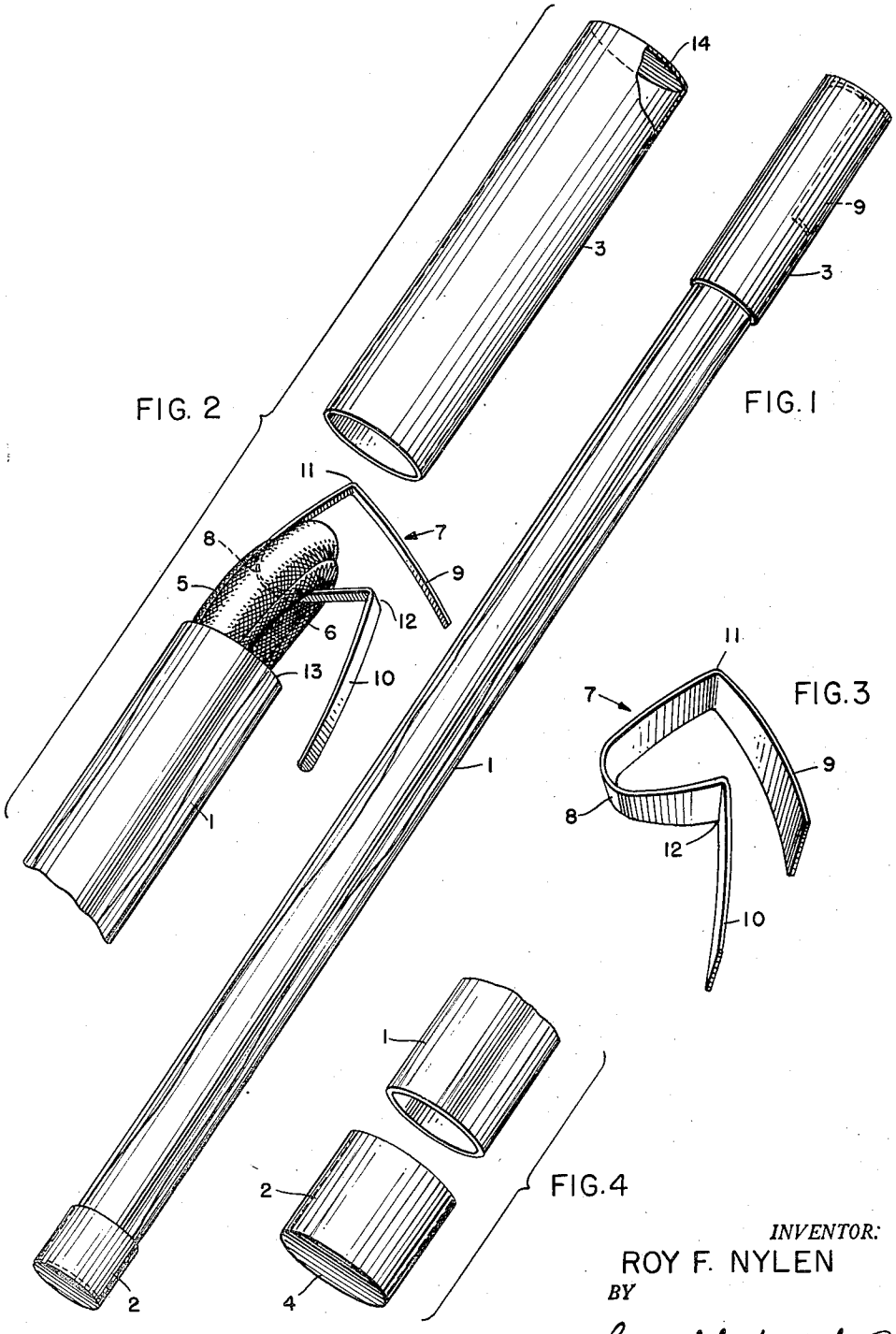
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MERCHANDISE DISPLAY CONTAINER

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MERCHANDISE DISPLAY CONTAINER

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This invention relates generally to merchandise displays and is particularly directed to a novel form of merchandise display container or package wherein fabrics and other relatively soft and pliable articles, particularly, wearing apparel, may be displayed and sold.

It has become increasingly important to display merchandise at the point of sale in containers or packages in such a way that the prospective purchaser may observe visually the product or merchandise to be purchased. For this reason, containers have been designed which contain transparent portions so that the prospective purchaser can see the merchandise on display within the container prior to making the purchase.

Pilferage problems, however, have arisen in retail outlets where the customers serve themselves and then carry their purchases to a cashier. This is particularly true in the case of retail grocery stores and chain stores which operate on a "serve yourself" basis.

The variety of merchandise available in such retail outlets has been increased to such a degree that many grocery stores carry items of wearing apparel such as women's stockings. Heretofore, such items have been packaged in relatively small paper envelopes containing a transparent portion enabling the customer to visually observe the color and texture of the merchandise. It has been found, however, in most instances that the pilferage of such merchandise has become so great that the loss occasioned by such pilferage is prohibitive. Many such stores have, therefore, discontinued the display and sale of such items as women's stockings.

The display container for merchandise, such as stockings, which forms the present invention, has been designed to make pilferage practically impossible and yet present an attractive display to the customer. It is, therefore, the principal object of the present invention to provide a merchandise display container or a package which is particularly adapted for the display of fabric merchandise, such as women's stockings, and which is pilferage proof as well as attractive.

Another object of the invention is to provide a pilferage-proof merchandise display container which comprises an elongated tubular body member closed at both ends and having at least a portion thereof transparent, the length of the tubular container being such as to be easily and quickly discovered if surreptitiously placed on or about the person.

A still further object of the invention is to provide a merchandise display container, particularly for the purpose of displaying soft and pliable merchandise, such as a fabric, which comprises an elongated tubular member having at least a portion thereof transparent and including means within the container to suspend the fabric merchandise therein so that the merchandise will appear to completely fill the container and prevent the merchandise from becoming heaped at the bottom when the container is placed on end.

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Still another object of the invention is to provide a merchandise display container for displaying fabric material, which includes an elongated tubular transparent container within which the merchandise is located and wherein a retaining member supports the merchandise or fabric at one end of the container, such retaining member being held in position by having a portion thereof held in place between the outer surface of the container and the inner surface of a tubular closure member fitting snugly over the end of the container.

Other objects and advantages of the invention will become apparent upon reading the following description taken in conjunction with the accompanying drawing in which:

Fig. 1 is a perspective view of a device embodying the present invention;

Fig. 2 is an enlarged fragmentary exploded view in perspective illustrating the closure member removed and showing a preferred form of retaining member;

Fig. 3 is a perspective view of the retaining member; and

Fig. 4 is a fragmentary enlarged exploded view of the opposite end of the container showing the bottom closure member removed.

Although the invention herein is illustrated and will be described with particular respect to the display and sale of women's stockings, it is to be understood that the structure herein may be used for the display and sale of other merchandise without departing in any way from the spirit of the invention, provided the merchandise so displayed has characteristics which make it necessary to use the retaining member to prevent it from becoming heaped in the bottom of the container.

As stated hereinabove, the present invention was conceived for the purpose of overcoming the pilferage problems which have confronted retail stores whose business is conducted in a manner where the customers serve themselves to the merchandise before carrying their purchases to a cashier. It has become necessary for many

stores of that type to discontinue the sale, particularly, of women's stockings, because it has been a simple matter for customers to select one or more of the small envelopes containing the stockings and place them in pockets, purses, shopping bags, and the like. This problem of pilferage has thus been overcome in the present invention by providing an elongated tubular member within which the merchandise is placed and which is sufficiently long that if it were to be placed under clothes on a person it could be easily detected. In the case of women's stockings, it is necessary that the merchandise be seen before buying to enable the customer to select the proper color and shade. For this reason the tubular container is made transparent at least throughout a portion of its length.

It was discovered, however, that when the container was made long enough for easy detection when placed on a person, the flimsiness of the stocking caused it to become heaped in the bottom of the container and thus detracted considerably from the appearance of the container when on display in the store. It then became necessary to devise some means for preventing the stockings from dropping downwardly to the bottom of the tube when the container was placed on end in order that the stockings would appear to completely fill the tube at all times.

Referring now more particularly to the drawing, there is illustrated a preferred embodiment of the invention whereby the disadvantages recited above have been overcome and wherein the problems have been met. The elongated tubular container is indicated by the numeral 1 and has a closure member 2 at the bottom thereof and a closure member 3 at the top. The particular manner of closing the bottom end of the tubular container is relatively unimportant since it may or may not consist of a removable member. For purposes of illustration, however, the closure member 2 at the bottom of the container consists of a relatively short tubular body portion adapted to fit snugly over the bottom end of the tube. The outer end of the closure member 2 is closed as at 4 and when assembled the closure member may be secured in place to prevent removal thereof, if so desired.

The fabric merchandise located within the container which, in this case, may be specifically referred to as a pair of stockings, is indicated by the numeral 5. In this particular instance, the stockings are placed within the tubular container in such a way as to form a loop 6 at the upper end of the container 1. The retaining member, generally indicated at 7, may be formed of a relatively narrow length of flexible material having the characteristic of being easily bent and formed and which may consist of a strip of paper, metal, cloth, or the like. This retaining member 7 is then placed beneath the loop 6 of the stockings so that a portion 8 thereof will support the stockings and suspend them within the tube.

End portions 9 and 10 are then formed on the retainer member 7 by bending the member at points 11 and 12, respectively. The fabric merchandise may then be lowered into the tubular container 1 and the end members 9 and 10 folded upon each other so that the bends 11 and 12 will be supported by the upper end 13 of the container 1. The loop 8 in the member 7 will then be positioned within the container and the two end members 9 and 10 thereof will be located outside of the container and along the outer surface thereof.

The upper closure member 3 is preferably formed of a relatively long tube closed at its upper end as at 14. This tubular closure member 3 is of such size as to fit snugly around the tubular container 1 so that when it is in place as shown in Fig. 1, the two ends 9 and 10 of the retaining member will be held securely in place between the inner surface of the closure member 3 and the outer surface of the container 1.

It is thus evident that the retaining member 7 is itself held securely in place and cannot move until the closure member 3 is removed from the container. It will also be evident that the portion of the retaining member 7 within the container will support and suspend the merchandise within the container so that when the container is placed in a vertical position for display purposes, the merchandise will be prevented from becoming heaped at the bottom of the tube.

The exact dimensions of the container are not critical except as to the length thereof which must be such as to satisfy the requirement that it cannot be concealed on a person without detection. In actual practice the container may be approximately 22 inches long, although it is possible that the requirement above mentioned might be met by providing a tube which is somewhat shorter. The main object, however, is to enable detection if the container is placed up one's sleeve, under one's coat, or an attempt is otherwise made to conceal the merchandise.

From the standpoint of merchandise appeal to the prospective customer, the stockings, or other such fabric within the container, should appear to completely fill the tube and, for this reason, the novel means for suspending the merchandise from the upper end of the container when it is in a vertical position has been provided. The transparent feature enables the prospective customer to view the merchandise and, after the purchase thereof, the customer may simply remove the tubular closure member from the upper end thereupon releasing the retaining member 7 which also serves to facilitate the removal of the merchandise from the container.

The invention is not intended to be limited to the specific form of retaining member disclosed herein, the broad object being to provide some means which will cooperate with the merchandise within the container and with the upper end thereof, whereby the merchandise may be suspended to prevent heaping thereof at the lower end of the container. For example, a metal hook rather than a flexible length of paper or metal could be used as well as an adhesive member capable of being secured to the container at the upper end thereof.

Changes may be made in the form, construction and arrangement of parts from those disclosed herein without in any way departing from the spirit of the invention or sacrificing any of the attendant advantages thereof, provided, however, that such changes fall within the scope of the claims appended hereto.

The invention is hereby claimed as follows:

1. A merchandise display comprising an elongated tubular container having at least a portion thereof transparent, a fabric enclosed within said container having a tendency to become heaped in the bottom thereof when the container is placed on end, said fabric having a loop therein adjacent one end of the container, a closure for said one end of said container and snugly engaging the sides thereof, and a retaining member from which said fabric is suspended within

the container, whereby heaping of the fabric is prevented when the container is placed on end, said retaining member comprising a strip of flexible material having a portion of the length thereof engaged through the loop in said fabric and having at least one end thereof engaged between said closure and the container, said strip end also comprising means for lifting the fabric from the container upon removal of said closure without engaging the fabric.

2. A merchandise display comprising an elongated tubular container having at least a portion thereof transparent, a stocking enclosed within said container having a tendency to become heaped in the bottom thereof when the container is placed on end, a tubular closure member for one end of said container and snugly embracing the sides thereof, and a retaining member from which said stocking is suspended within the container, a part of said retaining member being bent to define an end, said end being held between said closure member and the sides of said container, whereby heaping of the stocking is prevented when the container is placed on end, and providing means for lifting the stocking from the container upon removal of said closure member without physically contacting the stocking.

3. A merchandise display comprising an elongated tubular container having at least a portion thereof transparent, a fabric enclosed within said container having a tendency to become heaped in the bottom thereof when the container is

placed on end, a removable tubular closure member for one end of said container and snugly embracing the sides thereof, and an elongated flexible retaining member passing through a loop formed in said fabric to suspend the fabric within the container, the ends of said retaining member being placed together and held between said closure member and the outer surface of said container, whereby heaping of the fabric is prevented when the container is placed on end, said end also comprising means for lifting the fabric from the container without physically contacting the fabric.

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