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PATENTED JAN. 1, 1907.

G. L. MURDEN.  
SECRET BALLOT AND DISTRIBUTER BOX.

APPLICATION FILED MAY 11, 1906.

Fig. 1.

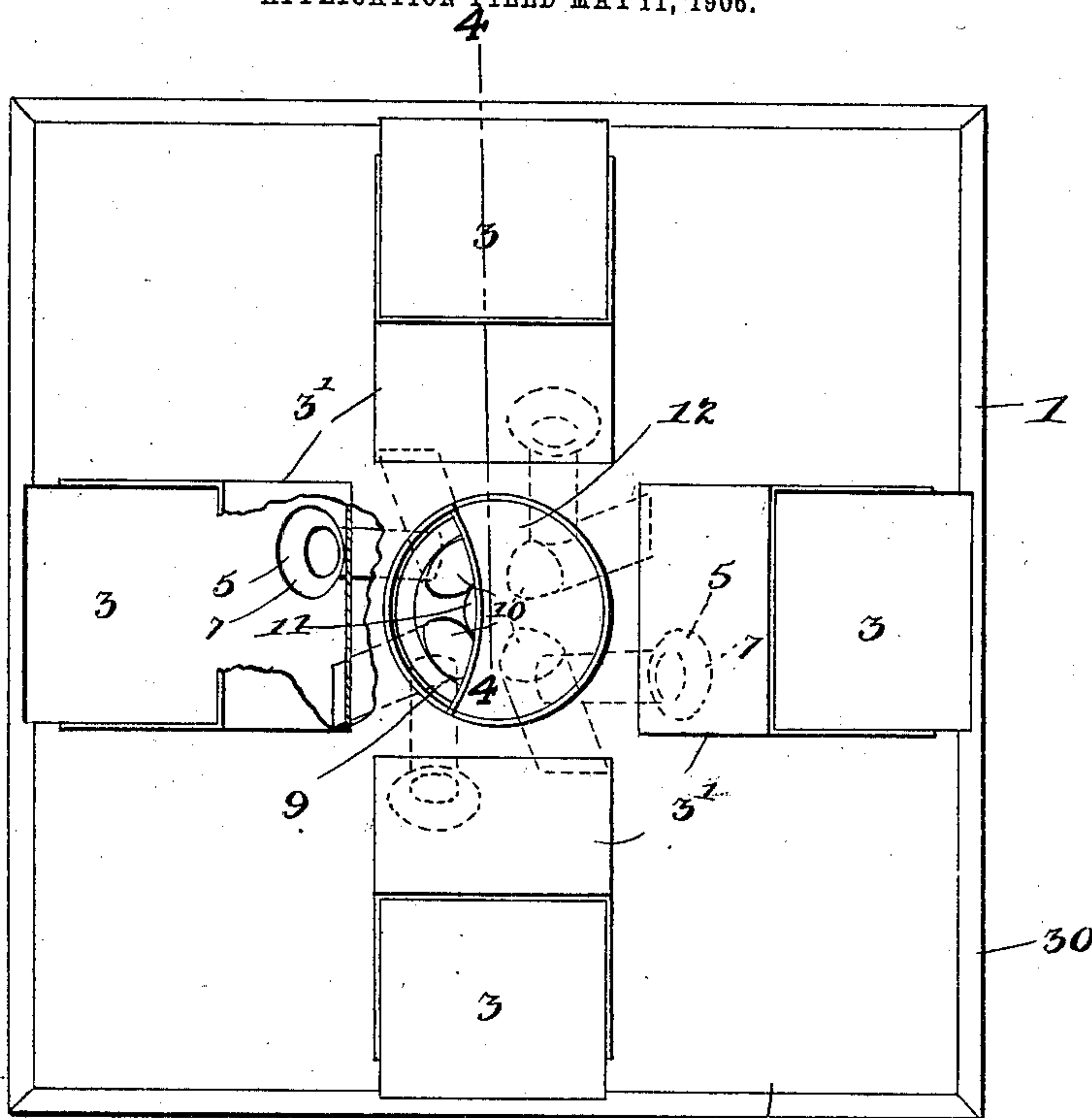


Fig. 3.

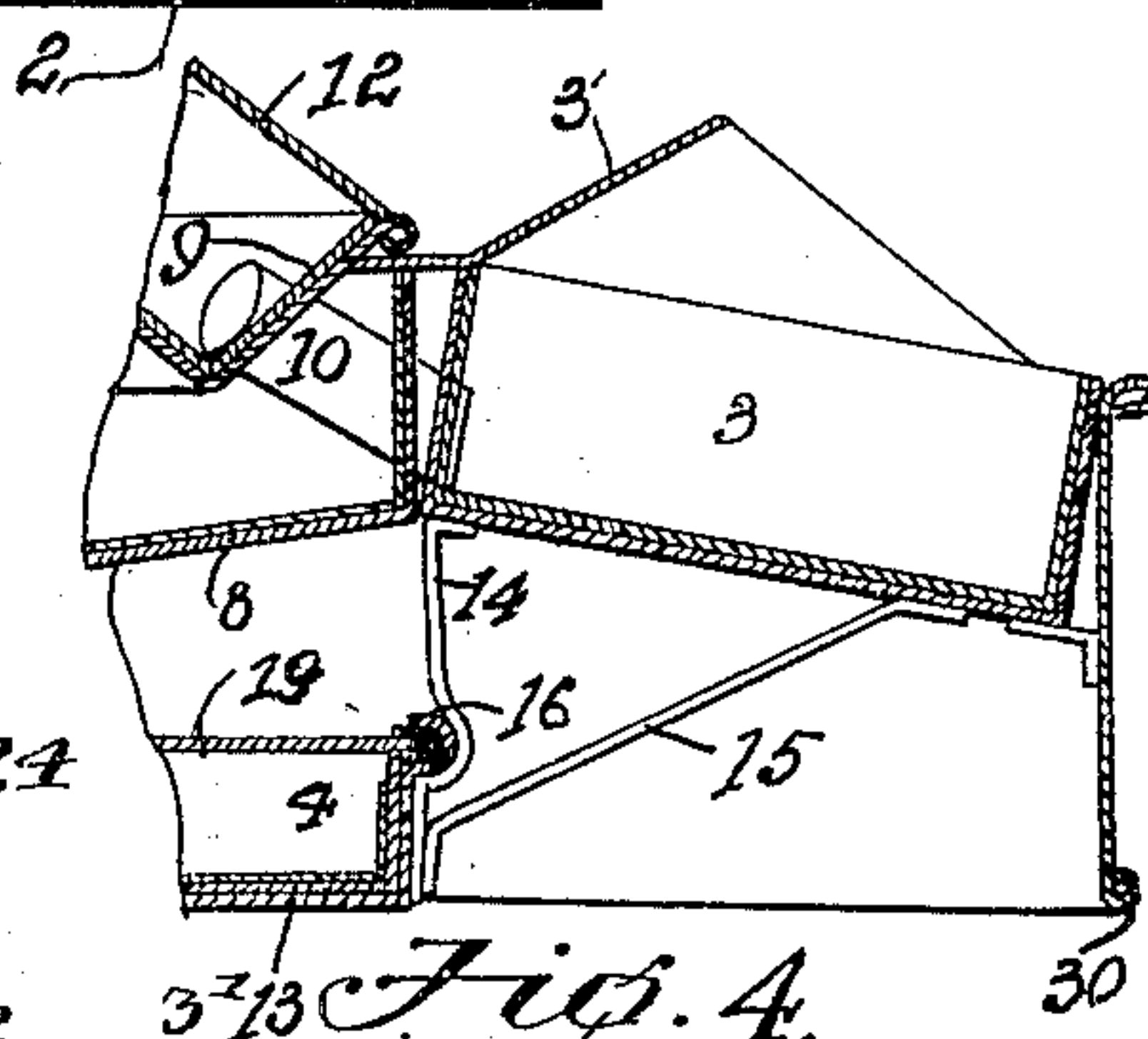
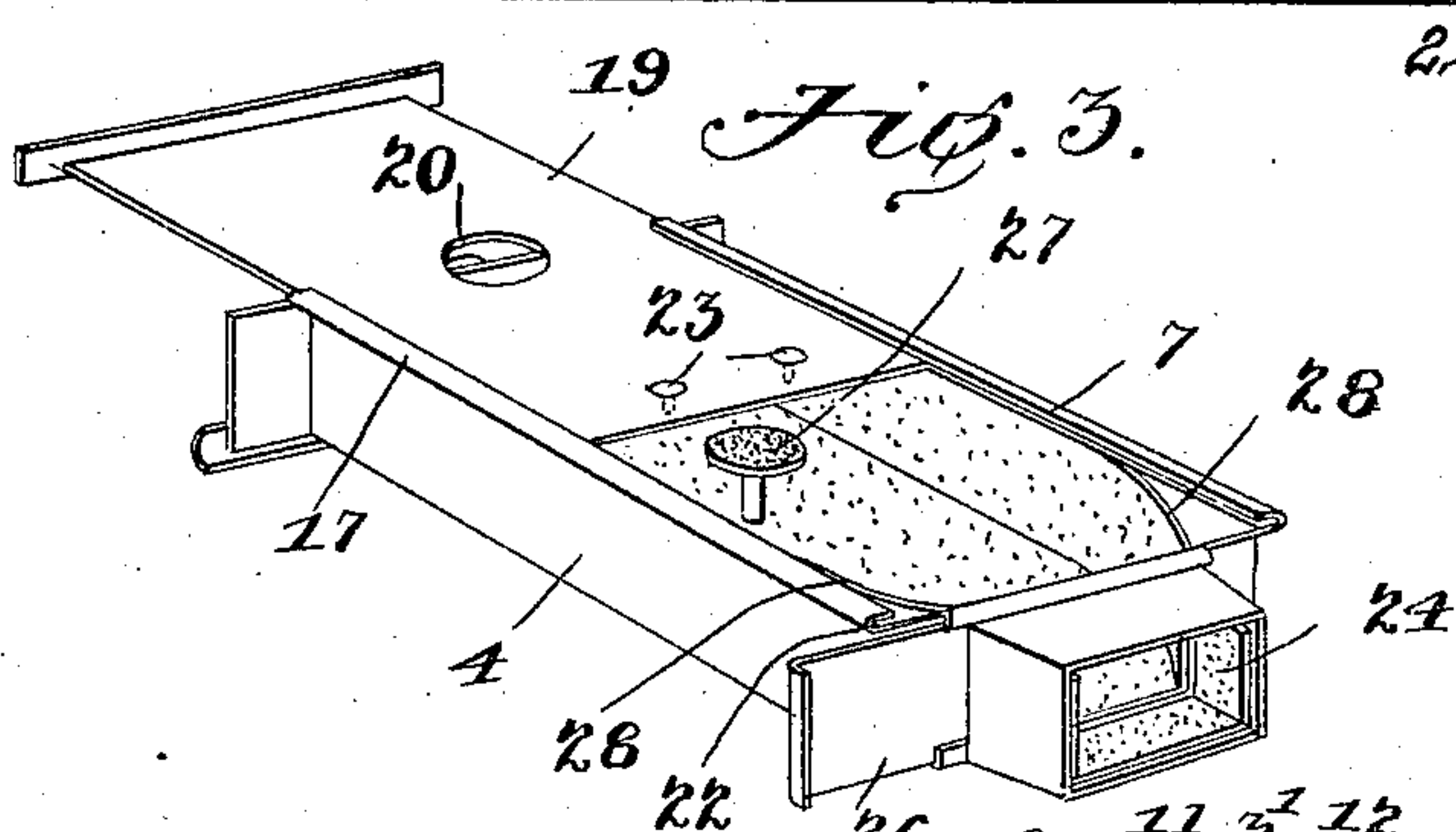
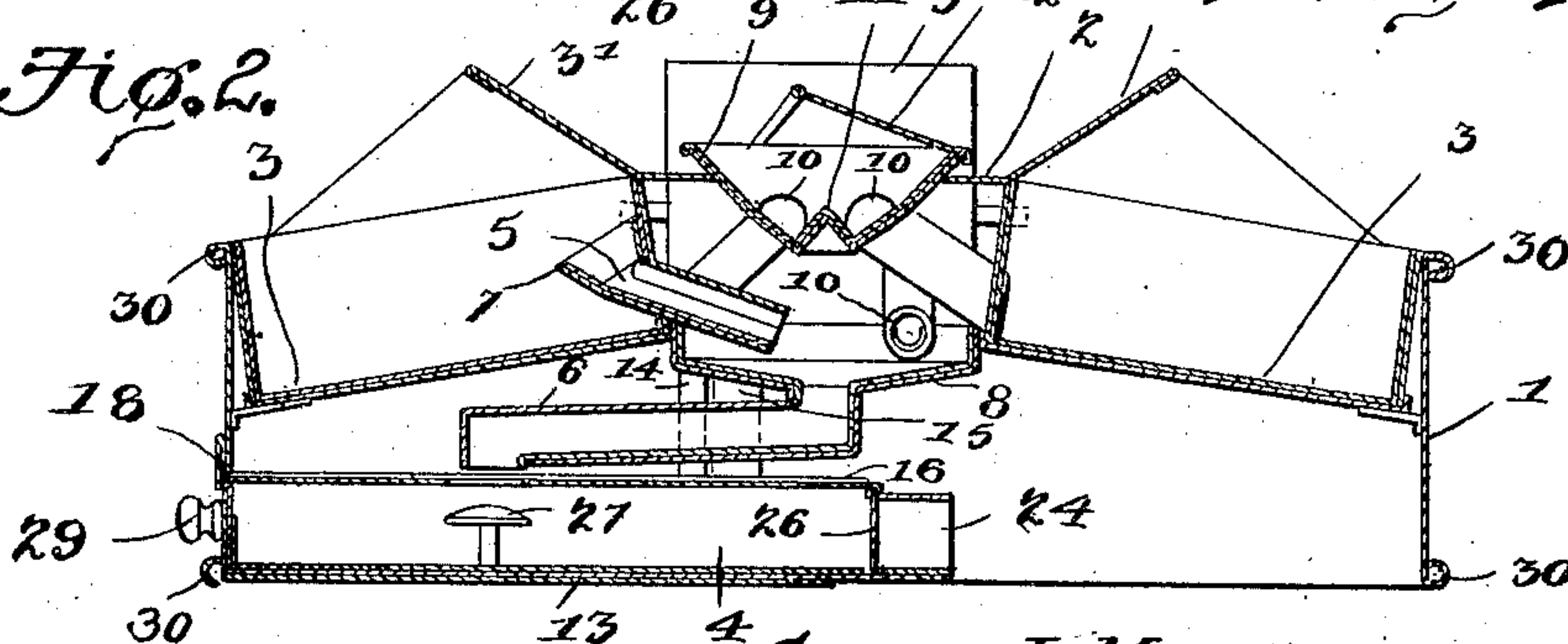


Fig. 2.



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# UNITED STATES PATENT OFFICE.

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## SECRET-BALLOT AND DISTRIBUTER BOX.

No. 840,151.

Specification of Letters Patent.

Patented Jan. 1, 1907.

Application filed May 11, 1906. Serial No. 316,313.

*To all whom it may concern:*

Be it known that I, GEORGE L. MURDEN, a citizen of the United States, residing at Peru, in the county of Miami and State of Indiana, have invented a new and useful Secret-Bal-  
lot and Distributer Box, of which the follow-  
ing is a specification.

The present invention relates to a ballot-box designed primarily for use in secret so-  
cieties for voting on applications for mem-  
bership and other matters requiring secret  
balloting.

It has for its objects to improve and sim-  
plify devices of this character, so as to lessen  
the cost of manufacture, improve the opera-  
tion, and expedite the matter of casting bal-  
lots by enabling a number of votes to be cast  
simultaneously with the utmost secrecy.

With these and other objects in view the  
invention consists in the construction and  
novel combination and arrangement of parts  
hereinafter fully described, and defined with  
particularity in the claims appended hereto.

In the accompanying drawings, which  
illustrate one of the embodiments of the in-  
vention, Figure 1 is a plan view of the ballot-  
box. Fig. 2 is a vertical transverse view  
taken centrally through the box. Fig. 3 is a  
perspective view of the receptacle for receiv-  
ing the ballots that are cast. Fig. 4 is a de-  
tail sectional view showing the braces of the  
frame for the receptacle shown in Fig. 3.

Corresponding parts in the several figures  
are indicated throughout by similar charac-  
ters of reference.

Referring to the drawings, 1 represents a  
box or other supporting-frame, which is po-  
lygonal in plan view and is adapted to rest on  
a table or stand, or, if desired, it may be pro-  
vided with a pedestal or other suitable struc-  
ture for supporting it. By preference the  
box is square, and arranged in the top 2 and  
extending radially from the center thereof  
are ballot compartments or pockets 3. These  
compartments are arranged on diametrical  
lines, and they form stations at which four  
persons may vote at one time. In order that  
one voter cannot see what character of ballot  
any of the other voters are voting, hoods or  
shields 3' are arranged over the compart-  
ments, which extend outwardly from the in-  
ner ends thereof in an upward direction,  
thereby permitting the interior of each com-  
partment to be observed only from directly

in front of each. This permits the individ-  
ual voter to see in only that box or compart-  
ment in which he is voting.

Extending from each compartment is a  
chute, which collectively constitute what is  
termed a "conductor," whereby the ballots  
are conveyed to a removable receptacle 4  
during the balloting. This conductor com-  
prises a tube or chute 5, extending from the  
inner end of each compartment in an in-  
wardly and downwardly inclined direction,  
where they unite with a single chute or tube  
extending from the center of the box to one  
side thereof and terminating over the center  
of the receptacle 4. The outer end of the  
chute 6 opens downwardly toward the recep-  
tacle 4. The receiving ends of the tubes 5  
are provided with a mouthpiece 7, extending  
and expanding inwardly into the compart-  
ments, so as to facilitate the dropping of the  
ballots into them. The laterally-inclined  
tube or chute 6 is supported at its inner end  
on the plate 8, carried on the inner ends of  
the pockets or compartments.

To distribute the ballots, which latter are  
suitably-colored balls such as are commonly  
employed, they are emptied from the recep-  
tacle 4, into which they have been deposited  
during the balloting, into what is termed  
a "distributer." This comprises a funnel-  
shaped device 9, arranged in the top 2 of the  
box in a central position between the several  
compartments, and extending in a down-  
wardly-inclined direction from the bottom of  
the funnel are four chutes or tubular pas-  
sages 10, that terminate at the lower ends in  
the front of the ballot-compartments. Lo-  
cated centrally between the mouth or inlet  
ends of these four chutes is a cone 11, which  
facilitates the distributing of the ballots  
more equally into the chutes and thence to  
the ballot-compartments. Arranged over  
the mouth of the funnel is a curved hood 12.  
The receptacle 4 is supported in a frame 13,  
that is attached at its outer end to a side wall  
of the box and is suspended at its inner end  
by laterally-extending brackets 14 15, at-  
tached to the bottoms of two diametrically  
opposite ballot-compartments. The frame  
13 is a box-like structure in which the recep-  
tacle 4 is adapted to slide in and out, and  
guides 16 are provided on the frame, which  
receive the flanges 17, arranged along the  
upper edges of the receptacle. The recep-



tacle slides in and out of the ballot-box through an opening 18, arranged in the side thereof.

Referring to Fig. 3, which shows the receptacle 4, 19 represents the slide or lid that closes the receptacle. This is provided with a central opening 20, over which the discharge end of the chute 6 is disposed. The long edges of the slide are guided by the flanges 17. These flanges are formed by the metal sides of the receptacle, which extend outwardly, and then bent inwardly parallel to the outwardly-extending portion and suitably spaced apart from the latter, as shown at 22. The front end of the slide is provided with an upwardly-extending flange by which the slide may be gripped for removing it, and the rear end is provided with lugs 23, extending inwardly to serve as stops adapted to engage the front of the drawer, so as to prevent the slide from being withdrawn entirely. The rear of the receptacle is provided with a converging mouth 24, which is controlled by the vertically - disposed and horizontally - movable slide 26. Arranged normally below the opening in the lid is a buffer 27 or other suitable device, upon which the ballots are adapted to strike before dropping to the bottom of the receptacle. This device is covered with a suitable material for deadening the noise which the ballots striking upon the same would otherwise produce. Extending from the inner surface of the side walls, at the rear ends of the latter, are deflector-plates 28, which guide the ballots into the converging mouth as the receptacle is being emptied. The receptacle, as well as the ballot compartments and passages of the conductor and distributor, is preferably lined with a suitable cushioning material, such as a suitable cloth, so as to deaden the noise which the movement of the ballots would produce. On the outer end of the receptacle is a grip-button or other device 29, whereby the receptacle can be withdrawn from the ballot-box. The top and bottom edges of the box are provided with a molding 30, which adds to the appearance of the device. If desired, however, the box may be ornamented to render the appearance thereof more pleasing.

The construction illustrated in the drawings represents a box entirely of sheet metal, such as tin, the joints of the parts being connected by soldering or otherwise. It is obvious, however, that the device can be constructed of wood or any other suitable material.

When a ballot is desired to be taken, the ballot-box is placed in the center of the club-room and the voters approach the same from four diametrically opposite directions in line with the ballot-pockets. The ballots, it will be understood, are permanently left in

the ballot compartments, and by reason of the downward and forward incline of the bottom of these compartments the ballots rest at the front ends, so as to be conveniently picked up. As the voters reach the ballot-box each picks up a ballot which he desires to cast and then inserts it into the tube of the conductor communicating with his compartment, without having to withdraw the ballot from the compartment and probably to reveal the character of the ballot he is voting. This is all done under the protection of the shield or hood arranged over each compartment, so that absolute secrecy is preserved. After the votes are cast the receptacle into which they have fallen is removed and the results of the balloting ascertained. By withdrawing the slide at the inner end the receptacle is opened and the ballots are discharged into the funnel of the distributor, and by means of the latter they are distributed more or less equally to the several compartments, so that the ballot-box is ready for the casting of the second ballot, and so on.

I have described the principle of operation of the invention, together with the apparatus which I now consider to be the best embodiment thereof; but I desire to have it understood that various changes in form, proportion, and certain details of construction may be resorted to within the scope of the claims without departing from the principle of the invention or sacrificing any of the advantages thereof.

What is claimed is—

1. A ballot-box comprising a plurality of diametrically-disposed ballot-compartments, hoods arranged over the same which extend outwardly in opposite directions with respect to the same, and a receptacle adapted to receive the ballots cast from the several compartments.

2. A ballot-box comprising a plurality of radially-disposed compartments for the ballots, hoods extending outwardly over the compartments and providing access to the compartments in a radial, inward direction, and means for receiving the ballots cast from the several compartments.

3. A ballot-box comprising a plurality of radially-disposed compartments for the ballots to be cast, the floors of which incline downwardly in an outward direction from a central point, hoods extending in an upwardly-inclined direction over the compartments, a receptacle, and means for conveying the ballots cast from the compartments to the receptacle.

4. A ballot-box comprising a plurality of ballot-compartments, a common receptacle for receiving the ballots cast from the compartments, and a conductor intermediate the compartments and the receptacle and having



inlets at each compartment and a common outlet at the receptacle.

5 5. A ballot-box comprising a plurality of ballot-compartments, a common receptacle for receiving the ballots cast from the compartments, and a conductor intermediate the compartments and the receptacle, said conductor comprising a plurality of passages terminating in a single passage leading to the  
10 receptacle.

6. A ballot-box comprising a plurality of ballot-compartments, a common receptacle for receiving the ballots cast from the compartments, and a conductor intermediate the  
15 compartments and the receptacle, said conductor comprising a plurality of downwardly-inclined passages communicating with the inner ends of the compartments, and a single passage leading from the lower ends of the  
20 said passages to the receptacle.

7. A ballot-box comprising a plurality of cushion-lined ballot-compartments, a cushion-lined receptacle, and a conductor intermediate the two for conveying the ballots to  
25 be cast from the compartments to the receptacle, said conductor comprising a plurality of cushion-lined passages, a cushion-lined conical member at the discharge end of the passages and provided with a central opening, and a cushioned passage leading from  
30 the opening of the member through the receptacle.

8. A ballot-box comprising a plurality of ballot-compartments, and a distributor arranged to distribute the ballots to the several compartments from a common point.  
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9. A ballot-box comprising a plurality of ballot-compartments, and a distributor arranged to distribute the ballots to the several compartments from a common point, said distributor comprising a receiving member and passages extending therefrom to the compartments.  
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10. A ballot-box comprising a plurality of radially-disposed ballot-compartments, and a distributor arranged to distribute the ballots to the several compartments from a common point, said distributor consisting of a receiving member arranged centrally between the compartments, and a passage between each compartment and said member.  
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11. A ballot-box comprising a plurality of radially-disposed ballot-compartments, and a distributor arranged to distribute the ballots to the several compartments from a common point, said distributor consisting of a funnel-shaped member supported centrally with respect to the compartment, and tubes communicating with the chamber and the  
55 60 several compartments.

12. A ballot-box comprising a plurality of radially-disposed ballot-compartments, a receptacle for receiving the ballots voted, a plurality of members for conveying the bal-

lots from the compartments to the receptacle, and a distributor for distributing the ballots to the compartments from the receptacle, said distributor comprising a receiving member and a plurality of conduits between the chamber and the compartments which  
65 70 are closely nested among the said conveying members.

13. A ballot-box comprising a frame, a plurality of ballot-compartments supported thereon, a receptacle arranged on the frame, a plurality of tubes extending from the compartments, a tube arranged between the latter tubes and the receptacle, and distributing-tubes leading to the compartments.  
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14. A ballot-box comprising a frame, a plurality of ballot-compartments supported thereon, a receptacle arranged on the frame, a plurality of tubes extending from the compartments, a tube arranged between the latter tubes and the receptacle, a funnel-shaped member carried by the frame and tubes extending from said member into the several compartments.  
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15. A ballot-box comprising a plurality of radially-extending ballot-compartments, a system of tubes connected with the compartments and beginning centrally between the compartments and leading to a common point; a receptacle removably supported under the said point, said receptacle being provided with an opening for receiving the ballots, and a noise-deadening device supported in the receptacle and located under the opening for the ballots to strike upon when entering the receptacle.  
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16. In a ballot-box, a ballot-receiving receptacle comprising a box-shaped structure, a slide on the top thereof and removable therewith, a slide at one end thereof, and a mouth controlled by the latter slide.  
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17. In a ballot-box, a receptacle comprising a rectangular box-shaped structure, a longitudinally-movable slide therefor provided with an opening for receiving the ballots that are cast, a slide mounted on the end of the box through which the receptacle is emptied, and a mouth controlled by the latter slide.  
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18. In a ballot-box, a receptacle comprising a rectangular box-shaped structure, a longitudinally-movable sliding cover therefor provided with an opening for receiving the ballots that are cast, a slide mounted on the end of the box through which the receptacle is emptied, a mouth controlled by the latter slide, and deflector-plates arranged in the receptacle for guiding the ballots into the mouth.  
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19. In a ballot-box, a receptacle comprising a rectangular box-shaped structure, a longitudinally-movable sliding cover therefor provided with an opening for receiving the ballots that are cast, a device in said structure  
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arranged under the opening upon which the  
ballots strike on entering the receptacle, a  
slide mounted on the end of the box through  
which the receptacle is emptied, a mouth  
5 controlled by the latter slide, and deflector-  
plates arranged in the receptacle for guiding  
the ballots into the mouth.

In testimony that I claim the foregoing as  
my own I have hereto affixed my signature  
in the presence of two witnesses.

GEORGE L. MURDEN.

Witnesses:

LEWIS W. EDWARDS,  
WILL. H. GUSTIN.