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(54) **Cover element for containers such as cans and the like**

(57) A cover element for containers which comprise a hollow body (10) closed by a lid (12), consisting of a profiled body (2) the plan shape of which encloses that of at least one container (1), and intended to be fitted in

the manner of a hood onto the top of said at least one container, where it provides an article-carrying compartment (33) above the container lid and a peripheral member in correspondence with the upper terminal part of the container body for its engagement therewith.

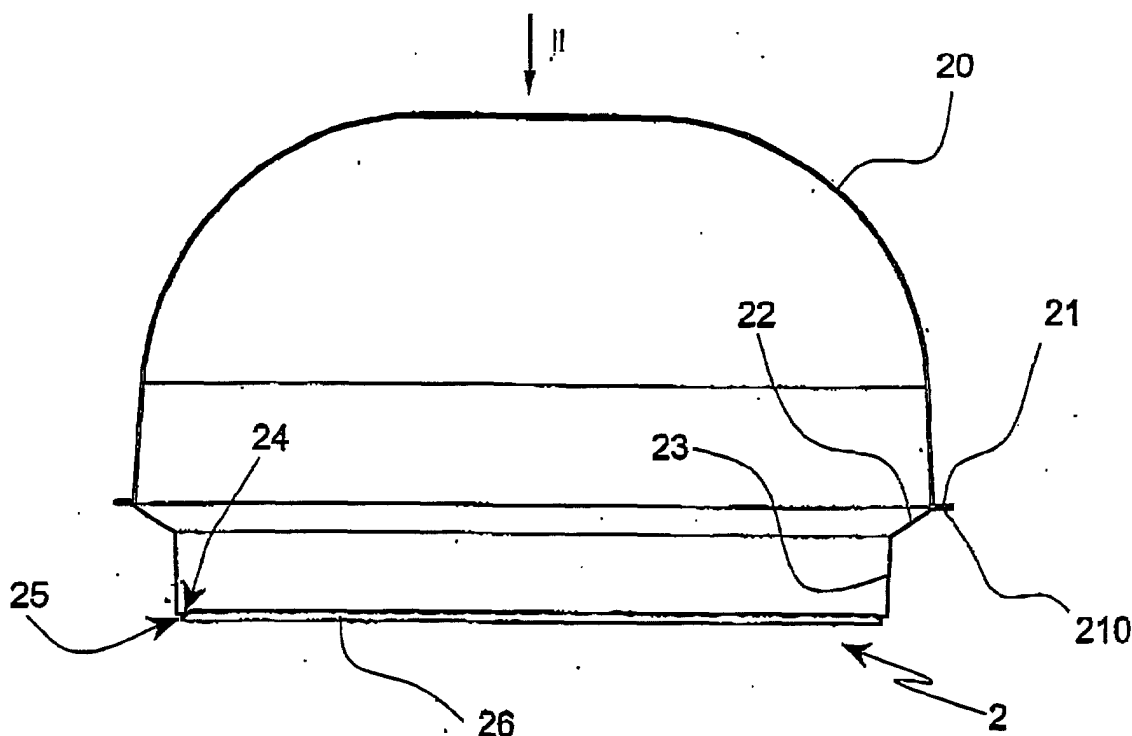


FIG.1

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Description

[0001] The present invention relates to an element for covering the upper part of at least one article, typically a container for food or non-food substances. Express reference will hereinafter be made to cans, i.e. containers comprising a generally cylindrical hollow body of tinplate with a lid seam-joined to its mouth, however the description is also valid for similar containers of cardboard, plastic or glass, with a snap-fitted, screw-fitted or tear-off lid.

[0002] An object of the invention is to provide a cover element enabling publicity or other material to be associated with the can, such as leaflets containing information regarding the van contents, or a substance or element to use generally together with said contents, and/or any type of gift.

[0003] A further object is to provide a cover element structured in such a manner as to oppose the unauthorized removal of the article, gift or the like associated with the can or the like.

[0004] Another object of the invention is to provide a cover element able to protect the top of the can against soiling and/or contamination.

[0005] Another object is to provide an element able to be quickly and easily associated with the can.

[0006] A further object is to provide a cover element which can be constructed easily, rapidly and comfortably at low cost.

[0007] Said objects are attained by virtue of the characterising elements indicated in the claims.

[0008] In a totally general sense, the element in question is formed from a generally thin synthetic sheet which is subjected to thermoforming to obtain a profiled body the plan shape of which encloses that of at least one can.

[0009] Specifically, it has the shape of a cap intended to be fitted in the manner of a hood onto the top of the can, where it provides an article-carrying compartment above the can lid and a peripheral member in correspondence with the upper terminal part of the can body for its engagement therewith.

[0010] The characteristics and the constructional merits of the invention will be apparent from the ensuing detailed description given with reference to the figures of the accompanying drawings, in which:

Figure 1 is the section I-I of Figure 2.

Figure 2 is the view obtained in the direction II of Figure 1.

Figure 3 is a perspective view from above showing a can with which an element of the invention is associated.

Figure 4 is a part of the section IV-IV of Figure 3, on an enlarged scale. Said figures, and in particular Figure 3, show a can of tinplate, indicated overall by 1, and a cover element indicated overall by 2.

[0011] The can 1 comprises a cylindrical body 10, with a base and lid, indicated respectively by 11 and 12, seam-joined to its lower and upper openings. Said element 2 is associated with the top of the can 1 and is generally in the form of a cap of circular plan, the diameter of which is slightly greater than that of the can 1.

[0012] Said element 2 consists of a profiled body obtained by thermoforming starting from a generally thin sheet of a generally rigid flexible synthetic material.

[0013] Said starting sheet can be of any constituent synthetic material provided it is suitable for thermoforming.

[0014] Said starting sheet is preferably transparent and can have any thickness suitable for the purpose, for example 0.15-2.50 mm.

[0015] The element 2 is shaped overall as an inverted bowl with a re-entering edge (see Figures 1 and 3), able to act as a hood for the upper part of the can 1.

[0016] Said bowl, or hood, is obtained by superposing and joining together two thermoformed pieces, namely a concave upper piece and an annular lower piece.

[0017] Said joint is made by a suitable method, such as electric bonding, gluing, etc.

[0018] Said upper concave piece of said hood consists of a circular based dome (Figures 2 and 3) having a diameter greater than that of the can 1 and presenting a projecting ledge 21 along its entire periphery.

[0019] The lower annular piece of the said hood comprises a frusto-conical band 22 presenting at its top a projecting ledge 210 along its entire periphery., and below that a descending cylindrical skirt 23.

[0020] The ledge 210 is exactly superposable on the ledge 21, the two being joined together as already stated.

[0021] As can be seen in Figure 4, the inner diameter of the skirt 23 is greater than the outer diameter of the seam-joined edge of the lid 12 of the can 1. From the lower edge of the skirt 23 there extends along the entire periphery a re-entering ledge 24 from which there extends a descending collar 25 having an inner diameter just less than the outer diameter of the seam-joined edge of the lid 12 of the can 1.

[0022] Finally, from the lower edge of said collar 25 there branches a re-entering lip 26 which is inclined upwards where with its free end it extends beyond the upper face of the ledge 24.

[0023] In the illustrated example the lip 26 has an inclination of about 45°, has a pointed free edge, and extends along the entire circumference of the collar 25.

[0024] Finally, the inner circumferential tip of said pointed edge forms an opening, the diameter of which is of the same order of magnitude as the outer diameter of the body 10 of the can 1.

[0025] To associate the element 2 with the can 1 the element 2 is firstly placed on the can 1 via the lip 26, and then thrust downwards in a direction generally parallel to the longitudinal axis of the can 1.

[0026] By virtue of said thrust the lip 26 bends elasti-

cally upwards against the collar 25, which in its turn widens elastically together with the adjacent parts of the element 2. When the free end of the lip 26 has passed beyond the seam-joined edge of the lid 12, the previously deformed elements again assume their undeformed starting shape, see Figure 4, with the lip 26 snapping inwards to rest against the body 10 of the can 1, immediately below the seam-joined edge of the lid 12.

[0027] The element 2 is removed in the reverse manner, i.e. by pulling the element 2 upwards while holding the can 1.

[0028] According to the invention, once the element 2 and the can 1 have been mutually engaged as stated, an article-carrying compartment, indicated by 33 in Figure 4, which is advantageously separated from the atmosphere, is made available above the lid 12.

[0029] Consequently prior to said engagement, at least one article, for example publicity material, leaflets containing information on the contents of the tin 1, substances or elements to be used either in combination with said contents or not, and/or also a gift, can be placed in said compartment 33. It should be noted that the lip 26 provides a coupling tooth which is engaged below the upper rim of the can 1 to oppose, subject to its breakage, the unauthorized removal of the contents of the compartment 33.

Claims

1. A cover element for containers which comprise a hollow body (10) closed by a lid (12), **characterised by** consisting of a profiled body (2) the plan shape of which encloses that of at least one container (1), and intended be fitted in the manner of a hood onto the top of said at least one container, where it provides an article-carrying compartment (33) above the container lid and a peripheral member in correspondence with the upper terminal part of the container body for its engagement therewith.
2. An element as claimed in claim 1, **characterised in that** that profiled body part which forms said compartment consists of a solid or continuous wall.
3. An element as claimed in claim 2, **characterised in that** at least said profiled body part is transparent.
4. An element as claimed in claim 1, **characterised in that** said engagement member is defined by the mouth of said hood profile, at least a portion of the edge of which is bent inwards towards said compartment, to provide an opening of dimensions having the same order of magnitude as those of the transverse shape of the container.
5. An element as claimed in claim 4, **characterised in that** the free edge of said bent portion is pointed.

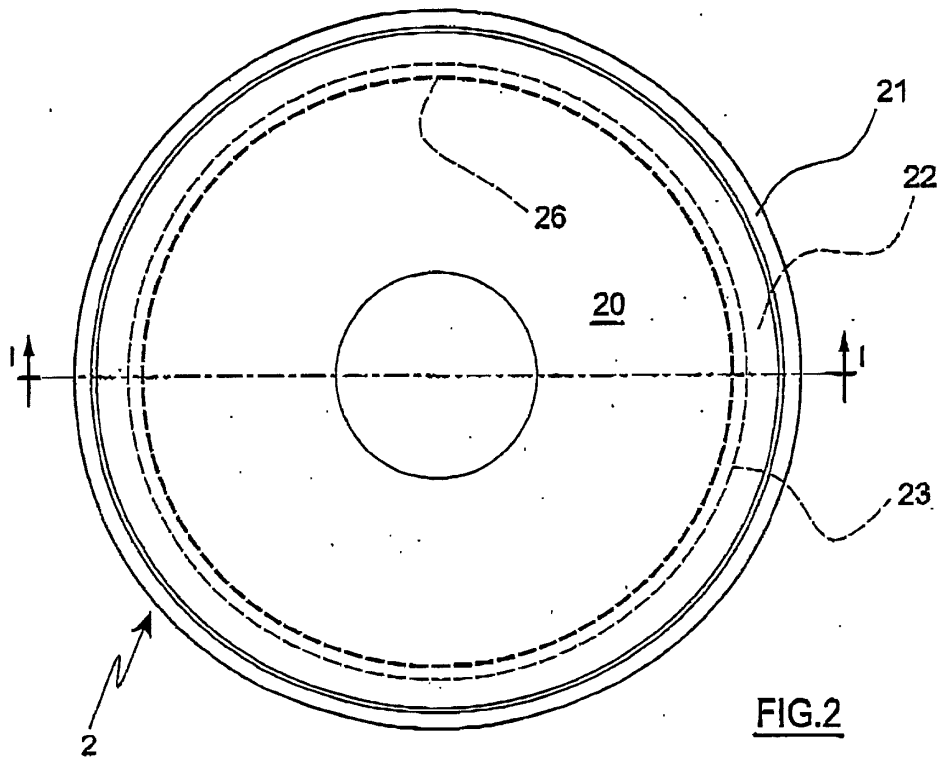
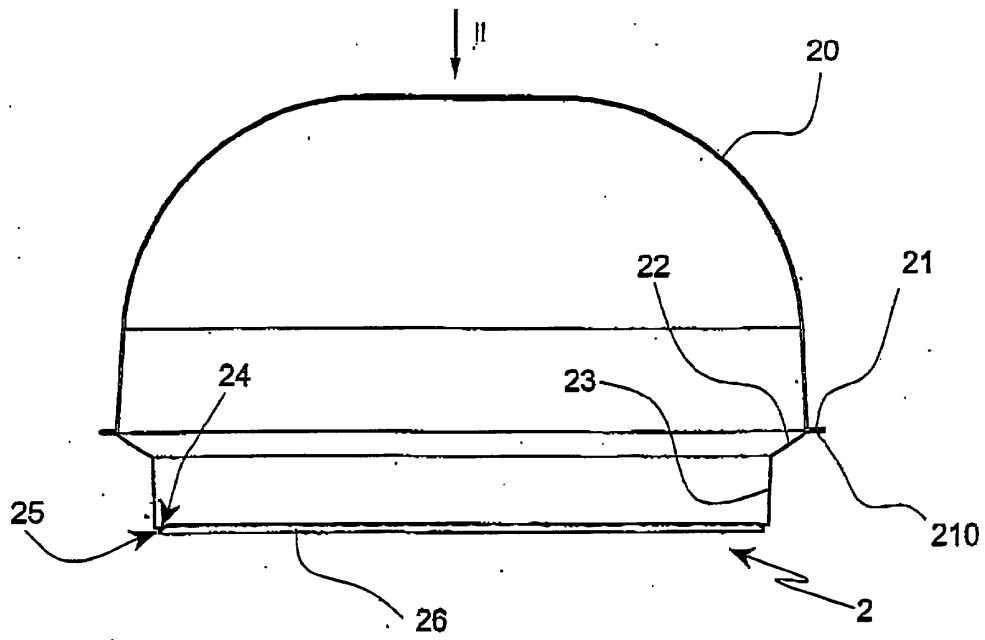


FIG.3

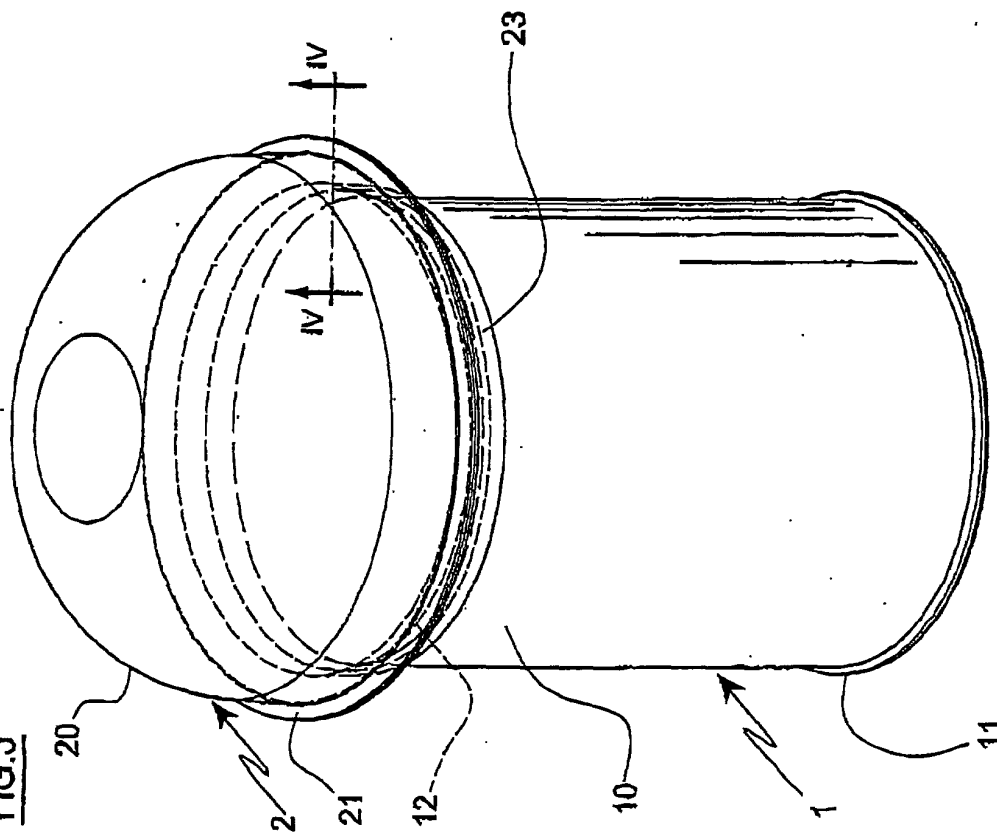
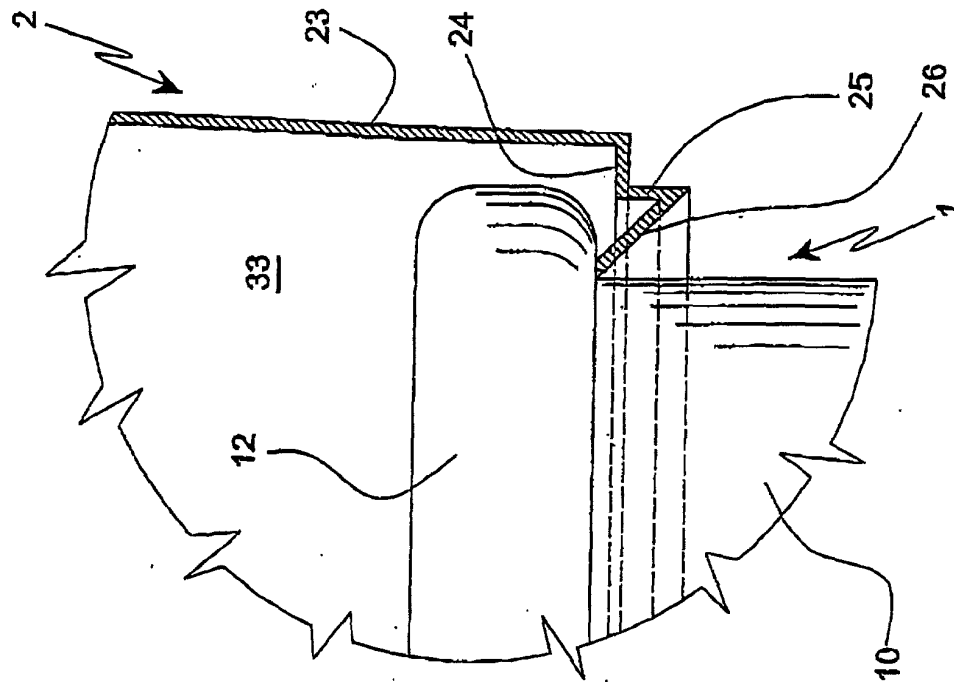


FIG.4





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EUROPEAN SEARCH REPORT

Application Number
EP 04 07 5912

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The present search report has been drawn up for all claims					
Place of search Munich		Date of completion of the search 25 June 2004	Examiner Derrien, Y		
<table border="0"> <tr> <td> CATEGORY OF CITED DOCUMENTS X : particularly relevant if taken alone Y : particularly relevant if combined with another document of the same category A : technological background O : non-written disclosure P : intermediate document </td> <td> T : theory or principle underlying the invention E : earlier patent document, but published on, or after the filing date D : document cited in the application L : document cited for other reasons & : member of the same patent family, corresponding document </td> </tr> </table>				CATEGORY OF CITED DOCUMENTS X : particularly relevant if taken alone Y : particularly relevant if combined with another document of the same category A : technological background O : non-written disclosure P : intermediate document	T : theory or principle underlying the invention E : earlier patent document, but published on, or after the filing date D : document cited in the application L : document cited for other reasons & : member of the same patent family, corresponding document
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**ANNEX TO THE EUROPEAN SEARCH REPORT
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The members are as contained in the European Patent Office EDP file on
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