



GB 2292584A

(12) UK Patent Application (19) GB (11) 2 292 584 (13) A

(43) Date of A Publication 28.02.1996

(21) Application No 9416942.2

(22) Date of Filing 22.08.1994

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(51) INT CL⁶
E05C 19/14

(52) UK CL (Edition O)
E2A ACHB A101 A105 A114 A162 A195 A408 A504
U1S S1801

(56) Documents Cited
GB 2226848 A EP 0513854 A2

(58) Field of Search
UK CL (Edition M) **E2A AARB ACHB**
INT CL⁵ **E05C 3/12 3/14 3/16 3/22 3/30 19/12 19/14**
ONLINE DATABASES: WPI

(54) Fastener for a large plastic suitcase

(57) A fastener has a retaining member 2 secured to the cover of a suitcase and a fastening assembly which includes a hollow base block 31 having a pivoting swing member 32 biased by spring 325. A clasp member 33 biased by spring 335 is pivoted to the swing member 32 and has a hook element 331 and an engagement element 332. The swing member 32 and the clasp member 33 can be moved to a folded position where the hook element 331 engages the retaining member 2. A latch member 34 biased by spring 342 and fulcrumed inside the base block 31 has a latch portion 343 for engaging the engagement element 332. The latch portion 343 can be released by depressing press plate 35 so as to permit engagement element 332 and the swing member 32 to be biased, by springs 325, 335, away from the base block 31. A locking device (336, Fig 3), operated by a key, prevents removal of the clasp member 33.

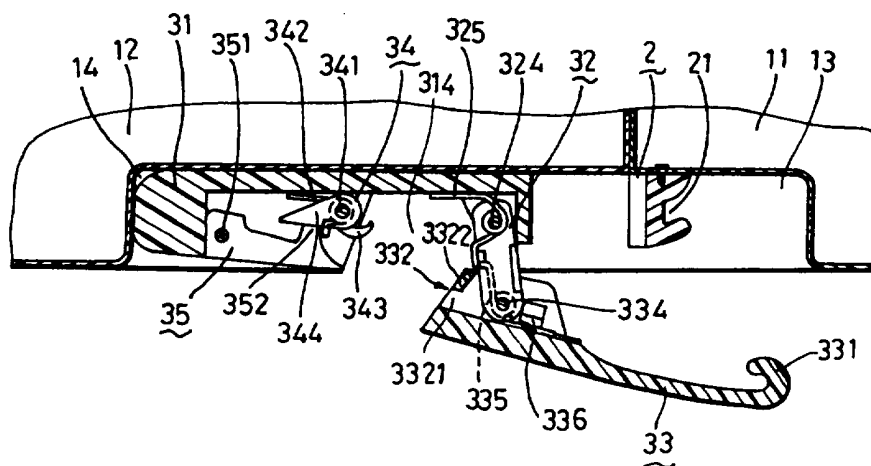


FIG.4

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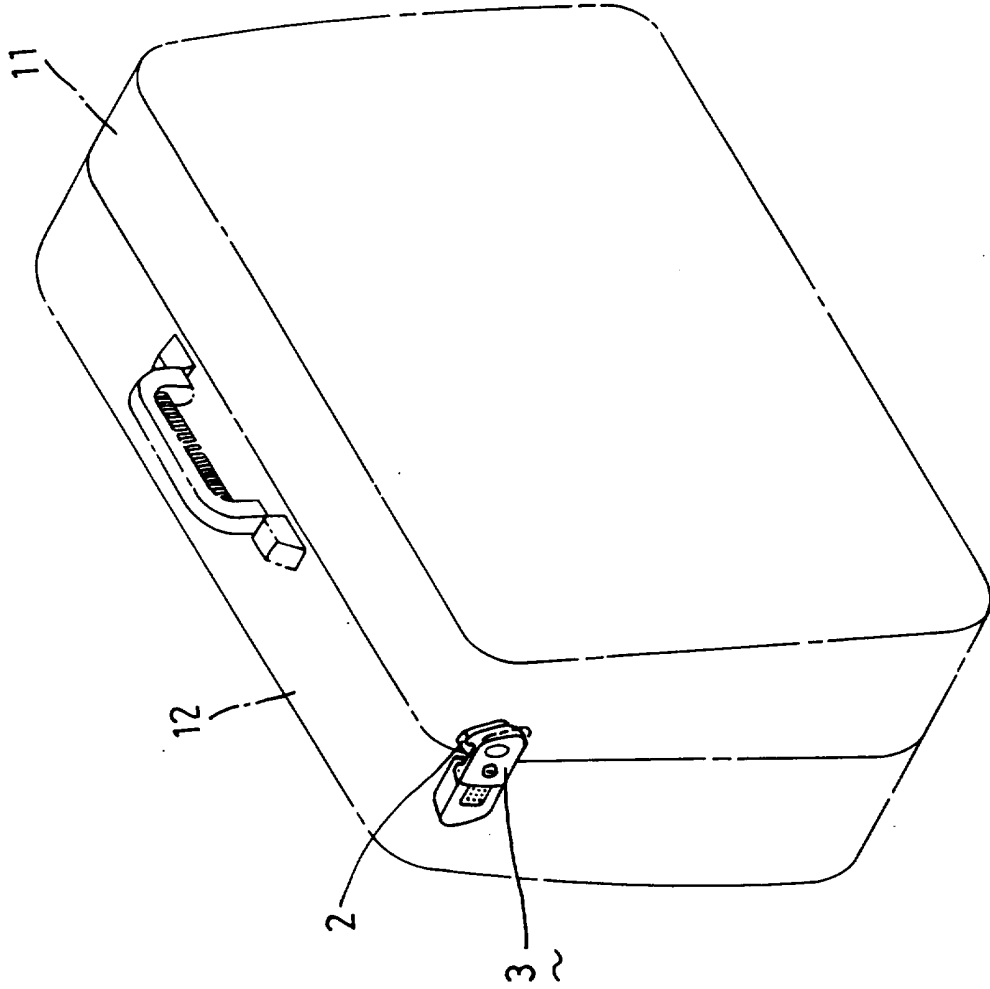


FIG. 2

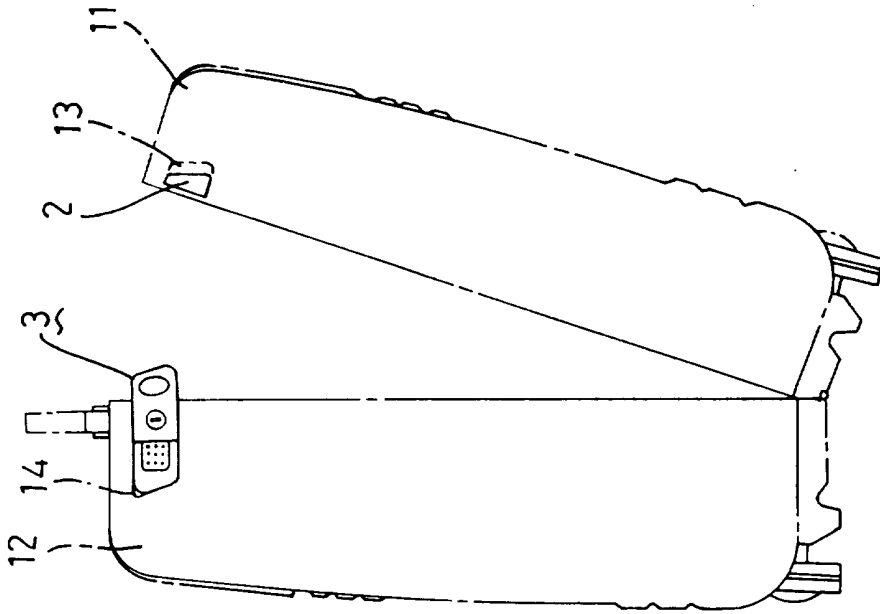


FIG. 1

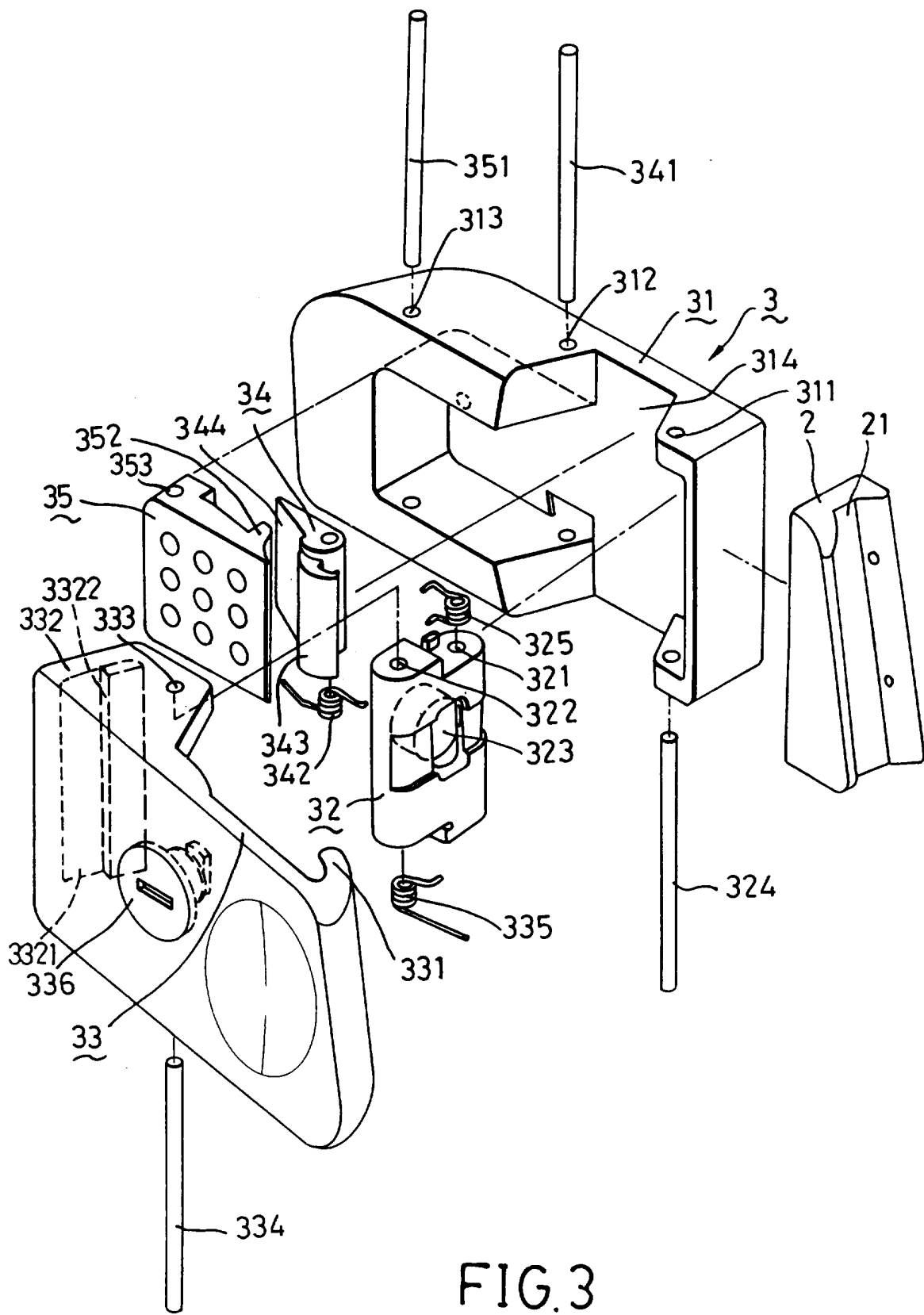


FIG. 3

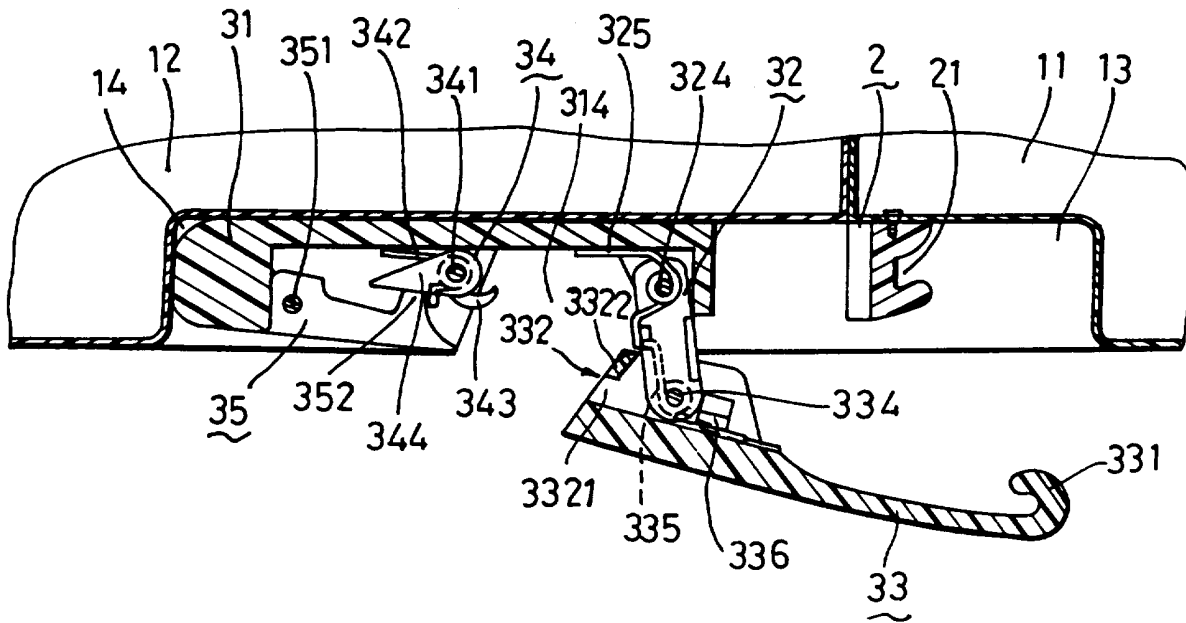


FIG.4

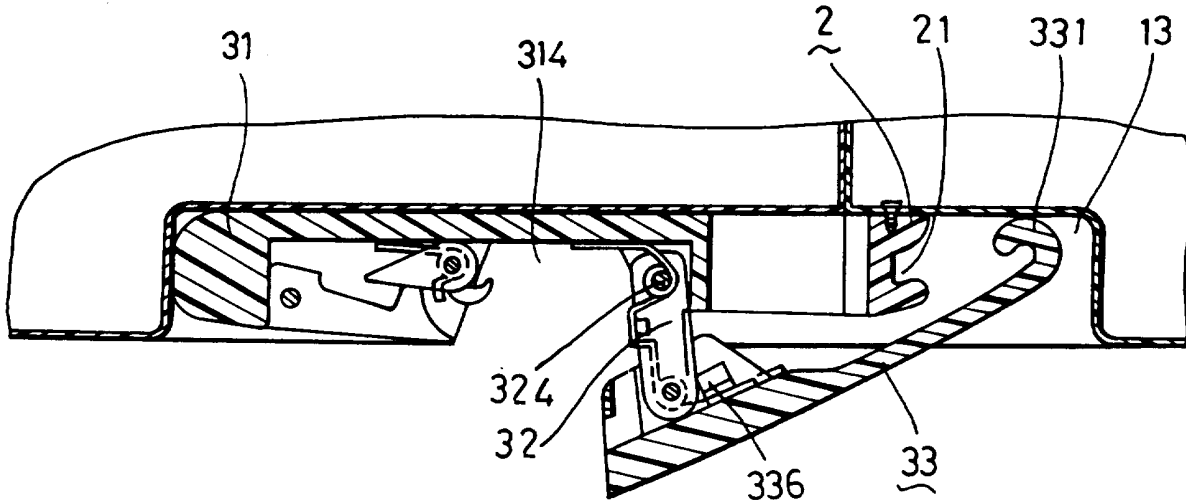


FIG. 5

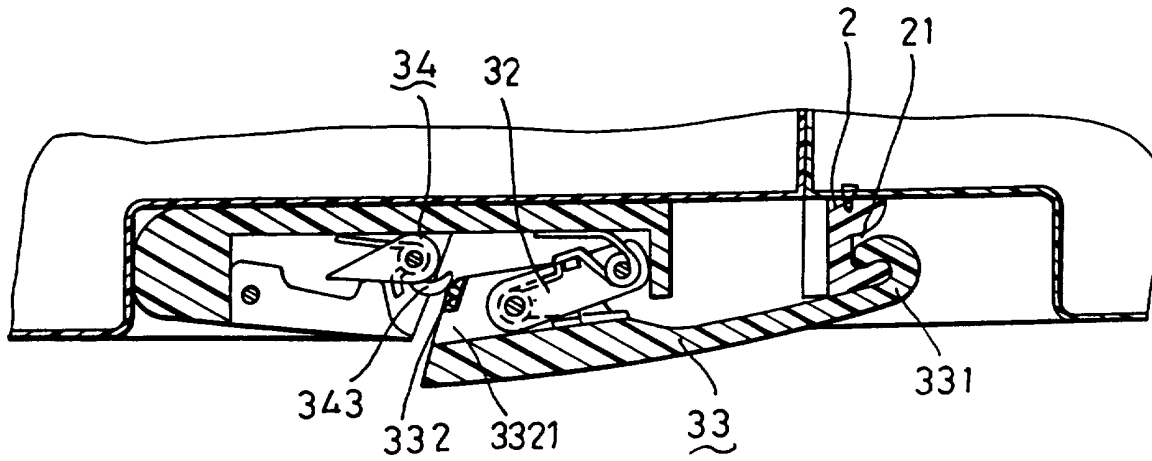


FIG. 6

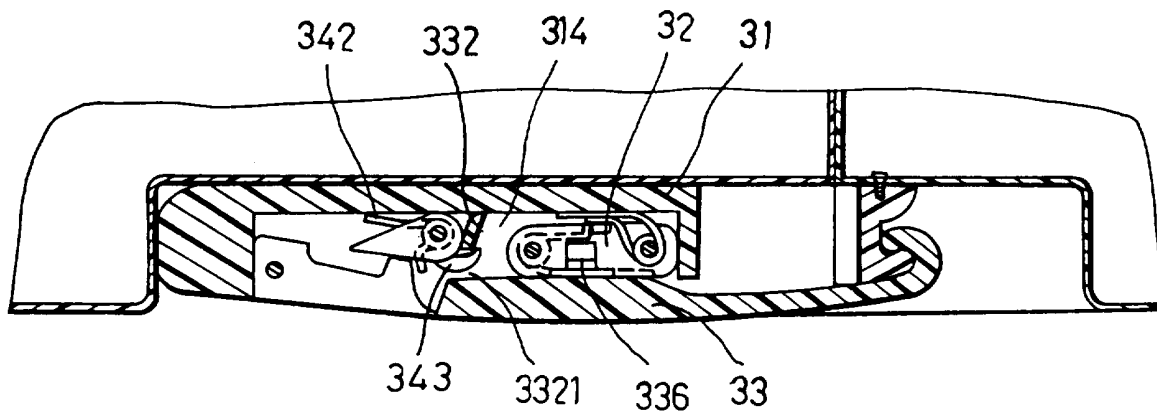


FIG. 7

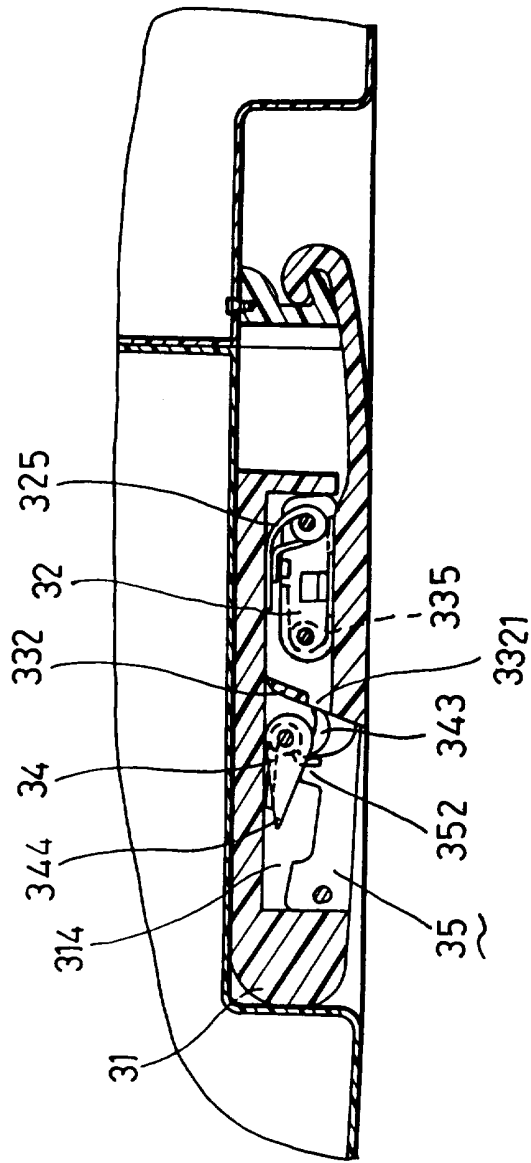


FIG. 8

FASTENER FOR A SUITCASE

This invention relates to a fastener for a suitcase, more particularly to a suitcase fastener which has an improved construction that can facilitate the operation of the suitcase fastener for closing the suitcase.

The improvement of this invention is directed to a conventional suitcase fastener. Owing to the increasing popularity of traveling abroad, different suitcases are demanded according to the different needs of the travelers. Therefore, suitcase manufacturers have developed many new techniques to manufacture suitcases. For instance, through the use of an injection molding method, large-size suitcases can be manufactured at a relatively low manufacturing cost. Because the large-size suitcases are presently formed integrally from a plastic material by means of the injection molding method, the suitcase fastener has to be redesigned to facilitate the operation of the same by a user so as to match the application of the large-size suitcase.

Therefore, the main objective of this invention is to provide a suitcase fastener which has an improved construction that can facilitate the operation of the suitcase fastener for closing the suitcase.

According to this invention, a fastener for a suitcase includes a retaining member and a fastening assembly. The suitcase has a cover and a case which is formed with a peripheral wall. The retaining member is adapted to be mounted securely on the cover. The fastening assembly is adapted to be mounted on the peripheral wall of the case to engage the retaining member for holding the case and the cover together. The fastening assembly includes a base block, a first swing member, first biasing means, a clasp member, second biasing means, a second swing member, third biasing means, and a press plate.

The base block is fixed on the peripheral wall of the case and has a first end portion adjacent to the retaining member, a second end portion opposite to the first end portion, and a receiving space defined between the first and second end portions.

The first swing member has a first end portion mounted pivotally on the first end portion of the base block, and a second end portion opposite to the first end portion of the first swing member.

The first biasing means is capable of biasing the first swing member to move the second end portion of the first swing member away from the receiving space of the base block.

The clasp member has a hook element formed on one end portion thereof, and an engagement element formed on the other end portion thereof. The clasp member is mounted pivotally on the second end portion of the first swing element adjacent to the engagement element.

The second biasing means is capable of biasing the clasp member to an unfolded position relative to the first swing member when the second end portion of the first swing member is biased away from the receiving space of the base block.

The first swing member and the clasp member are operable to be moved against the first and second biasing means to a folded position of the swing member and the clasp member in which the hook element of the clasp member is depressed to engage the retaining member, and in which the second end portion of the first swing member and the engagement element of the clasp member are depressed into the receiving space of the base block.

The second swing member is fulcrumed at a location inside the receiving space of the base block between the first and second end portions of the base block. The second swing member has a beak portion extending toward the first end portion of the base block, and a tail portion extending toward the second end portion of the base block. The second swing member is turnable

between a first position, in which the beak portion engages the engagement element of the clasp member when the engagement element is moved inward of the receiving space, and a second position in which the tail portion is depressed to release the beak portion from the engagement element, thereby permitting the first swing member to be biased away from the receiving space and thereby disengaging the hook element from the retaining member.

10 The third biasing means is capable of biasing the second swing member to the first position.

 The press plate is mounted pivotally on the second end portion of the base block and is operable to depress the tail portion.

15 Other features and advantages of this invention will become apparent in the following detailed description of a preferred embodiment of this invention, with reference to the accompanying drawings, in which:

20 Fig. 1 is an elevational side view showing a preferred embodiment of a fastener of this invention when mounted to a suitcase;

 Fig. 2 is a perspective view showing the preferred embodiment of this invention when the fastener is operated to a locked position for closing the suitcase;

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Fig. 3 is an exploded view showing the preferred embodiment of this invention;

Fig. 4 is a sectional view illustrating the preferred embodiment of this invention when the fastener is at an unlocked position;

Fig. 5 is a sectional view illustrating the first step of operating the fastener to the locked position for closing the suitcase in accordance with this invention;

Fig. 6 is a sectional view illustrating the second step of operating the fastener to the locked position for closing the suitcase in accordance with the invention;

Fig. 7 is a sectional view illustrating the locked position of the fastener according to this invention; and

Fig. 8 is a sectional view illustrating how the fastener is operated to the unlocked position so as to open the suitcase in accordance with this invention.

Referring to Fig. 2, the preferred embodiment of a fastener of this invention is to be applied on a suitcase for closing the same. The suitcase includes a cover 11 and a case 12 which is formed with a peripheral wall.

Referring to Fig. 1, the cover 11 has a recess 13 formed in an outer surface thereof. The case 12 has a recess 14 formed in the peripheral wall thereof. The

fastener includes a retaining member 2 which is mounted securely in the recess 13 of the cover 11, and a fastening assembly 3 which is mounted operably in the recess 14 of the case 12 and which is capable of engaging the retaining member 2 for holding the cover 11 and the case 12 together (see Fig. 2).

Referring to Figs. 3 and 4, the retaining member 2 has a retaining space 21 confined therein. The fastening assembly 3 includes a base block 31 which is fixed within the recess 14 of the case 12 (see Fig. 4). The base block 31 has a first end portion which is located at a position adjacent to the retaining member 2 and which is formed with a pair of aligned first pivot holes 311, as shown in Fig. 3, a second end portion which is located at a position opposite to the first end portion and which is formed with a pair of aligned third pivot holes 313, a receiving space 314 defined between the first and second end portions, and a pair of aligned second pivot holes 312 formed through two opposite side walls of the base block 31 between the first and second end portions.

A first swing member 32 has a first end portion with a first pivot hole 321 formed therethrough and aligned with the first pivot holes 311 of the base block 31, a second end portion with a second pivot hole 322 formed therethrough, and a lock hole 323 formed in a central portion of a side surface of the

first swing member 32. The first end portion of the first swing member 32 is mounted pivotally on the first end portion of the base block 31 by means of a pivot rod 324 which extends through the first pivot hole 321 of the first swing member 32 so as to be mounted pivotally to the first pivot holes 311 of the base block 31.

A first biasing means includes a first torsion spring 325 which is sleeved tightly on the pivot rod 324, as shown in Fig. 4, for biasing the first swing member 32 to move the second end portion of the first swing member 32 away from the receiving space 314 of the base block 31.

Referring again to Fig. 3, a clasp member 33 has a hook element 331 formed on one end portion thereof, and an engagement element 332 formed on the other end portion thereof. The engagement element 332 includes an engagement hole 3321 and a reinforcing plate 3322. The clasp member 33 further has a pair of aligned pivot holes 333 (only one is shown) formed in two opposite side walls thereof adjacent to the engagement element 332. The pivot holes 333 of the clasp member 33 are aligned with the second pivot hole 322 of the first swing member 32 so that the clasp member 33 can be mounted pivotally on the second end portion of the first swing element 32 by means of a pivot rod 334

which extends through the second pivot hole 322 of the first swing member 32 so as to be mounted pivotally to the pivot holes 333 of the clasp member 33.

5 A second biasing means includes a second torsion spring 335 which is sleeved tightly on the pivot rod 334, as shown in Fig. 4, for biasing the clasp member 33 to an unfolded position relative to the first swing member 32 when the second end portion of the first swing member 32 is biased away from the receiving
10 space 314 of the base block 31.

The first swing member 32 and the clasp member 33 are operable to be moved against the first and second torsion springs 325, 335 to their folded position, as shown in Fig. 6, in which the hook element 331 of the
15 clasp member 33 is depressed to engage the retaining space 21 of the retaining member 2, and in which the second end portion of the first swing member 32 and the engagement element 332 of the clasp member 33 are depressed into the receiving space 314 of the base
20 block 31.

Referring again to Fig. 3, a second swing member 34 is fulcrumed at a location inside the receiving space 314 of the base block 31 between the first and second end portions of the base block 31 by means of a
25 pivot rod 341 which extends through the second swing member 34 so as to be mounted pivotally to the second pivot holes 312 of the base block 31. The second swing

member 34 has a beak portion 343 which extends toward the first end portion of the base block 31, and a tail portion 344 which extends toward the second end portion of the base block 31. The second swing member 34 is turnable between a first position, as shown in Fig. 7, in which the beak portion 343 engages the engagement hole 3321 of the engagement element 332 of the clasp member 33 when the engagement element 332 is moved inward of the receiving space 314 of the base block 31, and a second position, as shown in Fig. 8, in which the tail portion 344 is depressed to release the beak portion 343 from the engagement hole 3321 of the engagement element 332, thereby permitting the first swing member 32 to be biased away from the receiving space 314 of the base block 31, as shown in Fig. 5, and thereby disengaging the hook element 331 of the clasp member 33 from the retaining space 21 of the retaining member 2.

A third biasing means includes a third torsion spring 342, as shown in Fig. 3, which is sleeved tightly on the pivot rod 341 for biasing the second swing member 34 to the first position in a known manner so that the beak portion 343 is engageable with the engagement hole 3321 of the engagement element 332 of the clasp member 33, as shown in Fig. 7.

Referring again to Fig. 3, a key-operated lock device 336 is mounted operably on a central portion of the clasp member 33 and can be inserted into the lock hole 323 of the first swing member 32. When the first swing member 32 and the clasp member 33 are at the folded position, as shown in Fig. 7, the key-operated lock device 336 can be operated in a known manner to prevent removal of the clasp member 33 from the first swing member 32, thereby preventing the first swing member 32 and the clasp member 33 from being biased to the unfolded position so as to lock the fastener.

A press plate 35, as shown in Fig. 3, is mounted pivotally on the second end portion of the base block 31 by means of a pivot rod 351 which extends through a pivot hole 353 of the press plate 35 so as to be mounted pivotally to the third pivot holes 313 of the base block 31. The press plate 35 has a protrusion 352 which lies on the tail portion 344 of the second swing member 34, as shown in Fig. 8, so that the press plate 35 is operable to depress the tail portion 344 of the second swing member 34.

Accordingly, when the key-operated lock device 336 is operated to an unlocked position, the tail portion 344 of the second swing member 34 can be depressed by depressing the press plate 35 so as to release the beak portion 343 of the second swing member 34 from the engagement hole 3321 of the engagement

element 332, as shown in Fig. 8. At this same time,
the second end portion of the first swing member 32 and
the engagement element 332 of the clasp member 33 can
be biased away from the receiving space 314 of the base
5 block 31, as shown in Fig. 6. In this way, the hook
element 331 of the clasp member 33 can be disengaged
from the retaining space 21 of the retaining member 2,
as shown in Fig. 5, thereby unlocking the fastener and
enabling the cover 11 to be removed from the case 12,
10 as shown in Fig. 1.

According to the above described operating manner,
the fastener provides a distinct construction which can
facilitate the operation of the fastener since the
clasp member 33 needs only to be depressed to lock the
15 fastener and since the press plate 35 needs only to be
depressed to unlock the fastener.

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I CLAIM:

1. A fastener for a suitcase, said suitcase having a cover and a case which is formed with a peripheral wall, said fastener comprising a retaining member
5 which is adapted to be mounted securely on said cover, and a fastening assembly which is adapted to be mounted on said peripheral wall of said case to engage said retaining member for holding said case and said cover together, said fastening assembly including:

10 a base block fixed on said peripheral wall of said case, said base block having a first end portion adjacent to said retaining member, a second end portion opposite to said first end portion, and a receiving space defined between said first and second
15 end portions;

a first swing member having a first end portion mounted pivotally on said first end portion of said base block, and a second end portion opposite to said first end portion of said first swing member;

20 first biasing means for biasing said first swing member to move said second end portion of said first swing member away from said receiving space of said base block;

a clasp member having a hook element formed on one
25 end portion thereof, and an engagement element formed on the other end portion thereof, said clasp member

being mounted pivotally on said second end portion of said first swing element adjacent to said engagement element;

5 second biasing means for biasing said clasp member to an unfolded position relative to said first swing member when said second end portion of said first swing member is biased away from said receiving space of said base block;

10 said first swing member and said clasp member being operable to be moved against said first and second biasing means to a folded position of said swing member and said clasp member in which said hook element of said clasp member is depressed to engage said retaining member, and in which said second end portion
15 of said first swing member and said engagement element of said clasp member are depressed into said receiving space of said base block;

20 a second swing member fulcrumed at a location inside said receiving space of said base block between said first and second end portions of said base block, said second swing member having a beak portion extending toward said first end portion of said base block, and a tail portion extending toward said second end portion of said base block, said second swing
25 member being turnable between a first position, in which said beak portion engages said engagement element

of said clasp member when said engagement element is moved inward of said receiving space, and a second position in which said tail portion is depressed to release said beak portion from said engagement element, thereby permitting said first swing member to be biased away from said receiving space and thereby disengaging said hook element from said retaining member;

third biasing means for biasing said second swing member to said first position; and

a press plate mounted pivotally on said second end portion of said base block and operable to depress said tail portion.

2. A fastener substantially as hereinbefore described with reference to and as illustrated in Figures 1 to 8 of the accompanying drawings.

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Relevant Technical Fields

- (i) UK Cl (Ed.M) E2A (AARB, ACHB)
(ii) Int Cl (Ed.5) E05C 3/12, 3/14, 3/16, 3/22, 3/30, 19/12, 19/14

Databases (see below)

(i) UK Patent Office collections of GB, EP, WO and US patent specifications.

(ii) ONLINE DATABASES : WPI

Search Examiner
MIKE McKINNEY

Date of completion of Search
20 OCTOBER 1994

Documents considered relevant following a search in respect of Claims :-
1 AND 2

Categories of documents

- X:** Document indicating lack of novelty or of inventive step. **P:** Document published on or after the declared priority date but before the filing date of the present application.
Y: Document indicating lack of inventive step if combined with one or more other documents of the same category. **E:** Patent document published on or after, but with priority date earlier than, the filing date of the present application.
A: Document indicating technological background and/or state of the art. **&:** Member of the same patent family; corresponding document.

Category	Identity of document and relevant passages	Relevant to claim(s)
A	GB 2226848 A (JY-CHANG JIANG)	
A	EP 0513854 A2 (SAMSONITE)	

Databases:The UK Patent Office database comprises classified collections of GB, EP, WO and US patent specifications as outlined periodically in the Official Journal (Patents). The on-line databases considered for search are also listed periodically in the Official Journal (Patents).