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(54) Bedside cradle

(57) A cradle comprises a container in which a baby can lie. A first side of the container is open or has a side panel which is capable of being displaced to allow access to the container when the cradle is positioned alongside a parental bed. The cradle is supported at an adjustable height above a floor surface. The container has a nose portion which is positioned along the first side of the container and which protrudes outwardly from the container. The nose portion can press firmly into a mattress of the parental bed and ensures that there is always a continuous bridge between the baby's mattress and the parental bed. The container is in the form of a carry cot which can be detached from the support structure.

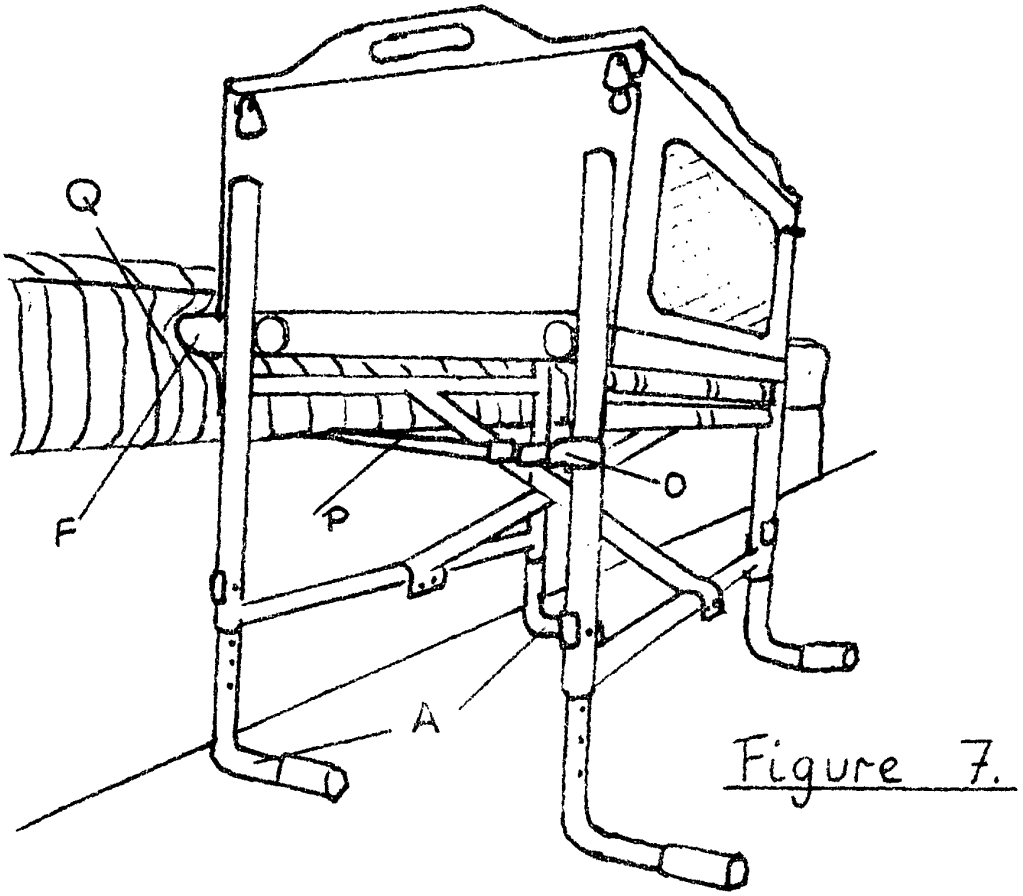

Figure 7.

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Description

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

[0001] This invention relates to a bedside cradle.

BACKGROUND TO THE INVENTION

[0002] The first few months of a baby's life can be stressful. It is desirable that a baby sleeps closely to their mother as this helps to develop a comforting bond between mother and baby, especially if the mother must be at work during the day soon after the birth. Sleeping close to its parent is known to help young babies adjust their breathing and to reduce the risk of cot death. It also helps build a mother's confidence and instinctive capability. In this way, the baby is not lonely and has the security and pleasure of hearing parental voices and being frequently touched. Loving touch is known to be the key to healthy brain development and contentment in babies and growing children. The confidence of the closeness encourages mothers to achieve relaxed sleep and minimize disturbance.

[0003] The recommendation to have a newborn baby sleeping in bed with the parents is often felt to be unacceptable for safety reasons, such as the risk of crushing the baby, and can be uncomfortable for the parents.

[0004] The use of bedside cradles or 'co-sleepers' has previously been proposed. Bedside cradles can rely on the parental bed for support, either by attaching directly to the side of a bed frame as in US 134,847 or by providing legs on one side of the cradle and attaching to the bed as in US 5,172,435. Alternatively, a self-supporting cradle can be provided which secures to the parental bed by a strap as, for example, in US 6,704,949. Self-supporting cradles have the benefit that they can be used as stand-alone cradles, if desired. However, it has been found that there are certain dangers in their use.

[0005] Accordingly, the present invention seeks to provide an improved bedside cradle.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0006] A first aspect of the present invention provides a self-supporting bedside cradle comprising:

> a container in which a baby can lie, the container having a base and a first side which is open, or which has a side panel which is capable of being displaced, to allow access to the container when the cradle is positioned alongside a bed; and,
> a supporting structure for supporting the container on a floor surface,

wherein the container has a nose portion which is positioned along the first side of the container and which protrudes outwardly from the container.

[0007] The bedside cradle provides the baby with it's own secure space yet gives close and easy access between mother and baby via the first side of the container. Because the cradle is self supporting, it can be easily used alongside a wide range of beds and is stable in use. The nose portion on the first side of the container can press firmly into a mattress of the parental bed. This ensures that there is always a continuous bridge between the baby's mattress and the parental bed and serves to prevent a gap forming between the cradle and the parental bed. Preferably, the nose portion is positioned substantially at, or just below, the level at which a baby lies in the container.

[0008] Conveniently, the nose portion can be positioned substantially at the level of the base of the container and preferably is formed integrally with the base of the container.

[0009] Preferably, the nose portion has a convex profile. In the event that a parental mattress were to slide beneath the nose portion, the convex profile has been found to allow a parental mattress to subsequently return to it's normal position with minimal resistance.

[0010] Preferably, the nose portion is rigid but has an outer layer of padding or other soft or cushioned material.

[0011] Preferably, the container is in the form of a carry cot which is detachable from the supporting structure. This allows a baby to be moved to the bedside without disturbing them.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0012] Embodiments of the invention will be described, by way of example only, with reference to the accompanying drawings in which:

> Figure 1 shows the frame that carries the baby bed;
> Figure 2 shows the frame of Figure 1 in a folded configuration;
> Figure 3 shows the baby bed in a fully assembled configuration;
> Figure 4 shows the base tray of the baby bed of Figure 3 in more detail;
> Figure 5 shows the connection between side panels of the baby bed of Figure 3;
> Figure 6 shows the baby bed fitted into the supporting frame;
> Figure 7 shows the cradle attached to a parental bed;
> Figure 8 shows the remote side of the parental bed of Figure 7.

DESCRIPTION OF PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

[0013] The present invention will be described with respect to particular embodiments and with reference to certain drawings but the invention is not limited thereto but only by the claims. The drawings described are only schematic and are non-limiting. In the drawings, the size of some of the elements may be exaggerated and not drawn on scale for illustrative purposes. Where the term

"comprising" is used in the present description and claims, it does not exclude other elements or steps.

[0014] In the following description the entire structure will be referred to as the "Cradle". The container in which the baby lies will be referred to as the "baby bed". The supporting structure that carries the baby bed will be referred to as the "Frame". The horizontal member that stands proud of the cradle will be referred to as the "Nose". The members that alter the footprint of the crib will be referred to as the "Feet". The adult bed will be referred to as the "parental bed."

[0015] The baby bed is a separate construction which fits within the confines of the frame, but can also be used independently of the frame in the manner of a carry cot Figure 1 illustrates the frame that carries the baby bed. The frame has four vertical tubular frame members B. Each frame member receives a foot A. The foot is a right-angled element, with a vertical shaft which fits within the tubular member B and a horizontal portion which rests on the floor. The feet A slide within the tubular frame members B and can be secured at a desired position by clips C which locate into pairs of receiving holes in the vertical shafts of the feet. This arrangement allows the frame to be set at a desired height which, as will be described below, allows the baby bed to be positioned at a desired height with respect to the mattress of the parental bed. The feet which will be positioned directly adjacent the parental bed may be turned through 180° to allow abutment to the parental bed when that bed does not have sufficient space between it and the floor for the feet to slide beneath the bed. In order to provide the recommended level of stability when free-standing, all four feet are fixed, pointing outwards, at right angles to the longitudinal axis of the frame, and each foot is adjusted to the same height relative to the frame.

[0016] The frame of Figure 1 can be folded, as shown in Figure 2. The folding is achieved by lifting the strap D on the centre of the frame cross bars. This activates the hinge mechanism E, allowing the frame to fold. The feet A are removable from their tubular frame members B for storage.

[0017] Figure 3 shows the baby bed. This is a container in which the baby can lie. The container is open at the top and has a base tray and has two side panels H and two end panels K. Figure 3 shows the baby bed with all four panels in place. The baby bed can be used independently of the support frame and can be used, for example, as a carry cot. End panels K are hingedly attached to the base tray and have carry handles near their upper edge. The frame just described supports the baby bed and provides stability, height adjustment and attachment points for securing the cradle against a parental bed.

[0018] The container has a horizontal nose member F joined to the base tray of the container. The nose F extends across the full length of the lower front edge of the baby bed. The nose F extends outwardly from the side of the baby bed and, in use, stands proud of both the baby bed and of the frame. The overall nose F has a convex profile. The upper surface of the nose F is approximately level with the top surface of the baby's mattress G and may be flat or rounded. The remainder of the nose F, i.e. from the furthest extent of the nose, down and back to the line vertically beneath the front panel, has a smoothly rounded profile. This ensures that, if the parental mattress is depressed below the nose, it will, on release, immediately recover its position.

[0019] The side panel of the baby bed that fits directly adjacent the nose F is removable. The side panel is fitted by sliding the base of the side panel between the nose F and the retaining lugs M in the base tray, as shown in Figure 4. The side panels H are fitted with lugs J near their top edge which slide into and then drop down within channels in the end panels K. The latches I swing into place, preventing the lugs lifting out. The disc on the end of each lug J prevents the end panel K from outward movement, and thus totally secures the corner of the baby bed. When both side panels H are removed, the end panels K hinge inwards on the line L to fold over the baby mattress G.

[0020] Figure 4 shows the position of the nose F on the base tray and also shows the lugs M which restrain the lower edges of panels H and the retainers N that fit inside the frame uprights B (Fig 1) preventing lateral movement of the baby bed within the frame.

[0021] Figure 5 shows the lug J and disc fitted to the side panel H which hold the tops of the panels in position.

[0022] It can be seen that the baby bed is capable of folding for packing, transport or storage. As shown in Figure 3, some of the four panels H, K can have a mesh window.

[0023] Figure 6 shows the assembled baby bed fitted into its support frame. The baby bed lowers onto the frame between the four vertical members B. The retainers N hold the bed securely in position. The baby bed is held so that it cannot move in the horizontal plane. The clip attachments O, fitted to each rear leg of the frame, connect to straps that run under the mattress of the parental bed.

[0024] Figures 7 and 8 shows the cradle positioned to a parental bed. Straps P are passed under the parental mattress and the free ends of the straps P are connected to the clips O. Clips O allow the cradle to be released from the parental bed without disturbing the straps under the mattress. The height of the cradle is adjusted so that the protruding nose F presses its full length into the soft side of the parental mattress, just below it's top surface, at Q. Figure 7 also shows the bedside feet A turned under the cradle to allow the cradle and the bed to abut together in the event of there being insufficient space for the horizontal portion of the feet to slide under the parental bed.

[0025] Straps P are fitted to a restrainer R at the remote side of the parental bed to the cradle. Figure 8 shows the restrainer R horizontally centered on the line between the mattress and the bed base. The straps P, having passed under the parental mattress and then round the longitudinal ends of the restrainer, are kept in place by

keepers at S and then join within a two-way tensioning clip T . By tensioning the straps at T, the cradle on the opposite side is pulled in against the bed, pressing the nose F into the soft side of the mattress and filling any gap between the two sleeping areas that could otherwise develop. The restrainer R also prevents the parental mattress from moving on the bed base away from the cradle. The cradle is shown here with the bedside panel removed in order to give direct contact between mother and baby.

[0026] As an alternative to the rigid-sided baby bed described above, it is possible to provide a fabric sling which is held by the support structure.

[0027] The invention is not limited to the embodiments described herein, which may be modified or varied without departing from the scope of the invention.

Claims

1. **A self supporting bedside cradle comprising:**

   a container in which a baby can lie, the container having a base and a first side which is open, or which has a side panel which is capable of being displaced, to allow access to the container when the cradle is positioned alongside a bed; and,
   a supporting structure for supporting the container on a floor surface, wherein the container has a nose portion which is positioned along the first side of the container and which protrudes outwardly from the container.

2. A cradle according to claim 1 wherein the nose portion is positioned substantially at, or just below, the level at which a baby lies in the container.

3. A cradle according to claim 1 or 2 wherein the nose portion is positioned substantially at the level of the base of the container.

4. A cradle according to claim 3 wherein the nose portion is formed integrally with the base of the container.

5. A cradle according to any one of the preceding claims wherein the nose portion has a convex profile.

6. A cradle according to any one of the preceding claims wherein the nose portion is padded.

7. A cradle according to any one of the preceding claims wherein the supporting structure is adapted to support the container at a range of heights above the floor surface.

8. A cradle according to claim 7 wherein the supporting structure has telescopic legs.

9. A cradle according to any one of the preceding claims wherein the container is mountable on the supporting structure in a manner that prevents it moving in a horizontal plane with respect to the structure.

10. A cradle according to any one of the preceding claims wherein the container is in the form of a carry cot which is detachable from the supporting structure.

11. A cradle according to claim 10 comprising a base tray, two end panels and two side panels which lock together.

12. A cradle according to claim 11 wherein the end panels are hingedly attached to the base tray and are movable between an assembled position and a storage position in which they substantially lie parallel to the base tray.

13. A cradle according to any one of the preceding claims further comprising securing means for securing the cradle to a bed.

14. A self supporting bedside cradle comprising:

   a container in which a baby can lie, the container having a base and a first side which is open, or which has a side panel which is capable of being displaced, to allow access to the container when the cradle is positioned alongside a bed; and,
   a supporting structure for supporting the container on a floor surface, wherein the container is in the form of a carry cot which is detachable from the supporting structure.

15. A cradle according to claim 14 comprising a base tray, two end panels and two side panels which lock together.

16. A cradle according to claim 15 wherein the end panels are hingedly attached to the base tray and are movable between an assembled position and a storage position in which they substantially lie parallel to the base tray.

17. A cradle according to any one of claims 14 to 16 further comprising securing means for securing the cradle to a bed.

18. A cradle as described herein with reference to and as shown in the accompanying drawings.

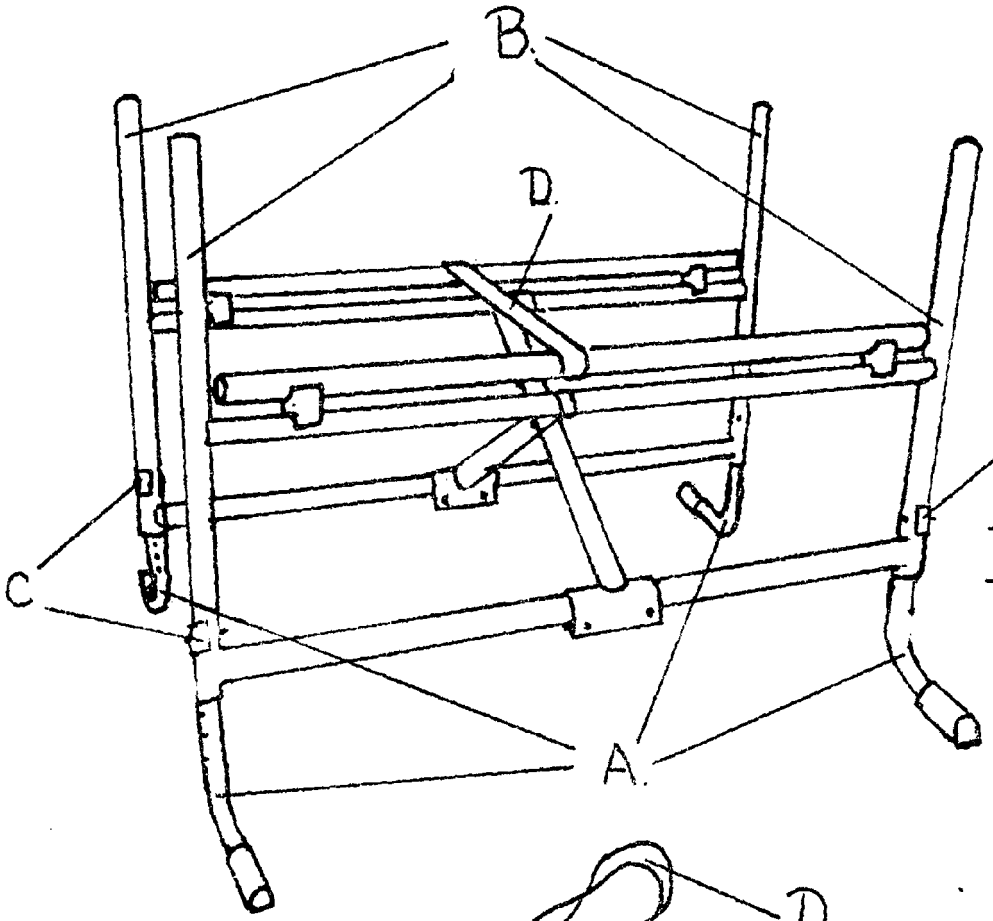


Figure 1.

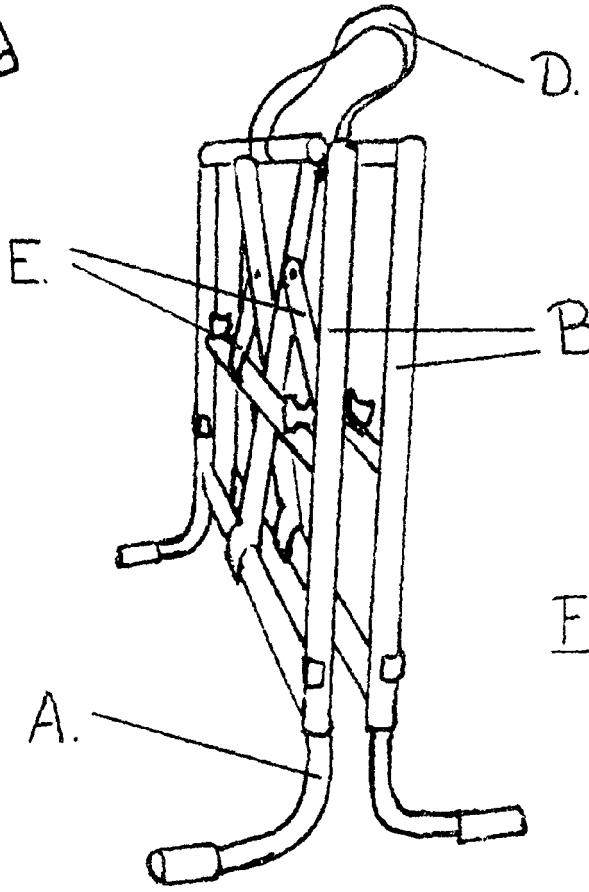


Figure 2.

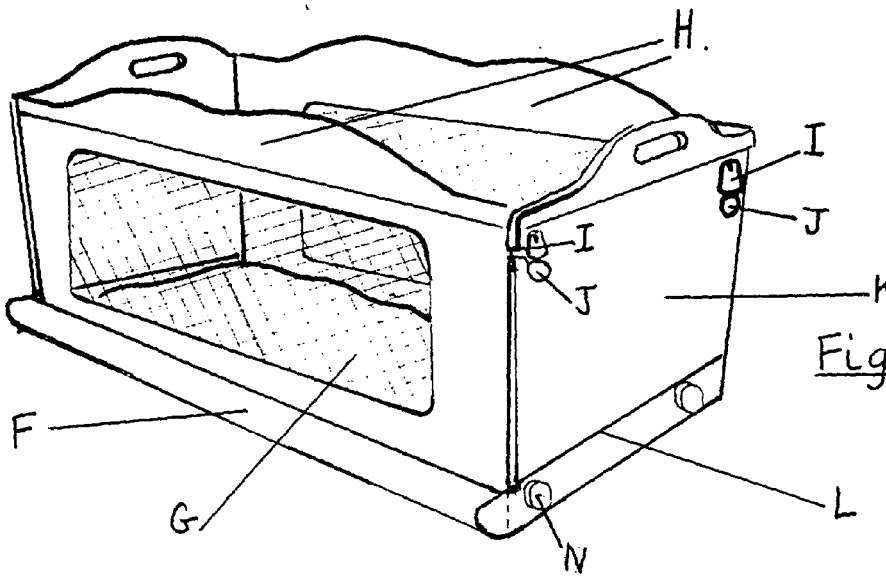


Figure 3.

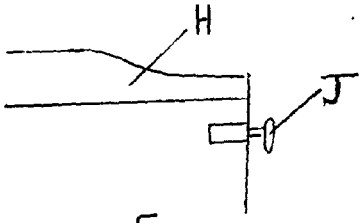
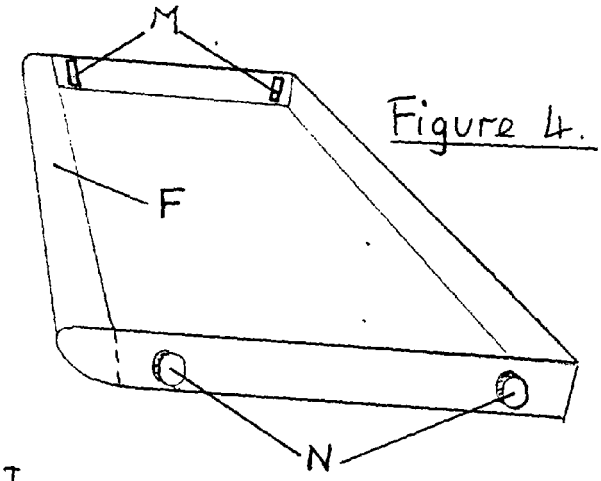


Figure 5.



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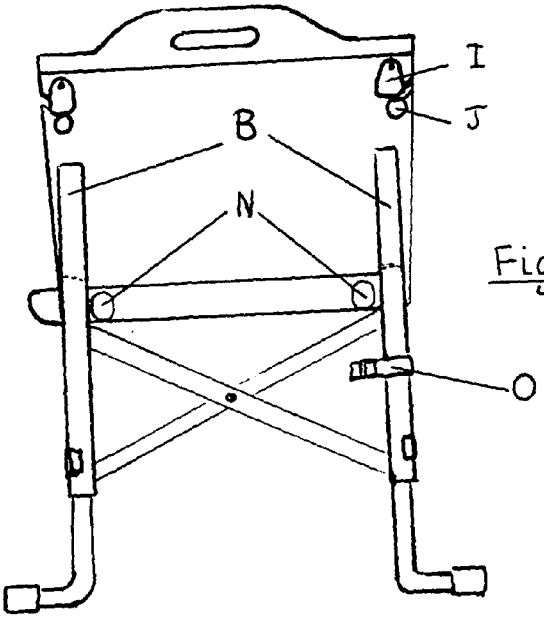

Figure 6.

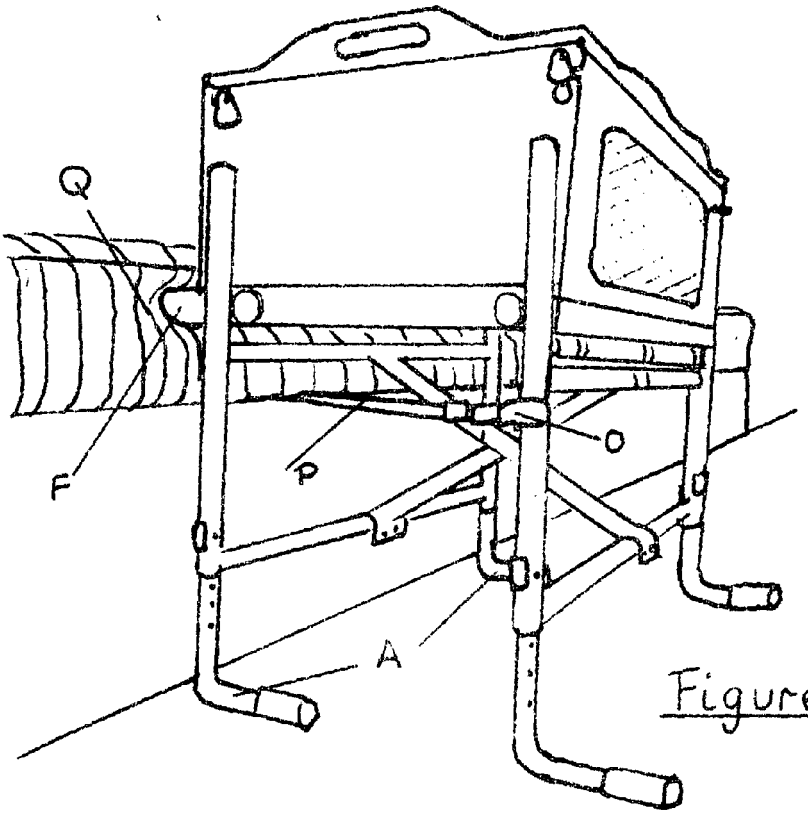

Figure 7.

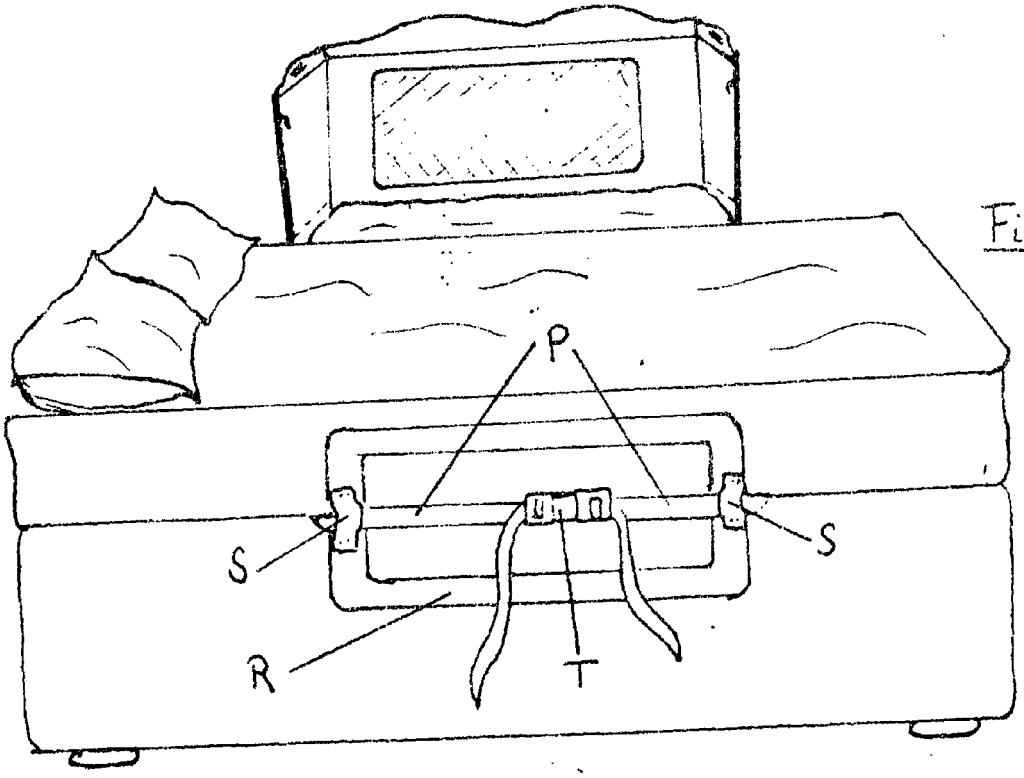

Figure 8.