

No. 742,783.

PATENTED OCT. 27, 1903.

H. J. FOX.  
SECRET BALLOT BOX.

APPLICATION FILED MAY 9, 1903.

NO MODEL.

2 SHEETS—SHEET-1.

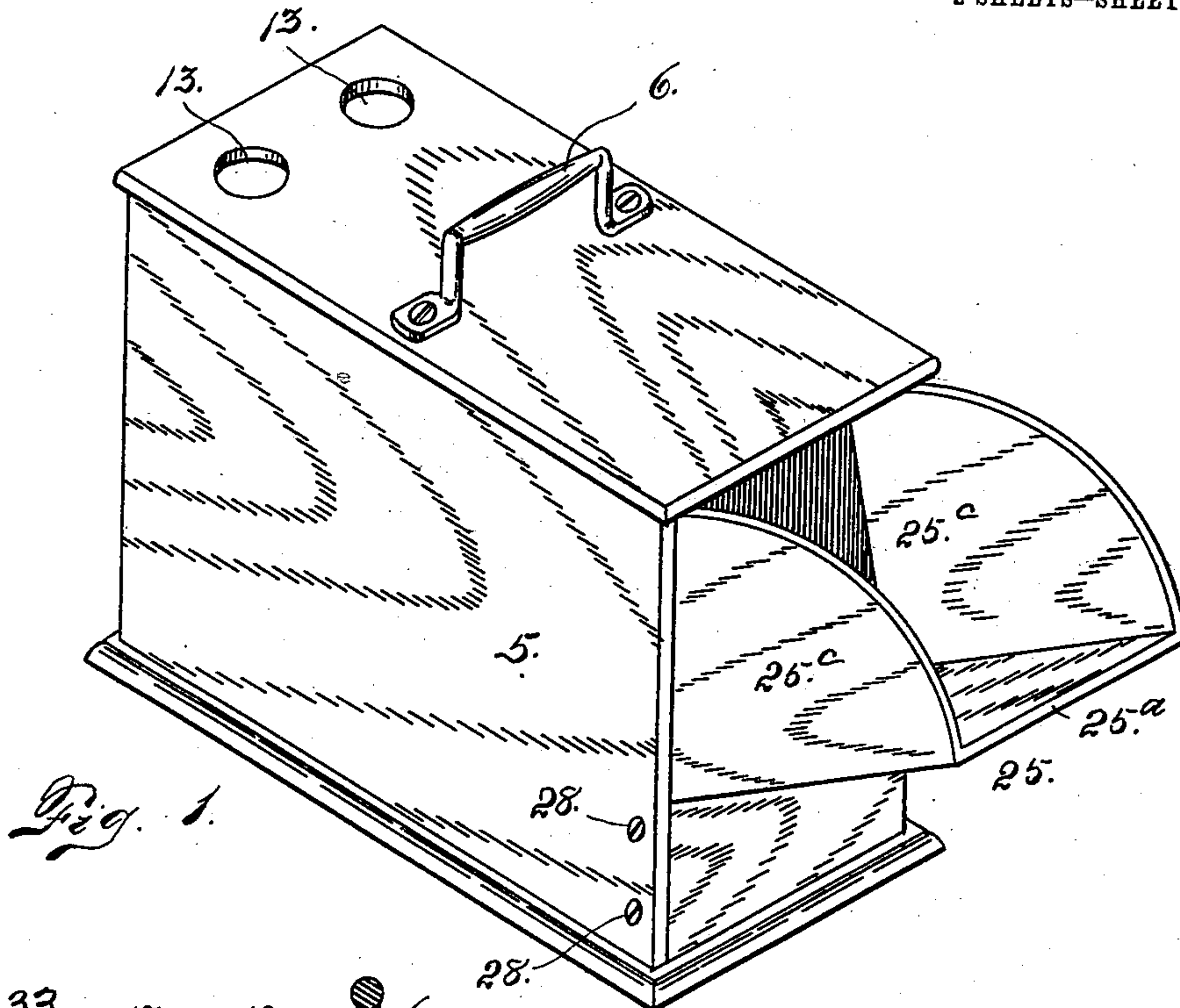


Fig. 1.

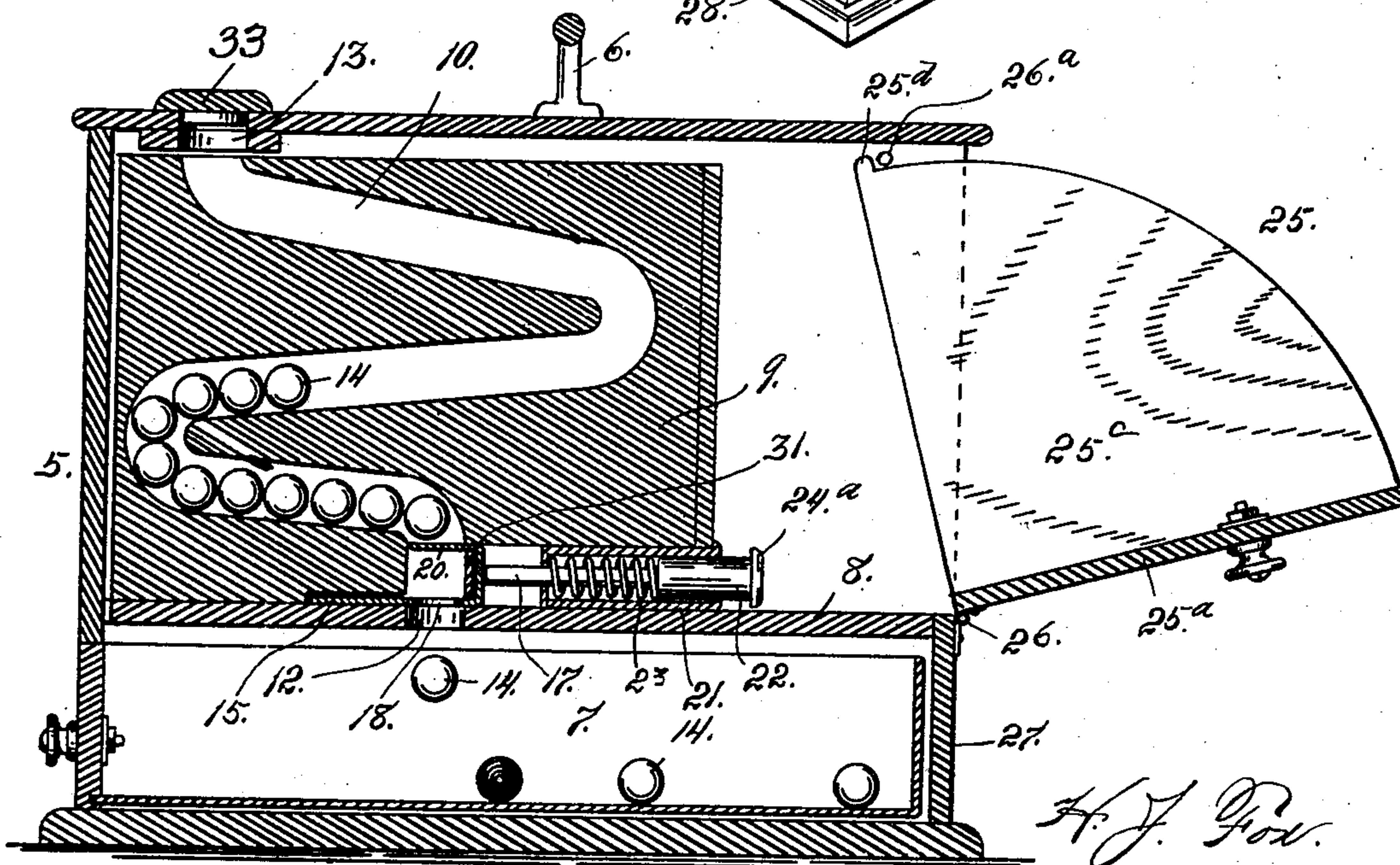


Fig. 2.

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SECRET BALLOT BOX.  
APPLICATION FILED MAY 8, 1903.

NO MODEL.

2 SHEETS—SHEET 2.

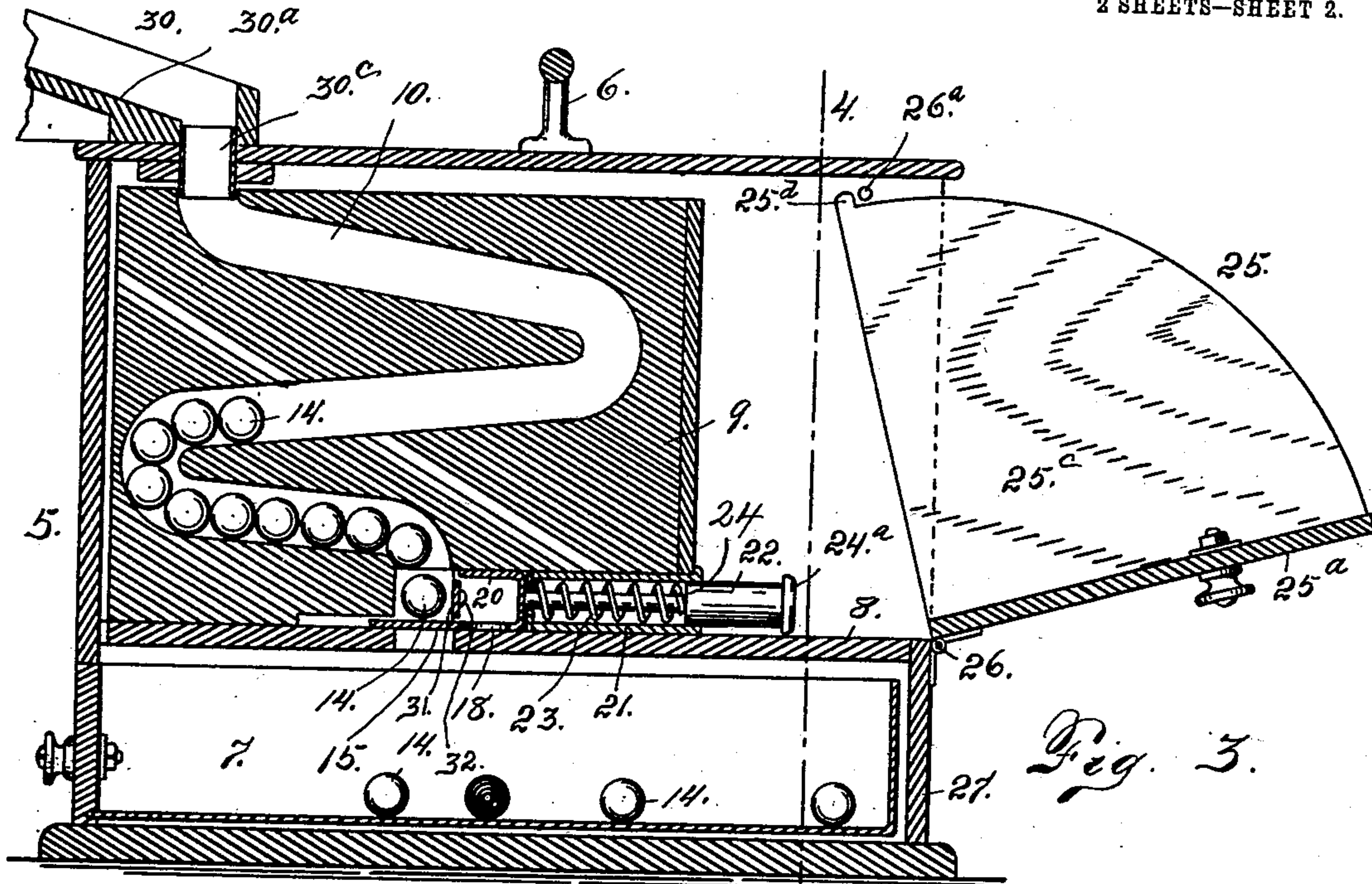


Fig. 3.

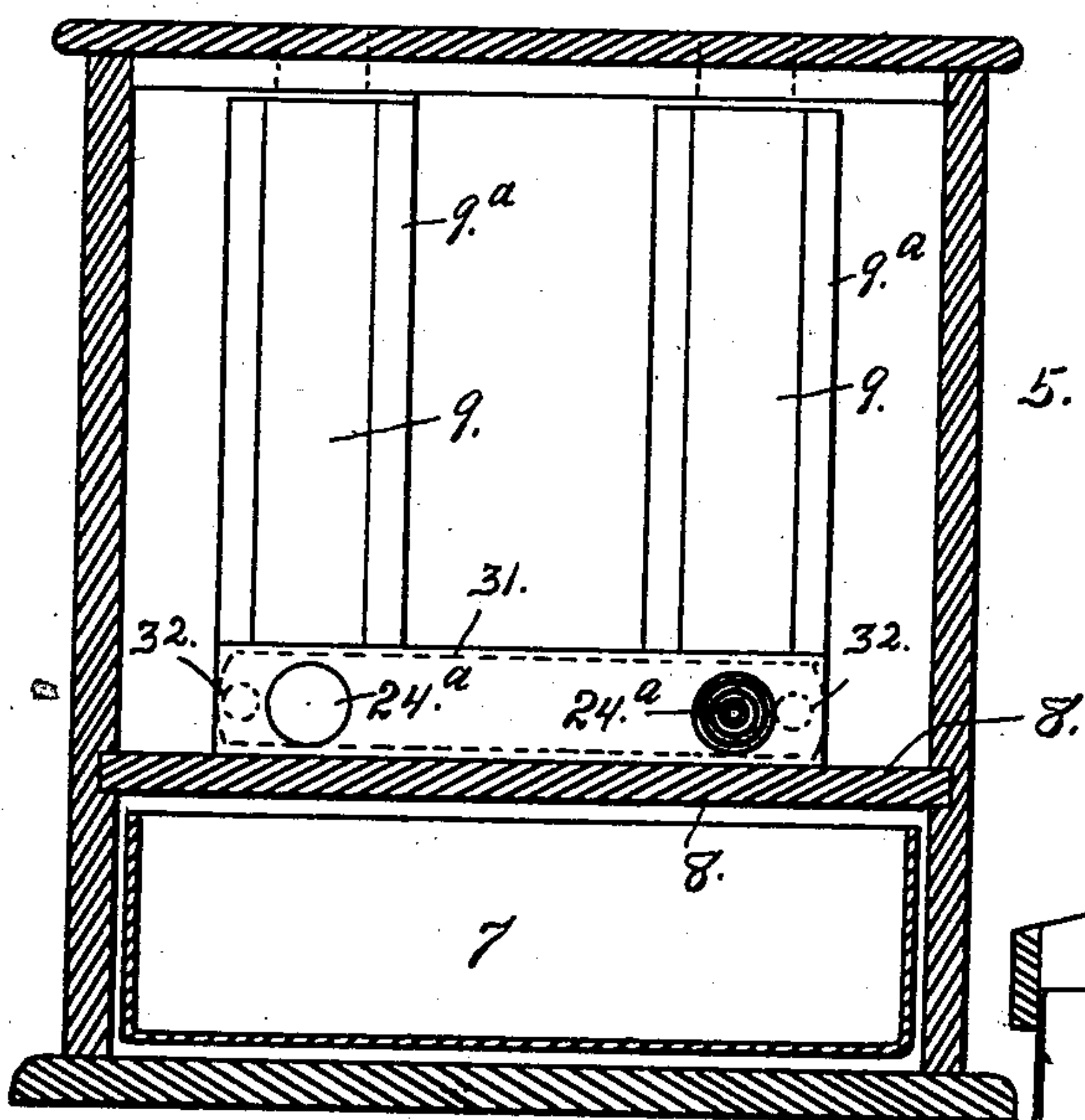


Fig. 4.

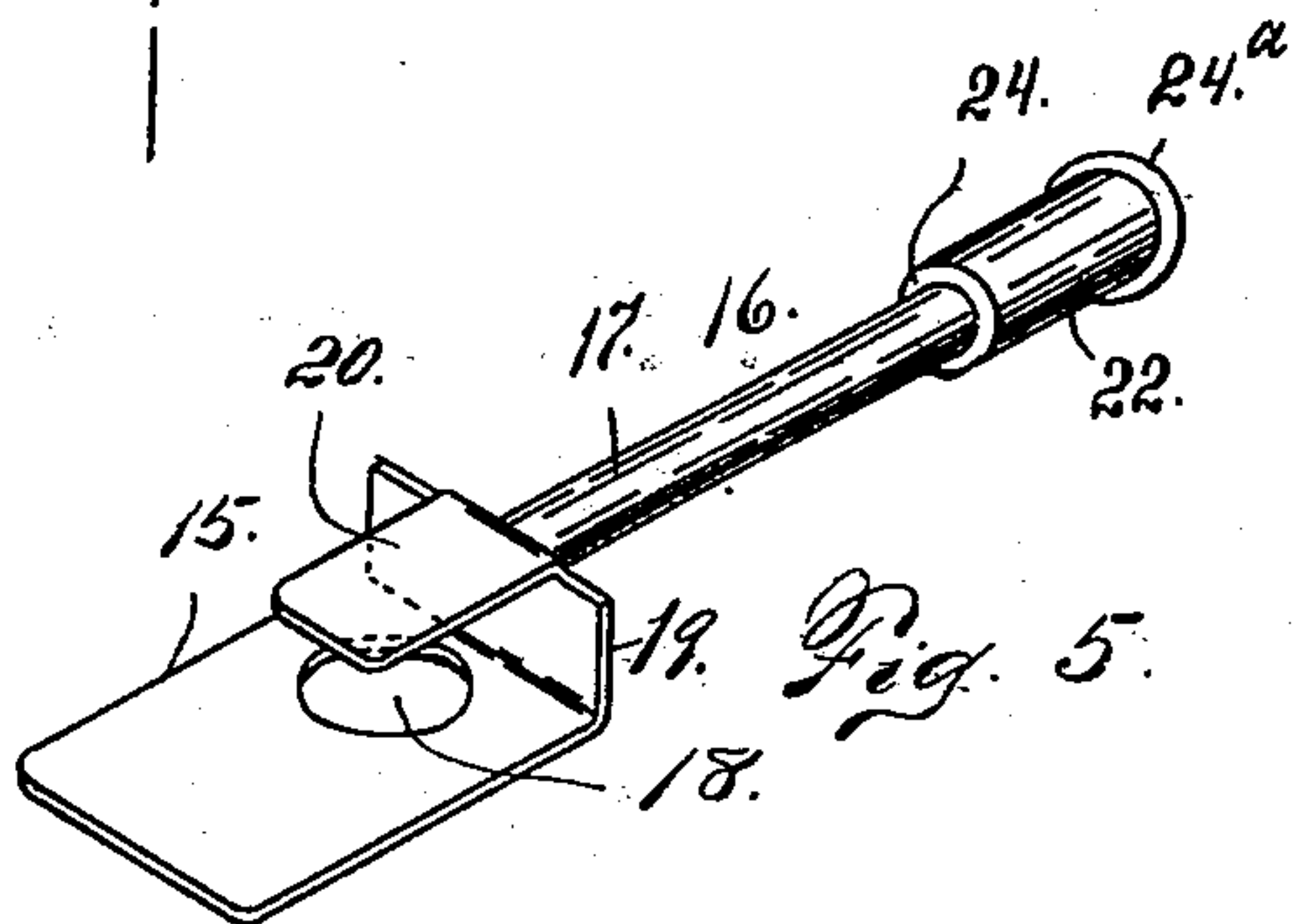


Fig. 5.

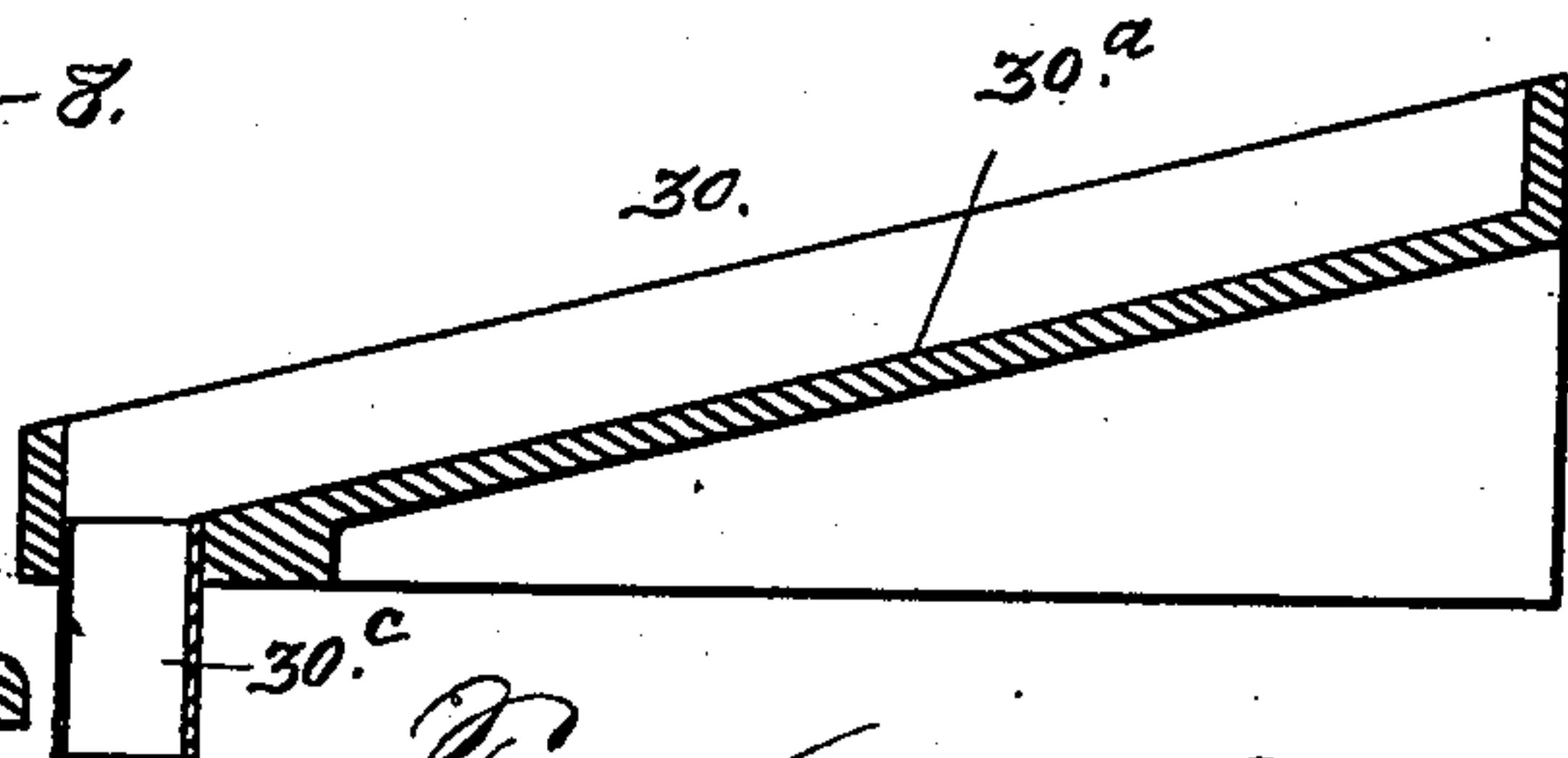


Fig. 6.

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# UNITED STATES PATENT OFFICE.

HENRY J. FOX, OF DENVER, COLORADO.

## SECRET-BALLOT BOX.

SPECIFICATION forming part of Letters Patent No. 742,783, dated October 27, 1903.

Application filed May 9, 1903. Serial No. 156,444. (No model.)

*To all whom it may concern:*

Be it known that I, HENRY J. FOX, a citizen of the United States of America, residing in the city and county of Denver, State of Colorado, have invented certain new and useful Improvements in Secret-Ballot Boxes; and I do declare the following to be a full, clear, and exact description of the invention, such as it appertains to make and use the same, reference being had to the accompanying drawings, and to the figures of reference marked thereon, which form a part of this specification.

My invention relates to improvements in secret-ballot boxes, my object being to provide a device adapted for use by societies and fraternities of all kinds where members are elected by secret ballot. It is well known that in elections of this kind white and black balls are generally employed, the white balls being counted in favor of the proposed member and the black balls against his acceptance or admission to the society.

My further object is to expedite the conducting of elections of this class and provide means whereby its secrecy is maintained and whereby mistakes are not liable to occur; and to these ends the invention consists of the features, arrangements, and combinations hereinafter described and claimed, all of which will be fully understood by reference to the accompanying drawings, in which is illustrated an embodiment thereof.

In the drawings, Figure 1 is a perspective view of my improved secret-ballot box. Fig. 2 is a section taken on the line 2 2, Fig. 4, the push-key being pushed rearwardly to the voting position. Fig. 3 is a similar view showing the key in the opposite or normal position. The filling chute or funnel is shown in place, but partly broken away, in this view. Fig. 4 is a section taken on the line 4 4, Fig. 3. Fig. 5 is a perspective view of one of the push-keys. Fig. 6 is a section taken through the filling chute or hopper.

The same reference characters indicate the same parts in all the views.

Let the numeral 5 designate a portable box or casing of suitable size and provided with a handle 6 at the top for convenience of carrying about. In the lower part of this case

is located a drawer 7 for the reception of the balls as they drop from the receptacle above. Immediately above the drawer is a floor 8, 55 which engages ways formed in the opposite walls or sides of the box. Mounted on this floor are two ball-receptacles 9, each of which, as shown in the drawings, is formed from a block of wood, in which is cut a groove 10 of 60 sufficient size to hold the balls and allow the latter to roll freely therein to an opening 12, formed in the floor 8 and registering with the bottom of the groove 10. To the opposite sides of this block in which the groove for 65 the balls is formed are applied plates or thin pieces 9<sup>a</sup>, of any suitable material, whereby the groove is closed at the opposite sides. The upper extremity of each groove 10 is open and registers with an opening 13, formed 70 in the top of the casing, to permit the filling of the grooves 10 with the balls 14 employed in the voting operation. The balls are normally prevented from falling through the opening 12 into the drawer by the lower rear- 75 ward part of a plate 15, forming a part of a push-key 16. This plate is attached to the rear extremity of a stem 17, and its forward part is provided with an opening 18, which is normally forward of the opening 12, as 80 shown in Fig. 3. The plate 15 is provided with an upwardly-projecting part 19 and a rearwardly-projecting lip 20, which occupies a position directly above the opening 18. Each push-key 16, composed of the aforesaid 85 parts, is slidably mounted in the lower forward extremity of each ball-receptacle 9, the latter being provided with an opening to permit the operation of the key, the said opening intersecting the lower part of the groove 90 10. In this opening is placed a stationary tube 21, whose forward extremity is open to receive the larger part of the key-stem 22, while its opposite extremity is partly closed, a central opening being left to allow the reduced part 17 of the stem to pass. Surround- 95 ing the reduced part of the key-stem is a coil-spring 23, whose forward extremity engages a shoulder 24 on the stem and whose opposite extremity bears against the bottom of the 100 guide-tube 21. This spring normally holds the push-key in the retracted position shown in Fig. 3, whereby the rear part of the plate 15 intersects the ball-holding groove 10 and



prevents the escape of the balls until the key is pushed rearwardly to the position shown in Fig. 2. When the push-key is in the position shown in Fig. 2, its lip 20 prevents the other balls or those above from moving downwardly while the lowermost ball is falling through the opening 12 and until the key is retracted, whereby it is made impossible for more than one ball to pass out into the drawer at each thrust of the key. The forward extremity of each key is provided with an enlargement 24<sup>a</sup>. One of these key extremities should be white and the other black, as shown in Fig. 4 of the drawings, in which the key at the right-hand side is made black, designating it from the key at the left, which is white. Hinged, as shown at 26, to the front end of the case or box is a housing 25. This housing is attached to a removable plate 27, which closes the front end of the case below the housing. This plate may be held in place by side screws 28. By removing these screws the plate and housing may be detached from the case, after which the floor 8 and its ball-holding receptacles may be slid forward out of the case. The housing is adapted to move inwardly into the box or case by raising it on its hinge, this being its normal position when not in use. The housing 25 is composed of a front plate 25<sup>a</sup> and two side plates 25<sup>c</sup>. Its upper part is provided with a projection 25<sup>d</sup>, which engages a stop 26<sup>a</sup>, the latter preventing the housing from moving out of the case too far. When this housing is open, (see Figs. 1, 2, and 3,) free access is given to the push-keys for voting purposes. The size of the hinged housing should only be such as to permit the free insertion of the hand of the voter. The housing makes it impossible for others to observe which key the voter uses. The operation of the black key allows the black balls to fall into the drawer, while the operation of the white key allows the white balls to fall.

As a convenience for filling the ball-grooves I employ a funnel or chute 30, the latter being provided with an inclined floor 30<sup>a</sup> and a surrounding rim to hold the balls in place. One extremity of this chute is provided with an opening, and the chute is so shaped that the balls are directed toward this opening. Projecting downwardly from the chute and surrounding this opening is a short tube 30<sup>c</sup>, which enters the top of either ball-groove during the operation of filling the same. The balls as they are removed from the drawer may be placed in the chute when the latter is in the position shown in Fig. 3 of the drawings.

When the device is in use, the openings in the top of the casing which register with the ball-holding grooves are closed by a suitable device 33.

From the foregoing description the use and operation of my improved device will be readily understood. When the device is ready for use, the hinged chute is thrown open or

to the position shown in the drawings. Each voter then presses one of the keys 16. If he presses the white key, a white ball is allowed to pass into the drawer below. If he presses a black key, a black ball falls into the said drawer. After all who may desire have voted the drawer is removed from the machine and the votes counted. If the white balls exceed the black, the person voted for is elected. If the black balls exceed the white, the proposed member is rejected. The custom in some societies is that a single black ball rejects.

In order to prevent the balls when in the lower extremity of either ball-holding groove 10 from rolling out into the push-key opening adjacent the lower extremity of the chute 10, the device is provided with a narrow vertical plate 31, suitably attached and forming a partition between the lower extremity of the groove 10 and the horizontal opening in which the push-key is adapted to reciprocate. This plate confines the lowermost ball in its proper position in the lower extremity of the groove and prevents it from moving from this position until the push-key is actuated to bring its opening 18 into position to register with the lower extremity of the ball-holding groove, as heretofore explained.

Having thus described my invention, what I claim is—

1. A secret-ballot box comprising a casing, two receptacles for balls, each receptacle having an opening through which the balls have a tendency to fall, the casing being provided with push-key openings extending at right angles to the openings for the escape of the balls from the receptacles, spring-held push-keys located in the push-key receptacles, a partition separating the push-key openings from the ball-receptacles and forming a stop limiting the forward movement of the push-keys, the forward portion of each push-key, having an opening arranged when the key is pushed to its rearward limit of movement, to register with the opening in the ball-receptacle, whereby a ball is allowed to fall out of said receptacle, the key having a projection located above the lowermost ball to prevent more than one ball from falling, the two push-key projections passing respectively above and below the said partition.

2. The combination with a suitable casing having a drawer in its lower portion, and ball-receptacles located above, each receptacle having a vertical lower portion through which the balls have a tendency to fall, push-key openings located in the plane of the receptacles and extending at right angles to the lower portion of said receptacles, tubes inserted in the push-key openings, push-keys located in said openings and passing through openings in the bottoms of the tubes, coil-springs surrounding the push-keys and bearing at one extremity against the bottoms of the tubes and at the opposite extremities against shoulders formed on the push-keys, the push-keys being provided with openings



which are normally located forward of the openings in their corresponding receptacles, the arrangement being such that when any key is pushed rearwardly its opening is made to register with the opening in the bottom of the receptacle, whereby the lowermost ball is allowed to drop through into the drawer below, each push-key having a projection which passes between the lowermost ball and the ball next above when the key is pressed, whereby but one ball is allowed to pass through the opening in the bottom of the receptacle at the same time or for a single operation of the push-key.

3. In a secret-ballot box, the combination with a suitable casing, of ball-receptacles located therein, each receptacle having an opening below through which the balls have a tendency to roll when unobstructed, push-keys which normally prevent the balls from leaving the receptacles, the said keys having openings normally located forward of the openings in the bottom of the receptacle, the arrangement, however, being such that when any key is pushed the said opening is made to register with the opening in the receptacle to allow a ball to drop therefrom, the said push-keys being differently colored, and the front of the casing having an opening, and a housing hinged to swing in said opening, said housing being closed on three sides and arranged to conceal the keys during the operation of voting, the said housing being also adapted to close the front opening of the casing when the device is not in use.

4. In a secret-ballot box, the combination with a casing, ball-receptacles located therein and having grooves or ways containing balls, the said grooves being open at their lower extremities whereby the balls have a tendency to fall out, push-keys for controlling the passage of balls from the said receptacles, an opening formed in the front part of the casing to give access to the push-keys, a housing hinged in the front part of the casing in order to conceal the keys from view

during the operation of voting, said keys being differently colored to correspond with the color of the balls in said receptacles, the said receptacles being open at the top of the casing, and a suitable chute having a depending tubular part adapted to enter the opening of either ball-receptacle, to facilitate the introduction of balls to said receptacles, substantially as described.

5. A secret-ballot box comprising a casing, a block having a groove formed therein to receive and hold the balls, the said groove having an opening at its lower extremity through which the balls will fall when unobstructed, a horizontal passage formed in the block and intersecting the ball-holding groove, a partition separating the horizontal passage from said groove, a tube located in the horizontal passage and having an opening in its rear extremity smaller than the opening in the body of the tube, a push-key located in said passage and normally supporting the balls, the said push-key having a reduced part passing through the opening in the rear extremity of the tube, a spring surrounding the push-key, its extremities engaging the rear extremity of the tube, and a shoulder on the push-key, a space being left between the rear extremity of the tube and the said partition, the said space determining the length of the push-key's stroke, the forward portion of the push-key having an opening arranged when the key is pushed to its rearward limit of movement, to register with the opening in the ball-holding groove whereby a ball is allowed to fall out of said groove, the key having a projection located above the lowermost ball to prevent more than one ball from falling, the said projections passing respectively above and below the said partition.

In testimony whereof I affix my signature in presence of two witnesses.

HENRY J. FOX.

Witnesses:

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A. J. O'BRIEN.