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FURNITURE

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Fig. 1

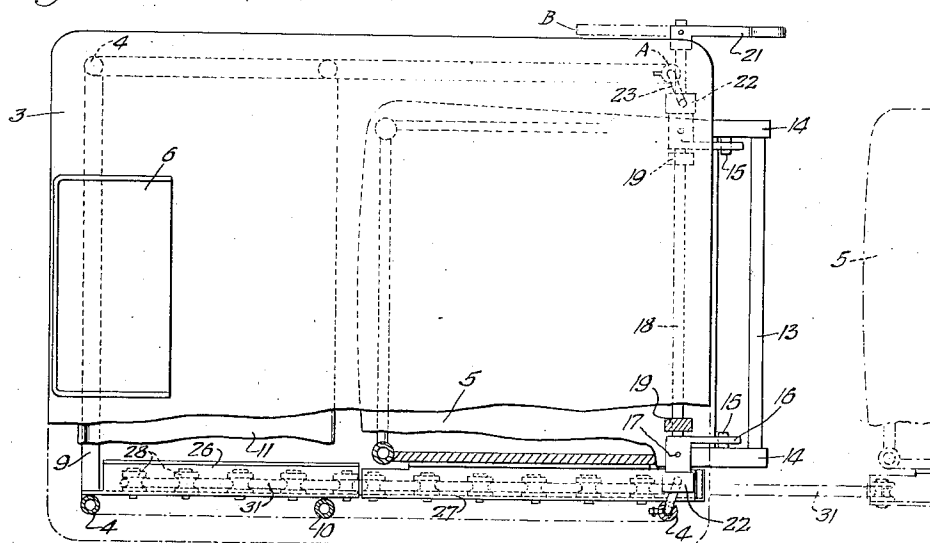


Fig. 2

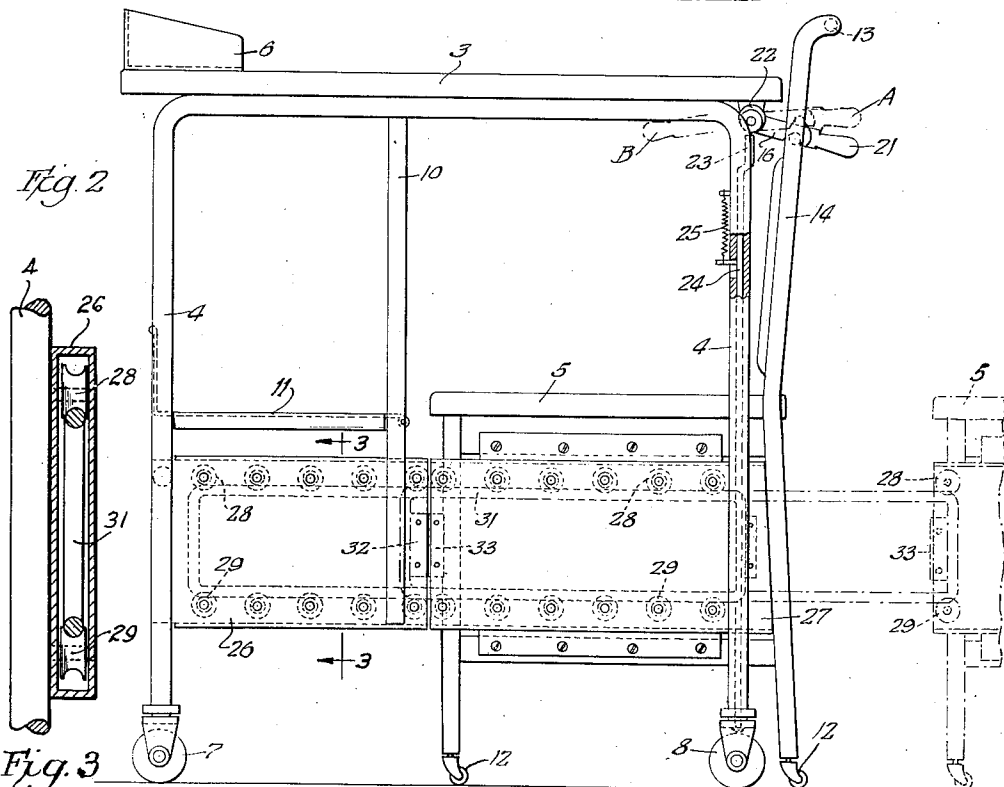


Fig. 3

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FURNITURE

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5 Claims. (Cl. 155—124)

My invention relates to furniture and more particularly to a combination article of furniture particularly suited for use in cafeterias.

Cafeterias are generally well patronized because of certain advantages which they offer over a conventional type of restaurant. For example, the elimination of delays occasioned by poor waiter service appeals to many people, whereas others enjoy seeing the food while making their selection. However, there are some objectionable features, which if overcome, would attract still more patrons to cafeterias. At present cafeterias are provided with tables seating two, four or more people. Many individuals, particularly women, when alone would prefer to have an individual table. Where a single individual appropriates a table seating two or four people considerable space is wasted. Frequently two people are seated opposite each other at a table for four, and two other people of the opposite sex may not care to sit at the same table, but may be compelled to do so, particularly during the rush hours. To them this is sufficiently objectionable as to greatly negative the other features offered by cafeteria service. Still on other occasions a group of people would like to go together to a cafeteria for their meals but they are unable to find table space because too many tables are being used to but a portion of their capacity.

Shoppers when carrying packages and parcels also feel loath to patronize cafeterias because frequently there are no facilities for checking packages and it is difficult to carry a tray and packages at the same time. Many persons do not wish to leave their packages at some table while selecting and obtaining their food; and still others do not care to check their packages and parcels even if checking facilities are available. Consequently there are factors in connection with the present system of cafeterias which deter possible patrons from patronizing cafeterias.

In accordance with my invention I propose a new system of operation utilizing a novel article of furniture whereby these deterrent factors of the present cafeterias are readily overcome. By this system and with the use of my article of furniture, each patron is assured of an individual table if he so desires, and furthermore groups of people are also assured of being able to sit together at a single table space. In accordance with my invention there is also provided a means for carrying packages while the selection of food is being made. Thus many of the factors which now may be objectionable to some individuals may be readily overcome and the table and floor space in a cafeteria will be utilized far more efficiently than heretofore so that a greater number of patrons may be accommodated in a building of the same size.

It is therefore an object of my invention to provide a new and improved method of operating cafeterias and an article of furniture which will overcome certain of the above mentioned disadvantages of the prior art.

Still another object of my invention is to provide a combination article of furniture for cafeterias whereby each patron will be assured of a seat and table space.

Other and further objects of my invention will become readily apparent by reference to the following description taken in connection with the accompanying drawing wherein:

Figure 1 is a top view of a combination article of furniture embodying my invention; and

Figure 2 is a side view of an article of furniture embodying my invention.

Figure 3 is a cross-section along the lines 3—3 of Fig. 2.

Referring more particularly to the drawing there is shown a combination article of furniture particularly suited for cafeterias comprising a table having a top 3 and legs 4, and a chair 5 connected to the table by a slideway guide mechanism. The table top 3 may be provided with a condiment receptacle 6 so that each table will have its own condiments such as sugar, salt, pepper, and meat and salad seasonings. The table top 3 is preferably of a size sufficient to extend a considerable distance beyond the legs 4 of the table so that a number of tables may be placed side by side and opposite each other to permit a group of people to dine together. For the purpose of illustration the table legs 4 have been shown as being formed of tubular material which is readily adaptable to an article of furniture of this type, although it is to be understood that any other suitable material may be utilized and that variations may be made in the materials and their construction. For example, each of the table legs is mounted upon rollers so that the table may be moved about from place to place and preferably the rollers 7 on the front of the table are swiveled wheels or casters whereas the rollers 8 at the back of the table are preferably stationary. The legs 4 may be formed so that two of the legs on each side are part of a continuous metal tube, and these two sets of legs are connected together by a tubular member 9 at the front of the table and this frame work is secured in any suitable manner to the table top 3. At a point intermediate the front and back legs of the table there are provided a pair of tubular members 10 which depend from the tubular material on the underside of the table top 3 so as to provide a portion of a supporting frame work to support the slideway guide mechanism, and a parcel rack 11. The parcel rack 11 may be supported in any suitable manner from the tubular members 10 and the legs 4 as for ex-

ample by welding supporting rods to these tubular members about which the metal shelf 11 may be crimped. The chair 5 is provided with legs which are mounted upon rollers or preferably casters 12 so as to permit ready movement of the table and chair from place to place. The chair 5 is provided with a back extending above the top of the table 3 in the form of a handle 13 which serves as a handle for the combination article of furniture whenever it is to be moved from place to place. On the inside of each of the rear upright portions 14 of the chair back there is provided a stud 15 for cooperation with a catch 16 which is suitably secured by a pin, a screw or key 17 to a shaft 18 supported from the underside of the table top 3 by brackets 19. The shaft 18 extends to the outer edge of one side of the table top 3 and adjacent its end there is connected an operating handle 21. Thus the handle 21 may be raised so as to disengage the latch member 16 from the stud 15 thereby to free the chair 5 for movement relative to the table. As soon as the chair has been moved but a short distance away from the table, the handle 21 is moved from the dotted line position A to the dotted line position B where actuation of the shaft 18 serves to apply a brake to each of the wheels 8. This is accomplished by the actuation of a pair of cam surfaces 22 which are mounted so as to engage the ends 23 of a rod 24 the lower extremity of which is provided with a suitable surface for engaging the wheel 10. Preferably the rod 24 is maintained out of engagement with the wheel 8 by suitable spring means 25 which operates to raise the rod 24 whenever the handle 21 is in the solid line position shown in Figure 2. While the rod 24, or the equivalent thereof may comprise any suitable form of brake mechanism, it would be preferable in a table of the type shown in the drawing to have the rod 24 mounted within the rear tubular table legs 4. It is preferable to provide a catch means for maintaining the chair 5 immovable with respect to the table whenever the article of furniture is to be moved from place to place. Whenever it is desired to remove or withdraw the chair from underneath the table a mechanism similar to that described is provided which may either sequentially or concomitantly operate the catch to disengage it from the chair and to apply a brake to at least two of the wheels upon which the table is mounted.

The slideway guide mechanism which interconnects the frame and legs of the table with one side of the chair may comprise any suitable telescopic slideway mechanism, one form of which is shown in the drawing. This slideway mechanism, which operates to maintain a predetermined relation between the table and the chair, comprises an enclosed compartment 26 attached to the frame of the table, and a similar compartment 27 attached to one side of the chair 5. Each of these compartments is provided with two sets of rollers 28 and 29 between which there is mounted a rectangular shape member 31 preferably made of a continuous piece of tubular material. The compartment 26 is provided with a stop 32, and the compartment 27 is provided with a stop 33 so as to engage the rectangular member 31 and to limit the distance which the chair may be withdrawn from the table. The dotted line representation to the right of the table in the drawing shows the position assumed by the member 31 when the chair has been withdrawn from the table to the maximum distance. The

particular movement of the member 31 when the chair 5 is withdrawn from the table is dependent somewhat upon the degree of friction existing between the rollers 28 and 29 of each compartment with respect to the tubular member 31. Therefore, under certain circumstances the following operation will take place. The chair 5 may be withdrawn from the table with the member 31 remaining stationary with respect to the compartment 26 until the stop 33 engages one closed end of the member 31. Thereupon, further movement of the chair away from the table will cause the remaining portion of the tubular member 31 to be withdrawn from the compartment 26 until the stop 32 engages the other closed end of the tubular member 31. Since the handle 21 has been moved to the dotted line position B it will be apparent that adequate space is provided between the front edge of the chair and the edge of the table 3 to permit the user to be seated whereupon the user may slide the chair toward the table since the table is maintained stationary by the action of the brake 24 upon the wheels 8. If it is desired to return the chair 5 to the position under the table and the conditions of friction are the same as previously assumed the reverse order of operation will take place. Thus the chair 5 will be moved forwardly until the rear end of the guide 31 engages the back of the compartment 27 attached to the chair, whereupon further movement of the chair will cause the guide 31 to be moved into the compartment 26 which is attached to the table. If, however, the conditions of friction are different there may be simultaneous movement of the rollers 28 and 29 forwardly along a portion of the guide member 31, and this guide member may also begin to move inwardly into the compartment 26. Thus the member 31 relative to each of the compartments 26 and 27 is moving to the interior of these compartments until one end or the other of the member 31 reaches the proximity of the end of one of the compartments, whereupon the final movement of one of the compartments will be relative to the now stationary member 31.

A cafeteria having articles of furniture above described and utilizing the system of operation of my invention will have a plurality of these articles of furniture arranged at a point adjacent the beginning of the cafeteria counters and steam table. Each condiment tray 6 may be provided with condiments, napkin and table silver. The chair is latched into position relative to the table so as to appear as shown in the solid line representations in the drawing. The patron, if carrying any packages, will deposit them on the parcel tray 11. The patron grasps the handle 13 which, as shown, may also be part of the chair and moves the combination chair and table down the line and makes a selection of his food. The patron selects a suitable location in the dining area provided by the cafeteria, unlatches the chair by means of the handle 21 and draws the chair a short distance from the table sufficient so that the handle 21 may be operated from the position A to the position B thereby to apply the brakes 24 to the wheels 8 and to swing the catches 16 back underneath the table so that the catches will not interfere with the patron's use of the table. The patron thereupon withdraws the chair a distance sufficient so that the patron may readily be seated upon the chair and he may then move the chair to a comfortable position relative to the table. When the patron

has completed his meal, he picks up his parcels and leaves. Thereupon bus boys move the chair underneath the table and move the article of furniture to a point where the table top is cleaned of dishes and then the article of furniture is again positioned adjacent the beginning of the cafeteria counters.

Where two or more people in a group wish to eat together each will deposit his or her packages and the like in the parcel tray or shelf and will make selection of the food by moving the article of furniture from place to place. The group of people will then select some place in the dining area where they then will arrange the tables opposite each other or adjacent each other side by side. Thus any number of individuals will be assured the privacy of table and chair space and they will not be interrupted by other patrons who may find it necessary under the old practice to be seated at the same table space. Thus in accordance with my invention numerous objectionable factors present in the prior system of operation of cafeterias are obviated thus adding considerably to the appeal of cafeterias thereby increasing the patronage and furthermore increasing the efficient use of the dining area of a cafeteria.

While the combination article of furniture arrangement shown and described is particularly suited for use in cafeterias, it of course will be apparent that such an article of furniture will find ready favor with clubs and assembly halls, particularly where the normal use of the hall requires that the floor space be not impeded by large permanent tables and chairs. Obviously, of course, such an article of furniture may be used for other purposes other than for eating, since the condiment compartment 6 may be left off of the table top 3, or it may be detachably secured thereto.

While for the purpose of illustration a particular embodiment of my invention has been shown, it of course is to be understood that modifications may be made in the structure and arrangement shown as may fall within the true spirit and scope of the appended claims.

What I claim as new and desire to secure by Letters Patent of the United States is:

1. A combination article of furniture for cafeterias comprising a table having a pair of legs provided with wheels, a pair provided with casters, a parcel shelf supported underneath the top of said table; a chair having legs provided with casters, a back for said chair extending above the top of said table to serve as a handle for said article of furniture; the seat of said chair being adapted to be positioned under said table while said article of furniture is being moved from place to place, a catch mounted on said chair and table for retaining said chair seat under said table while they are being moved about, a brake mechanism adapted to engage said table wheels when said chair is moved out from under said table and means for sequentially releasing said catch and applying said brake.

2. A combination article of furniture for cafeterias comprising a table having a top provided with a condiment receptacle, a pair of legs provided with wheels, a pair of legs provided with casters, a parcel shelf supported underneath said top; a chair having legs provided with casters, and a back extending above the top of said table to serve as a handle for said article of furni-

ture; a telescopic sliding guide mechanism supported by said table and said chair to maintain a predetermined relation between said chair and said table, the seat of said chair being adapted to be positioned under said table while said article of furniture is being moved from place to place, a catch for retaining said chair seat under said table while said article of furniture is being moved about, a brake mechanism adapted to engage said wheels when said chair is moved out from under said table, and means for releasing said catch and applying said brake.

3. A combination article of furniture for cafeterias comprising a table having a top, legs provided with wheels and casters, and a parcel shelf supported underneath said top; a chair provided with casters; a slide guide mechanism connected to said table and said chair to maintain a predetermined relation therebetween when said chair is moved relative to said table; and a brake and catch mechanism mounted on said table, said catch engaging means on said chair when the seat of said chair is positioned underneath and the back of the chair is against said table, said brake being applied to the wheels of said table when said chair is withdrawn from said table.

4. A combination article of furniture for cafeterias comprising a table and a chair adapted to be moved from place to place as a unit, said table having a top, legs provided with wheels and casters, and a brake for immobilizing said table; a chair provided with casters to permit movement with said table from place to place and also relative thereto, said chair having a back extending above the top of said table to serve as a handle for moving said article of furniture about from place to place; means interconnecting said chair and said table for retaining said chair seat under said table while said furniture is being moved about, means for concomitantly operating said interconnecting means and said brake means, and a horizontal slide guide mechanism interconnecting said table and said chair to limit the movement therebetween and to maintain a predetermined relation between said table and said chair when said chair is moved relative to said table.

5. A combination article of furniture for cafeterias comprising a table having a top, legs provided with wheels or casters, a wheel braking means for immobilizing said table; a chair provided with casters to permit movement with said table from place to place when the seat thereof is beneath said table top and to permit horizontal movement relative to said table when it is immobilized, said chair having a back extending above the top of said table to serve as a handle to move said article of furniture when said chair seat is beneath said table top; a single slide guide mechanism connected to one side of said chair and to one side of said table to maintain a predetermined relation therebetween and to permit only limited horizontal movement therebetween, catch means interconnecting said chair and said table for retaining the back of said chair against said table while said furniture is being moved about, and means for actuating said wheel braking means to immobilize said table and for releasing said catch when said chair is to be moved away from said table.

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