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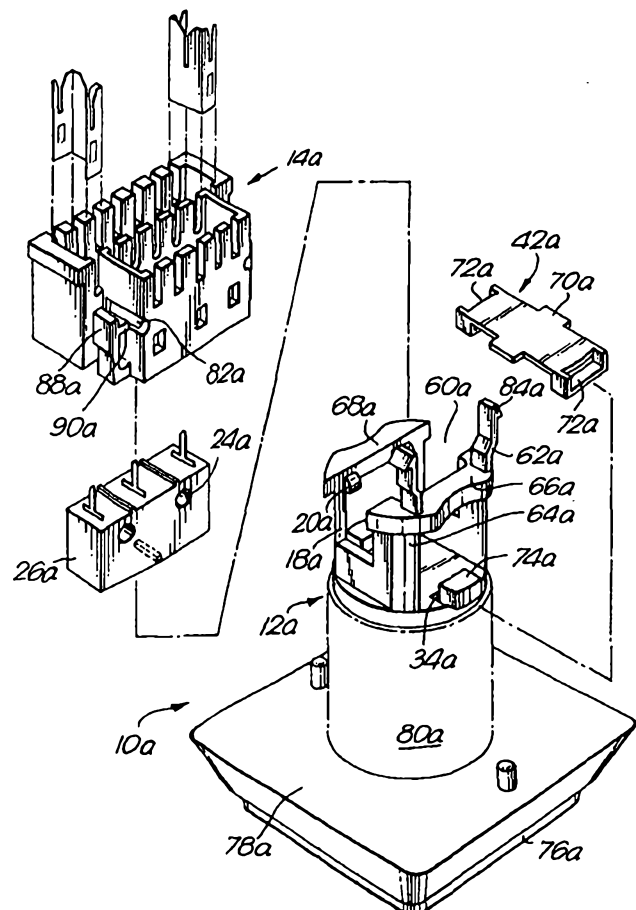
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(54) Title: ELECTRICAL ASSEMBLIES

(57) Abstract

An electrical assembly (10a) comprises first (12a) and second (14a) initially separated connection portions of which the first (12a) is adapted to be secured to a first component, such as a microswitch (26a), and the second (14a) is adapted to be secured to a second component, such as electrical wiring through insulation displacement, with the first (12a) and second (14a) connection portions further being capable of releasably fitting together, such as by means of latch means (82a, 84a), to bring the first (12a) and second (14a) components into electrical contact.



Electrical Assemblies

5 The present invention relates generally to electrical assemblies and is more especially but not exclusively concerned with electrical assemblies of the kind found in fruit machines.

10 It is well known for fruit machines to be provided with controls for operation by players of the fruit machines.

Typically, the controls are in the form of push-buttons provided with respective microswitches which are themselves provided with respective series of blade contacts to which electrical wiring is to be secured to
15 permit operation of the fruit machines.

Examples of known push-button switches are to be found in GB-A-2279500 to which the reader is invited to refer.

20 A particular problem with push-button switches for fruit machines, but a problem which is also experienced by other electrical assemblies, is that it is commercially desirable for fitting the push-button switches in the fruit machines to be as quick as possible, thus enabling the periods when the fruit machines are out of operation to be as short as possible.

25 In practical terms, this means that fastening the push-button switches to the fruit machines, and fastening the electrical wiring to the push-button switches, must be such that the fastening operations can be performed easily and reliably even by unskilled servicing personnel.

30 WO 97/23934 discloses, inter alia, how a push-button switch can be quickly secured to a fruit machine.

It involves the use of a stud-like member having a ribbed portion and a non-ribbed portion, and a nut-like member having a projecting portion which is capable of
35 moving along the stud-like member in the non-ribbed portion thereof and is capable of moving across the stud-like member in the ribbed portion thereof.

The ribbed portion can be in the form of a helically advancing thread or a series of transversely extending serrations.

The discussion of the background to the invention herein is included to explain the context of the invention. This is not to be taken as an admission
5 that any of the material referred to was published, known or part of the common general knowledge in Australia as at the priority date of any of the claims.

The present patent application is concerned, inter alia, with how electrical wiring can be quickly secured to and released from a push-button switch.

According to the present invention there is provided an electrical
10 assembly including:

first and second initially separated connection portions, of which the first connection portion is secured to a microswitch and the second connection portion is secured to an electrical component, with the first and second connection portions being capable of bringing the microswitch into electrical
15 contact with the electrical component; and

latch means provided to permit the first and second connection portions to be releasably secured to one another, with the first connection portion being formed with two resiliently deflectable legs, each having a latching shoulder near one end thereof which is capable of snap engagement with a respective
20 latching surface formed on the second connection portion;

wherein the electrical component is electrical wiring, and release of said resiliently deflectable legs is achieved by squeezing a further pair of resiliently deflectable legs provided by the second connection portion towards one another to push the latching shoulders out of engagement with the latching surfaces.

25 Preferably, the first connection portion is formed of a resiliently deformable plastics material and the first connection portion is provided with a plurality of studs which locate in corresponding holes provided in the microswitch.

Preferably, the second connection portion is secured to the electrical
30 wiring by way of insulation displacement, the second connection portion includes a housing of plastics material and the second connection portion is provided with a plurality of electrical terminals which are electrically insulated from one another, are accessible through associated slots in the housing and



are intended for electrical contact with corresponding electrical terminals provided by the microswitch.

Preferably, the first connection portion is operatively secured to a reciprocally movable push-button, operation of the push-button causes an
5 actuating bar to actuate the microswitch and the actuating bar bridges a pair of reciprocally movable legs projecting from the push-button.

Preferably, the microswitch does not project laterally outwardly of the first connection portion thereby enabling the microswitch to be secured to the first connection portion before the first connection portion is itself pushed through an
10 apertured panel.

Said first connection portion may be associated with blade contacts for a lamp, or two lamps if there is to be dual illumination, particularly if the electrical assembly forms part of a push-button switch.

Said first connection portion may be provided integrally with, or attached
15 to, a nut-like member of the kind disclosed in said WO 97/23934, particularly if the electrical assembly forms part of a quick-fit fastener in a push-button switch.

It should also be noted that said first connection portion may be dimensioned to be small enough to fit through an existing hole in a panel in a fruit machine, even when secured to a microswitch, and that said second
20 connection portion may be configured to fit with said first connection portion in only a single permitted orientation.

A particular advantage of said first connection portion being dimensioned to be small enough to fit through an existing hole in a panel of a fruit machine, even when secured to a microswitch, is that the electrical circuitry of said first
25 connection portion including the microswitch can be fully factory tested before sale.

Preferred embodiments of the present invention will now be described with reference to the accompanying drawings, in which:-

Figure 1 is an exploded schematic perspective view of a first electrical
30 assembly which does not fall within the present invention, from which various features have been omitted in the interest of clarity;

Figures 2, 3, 4 and 5 are respectively plan, left side, right side and sectional views of the electrical assembly shown in Figure 1;



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Figure 6 is an exploded schematic perspective view of an electrical assembly of the present invention, illustrating several modifications;

Figures 7, 8, 9 and 10 are respectively plan, rear, section on line X-X and underplan views of just one of the two connection portions shown in Figure 6;

5 Figure 11 is similar to Figure 6, but illustrating a modified actuating bar; and

Figure 12 is an enlarged exploded schematic perspective view of parts of Figure 11.

10 Although not falling within the present invention, it is convenient to begin by considering an electrical assembly 10, as shown in Figures 1 to 5, including two initially separated connection portions 12, 14 of which the connection portion 12 is adapted to be secured to a

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first component (microswitch) and the other connection portion 14 is adapted to be secured to a second component (electrical wiring) with the two connection portions 12, 14 further being capable of releasably fitting together to bring the wiring into electrical contact with the microswitch.

The connection portion 12 is formed in one piece of a plastics material and presents a body 16.

The body 16 may be inserted in, or integrally formed with, an externally threaded cylinder of a conventional push-button switch or may be attached to, or integrally formed with, a nut-like member of a quick-fit fastener of the kind referred to hereinbefore.

The body 16 has a pair of stiff support legs 18 extending therefrom, each of the support legs 18 being formed with a locating stud 20 and the support legs 18 being joined by a central strut 22. The purpose of the studs 20 is to locate within complementary holes 24 provided in a side face of a microswitch 26. The other side face of the microswitch 26 is engaged by a resiliently flexible support leg 28 which continuously presses the microswitch 26 towards the support legs 18. The central strut 22 presents a latching surface, for a purpose to be set forth hereinafter, and a latching shoulder is presented by a barb 30 at a free end of a resiliently deflectable leg 32.

It will be appreciated that, in a manner which is generally conventional, the lower end face of the microswitch 26 (as shown in the exploded view) is formed with a button. The button is pressed when a pivotable arm (not shown) of the microswitch 26 is lifted upwardly by a part of a push-button switch (not shown) which protrudes through an opening 34. The upper end face of the microswitch 26 (as shown in the exploded view) is formed with a row of three blade contacts 36.

The body 16 may have a pair of stiff support legs 38, only one shown, which provide support for a pair of lamp terminals 40.

Moreover, the body 16 may have an opposed pair of the
5 openings 34, both are shown, which receive an opposed pair of legs reciprocally movable when the push-button switch is operated, and an actuating bar 42 may extend between the legs to actuate the button on the microswitch 26 directly, thus enabling the pivotable arm on the microswitch 26 to be
10 omitted.

The connection portion 14 is again formed in one piece of a plastics material and presents a housing 44.

The housing 44 is formed externally with a pair of resiliently deflectable legs 46, each of which is formed at
15 its free end with a barb 48 presenting a latching shoulder, and each of which is secured to the housing 44 by a short strut 50. The housing 44 is formed internally with a pair of compartments 52, 54 with the larger compartment 52 including wire terminals 56 and the smaller compartment 54
20 including wire terminals 58. All of the wire terminals 56, 58 are provided with various slots 60 allowing individual wires to be easily connected thereto by displacement of the insulation around the wires.

The housing 44 would itself be provided with opposed
25 pairs of slots (not shown) and indeed as is typical for IDC connectors the opposed pairs of slots in the housing 44 would preferably include resilient barbs (not shown) for resisting inadvertent removal of wiring which had been brought into electrical contact with the wire terminals 56,
30 58.

When fitted together, one of the barbs 48 snaps into engagement with the latching surface presented by the central strut 22, whereas the other of the barbs 48 snaps into engagement with the latching shoulder presented by the
35 barb 30.

At this time, the three blade contacts 36 projecting from the microswitch 26 are inserted through complementary

slots formed in the bottom of the larger compartment 52 and the lamp terminals 40 are inserted through a complementary pair of slots formed in the bottom of the smaller compartment 54 into electrical contact with the terminals 56 and 58.

In contrast an electrical assembly 10a according to the present invention is shown in Figures 6 to 10 - the overall height is considerably reduced but the manner of operation of the electrical assembly 10a is substantially the same as already described with reference to the electrical assembly 10.

Indeed, many of the constructional features of the electrical assembly 10a are either the same as or very similar to the corresponding constructional features of the electrical assembly 10.

The connection portion 12a has a channel 60a extending at right angles to the line joining opposed openings 34a. The microswitch 26a is received in the channel 60a with holes 24a in the microswitch 26a locating with studs 20a presented by support legs 18a. The studs 20a can be of a ramped outline to facilitate entry of the microswitch 26a into the channel 60a but to resist withdrawal of the microswitch 26a from the channel 60a. A pair of resiliently deflectable legs 62a are carried by respective ones of a pair of support legs 64a which are joined by a strut 66a in opposition to a strut 68a joining the support legs 18a. The purpose of the resiliently deflectable legs 62a is to allow the connection portion 12a to latch into engagement with the connection portion 14a.

An actuating bar 42a is of a cross or plus shape, with each of its central lugs 70a fitting between one of the support legs 18a and one of the support legs 64a, and with each of its end lugs being formed with a recess 72a - in use, the bar 42a is inverted so that the recesses 72a receive respective ones of a pair of reciprocable legs 74a projecting through the openings 34a, the legs 74a forming part of a push-button switch having a button 76a which is



reciprocable relatively to a housing 78a and a cylinder 80a (shown in phantom).

The connection portion 14a here includes a pair of slots 82a for engagement by barbs 84a formed at the free ends of the resiliently deflectable legs 62a. The barbs 84a enter the connection portion 14a through respective holes 86a. The connection portion 14a also includes another pair of resiliently deflectable legs 88a having projections 90a which are operable when squeezed towards one another to push the barbs 84a out from engagement with the slots 82a.

It will be appreciated that Figures 6 to 10 are schematic in that only a microswitch has been indicated whereas in practice there would also be a lamp to be brought into electrical contact with electrical wiring - the electrical contact can be equivalent to that between the microswitch and the electrical wiring by involving blade contacts associated with the lamp which engage IDC contacts associated with the electrical wiring.

With reference now to Figures 11 and 12, it will be seen that the previously disclosed actuating bars 42 and 42a have been replaced by an actuating bar 42b which serves the same purpose in acting as a bridge to actuate a button on a microswitch when a push-button switch is operated.

Here, the bar 42b is provided with a central rectangular aperture 92b and/or a pair of end retaining projections 94b. The aperture 92b is intended to locate with a complementary locating peg 96b extending from one end of the lamp holder body. Similarly, the projections 94b are intended to locate against the sides of the microswitch to hold the bar 42b in position.

It should be noted that the aperture 92b and the peg 96b can be reversed so that the peg 96b extends from the bar 42b and the aperture 92b is formed in the lamp holder body.

It should also be noted that the aperture 92b and the peg 96b need not necessarily be rectangular, in cross-

section, but are merely preferably of non-circular outline to resist swivel therebetween.

In all other respects, the manner of operation of the electrical assembly of the invention has remained
5 unchanged.

THE CLAIMS DEFINING THE INVENTION ARE AS FOLLOWS:

1. An electrical assembly including:
first and second initially separated connection portions, of which the first connection portion is secured to a microswitch and the second connection portion is secured to an electrical component, with the first and second connection portions being capable of bringing the microswitch into electrical contact with the electrical component; and
latch means provided to permit the first and second connection portions to be releasably secured to one another, with the first connection portion being formed with two resiliently deflectable legs, each having a latching shoulder near one end thereof which is capable of snap engagement with a respective latching surface formed on the second connection portion;
wherein the electrical component is electrical wiring, and release of said resiliently deflectable legs is achieved by squeezing a further pair of resiliently deflectable legs provided by the second connection portion towards one another to push the latching shoulders out of engagement with the latching surfaces.
2. An electrical assembly according to claim 1, in which the first connection portion is formed of a resiliently deformable plastics material.
3. An electrical assembly according to claim 2, in which the first connection portion is provided with a plurality of studs which locate in corresponding holes provided in the microswitch.
4. An electrical assembly according to any one of the preceding claims, in which the second connection portion is secured to the electrical wiring by way of insulation displacement.
5. An electrical assembly according to claim 4, in which the second connection portion includes a housing of plastics material.
6. An electrical assembly according to claim 4 and claim 5, in which the second connection portion is provided with a plurality of electrical terminals



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which are electrically insulated from one another, are accessible through associated slots in the housing and are intended for electrical contact with corresponding electrical terminals provided by the microswitch.

5 7. An electrical assembly according to any one of the preceding claims, in which the first connection portion is operatively secured to a reciprocally movable push-button.

8. An electrical assembly according to claim 7, in which operation of the
10 push-button causes an actuating bar to actuate the microswitch.

9. An electrical assembly according to claim 8, in which the actuating bar bridges a pair of reciprocally movable legs projecting from the push-button.

15 10. An electrical assembly according to any one of the preceding claims, in which the microswitch does not project laterally outwardly of the first connection portion thereby enabling the microswitch to be secured to the first connection portion before the first connection portion is itself pushed through an apertured panel.

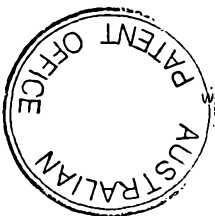
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11. An electrical assembly substantially as herein described with reference to Figs. 6 to 12 of the accompanying drawings.

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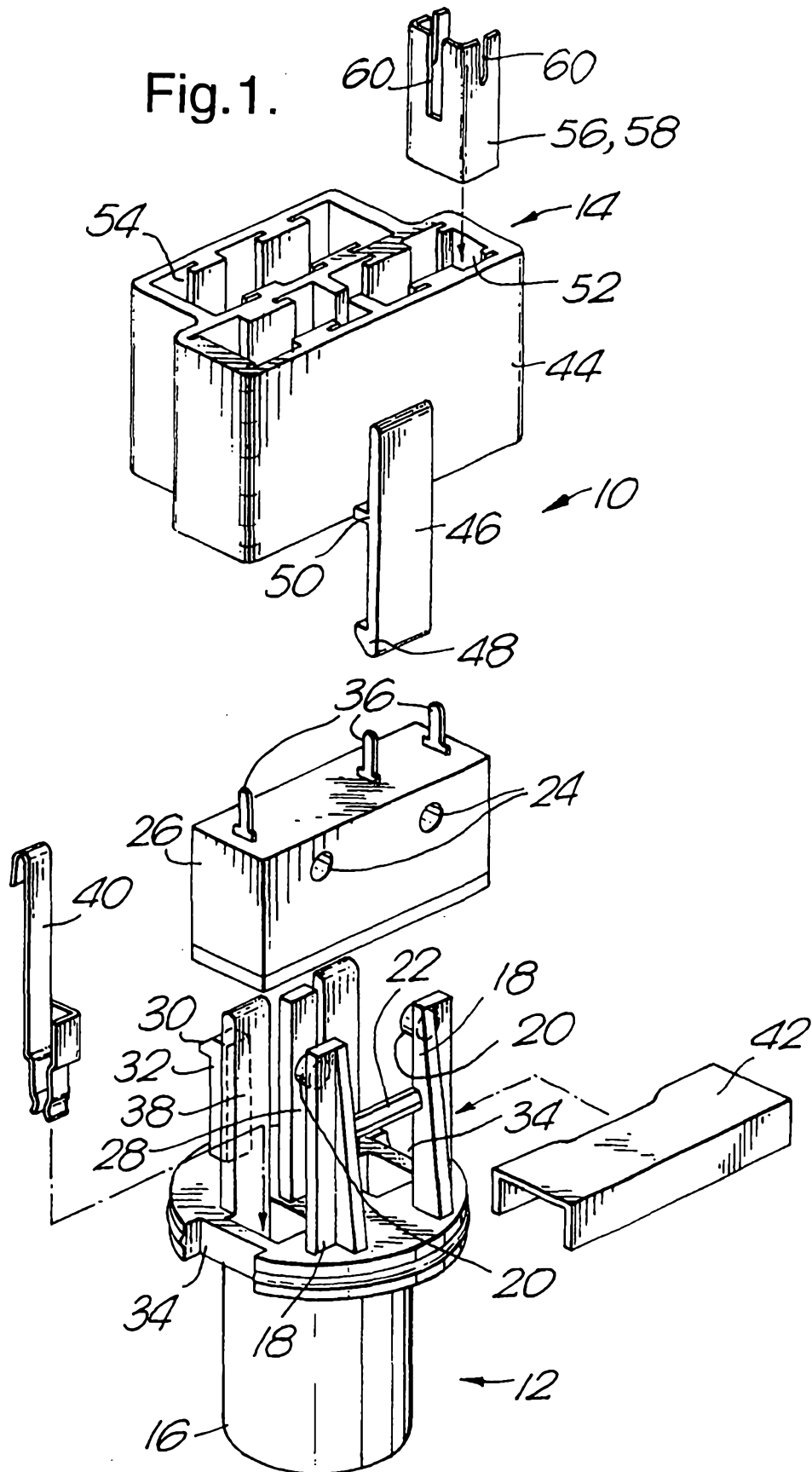
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Fig.1.



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Fig.2.

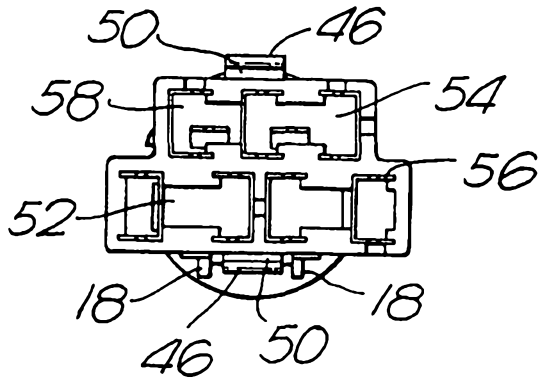


Fig.3.

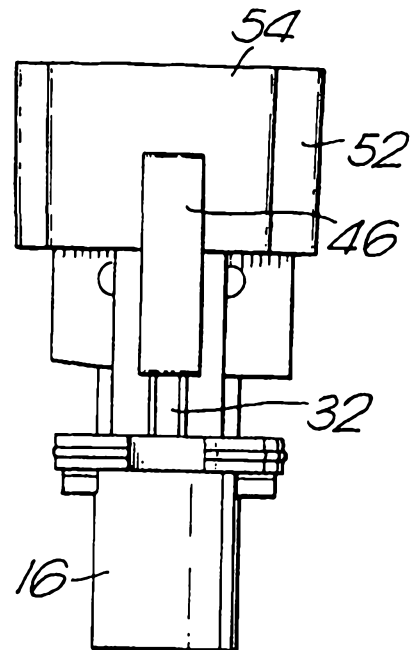


Fig.4.

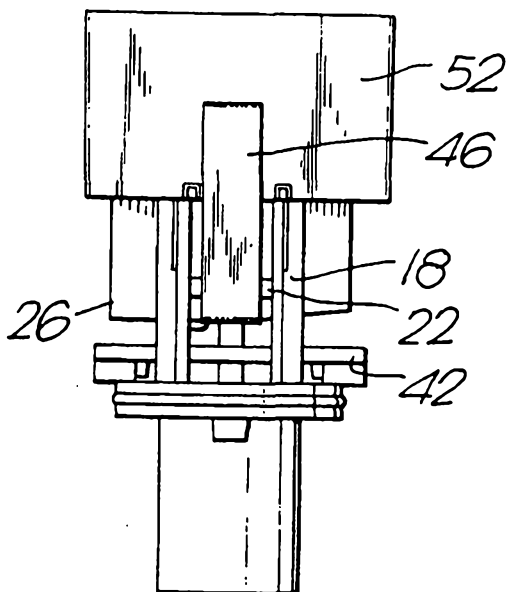
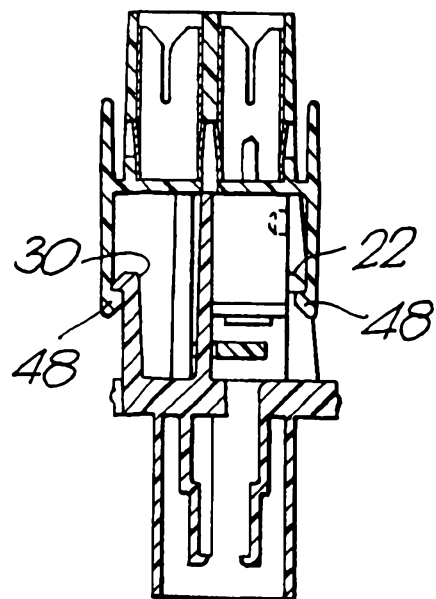


Fig.5.



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Fig.6.

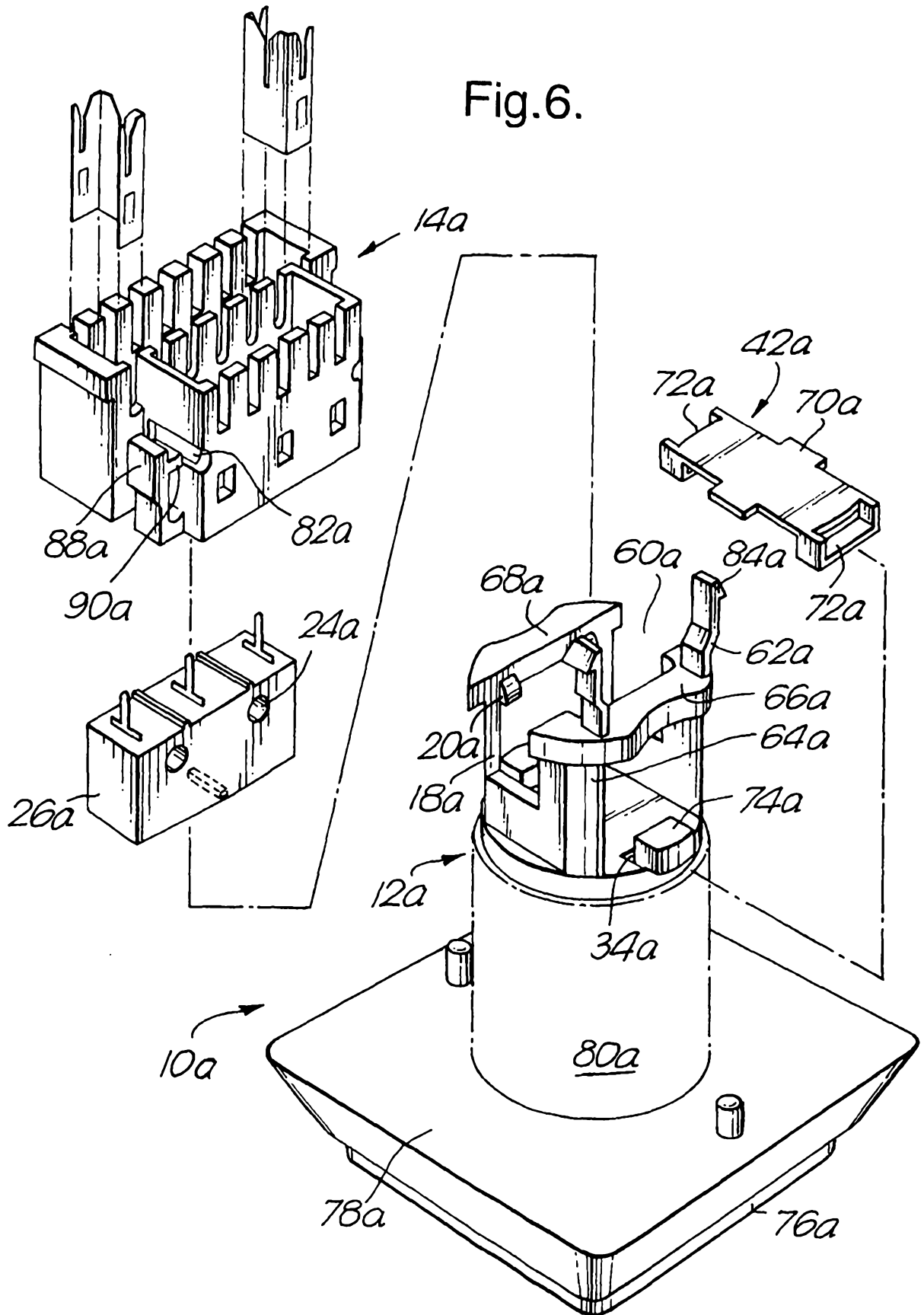


Fig.7.

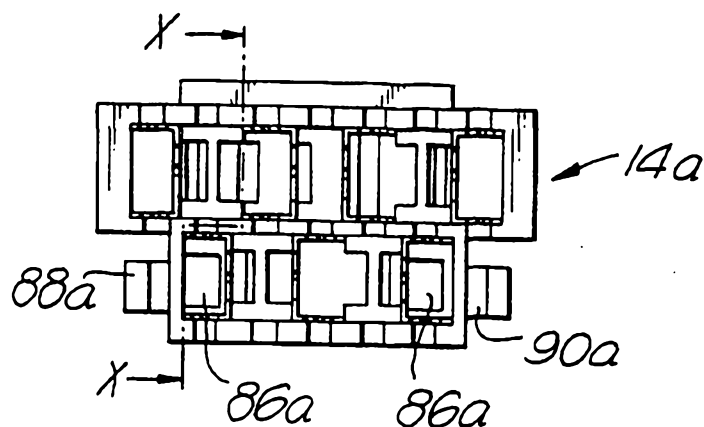


Fig.8.

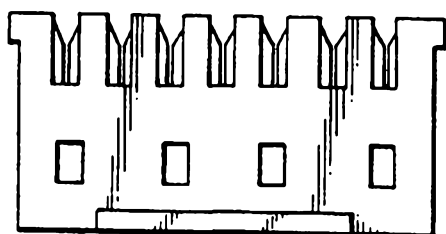


Fig.9.

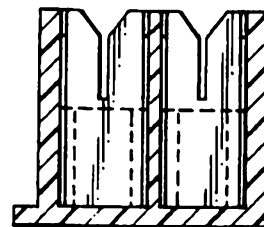
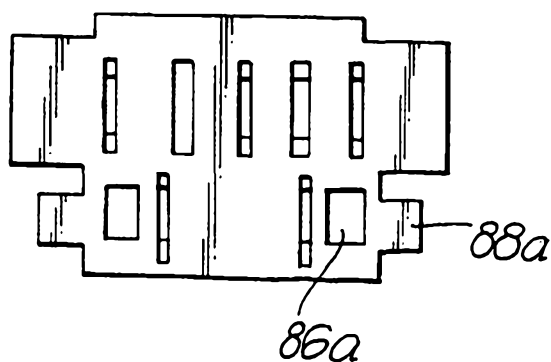


Fig.10.



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