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SELF-RETAINING ADJUSTABLE COVER FOR TABLES AND THE LIKE

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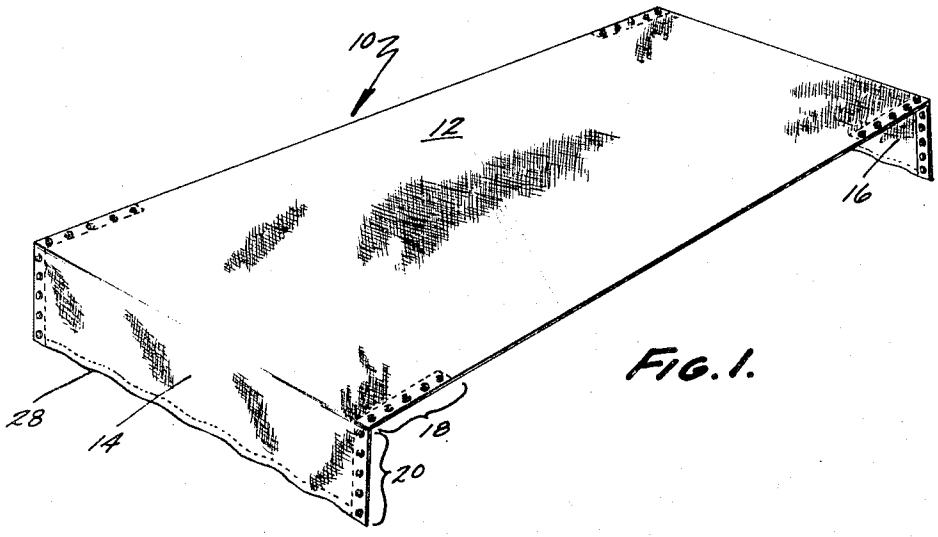


FIG. 1.

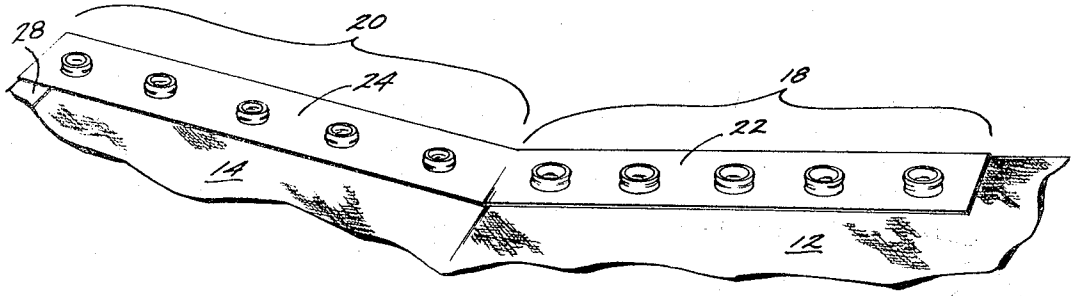


FIG. 2.

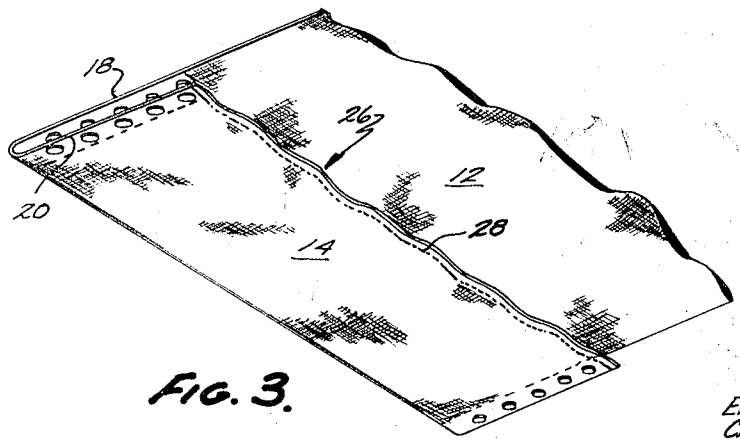


FIG. 3.

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SELF-RETAINING ADJUSTABLE COVER FOR TABLES AND THE LIKE

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This invention relates to covers for generally flat objects such as tables, benches, and the like, and more particularly to a new and unique cover for such objects which is adjustable to cover a range of different sizes, and which snugly retains itself upon the object which it covers.

As campers and picnickers have long been aware, when a meal is eaten from a picnic table in the outdoors there is frequently a very troublesome problem in keeping the tablecloth or other covering in place upon the table, since there strong and gusty breezes are usually blowing at the parks and recreational areas where picnic meals are eaten. When ordinary tablecloths are used, as is the typical situation, the wind whips the dangling edges of the tablecloth upward onto the table and, frequently, into the food that is being served and eaten atop the table. When a tablecloth is blown about in this manner, it also frequently causes glasses and other containers resting upon the table to be tipped over, thereby spilling their liquid contents and causing associated problems.

A related problem is encountered by the increasing numbers of people who have personal picnic tables in the yards and patios of their homes. Such tables are of course continuously exposed to the outdoors and to wild birds and animals, and consequently each time the table is to be used it must laboriously be cleaned, usually by washing the top of the table with a sponge or the like. This must also be done to the benches used for seating guests at the table, in order to make certain that the equipment is clean and in proper condition for usage.

It is a major object of the present invention to provide a covering apparatus for tables, benches, and the like which is self-retaining once it has been installed, and which will readily alleviate both the foregoing problems, since the fact that the covering will remain snugly in place regardless of wind and weather conditions makes it an ideal protective device which may be left in place upon private picnic tables and benches between the times when they are used. Thus, when private equipment is to be used, the protective cover may be removed and set aside, and the table and benches therebeneath will be clean and ready for immediate use.

A further important object of the present invention is to provide a covering apparatus of the foregoing nature, which further is readily adjustable to effectively vary its overall size, so that when the covering is taken to public picnicking areas it will fit all or most of the similar but differently dimensioned tables present at different recreational areas.

The foregoing major objects of the invention and the advantages provided thereby, together with numerous other objects and advantages no less a part thereof, will become increasingly apparent following a consideration of the ensuing specification and its appended claims, particularly when taken in conjunction with the accompanying illustrative drawings setting forth a preferred embodiment of the invention.

In the drawings:

FIG. 1 is an overhead, frontal perspective view of the novel covering apparatus;

FIG. 2 is an enlarged, fragmentary perspective view showing details of the underside of the device of FIG. 1; and

FIG. 3 is a fragmentary perspective view showing the underside of one end of the covering apparatus in an operative position.

Briefly stated, the novel self-retaining and adjustable cover assembly for tables and the like is made up of a sheet of material of sufficient size to cover the upper surface of a desired table or bench, and having end portions which extend somewhat beyond the corresponding ends of the table. These extending ends are foldable beneath the respective ends of the table, so that the sheet at least partially envelopes the same. The sides of the said sheet along at least some of the edges of the doubled end portions thereof are detachably connectable together, so that the doubled ends of the sheet in effect define pockets, into which project the ends of the table or bench which is to be covered.

Referring now in more detail to the drawings, the cover assembly or apparatus **10** is to be made from sheet material which is preferably a rather flexible polymeric plastic, but which may is desired be other flexible sheet material such as fabric or cloth. The sheet material includes a large covering area **12** which is of a sufficient size to cover tables or benches in a desired size range, and the end portions **14** and **16** of the sheet extend lengthwise of the covering area **12** and are foldable beneath both the covering area and the corresponding end portion of the table or the like which is to be covered, in the manner shown in FIG. 3. The end portions **14** and **16** are preferably merely continuations of the covering area **12**, but in the broader aspects of the invention, the covering area could be of a different and even inflexible material, with the end portions being flexibly secured thereto so as to operate in generally the same manner as has been set forth just above.

It is to be noted that along the two sides of the covering apparatus **10**, the edges such as **18** and **20** of the doubled or folded end portions thereof are provided with means **22** and **24**, respectively (FIG. 2), for detachably securing the edge **20** of the end portions such as **14** to the edge **18** of the covering area **12**. Such means are preferably a row of spaced metallic snaps such as are used in clothing and the like, with one of the halves of each snap being secured along the covering area while the other and matching half of each snap is secured along the edge of the end portion. While such snaps are to be preferred, it is to be noted that other feasible fastening materials are available commercially, such as for example the matching strips of the material which has come to be known as "Velcro."

Whichever fastener is actually selected, it will be noted from FIG. 3 that such fasteners are used to connect edges such as **18** and **20** securely together, and thereby form a looped retaining pocket **26** at each end of the cover assembly. Moreover, the securing means **22** and **24** should preferably be longitudinally adjustable, as is the case with the preferred snaps or Velcro material. That is to say, any of the snap halves attached to edge **18** may be connected to any of the snap halves secured to edge **20**. Consequently, the depth of the retaining pocket **26** formed by connecting these snaps together may be varied an amount corresponding to the length of the edge strips **22** and **24** which are chosen. Varying the depth of the retaining pockets naturally varies the effective length of the covering area **12**, and consequently the presence of the longitudinally adjustable form of edge-securing means makes the resulting cover assembly adjustable to fit different sizes of tables or the like.

A further aspect of the present cover assembly is that each of the end portions such as **14** has an elastic member **28** which interconnects the strips of snaps or other securing means such as **24** fastened along opposite sides

of the end portions. This elastic member is applied across the end portions so that it continuously exerts a tension force therebetween which tends to draw the two opposite sides of the end portion together. Consequently, when the end portions have been doubled back under the covering area of the cover assembly and under the edge of the table or bench being covered, and when the securing means such as **22** and **24** have been interconnected at each side of the cover assembly, the elastic tension exerted between the two sides of the cover assembly tends to tighten the cover in place upon the object being covered, so that the upper surface of the covering area tends to be wrinkle free and smoothly covered.

Having now thoroughly described the structure of a preferred embodiment of the present novel cover assembly, and having also indicated certain of its functional aspects, the use and operation of the assembly will likely already be apparent. In order to install the cover assembly, the covering area **12** is arranged over the top of the table or bench which is to be covered, and the end portions of the assembly are, one after the other, folded beneath the covering area. The snaps or other securing means **22** and **24** on each side of each end portion are then interconnected to form the pockets **26** which partially envelope each of the ends of the object being covered. The longitudinaly adjustable feature of the snaps is utilized to tighten the cover lengthwise upon the table.

When the snaps or other securing means have been interconnected, the installation of the cover assembly is completed, since once the pockets have been formed the elastic members such as **28** across the lip of each of the pockets tightens the cover assembly transversely across the width of the table or the like, and thus the cover assembly is not only adjustable for different sizes of objects, but is also self-tightening about any particular table which has been chosen, whether this happens to be longer or shorter than the nominal length of the covering area **12**, and whether the particular table happens to be narrower or wider than the nominal width of the covering area.

Once it has been installed upon a particular table or the like, it will be manifest that the present cover assembly **10** will not be disturbed in the least by the typical winds and breezes of the outdoors, nor by any other disturbing elemental influence typically found. Consequently, the cover assembly is completely trouble-free in use, and it may be left in place upon a table or bench for extended periods of time, during which it will protect the upper surfaces thereof from dirt and foreign deposits which would otherwise require that such surfaces be thoroughly cleaned before each successive use.

Having disclosed the embodiment of the invention which is presently deemed most preferable, it may be that others skilled in the pertinent arts will conceive of slightly different embodiments of the same principle and the same concept which we have conceived, or that certain variations or modifications will be made in the specific embodiment which has been set forth herein. All such embodiments, variations, and modifications which incorporate the spirit of the invention and which are clearly based upon its underlying concepts are thus to be considered as within the scope of the claims which are appended herebelow, unless these claims by their language specifically state otherwise.

We claim:

1. A self-retaining cover assembly for generally flat-topped objects such as tables, benches, and the like, comprising: a sheet of material of sufficient size to cover a desired object and having sides and ends, at least some of said ends being foldable to be doubled beneath a corresponding end of an object covered by said sheet to at least partially envelope the said end of the object; the sides of the sheet along at least one edge of the doubled end portions thereof being detachably connectable together to define a lateral edge of a pocket about the enveloped end of the object covered; and the sides of said sheet along both edges of at least one doubled end portion pocket being detachably and longitudinally adjustably connectable together, such that the depth of said pocket may be varied to change the effective length of said cover.

2. A self-retaining cover assembly for generally flat-topped objects such as tables, benches, and the like, comprising: a sheet of material of sufficient size to cover a desired object and having sides and ends, at least some of said ends being foldable to be doubled beneath a corresponding end of an object covered by said sheet to at least partially envelope the said end of the object; the sides of the sheet along at least one edge of the doubled end portions thereof being connectable together to define a lateral edge of a pocket about the enveloped end of the object covered; and the lateral edges of at least some of said pockets being interconnected by an elastic member; said member drawing said edges toward each other beneath said covered object to tighten the cover assembly thereabout.

3. The cover assembly of claim **1**, wherein the sides of the sheet along both edges of at least one doubled end portion pocket are detachably and longitudinally adjustably connectable together, such that the depth of said pocket may be varied to change the effective length of said cover; and wherein the lateral edges of at least some of said pockets are interconnected by an elastic member; said member drawing said edges toward each other beneath said covered object to tighten the cover assembly thereabout.

4. A self-retaining cover assembly for generally rectangular flat-topped objects such as tables, benches, and the like, comprising: a rectangular sheet of material of sufficient size to cover a desired object and having a pair of sides and a pair of ends, each of said ends being foldable to be doubled beneath a corresponding end of an object covered by said sheet to at least partially envelope the said end of the object; the sides of the sheet along both edges of both of the doubled end portions thereof being detachably connectable together to define lateral edges of a pocket about the enveloped end of the object covered; and the sides of said sheet along both edges of both of said doubled end portion pockets being detachably and longitudinally adjustably connectable together, such that the depth of said pocket may be varied to change the effective length of said cover.

5. The cover assembly of claim **4**, wherein the lateral edges of both of said pockets are interconnected by an elastic member; said member drawing said edges toward each other beneath said covered object to tighten the cover assembly thereabout.

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