greater length than the other edges, and that the centre of rotation of the bayonet
30 coupling (11, 26) is located on a connecting line between one end of the long edges.

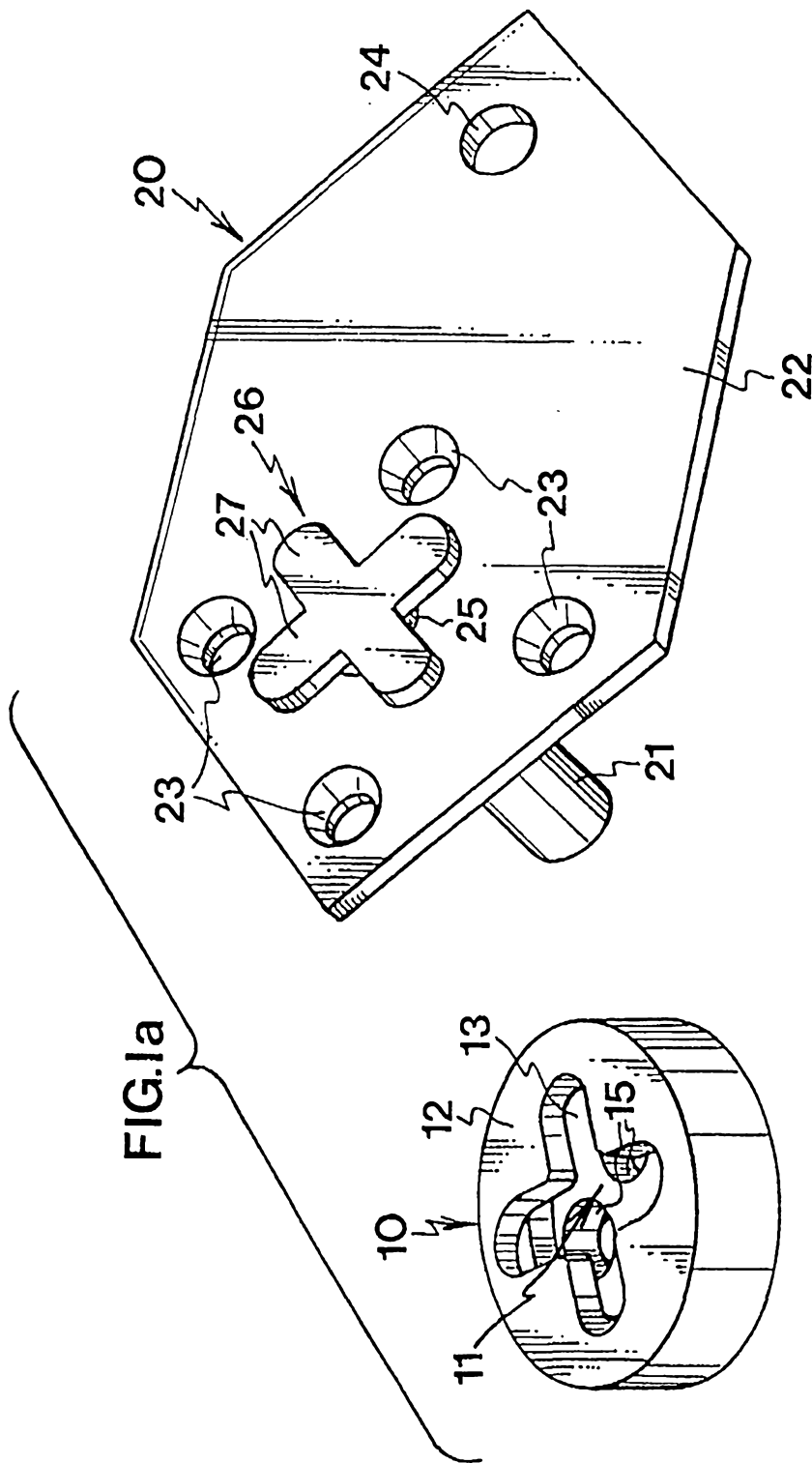
13. A table with a table top (B) and table legs (A), characterised in that the table legs (A) and the table top (B) are connected to each other with the
35 aid of assembly fittings according to any one of claims 1-12, the table top attachment (10) being recessed in the table top (B) adjacent to the edge of the latter.

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14. A table system with table legs (A) and two or more table tops (B, B') placed next to each other, characterised in that the table legs (A) are connected to the table tops (B, B') with the aid of assembly fittings according to any one of claims 1-10, a plate (22) of an assembly fitting, which projects laterally from a leg attachment (20), bridging the joint of adjoining table tops (B, B') and being connected thereto and the table top attachment (10) being recessed in the table top (B) adjacent to the edge of the latter.





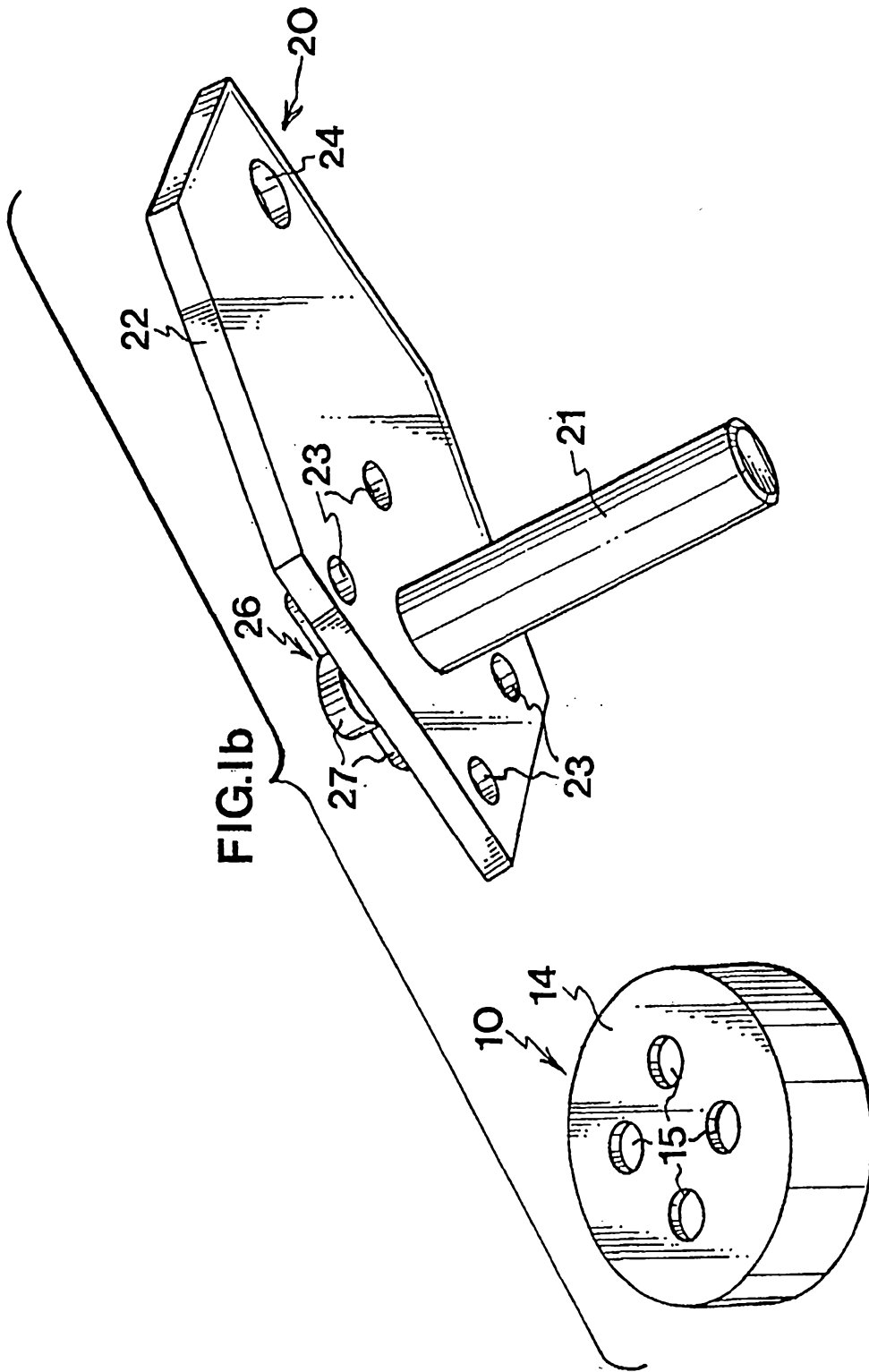


FIG.2

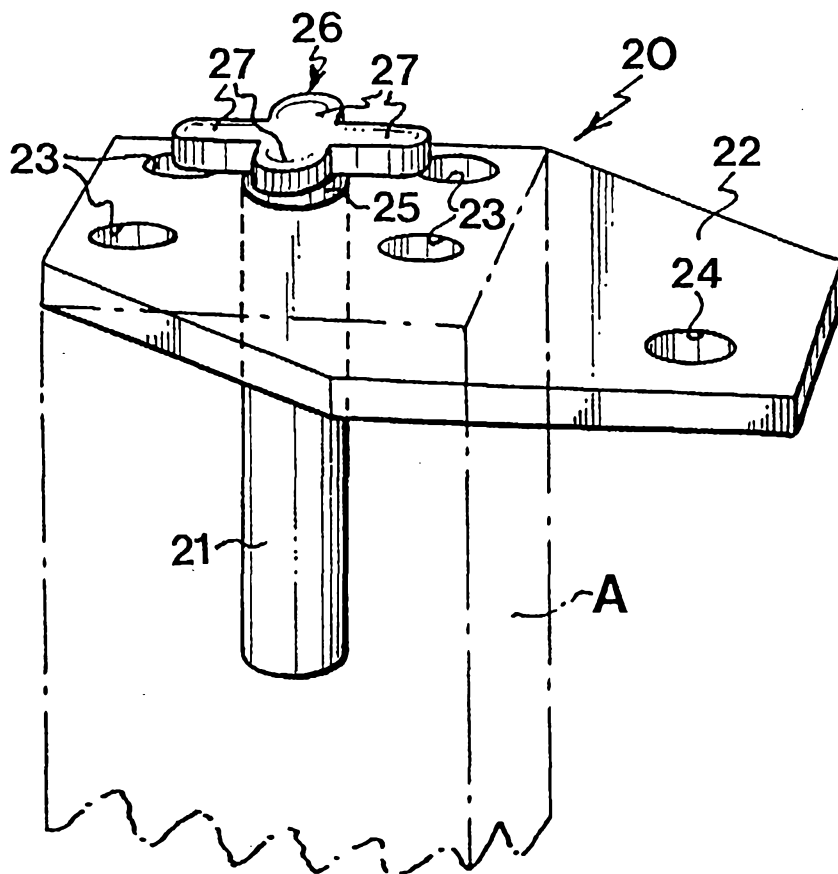
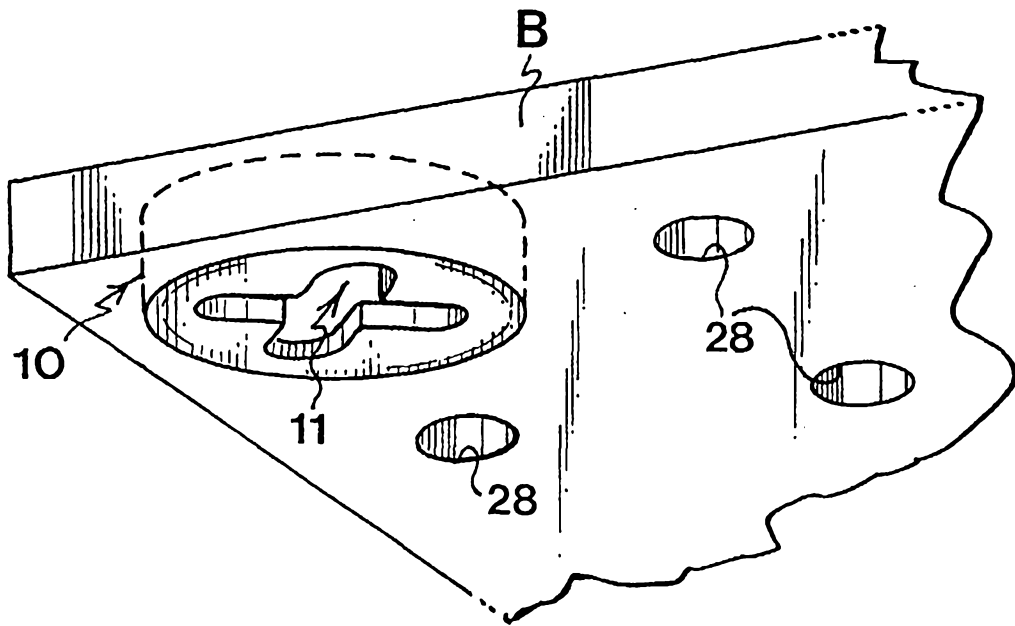


FIG.3

