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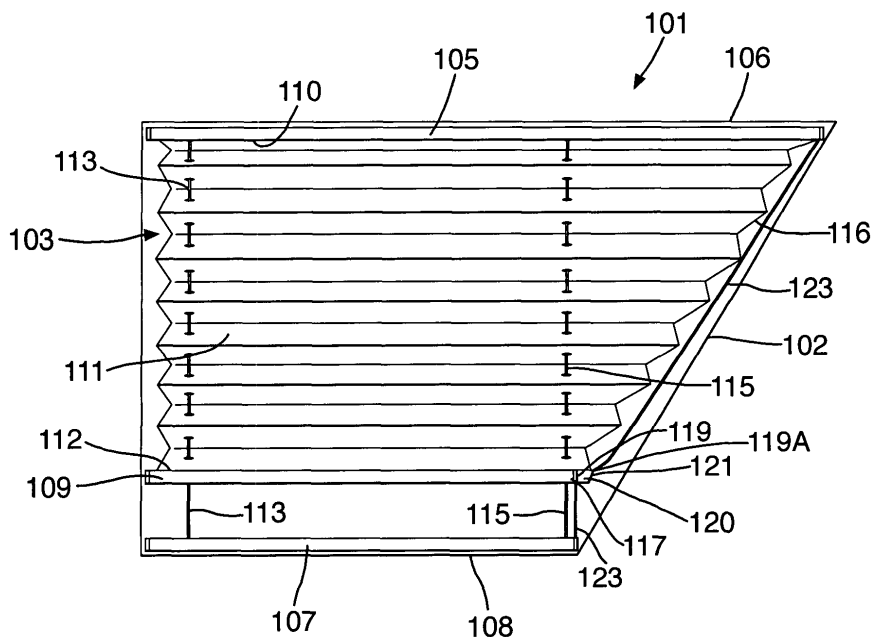
(54) **End cap for a blind with an inclined side edge**

(57) An end cap for a longitudinally-elongated movable rail of a window covering having an inclined side edge, extending upwardly at an acute angle to a longitudinal end of the movable rail. The end cap includes:

- a base part on the end of the movable rail; and
- a guide part, on the base part, that extends longitudinally away from the guide part and the end of the movable rail to a longitudinal end of the guide part.

A surface of the longitudinal end of the guide part also is upwardly inclined at an acute angle, and a passage extends longitudinally through the guide part to its longitudinal end. An upwardly inclined funnel is provided at the passage's opening, on to the inclined surface. The passage is adapted, so that a tension cord, from the base part, can move through it and then move smoothly along the inclined surface on the guide part's longitudinal end and then along the covering's inclined side edge when raising and lowering the window covering.

Fig.2.



Description

[0001] This invention relates to an end cap for finishing an end of a movable rail of a covering for an architectural opening with an inclined side. The invention particularly relates to an end cap for a movable rail of a fabric window covering, particularly a pleated blind, for a triangular or trapezoidal window.

[0002] End caps are generally known for movable rails of window coverings. They usually include a plug-in end, so that they can be easily inserted into the ends of movable rails, and an enlarged end portion for abutment against the ends of the rails. However, a window covering often has to fit within a window having a triangular or trapezoidal shape with an inclined side that extends at an acute angle to the covering's movable rail. In such a case, the window covering will have to have a matching inclined side edge, extending at an acute angle to its movable rail. As a result, the movable rail will have to be shorter than the side of the window, against which the blind is retracted. When such a window has its longest side at the top, the movable rail will retract upwardly against the longest side, and a substantial portion of the material of the window covering (e.g., fabric of a pleated blind) will be longer than, and hence not supported by, the underlying movable rail. As a result, the unsupported covering material will fan downwardly which is considered unsightly. This effect is shown in Figure 1.

[0003] In order to overcome the disadvantages of known end caps and to provide an alternative which is easier to assemble and use and less expensive, an end cap of this invention is provided for a longitudinally-elongated movable rail of a window covering having a side edge that is inclined in either an upward or downward direction, preferably an upward direction, and that extends at a first acute angle to a longitudinal end of the movable rail, wherein the end cap includes:

- a base part that is on the end of the movable rail and extends longitudinally away from the end of the movable rail; and
- a guide part that is attached to the base part and extends longitudinally away from the base part and the end of the movable rail to a longitudinal end of the guide part; a surface of the longitudinal end of the guide part also being inclined in the direction at a second acute angle; a passage extending longitudinally through the guide part to its inclined surface; the passage being adapted, so that a tension cord, from the base part, can pass through the passage and then extend along the inclined surface of the guide part and then along the inclined side edge of the window covering.

[0004] It is advantageous that the passage, at the inclined surface of the guide part, includes a funnel with a wide opening for the tension cord. It is especially ad-

vantageous that the funnel is inclined in the direction at a third acute angle. It is particularly advantageous that the opening of the funnel is vertically-elongated. It is quite particularly advantageous the second and third acute angles are about the same. In this regard, it is quite advantageous that the first acute angle is approximately the same as the second and third acute angles.

[0005] It is also advantageous that the guide part is adapted to move longitudinally relative to the end of the movable rail. It is especially advantageous that the guide part is attached telescopically to the base part, so that the guide part can move longitudinally relative to the base part and the end of the movable rail. It is particularly advantageous that the guide part is attached telescopically to the base part and the longitudinal end of the movable rail. It is quite particularly advantageous that a portion of the base part and a portion of the guide part are inserted longitudinally in an open longitudinal end of the movable rail.

[0006] Further aspects of the invention will be apparent from the detailed description below of particular embodiments and the drawings thereof, in which:

- Figure 1 is a front view of a trapezoidal pleated blind of the prior art in a fully raised position;
- Figure 2 is a front view of a trapezoidal pleated blind in an almost fully lowered position; one end of its movable middle rail holds a first embodiment of an end cap of the invention;
- Figure 3 is a front view of the blind of Figure 2, in a fully raised position;
- Figure 4 is a perspective view of an inclined side of a trapezoidal pleated blind; one end of its movable rail (partly broken away) holds a second embodiment of an end cap of the invention; this end cap has two parts; a base part and a guide part;
- Figure 5A is an inverted perspective view of the guide part of the end cap of Figure 4;
- Figure 5B is a bottom elevation view of the guide part of Figure 5A;
- Figure 5C is an inverted longitudinal sectional view of the guide part of Figure 4A, taken along line C-C in Figure 5B;
- Figure 5D is an end elevation view of the guide part of Figure 4A from its left end that is inserted into the base part of the end cap of Figure 4;
- Figure 6 is a perspective view of the head rail (partly broken away) and inclined side of the blind of Figure 4; and
- Figure 7 is a perspective view of a movable rail for a trapezoidal pleated blind; one end of the movable rail holds a third embodiment of an end cap of the invention that is very similar to the second embodiment of Figure 4.

[0007] Figure 1 shows a trapezoidal window opening 1 with a right (longitudinal) side 2 being inclined upwardly and rightwardly at an acute angle from its bottom right

side to its top right side. The window opening 1 is fitted with a conventional trapezoidal pleated blind 3. The blind 3 has a fixed, longitudinally-extending, elongated, head rail 5 mounted along the upper side 6 of the window opening 1, a fixed, longitudinally-extending, elongated, bottom rail 7 mounted along a lower side 8 of the window opening and a movable, longitudinally-extending, elongated, middle rail 9, between them. Since the upper side 6 of the window opening is longer longitudinally than its lower side 8, the head rail 5 is longer than the bottom rail 7. The top 10 of a pleated blind fabric 11 is attached to the head rail 5, and its bottom 12 is attached to the movable rail 9. The movable rail 9 can be raised (or retracted) and lowered (or extended) along vertically-extending, left and right, guide cords or cables 13, 15 respectively, attached to the head and bottom rails 5,7. So that the blind fabric 11 can be fully lowered, the movable rail 9 has the same length longitudinally as the bottom rail 7.

[0008] A right (longitudinal) side edge 16 of the blind fabric 11 is also inclined upwardly and rightwardly at an acute angle from its bottom right side to its top right side, so that when the movable rail 9 is fully lowered and the fabric is fully extended, the side edge 16 extends along the inclined side 2 of the window opening. However, when the movable rail 9 is fully raised as shown in Figure 1, the movable rail does not support the right side edge 16 of the fabric 11. This is because the top 10 of the fabric 11 has the same longitudinal length as the head rail 5, to which it is attached, the bottom 12 of the blind fabric has the same longitudinal length as the movable rail 9, to which it is attached, and thus the bottom 12 of the fabric is shorter than its top at the right side of the fabric. As a result, the right side edge 16 of the relatively flexible blind fabric 11 usually fans or sags downwardly as shown schematically in Figure 1.

[0009] Figures 2 and 3 show a trapezoidal pleated blind 103 of this invention which is similar to the blind 3 of Figure 1 and for which corresponding reference numerals (greater by 100) are used below for describing the same parts or corresponding parts. The blind 103 is mounted in a trapezoidal window opening 101 which includes an upwardly-inclined right side 102. The blind 103 includes a fixed head rail 105 and bottom rail 107, a movable middle rail 109, a pleated blind fabric 111, a pair of guide cords 113, 115 and an additional vertically-extending guide cord 123, attached to the head and bottom rails. The top 110 of the blind fabric 111 is attached to the head rail, and the bottom 112 of the fabric is attached to the movable rail 109. A right (longitudinal) side edge 116 of the blind fabric 111 is also upwardly inclined from its bottom right side to its top right side.

[0010] The blind 103 features a movable rail 109 with a first embodiment of an end cap 120 of this invention, attached to the right (longitudinal) end 117 of the movable rail. A left portion of the end cap 120 is a base part 125, and a left end portion 119 thereof is attached to the right end of the movable rail. A right portion of the end

cap 120 is a guide part 127 and a right end portion 119A thereof has a right end surface 121 that is adjacent the bottom of the right side edge 116 of the blind fabric 111 and is inclined upwardly and rightwardly at an acute angle relative to the movable rail 109. The blind 103 also features an additional vertically-extending guide cord 123, attached to the head and bottom rails 105,107 and on the right (longitudinal) side of the guide cords 113, 115. The additional guide cord 123 extends: upwardly from the right (longitudinal) end of the bottom rail 107 to the end cap 120, longitudinally through a passage (not shown) in the end cap and its right end portion 119A to the upwardly-inclined right end surface 121 of the right end portion 119A, upwardly and rightwardly along the right end surface 121, upwardly and rightwardly along the inclined side edge 116 of the blind fabric, and then to the right (longitudinal) end of the head rail 105. When the movable rail 109 is lowered as shown in Figure 2, the additional guide cord 123 extends along, and abuts against, the inclined side edge 116 of the fabric 111 and is not unsightly. When the movable rail 109 is fully raised as shown in Figure 3, the additional guide cord 123 also extends along, and abuts against, the inclined right side edge 116 of the fabric 111 to support and keep the right side edge from fanning downwardly. This gives the raised blind 103 a much neater appearance, with less obstruction of daylight and the view to the outside of the window.

[0011] Figures 4 and 6 show a pleated blind 203 of this invention which is similar to the blind 103 of Figures 2 and 3 and for which corresponding reference numerals (greater by 100) are used below for describing the same parts or corresponding parts. The blind 203 can be mounted in a window opening (not shown) which includes an upwardly-inclined right side. The blind 203 includes a fixed head rail (not shown) and a fixed bottom rail 205, a movable middle rail 209, a pleated blind fabric 211, a left guide cord (not shown) and a right guide cord 215 and an additional vertically-extending guide cord 223, attached to the head and bottom rails. The top 210 of the blind fabric 211 is attached to the head rail, and its bottom 212 is attached to the movable rail 209. A right (longitudinal) side edge 216 of the blind fabric 211 is also upwardly-inclined from its bottom right side to its top right side.

[0012] As seen from Figure 4, the right (longitudinal) side of the movable rail 209 has a vertically-extending bore therein, through which the right guide cord 215 extends upwardly from the bottom rail to the head rail. Preferably, the left side (not shown) of the movable rail 209 also has a vertically-extending bore (not shown), through which a left guide cord extends upwardly from the bottom rail to the head rail. It is preferred that a conventional grommet 224 is provided in these bore, particularly in the right bore for the right guide cord 215.

[0013] As also seen from Figures 4 and 5A-D, the blind 203 features a second embodiment of the end cap 220 of the invention. The end cap 220 has a base part

225, attached to the right end 217 of the movable rail 209, and a longitudinally movable guide part 227, attached to the right side of the base part, between the right end of the movable rail and the right side edge 216 of the blind fabric 211. Preferably, a first longitudinally-extending bore 222 in a right portion of the movable rail 209 telescopically receives and holds immovably a longitudinally-elongate, left end portion 219 of the base part 225, and a second longitudinally-extending bore 222A in the base part 225 and the first longitudinally-extending bore 222 in the movable rail telescopically receive and hold movably a longitudinally-elongate left portion 229 of the guide part 227. Also preferably, the right end portion 219A of the guide part 227 includes a longitudinally-extending passage 228 that opens onto the upwardly-inclined right end surface 221 of the right end portion 219A. As shown in Figures 4 and 6, the additional guide cord 223 extends: upwardly from the bottom rail (not shown) to and through a vertically-extending bore 226 in the base part 225 to its second longitudinally-extending bore 222A, rightwardly between the base part 225 and the bottom of the guide part 227 in the second longitudinally-extending bore 222A, rightwardly along the bottom of the guide part, through the passage 228 in the right end portion 219A of the guide part, upwardly and rightwardly along the upwardly-inclined right end surface 221 of the right end portion 219A of the guide part, and then upwardly and rightwardly along the inclined side edge 216 of the fabric 211 to the head rail.

[0014] With this end cap 220, the longitudinal location of the right end surface 221 of the guide part 227 of the end cap 220 can be adjusted by moving the guide part longitudinally, relative to the base part 225 and the right end 217 of the movable rail 209, depending upon the acute angle of inclination of the inclined side of the window opening (not shown). Thereby, the right end surface 221 of the guide part 227 can be positioned longitudinally for any window opening, so that the additional guide cord 223 of its blind 203 extends along, and thereby supports, the inclined side edge 216 of the blind fabric 211 to keep it from fanning downwardly when the blind is raised.

[0015] Preferably as shown in Figures 4, 5A and 5B, the elongate left portion 229 of the guide part 227, that is telescopically movable in the bores 222 and 222A of the base part 225 and the movable rail 209, is a longitudinally-extending bifurcated member. The bifurcated left portion 229 has a plurality of semi-circular indexing recesses 231 that face and match each other on laterally opposite sides of a longitudinally-extending slot 233, formed between opposite legs 235, 237 of the left portion 229 of the guide part. The indexing recesses 231 are formed in the facing longitudinally-extending sides of the legs 235, 237. Upper portions of the grommet 224 in the right vertically-extending bore for the right guide cord 215 are preferably located, in the movable rail 209, within the slot 233 between the legs 235, 237 and the indexing recesses 231 of the left portion 229 of the guide

part. As a result, the upper portions of the grommet 224A engage different pairs of indexing recesses 231 on laterally opposite sides of the bifurcated left portion 229 of the guide part 227 at different longitudinal positions of the guide part, relative to the base part 225. Thereby, the longitudinal position of the right end surface 221 of the guide part 227, relative to the base part 225 and the right end 217 of the movable rail 209, can be accurately selected and maintained, using the engagement of the indexing recesses 231 with the top portions of the grommet 224.

[0016] It is also preferred, as shown in Figures 4, 5A and 5B, that the right end of the longitudinally-extending passage 228, at the upwardly-inclined right end surface 221 of the guide part 220, includes a funnel 243 that has a wide opening, particularly a vertically-elongated opening. The funnel 243 preferably is inclined upwardly and rightwardly. It is preferred that the funnel 243 and the right end surface 221 of the guide part 227 are upwardly inclined at about the same acute angle. It is particularly preferred that the right side edge 216 of the blind fabric 211 is upwardly inclined at approximately the same acute angle as the funnel 243 and the right end surface 221 of the guide part 227. Thereby, the additional guide cord 223 can slide smoothly between the passage 228 and the inclined right end surface 221 of the guide part 227 when the blind 203 is raised or lowered. In this regard, the additional guide cord can move, with little resistance, from the bore 226 in the base part: longitudinally along the bottom of the guide part 227, through the passage 228 and its funnel 243 and then upwardly and rightwardly onto the inclined right end surface 221 of the guide part.

[0017] Thus, the end cap 220, with its adjustable guide part 227, provides a significant advantage in that it overcomes the need for a window covering manufacturer to stock a variety of end caps to cope with different angles of inclination of the inclined sides of window openings of different dimensions and configurations.

[0018] As seen from Figure 6, the additional guide cord 223 extends upwardly and rightwardly, from the upwardly-inclined right end surface 221 of the guide part 227, along the bottom of the upwardly- and rightwardly-inclined right side 216 of the blind fabric 211, to the right end of the head rail 205 of the blind 203. The additional guide cord 223 then enters the head rail through a conventional end fitting 239 on the right (longitudinal) end of the head rail, and the top end of the additional guide cord is attached to the right end of a conventional longitudinally-extending tension spring 241. The left end (not shown) of the tension spring 241 is attached to the head rail. The spring 241 serves to take up any slack in the length of the additional guide cord 223 between the fully raised and fully lowered positions of the blind 203.

[0019] Figure 7 shows a movable middle rail 309 for a pleated blind which is very similar to the movable rail 209 of Figures 4 and 5A-D and for which corresponding reference numerals (greater by 100) are used below for

describing the same parts or corresponding parts. The movable rail 309 features a third embodiment of the end cap 320 of the invention with a base part 325, attached to its right end 317 and a longitudinally movable guide part 327, telescopically attached to the right side of the base part and the right end of the movable rail. A right end portion 319A of the guide part 327 is provided with a longitudinally-extending passage 328. The right end of the longitudinally-extending passage 328, at the inclined right end surface 321 of the guide part 320, includes a funnel 343 that has a wide opening, particularly a vertically-elongated opening, and is inclined upwardly and rightwardly. Thereby, an additional guide cord (not shown) can slide smoothly between the passage 328 and the right end surface 321 of the guide part 227 when the blind is raised or lowered.

[0020] The passage 328 is in communication with a vertically-extending bore 326 for the additional guide cord (not shown) in the base part 325, so that the additional guide cord can extend: upwardly from the right end of a bottom rail (not shown) to the bore 326 in the base part, longitudinally from the base part along the bottom of the guide part 327, longitudinally through the passage 328 and its funnel 343 to the right end surface 321 of the guide part and then upwardly and rightwardly along an upwardly- and rightwardly-inclined side edge of a blind fabric (not shown) to a right end of a head rail (not shown).

[0021] This invention is, of course, not limited to the above-described embodiments which may be modified without departing from the scope of the invention or sacrificing all of its advantages. In this regard, the terms in the foregoing description and the following claims, such as "longitudinal", "lateral", "left", "right", "vertical", "horizontal", "bottom", "top", "upwardly" and "downwardly", have been used only as relative terms to describe the relationships of the various elements of the end cap of the invention for window coverings. For example, the end caps 120, 220, 320 could be used for movable rails 109, 209, 309 of other than trapezoidal blinds 3, 103, such as triangular blinds, and these end caps could also be used for other trapezoidal or triangular fabric window coverings, besides pleated blinds, such as roman shades and light control window coverings of the type described in US 5 313 999. The end caps 120, 220, 320 could also be used for trapezoidal or triangular fabric window coverings, in which the bottom is longer than the top and could further be used on the left (longitudinal) side or on both the left and right sides, rather than on just the right side of the movable rails 109, 209, 309 as in Figures 2-4, 6 and 7. In addition, the end caps 120, 220, 320 could be used for trapezoidal blinds 103, 203, in which side edges 116, 216 extend downwardly from the longitudinal ends of the blinds' movable rails 109, 209 but tend to resiliently fan upwardly, unless restrained by the blinds' additional guide cords 123, 223.

Claims

1. An end cap (120, 220, 320) for a longitudinally-elongated movable rail (109, 209, 309) of a window covering (103, 203) that has a side edge (116, 216) that is inclined in either an upward or downward direction, preferably an upward direction, and that extends at a first acute angle to a longitudinal end (117, 217) of the movable rail, wherein the end cap includes:
 - a base part (125, 225, 325) that is on the end of the movable rail and extends longitudinally away from the end (117, 217) of the movable rail (109, 209, 309); and
 - a guide part (127, 227, 327) that is attached to the base part (125, 225, 325) and extends longitudinally away from the base part and the end of the movable rail to a longitudinal end of the guide part; a surface (121, 221, 321) of the longitudinal end of the guide part (127, 227, 327) also being inclined in the direction at a second acute angle; a passage (228, 328) extending longitudinally through the guide part to its inclined surface (121, 221, 321); the passage being adapted, so that a tension cord (123, 223, 323), from the base part, can pass through the passage (228, 328) and then extend along the inclined surface (121, 221, 321) of the guide part and then along the inclined side edge (116, 216) of the window covering.
2. The end cap of claim 1 wherein the passage (228, 328), at the inclined surface (121, 221, 321) of the guide part (227, 327), includes a funnel (243, 343) with a wide opening for the tension cord (123, 223, 323).
3. The end cap of claim 2 wherein the funnel (243, 343) is inclined in the direction at a third acute angle.
4. The end cap of claim 2 or 3 wherein the opening of the funnel (243, 343) is vertically-elongated.
5. The end cap of any one of claim 2-4 wherein the second and third acute angles are about the same.
6. The end cap of any one of claims 2-5 wherein the first acute angle is approximately the same as the second and third acute angles.
7. The end cap of any one of claims 1-6 wherein the guide part (227, 327) is adapted to move longitudinally relative to the end of the movable rail (109, 209).
8. The end cap of claim 7 wherein the guide part (227, 327) is attached telescopically to the base

part guide part (225, 325), so that the guide part can move longitudinally relative to the base part and the end of the movable rail (109, 209).

9. The end cap of claim 8 wherein the guide part (227, 327) is attached telescopically to the base part (225, 325) and the longitudinal end of the movable rail (109, 209). 5
10. The end cap of any one of claims 7-9 wherein a portion of the base part (225, 325) and a portion of the guide part (227, 327) are inserted longitudinally in an open longitudinal end of the movable rail (109, 209). 10
11. An end cap for a movable rail of a blind having an inclined edge generally transverse to the longitudinal extend of said movable rail, wherein the end cap includes a portion adapted to extend from the movable rail towards said inclined edge and shaped in accordance with said inclined edge and wherein said portion has a cord funnel to enable a tension cord to extend along said inclined edge. 15 20

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Fig.1.
(Prior Art)

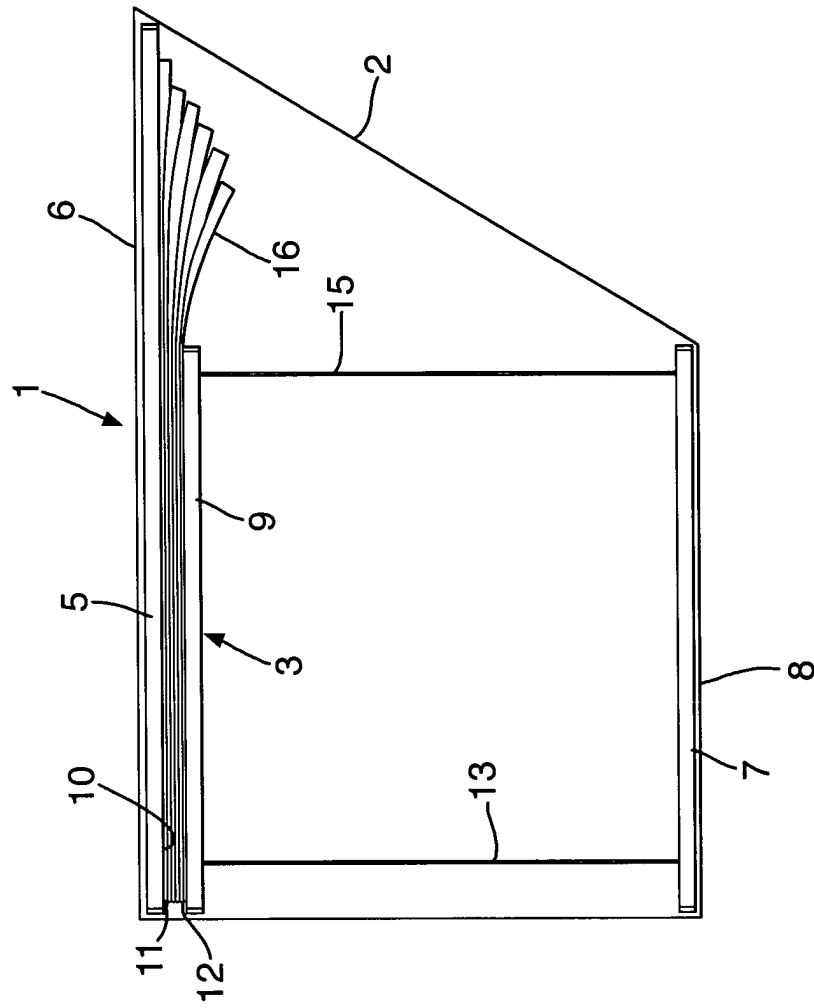


Fig.2.

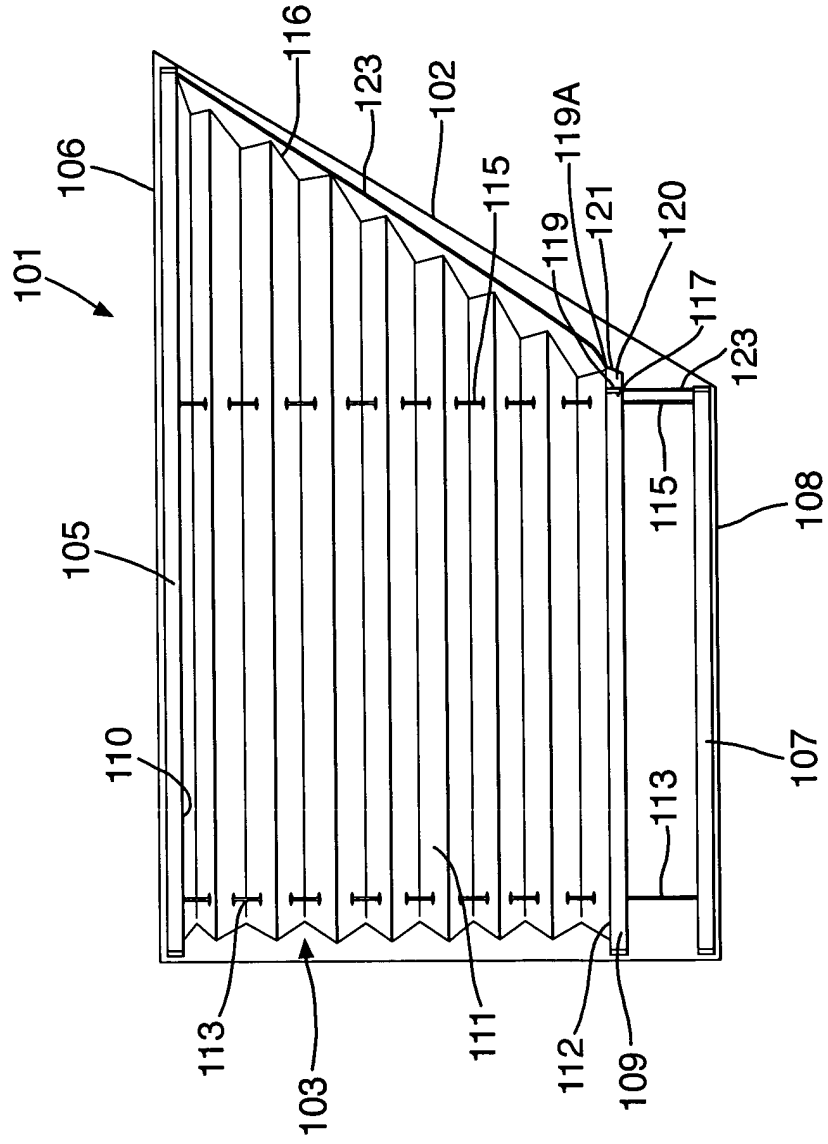
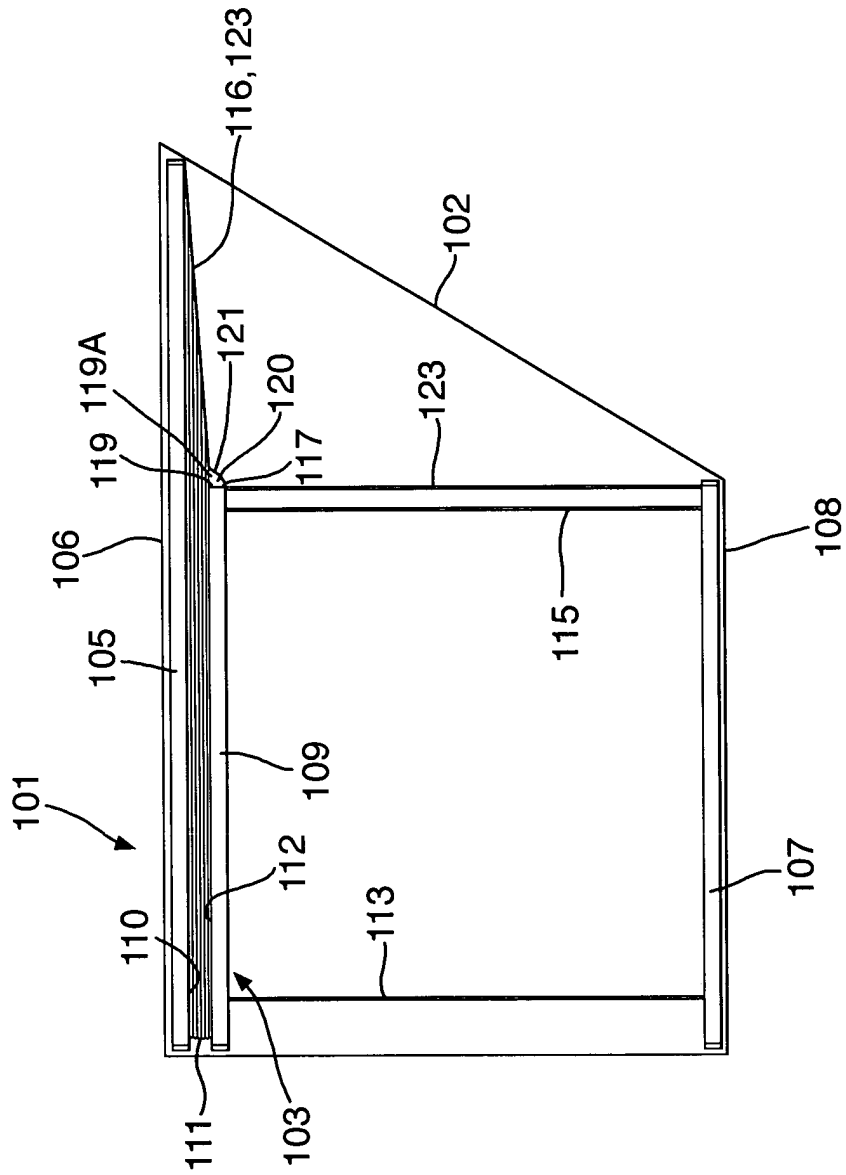


Fig.3.



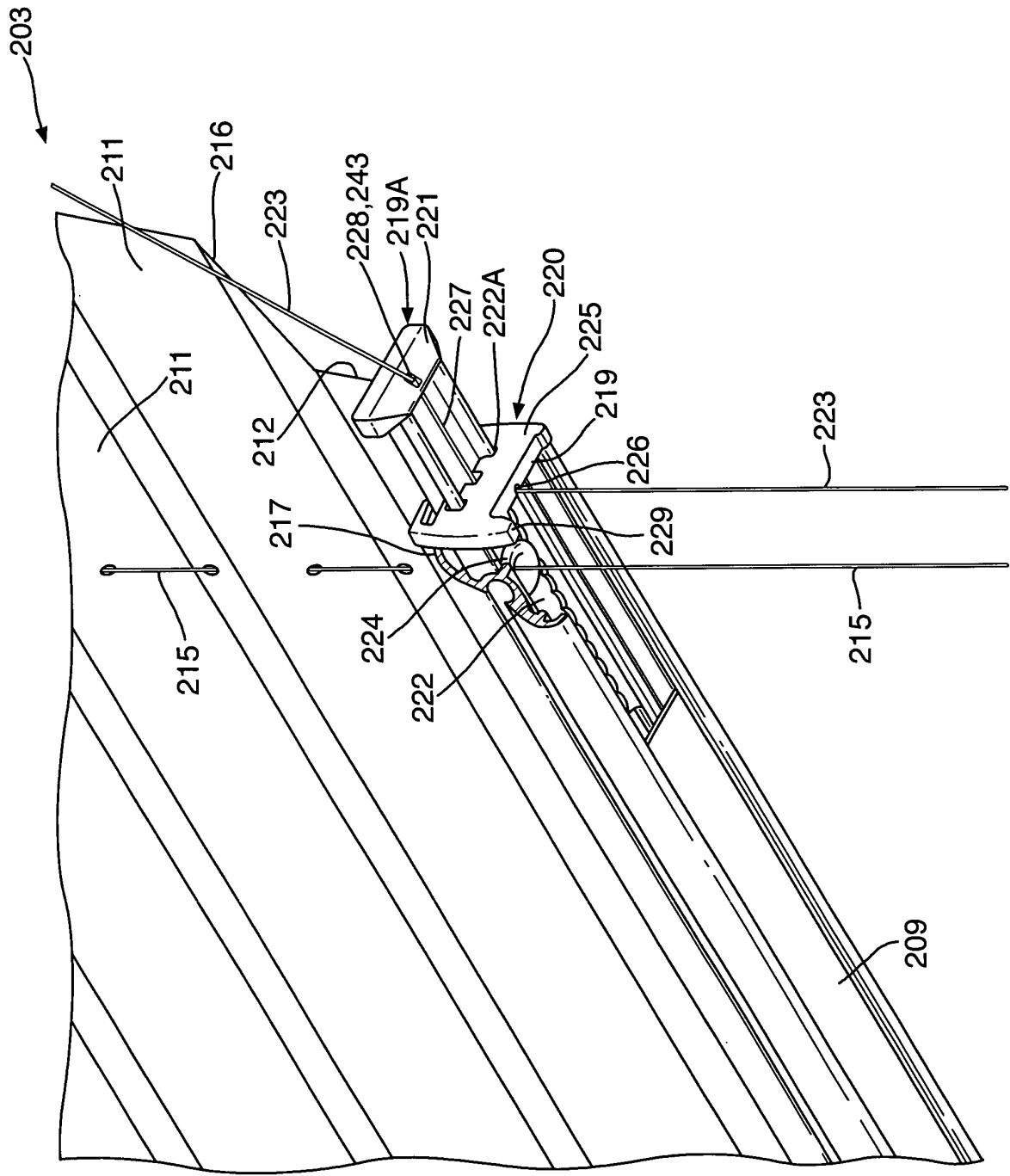


Fig. 4.

Fig. 5A.

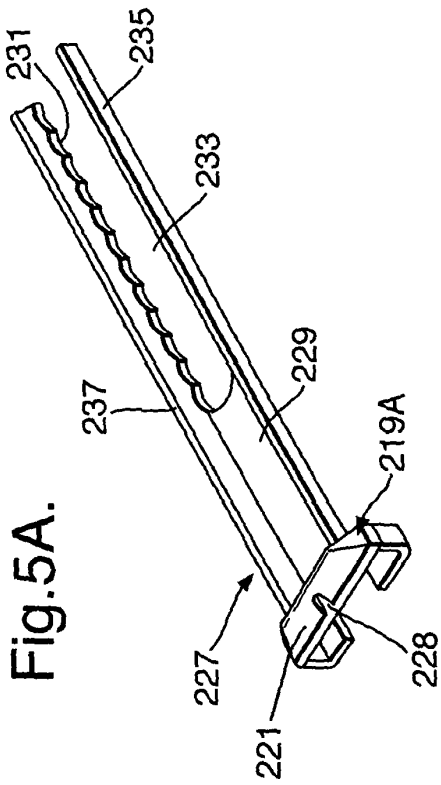


Fig. 5B.

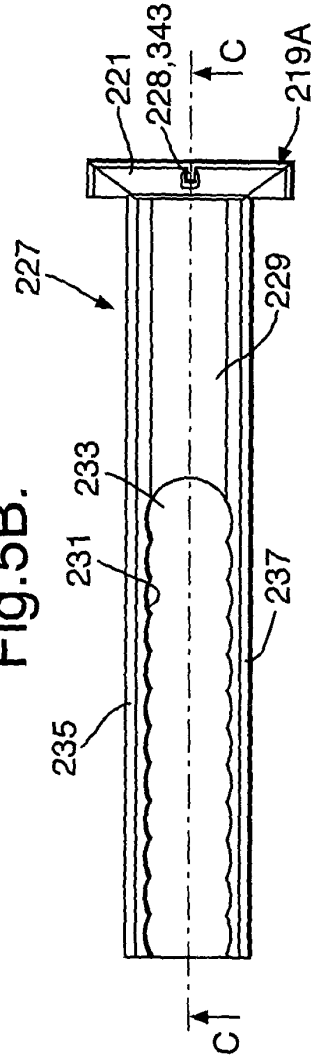


Fig. 5D.

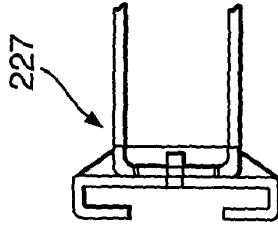
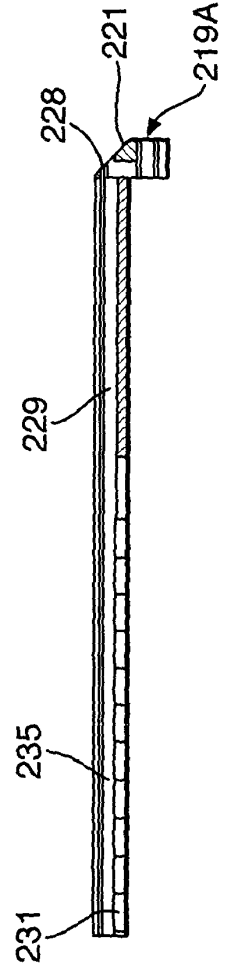


Fig. 5C.



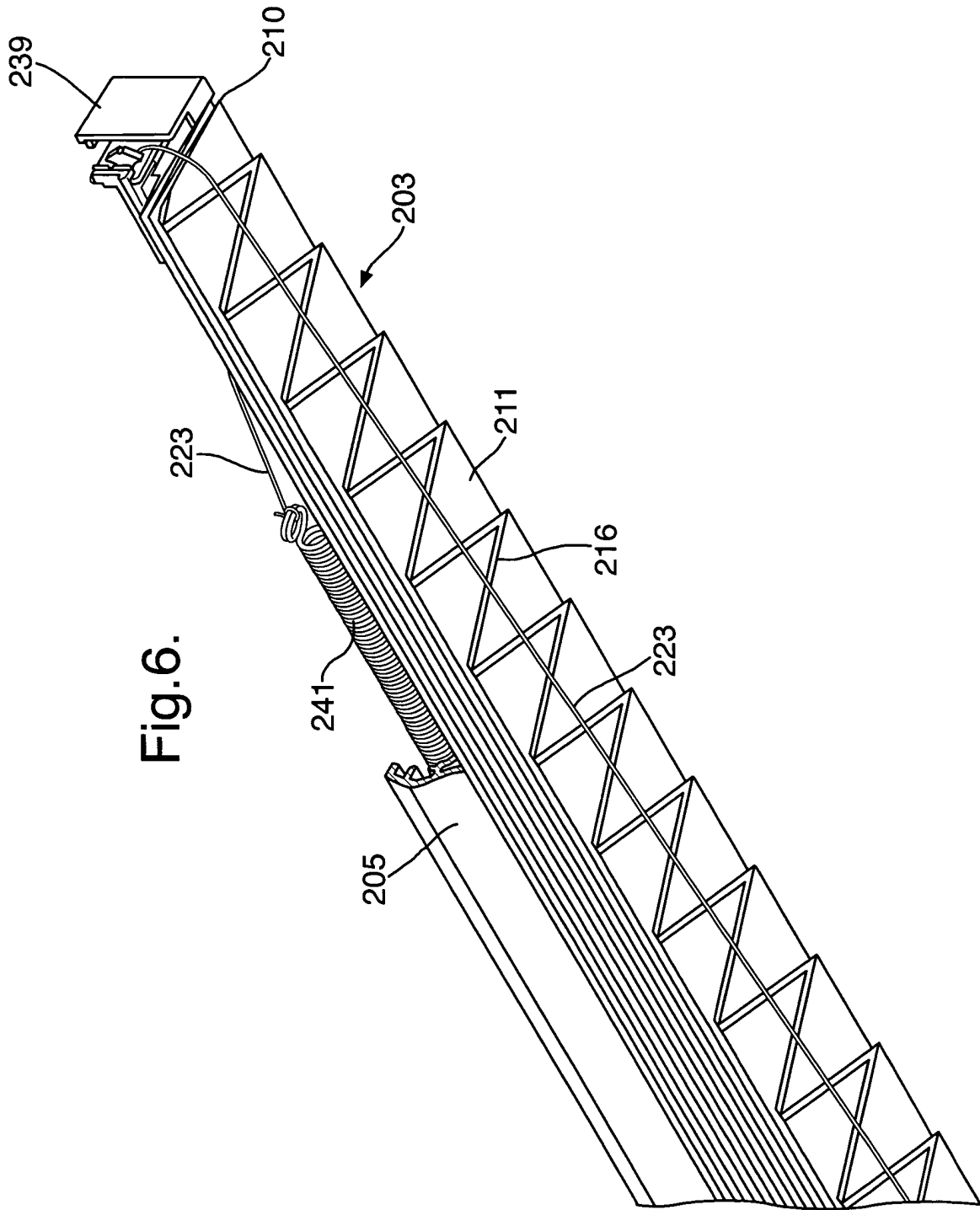
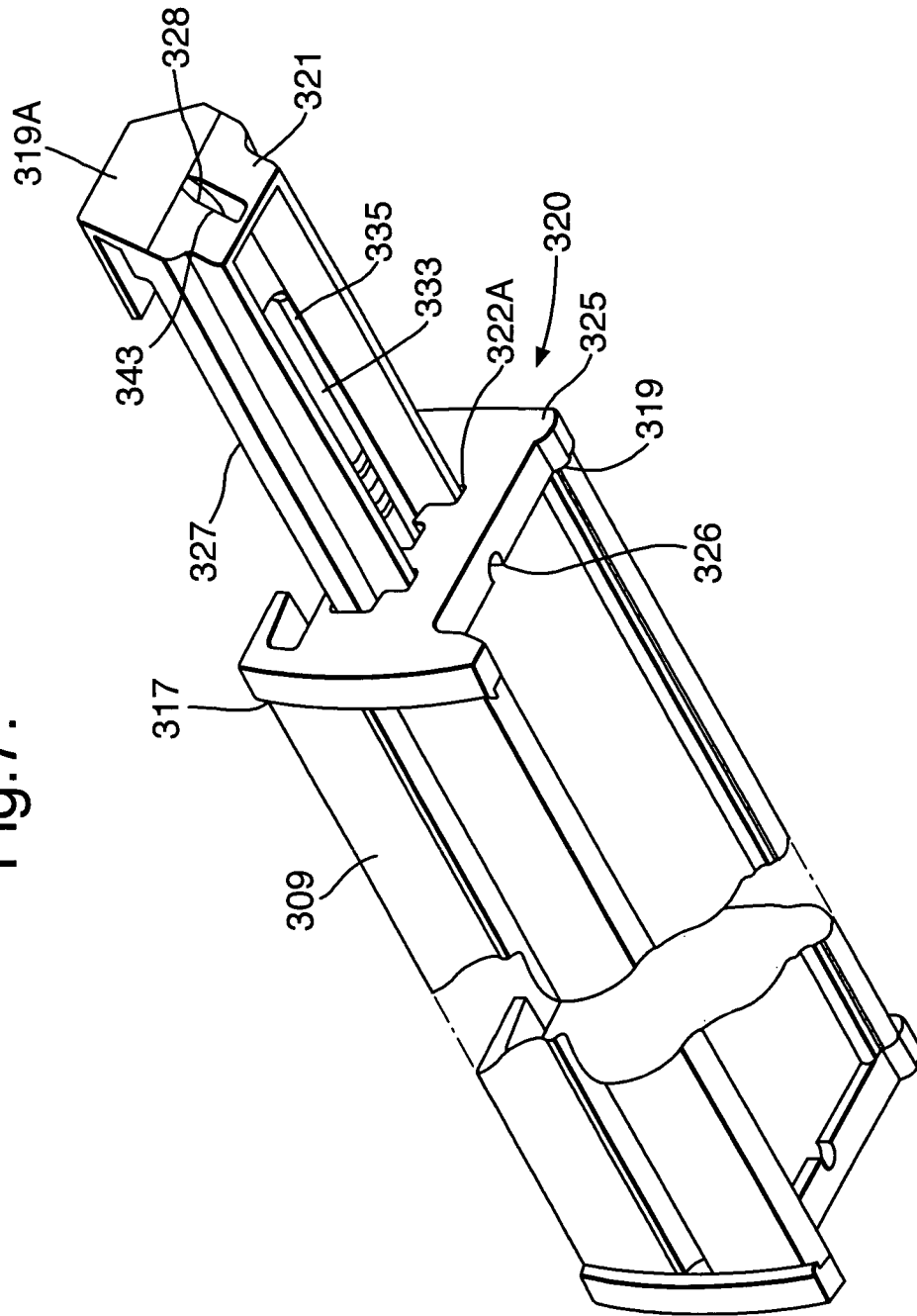


Fig.6.

Fig.7.





European Patent Office

EUROPEAN SEARCH REPORT

Application Number
EP 04 25 5237

DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT			
Category	Citation of document with indication, where appropriate, of relevant passages	Relevant to claim	CLASSIFICATION OF THE APPLICATION (Int.Cl.7)
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The present search report has been drawn up for all claims			TECHNICAL FIELDS SEARCHED (Int.Cl.7)
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Place of search		Date of completion of the search	Examiner
Munich		3 January 2005	Kofoed, P
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