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Erb et al.

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(54) **DYNAMIC FURNITURE**

(75) Inventors: **Scott C. Erb**, Alexandria, VA (US); **Mark M. Erb**, Alexandria, VA (US)

(73) Assignee: **Exciting Inc.**, Alexandria, VA (US)

(21) Appl. No.: **13/507,810**

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Filed: **Jul. 16, 2007**

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A47C 1/12 (2006.01)

(52) **U.S. Cl.**
USPC **297/321**; 297/325; 297/327; 297/354.13

(58) **Field of Classification Search**
USPC 397/320, 354.11, 321, 340, 325, 327, 397/354.12, 354.13, 313, 354.1
See application file for complete search history.

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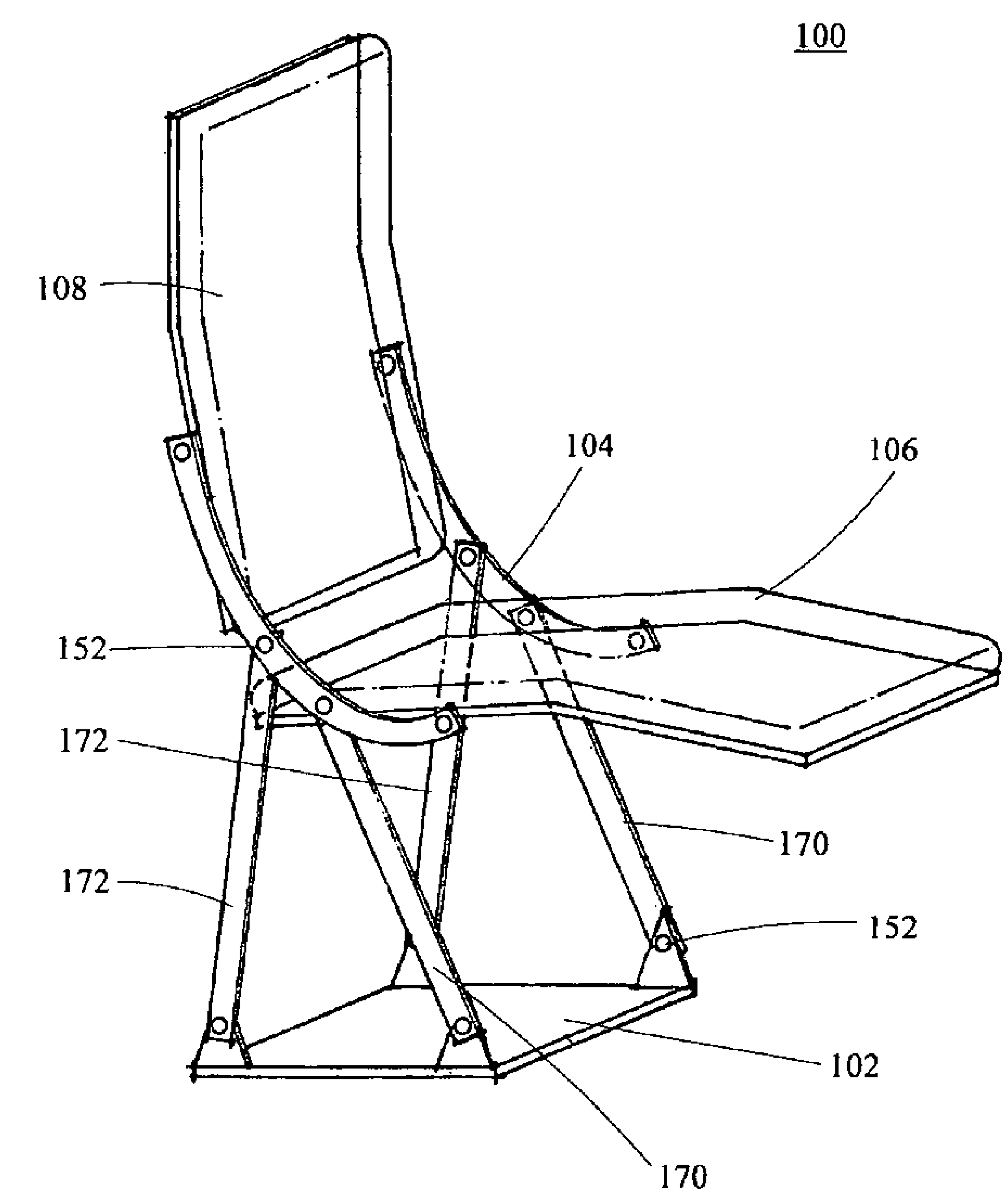
Primary Examiner — Anthony D Barfield
(74) *Attorney, Agent, or Firm* — Greenblum & Bernstein P.L.C.

(57) **ABSTRACT**

Dynamic furniture having platforms in dynamic attachment to an actuator assembly that in turn is in dynamic attachment to a base. Use of motional platforms supported by a motional actuator assembly permits an article of the furniture to conform to the many and varied body positions a user wants, and allows a user to more easily change body positions while remaining within the furniture, and in medical scenarios may obviate most needs to transfer a patient from one article of furniture to another.

8 Claims, 17 Drawing Sheets



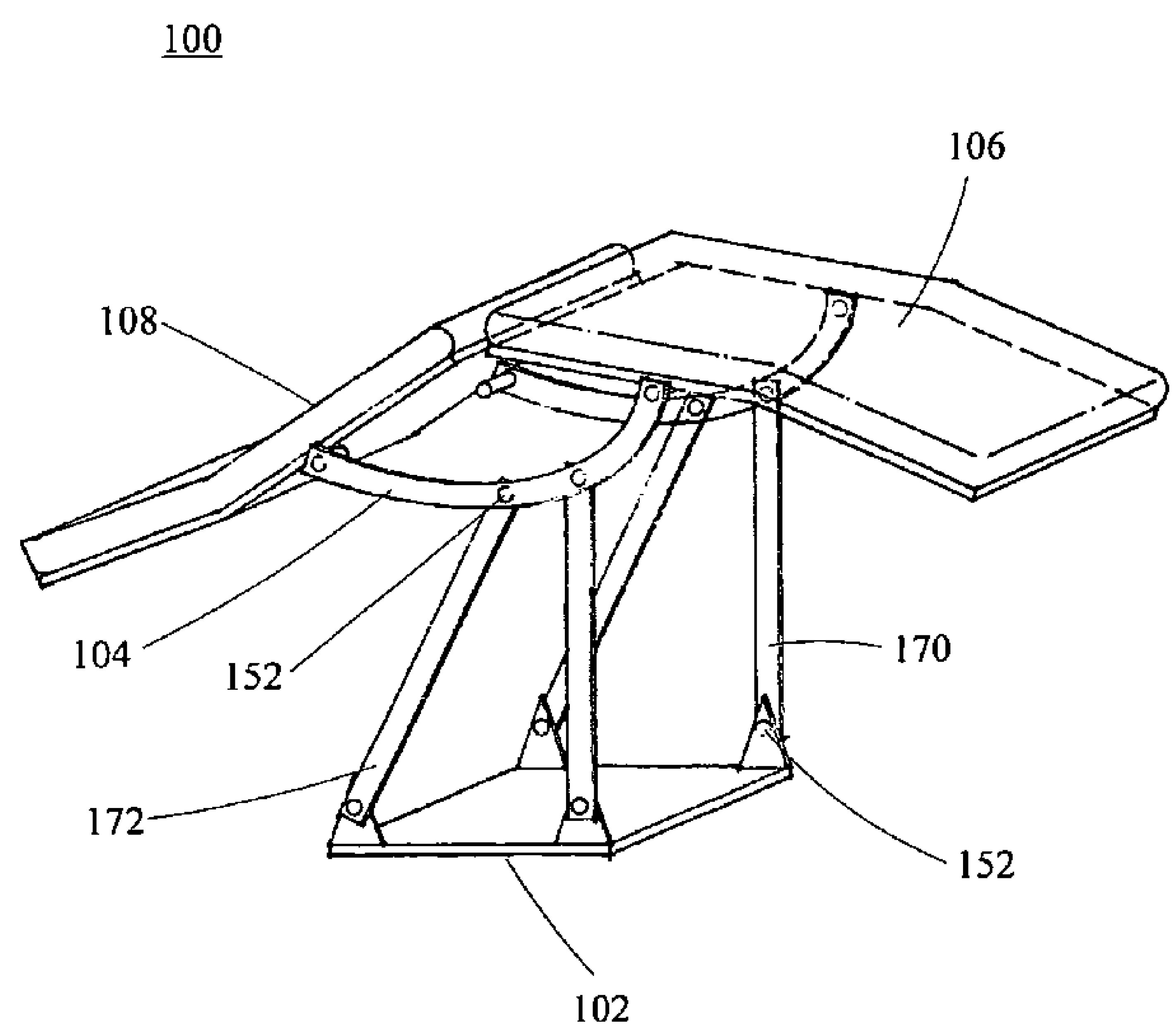


FIG. 1

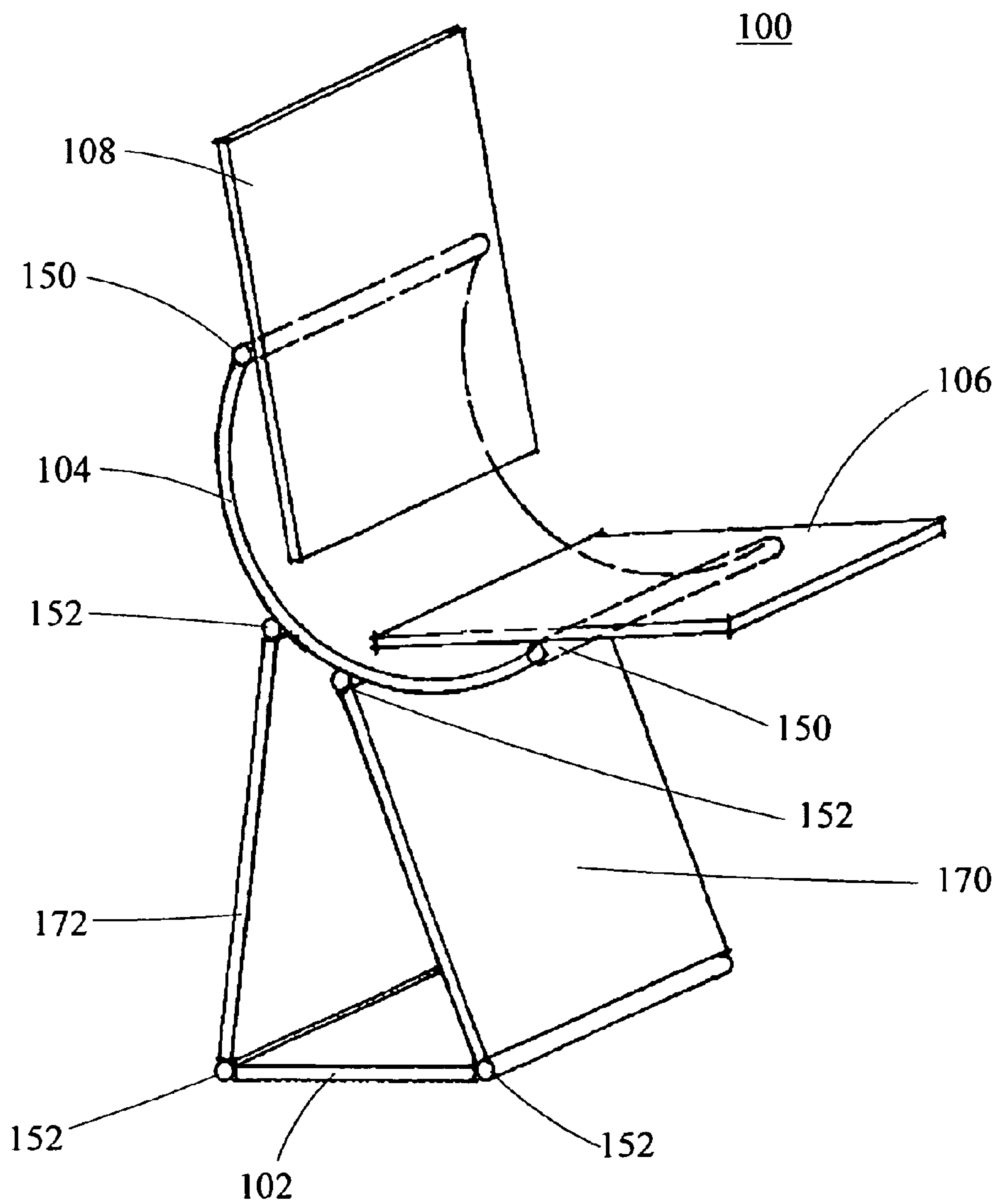


FIG. 2

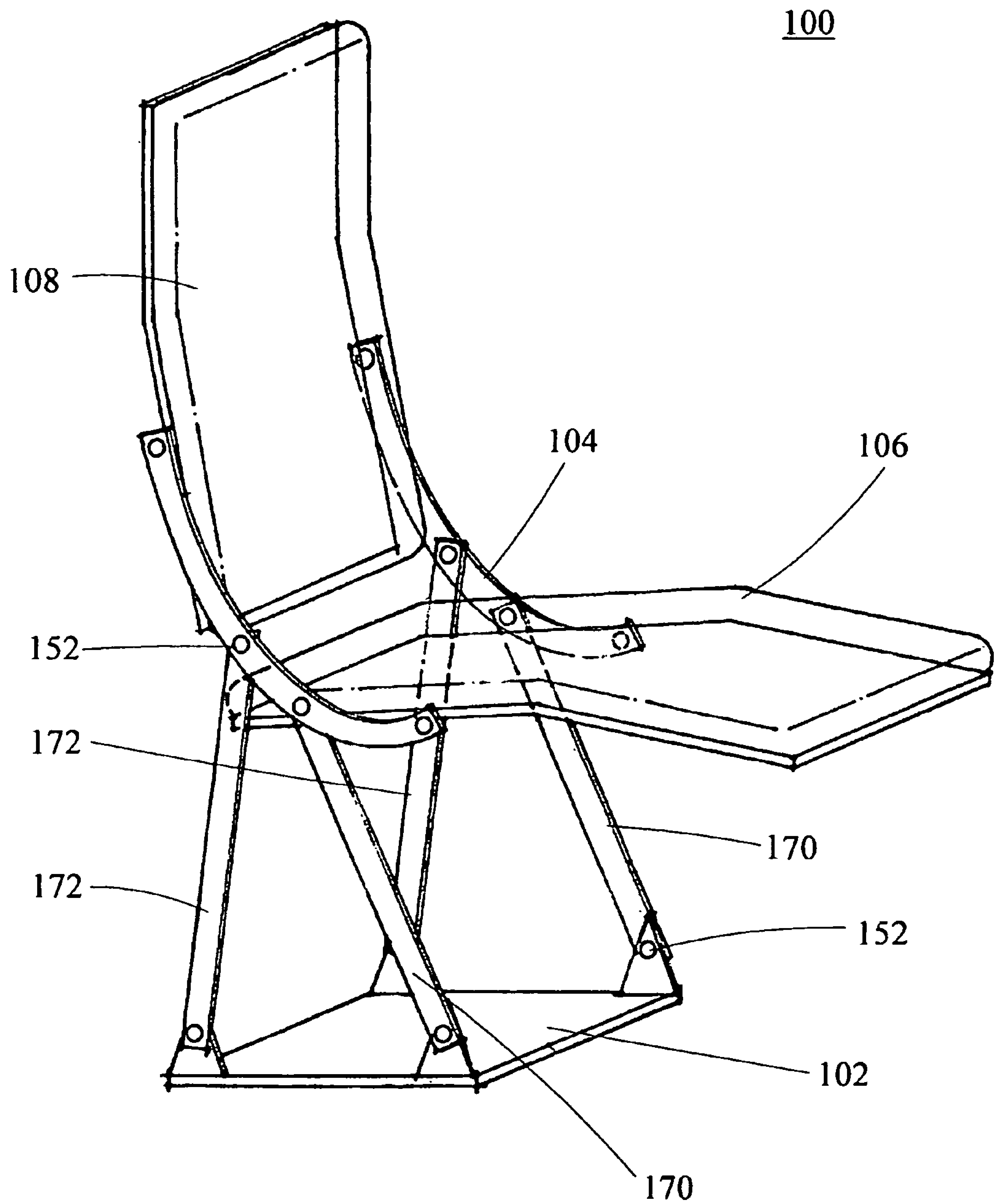


FIG. 3

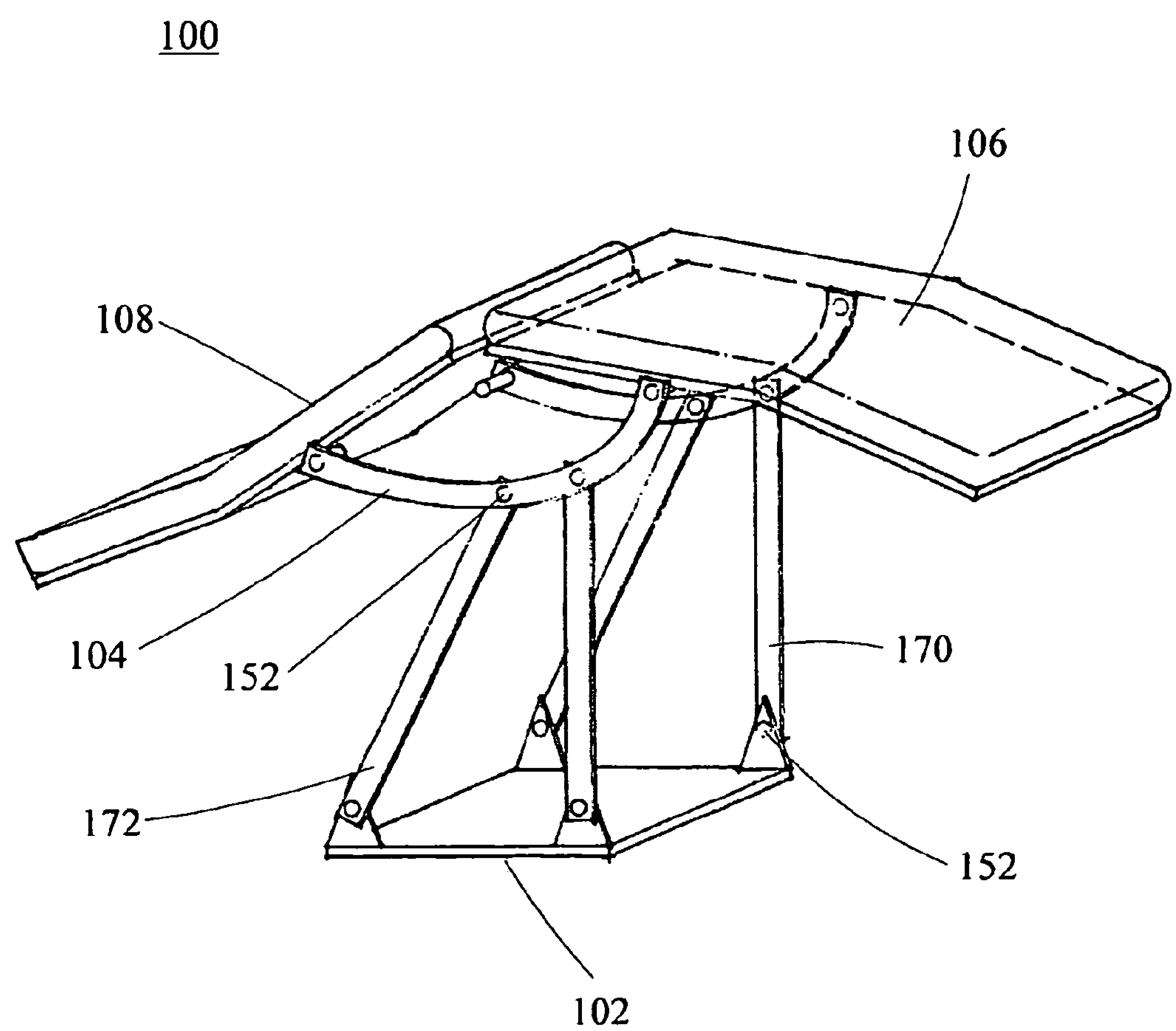


FIG. 4a

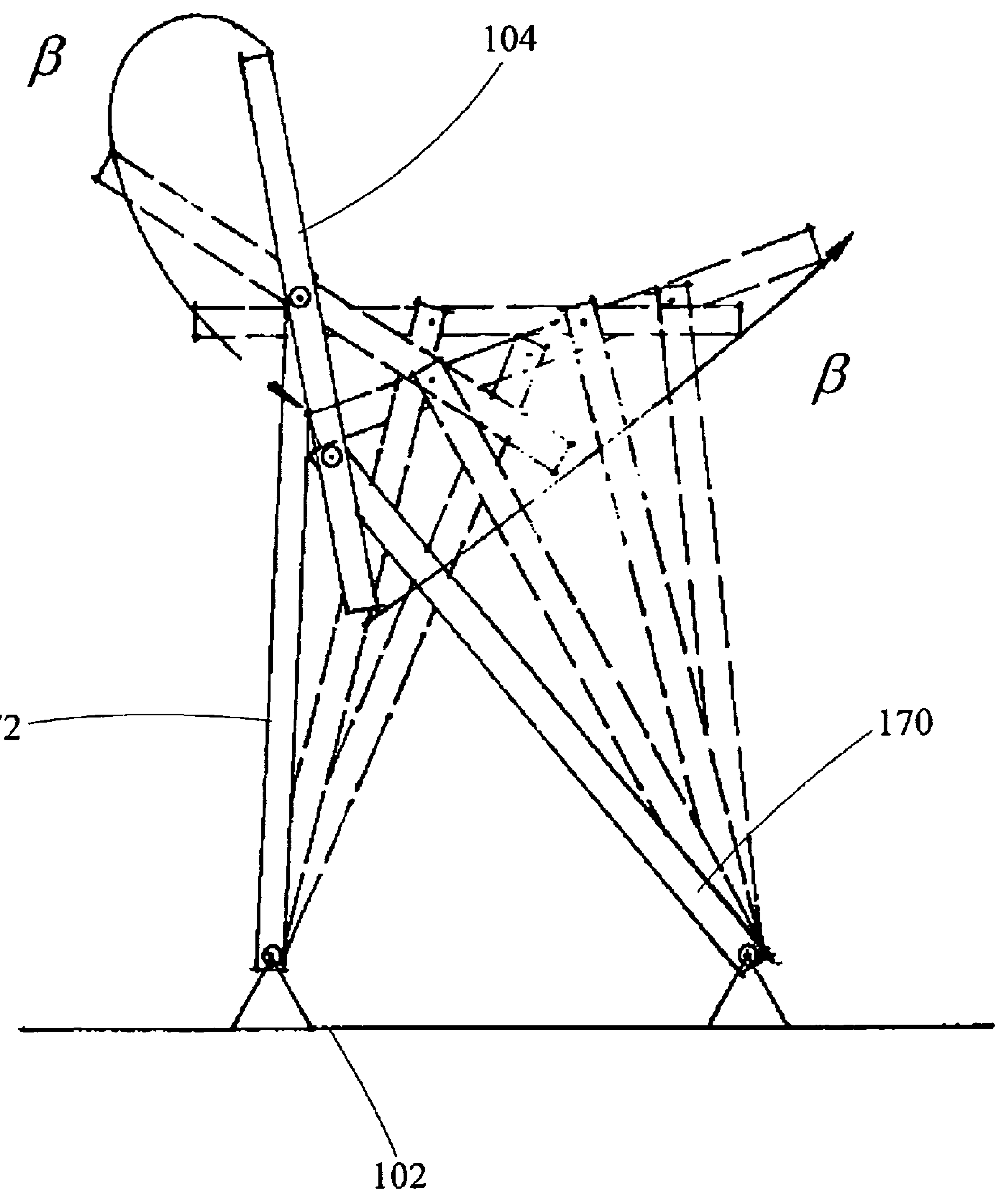


FIG. 4b

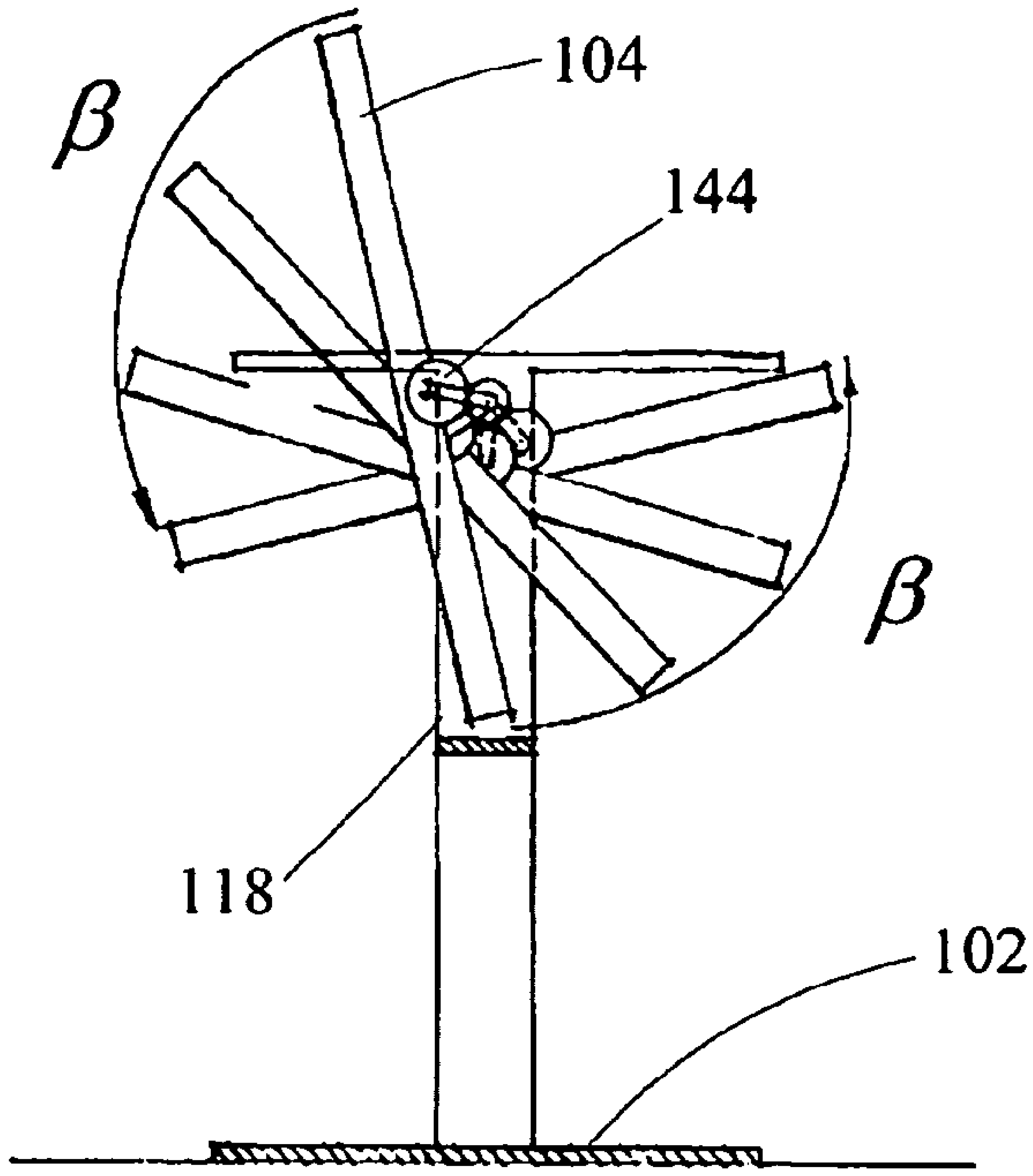


FIG. 4c

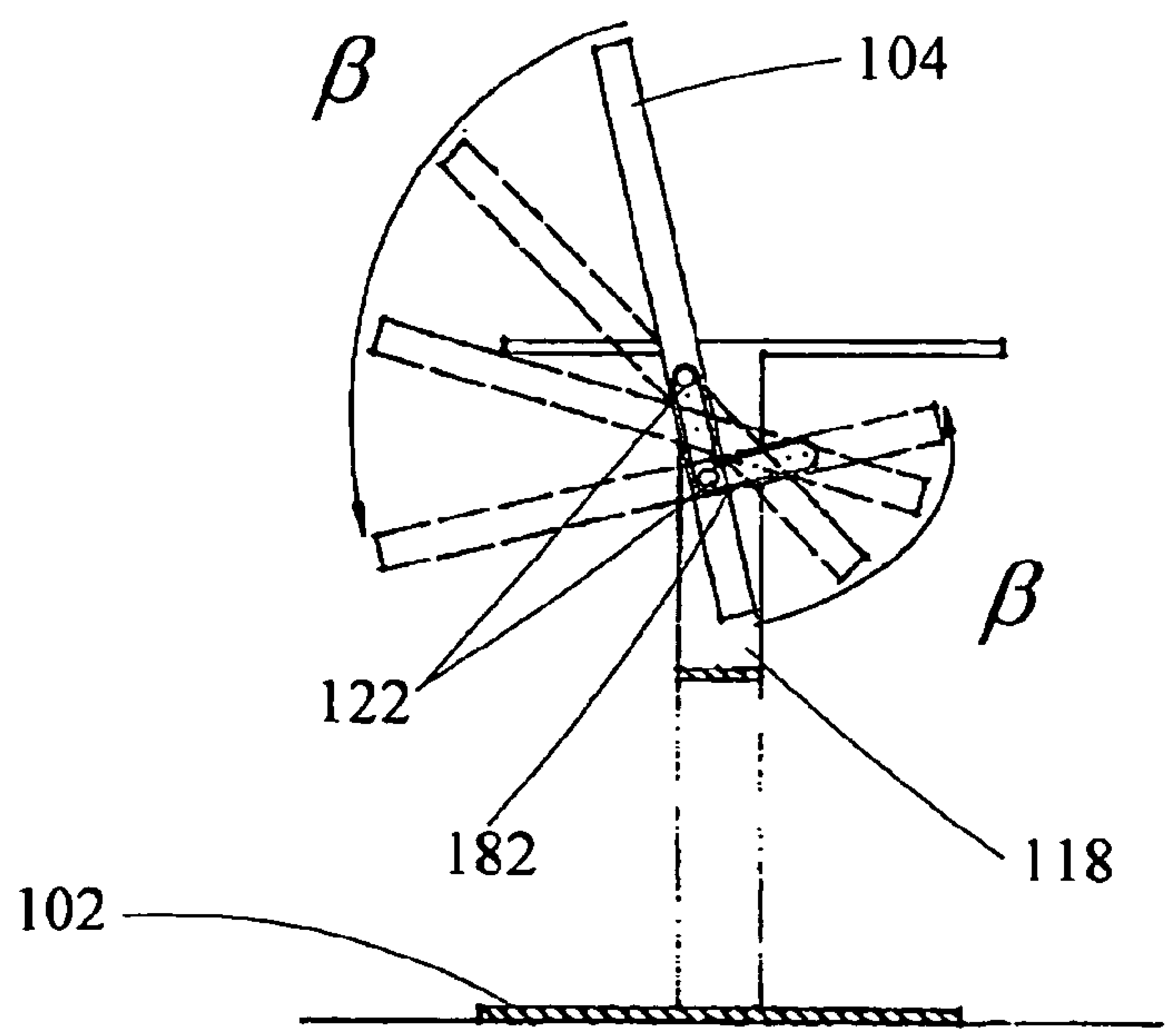


FIG. 4d

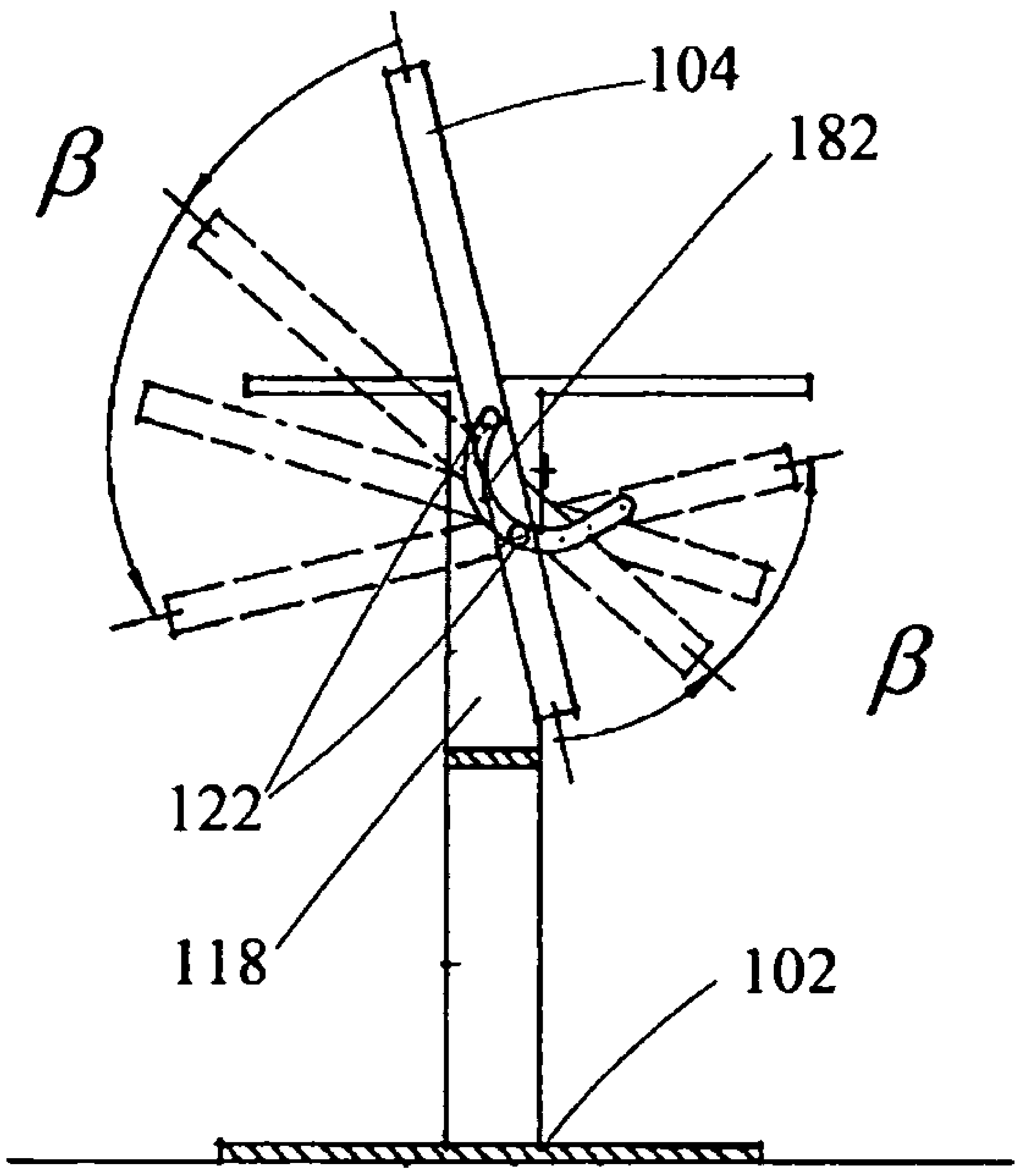


FIG. 4e

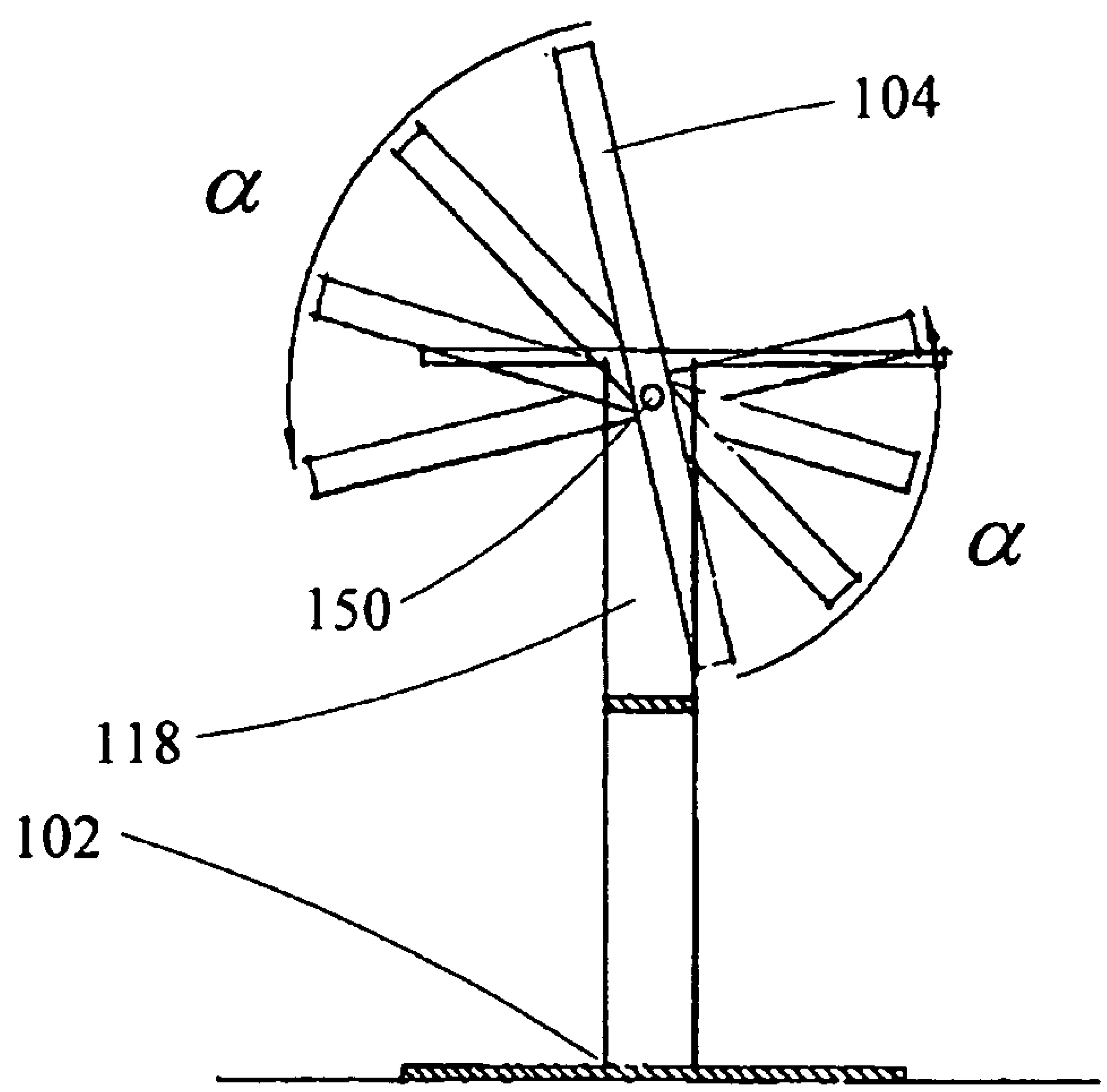


FIG. 5a

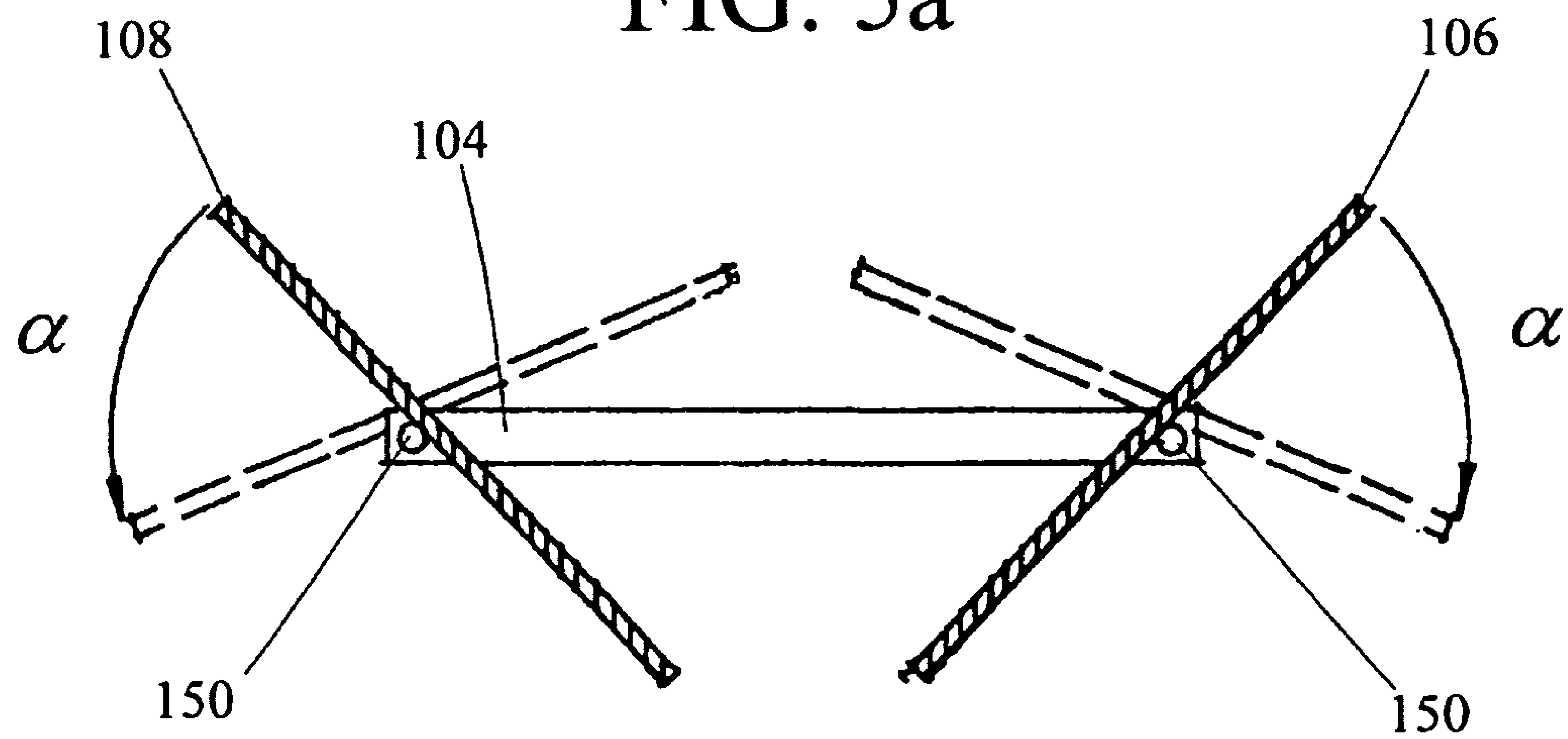


FIG. 5b

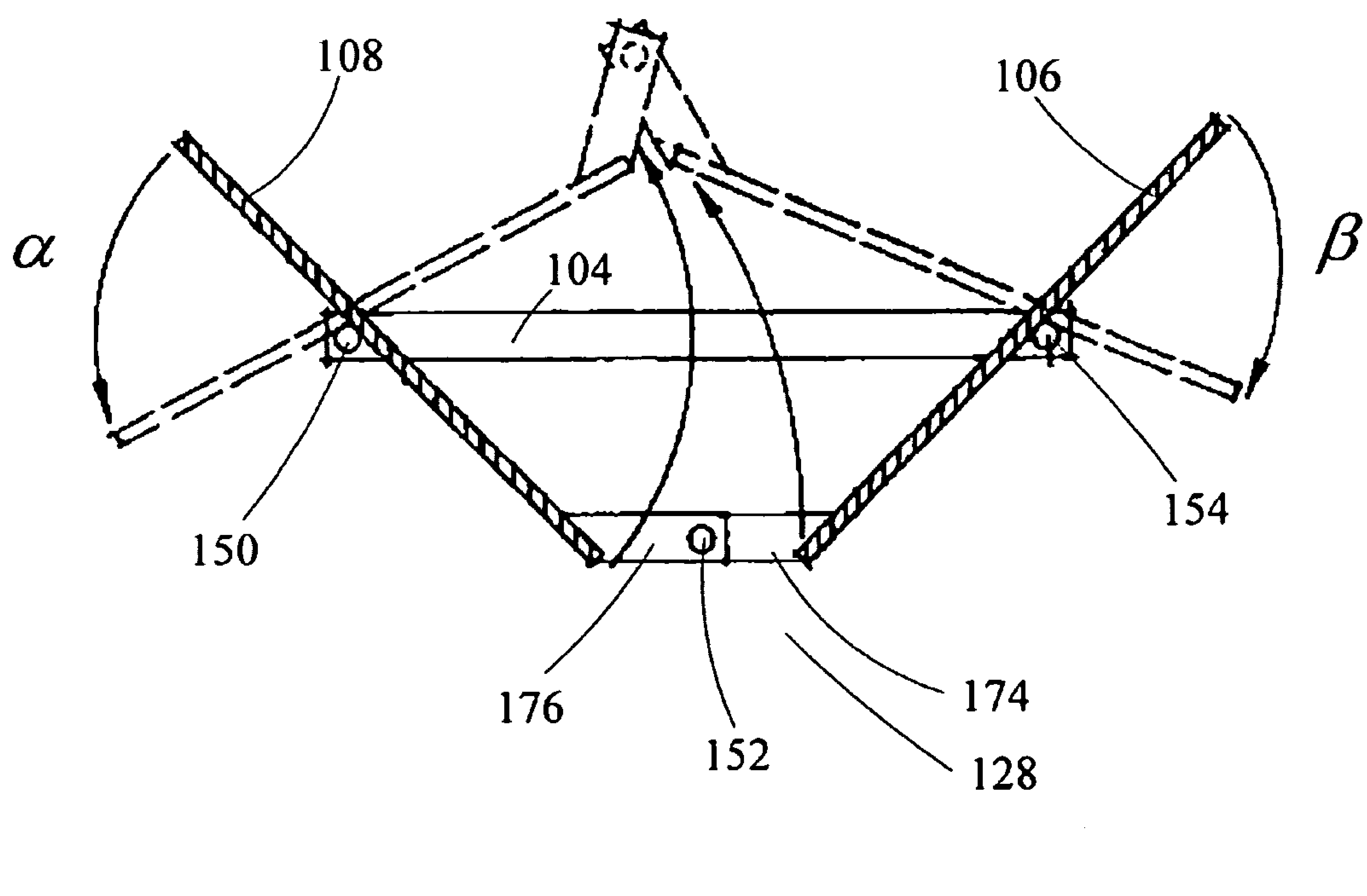


FIG. 6a

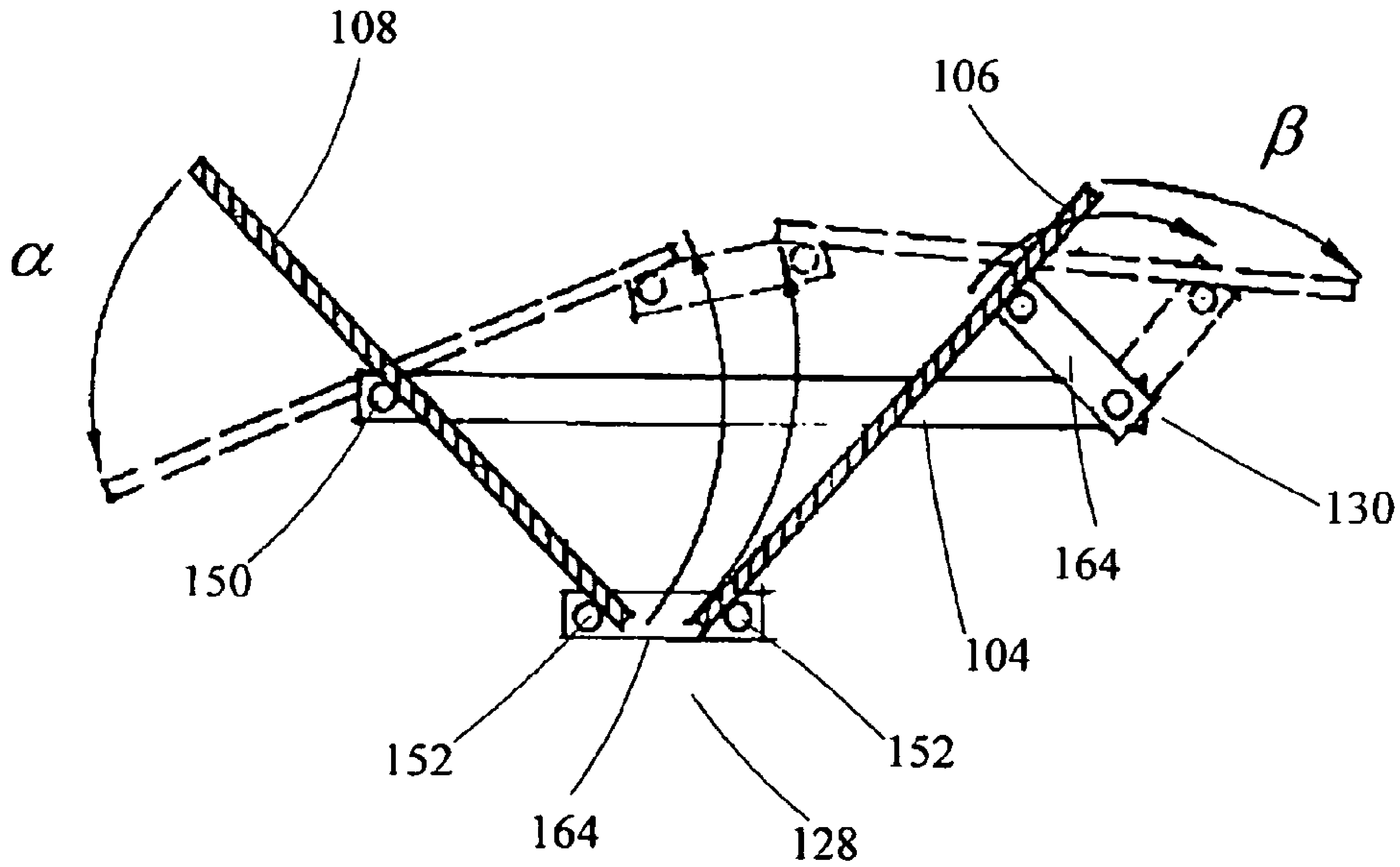

108
106
β
α
150
164
130
104
152
152
164
128

FIG. 6b

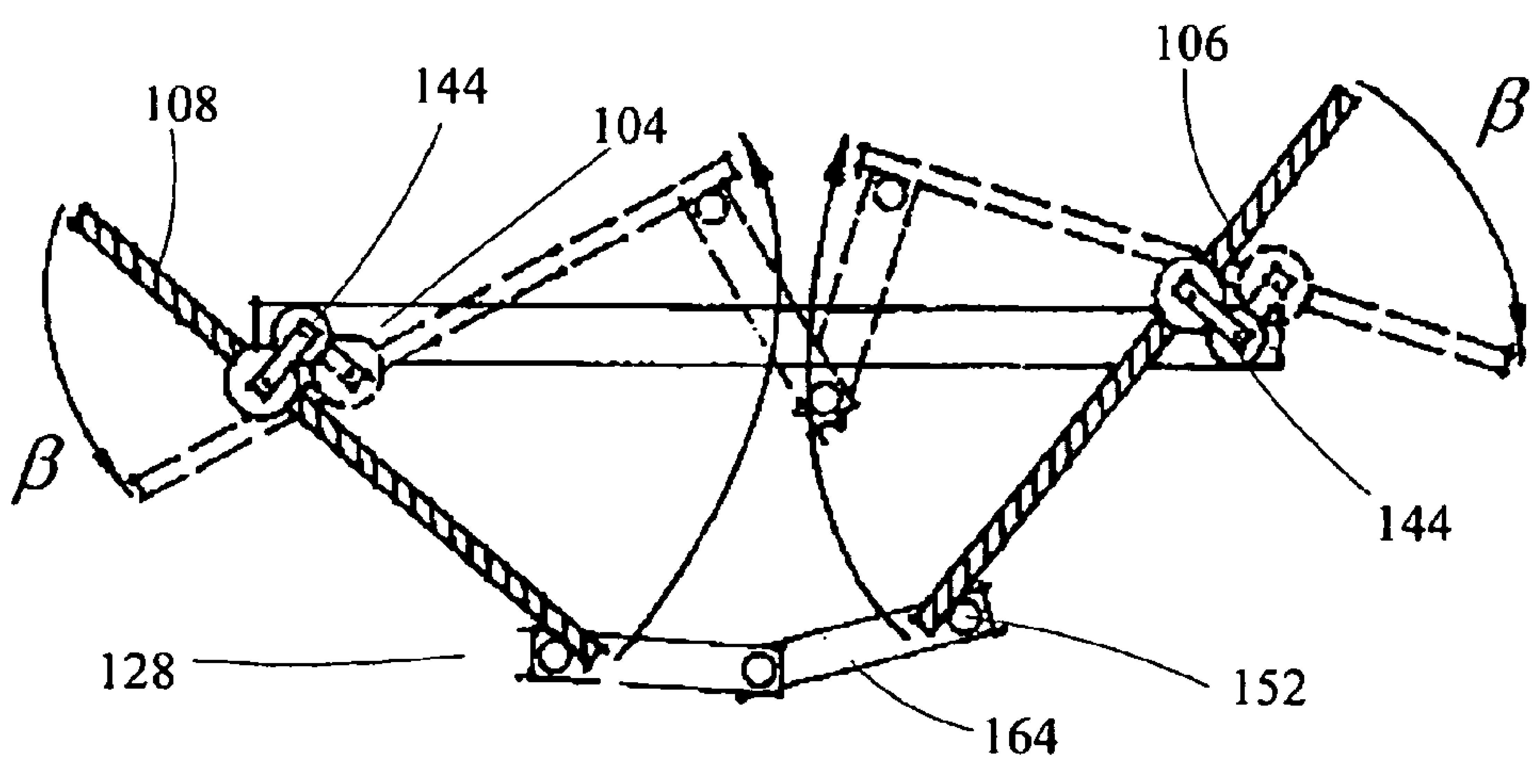

108
144
104
106
β
β
144
128
152
164

FIG. 7a

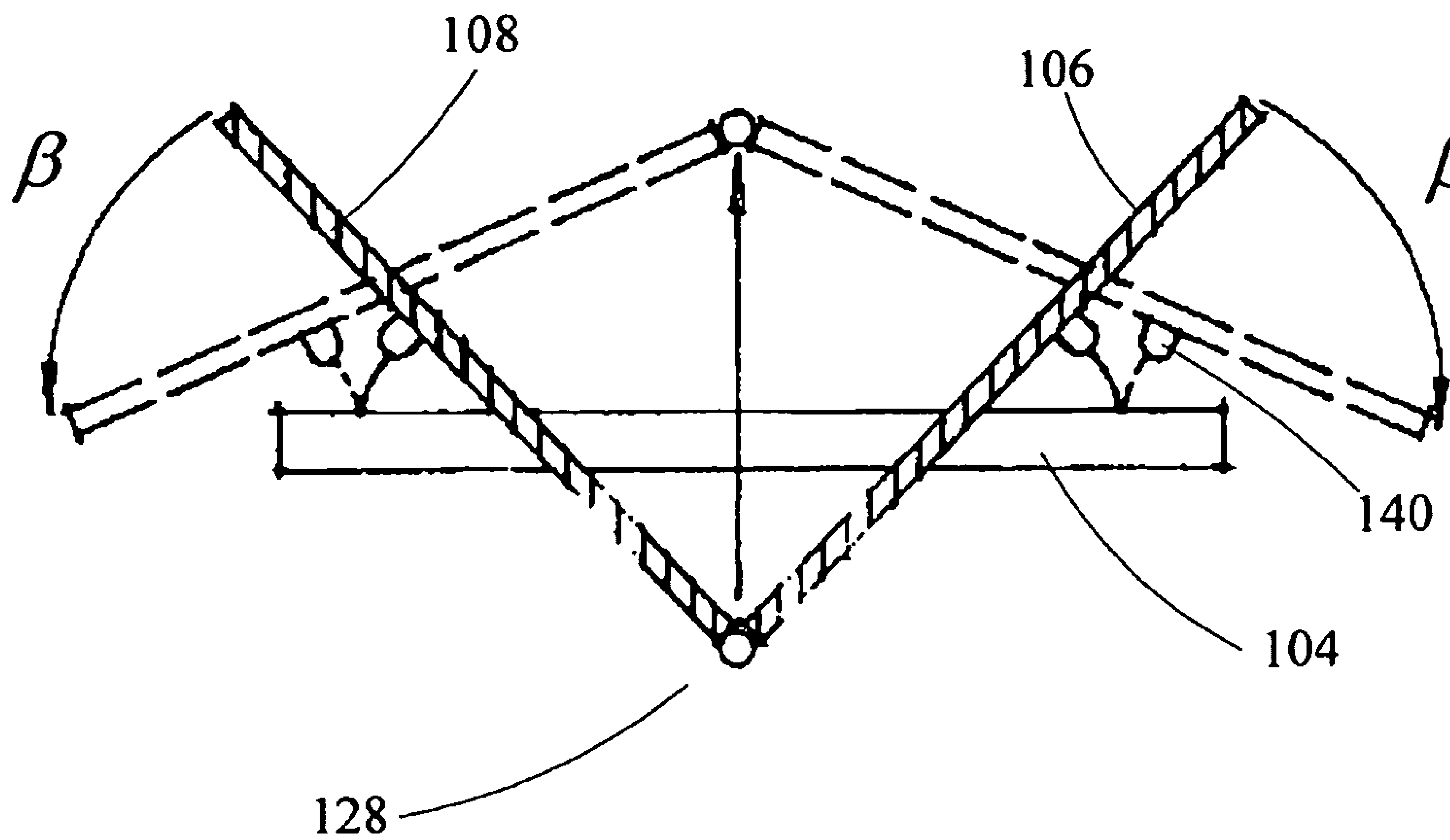


FIG. 7b

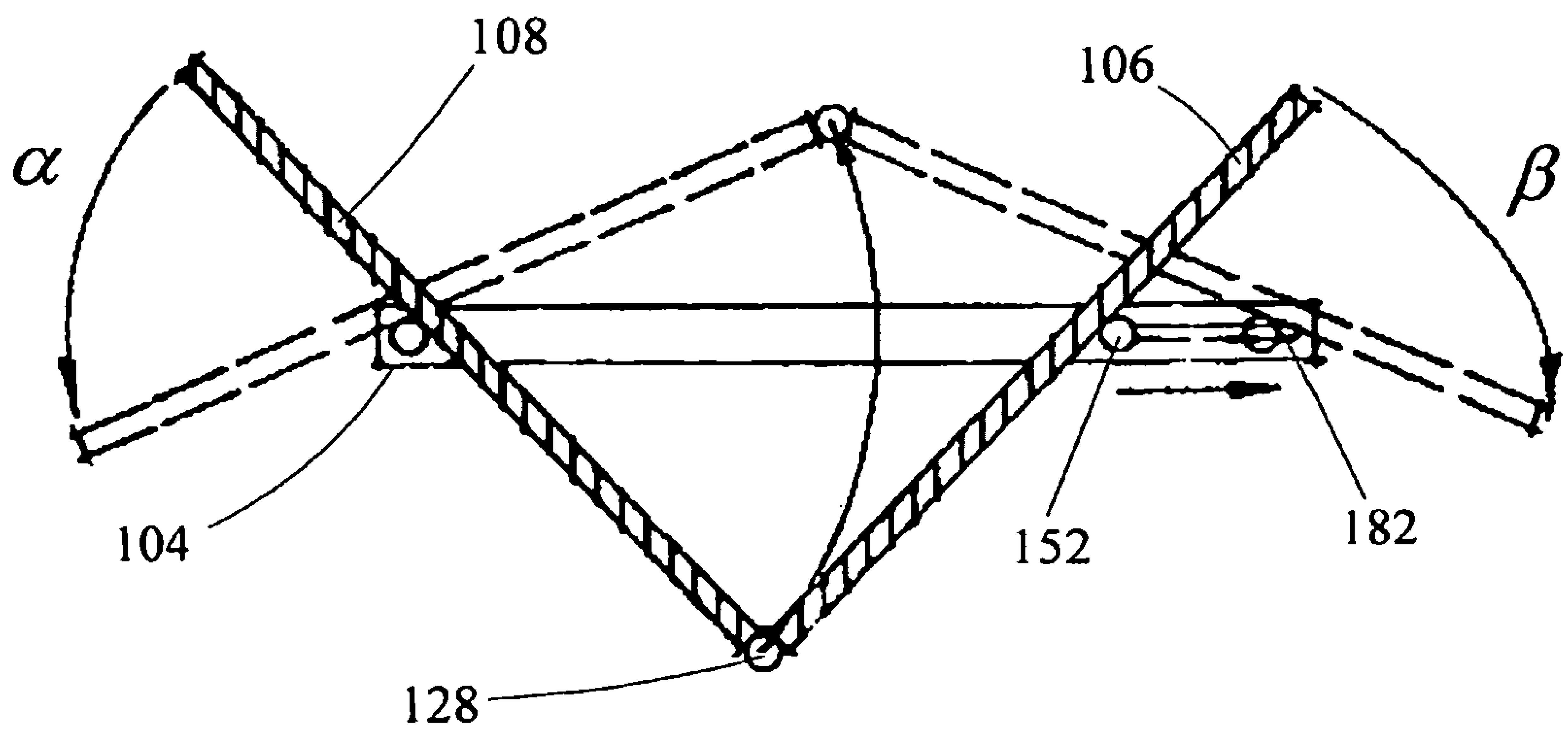


FIG. 8

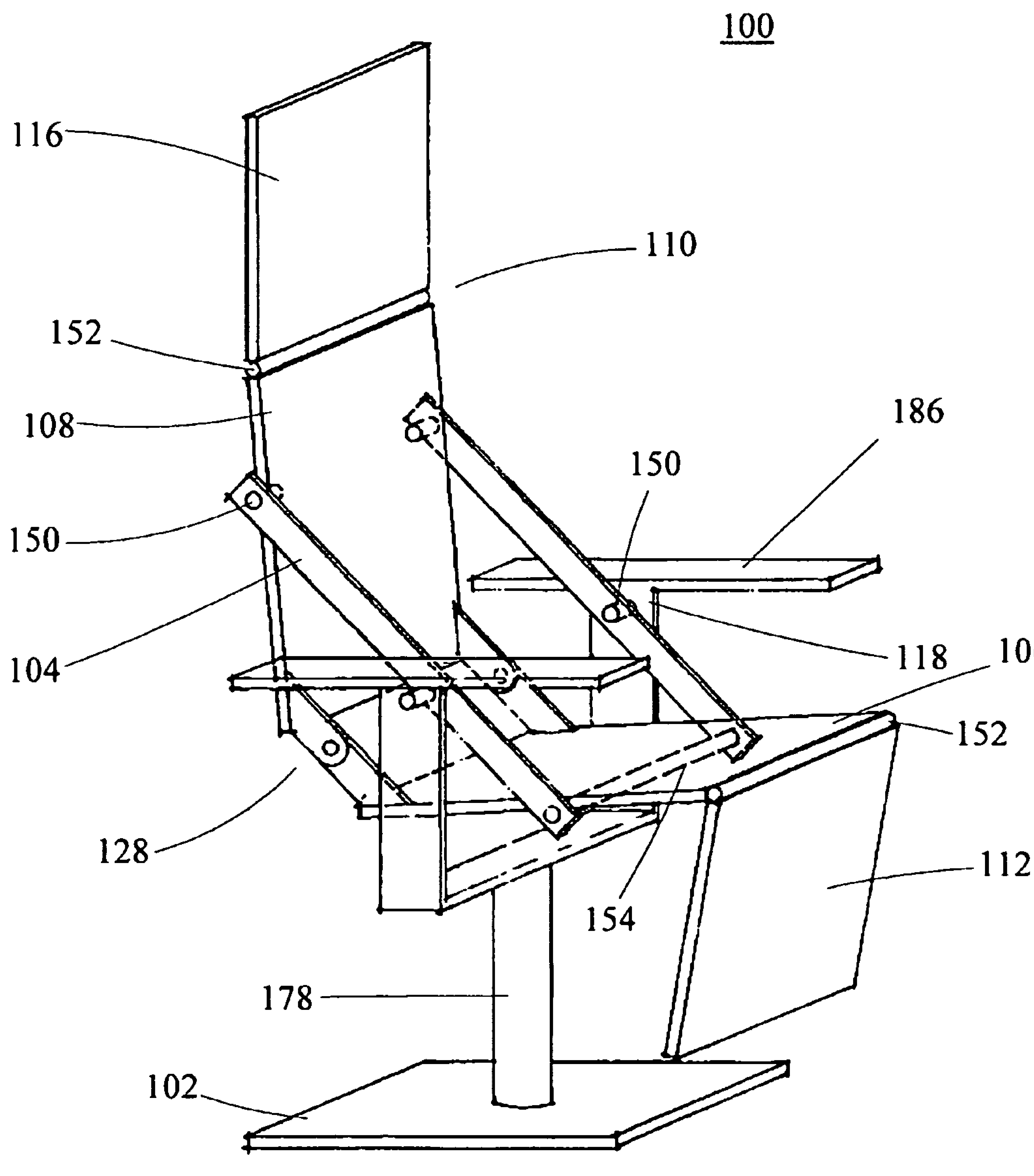

100
116
110
152
108
186
150
150
104
118
106
152
128
112
154
178
102

FIG. 9

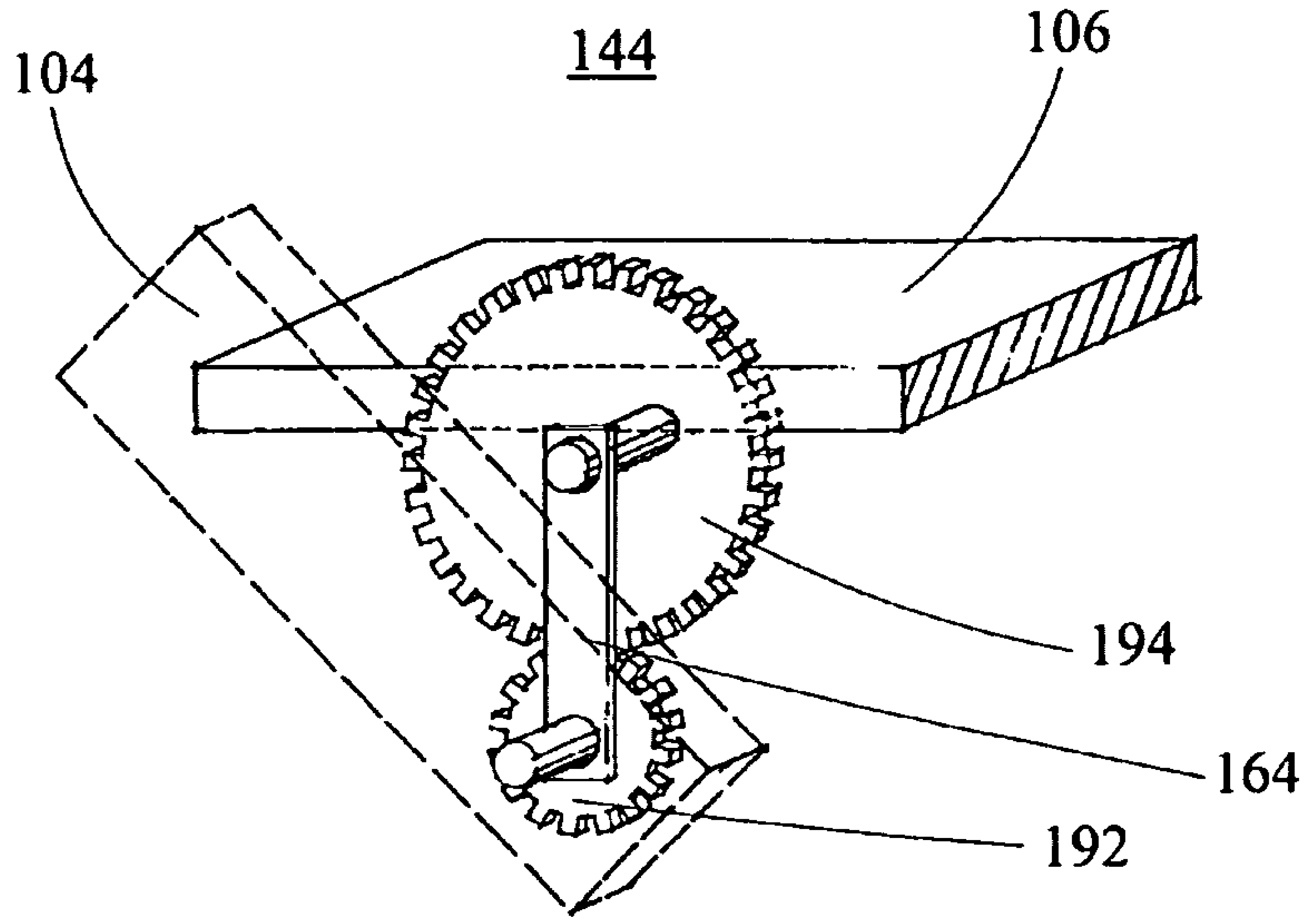


FIG. 10

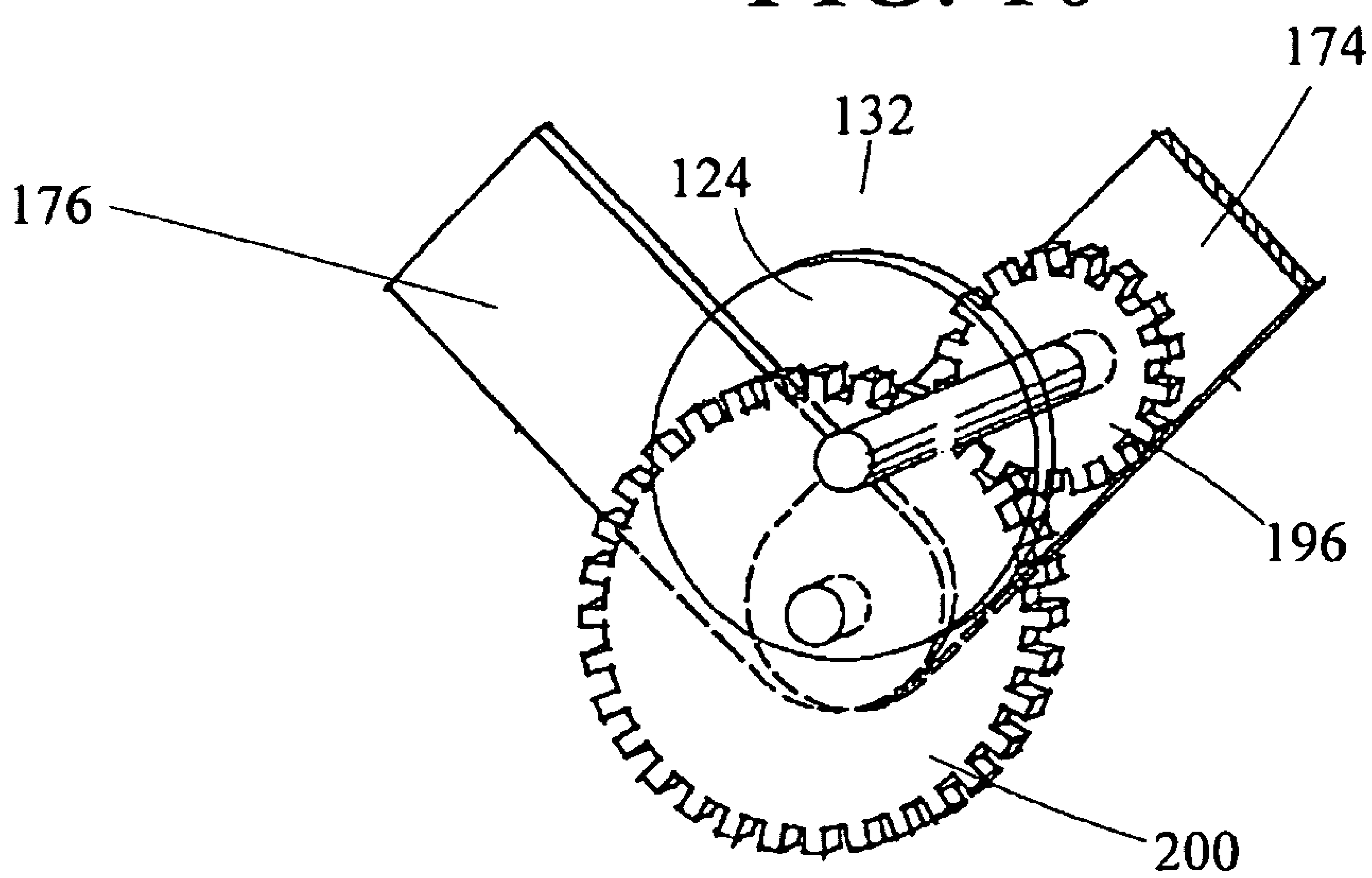


FIG. 11

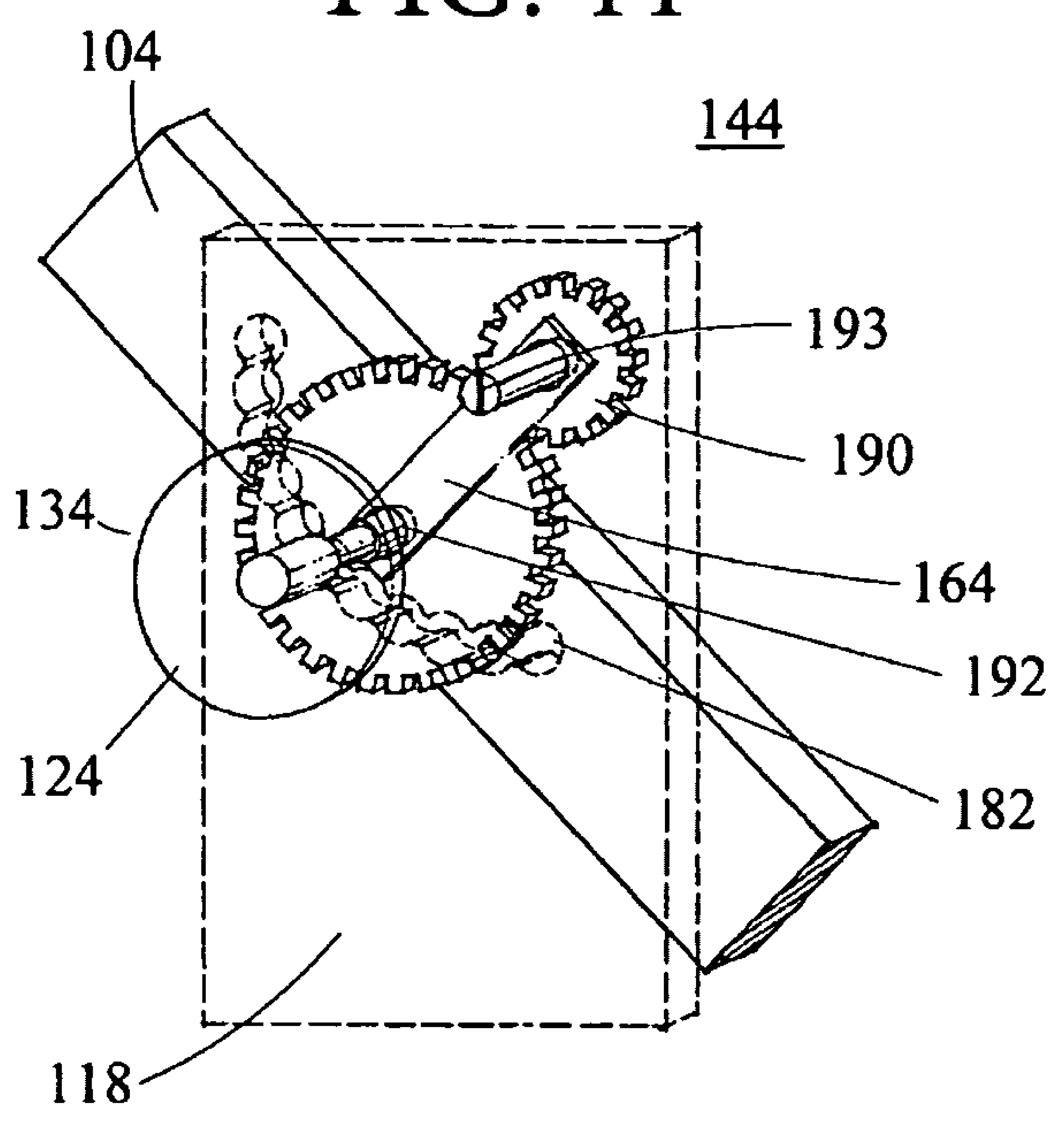

104
144
193
190
134
164
192
124
182
118

FIG. 12

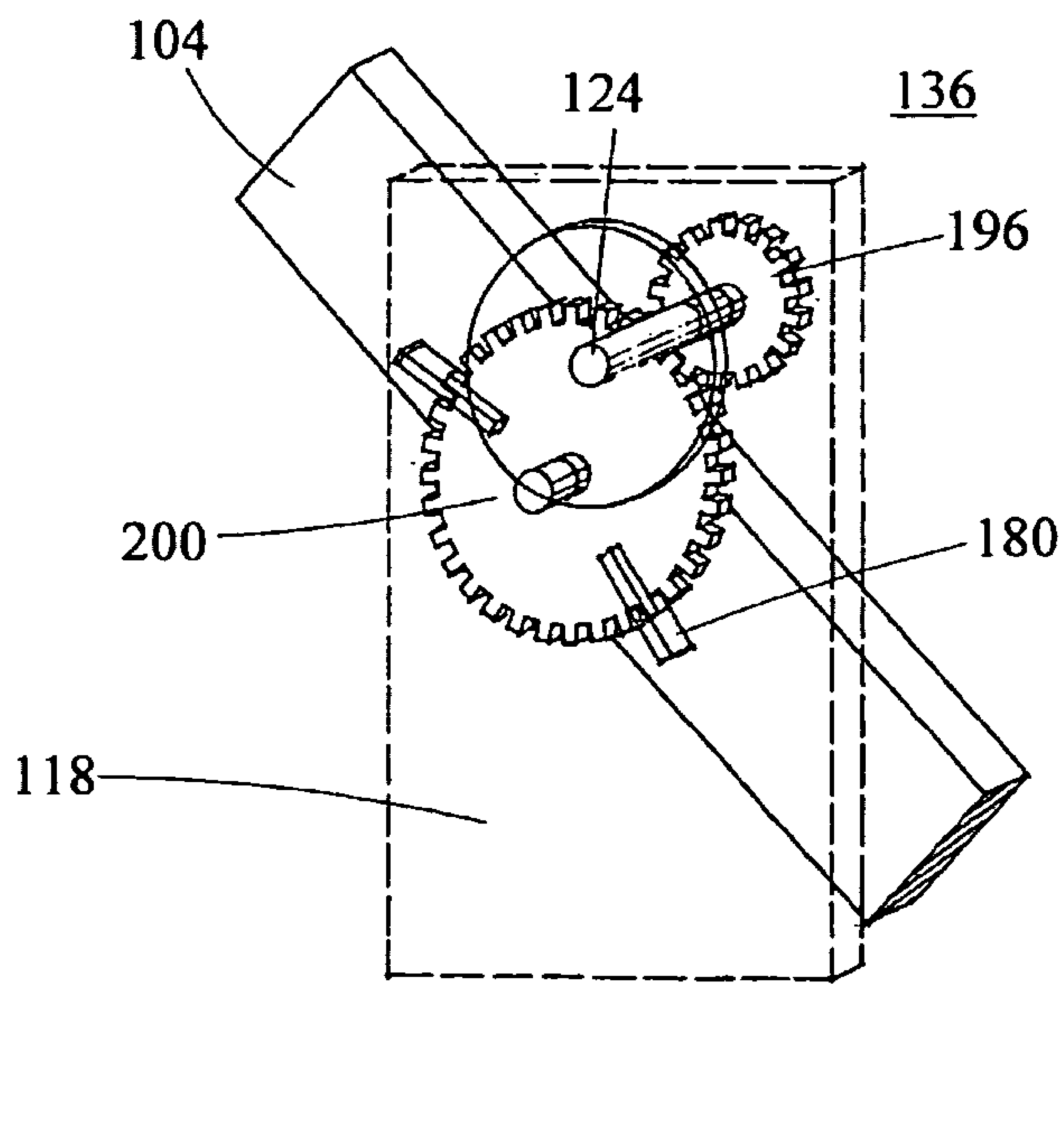

104
124
136
196
200
180
118

FIG. 13

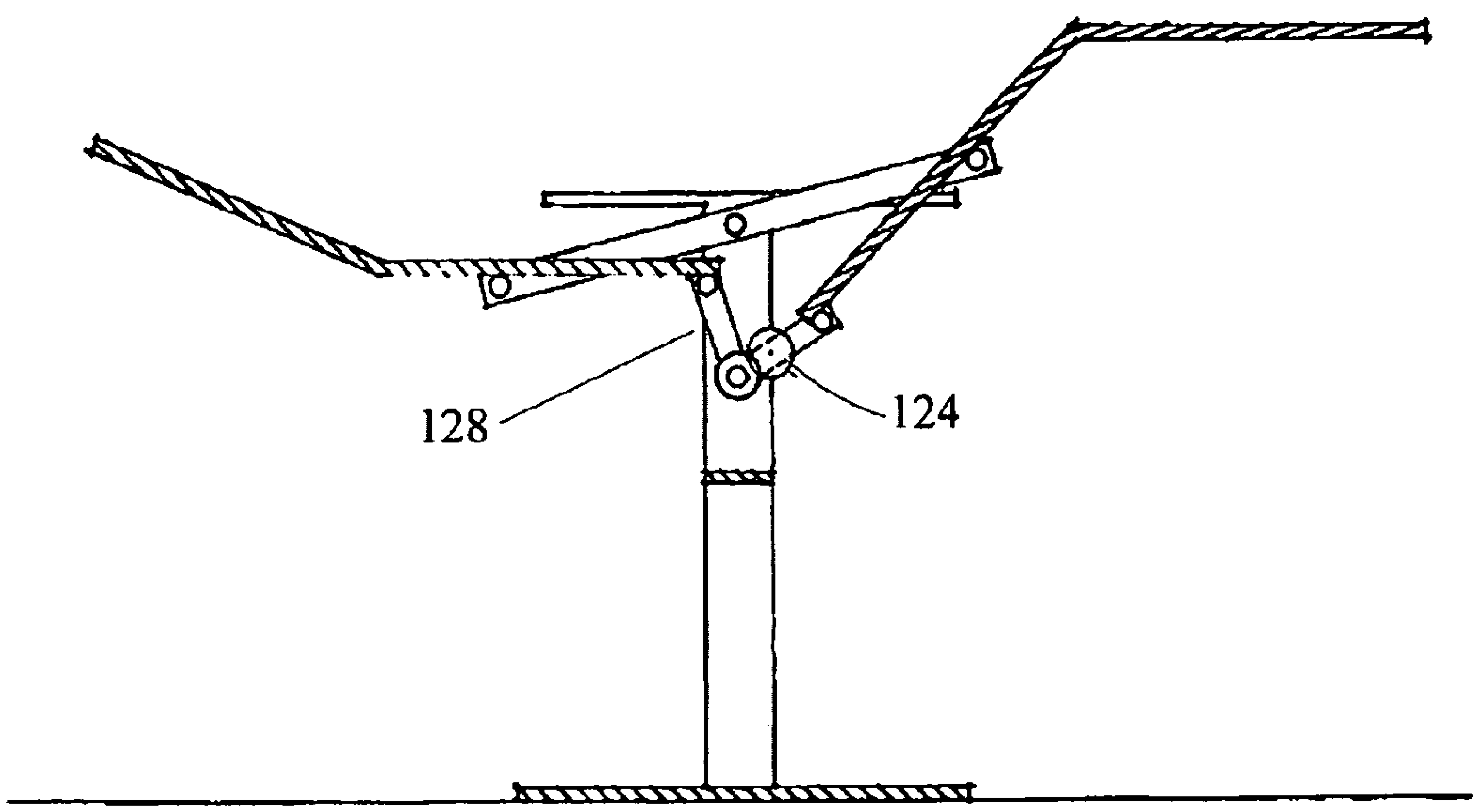


FIG. 14

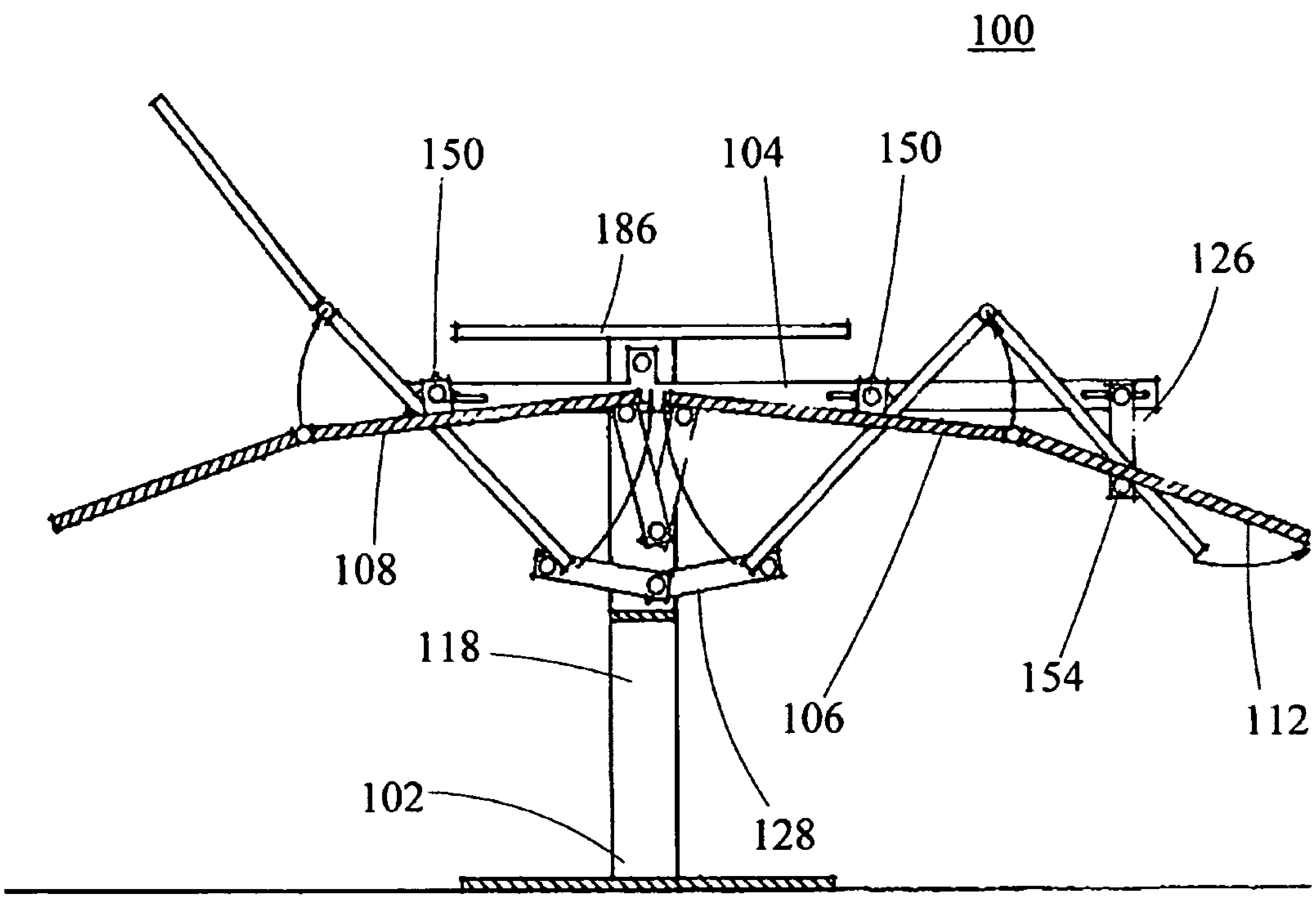


FIG. 15

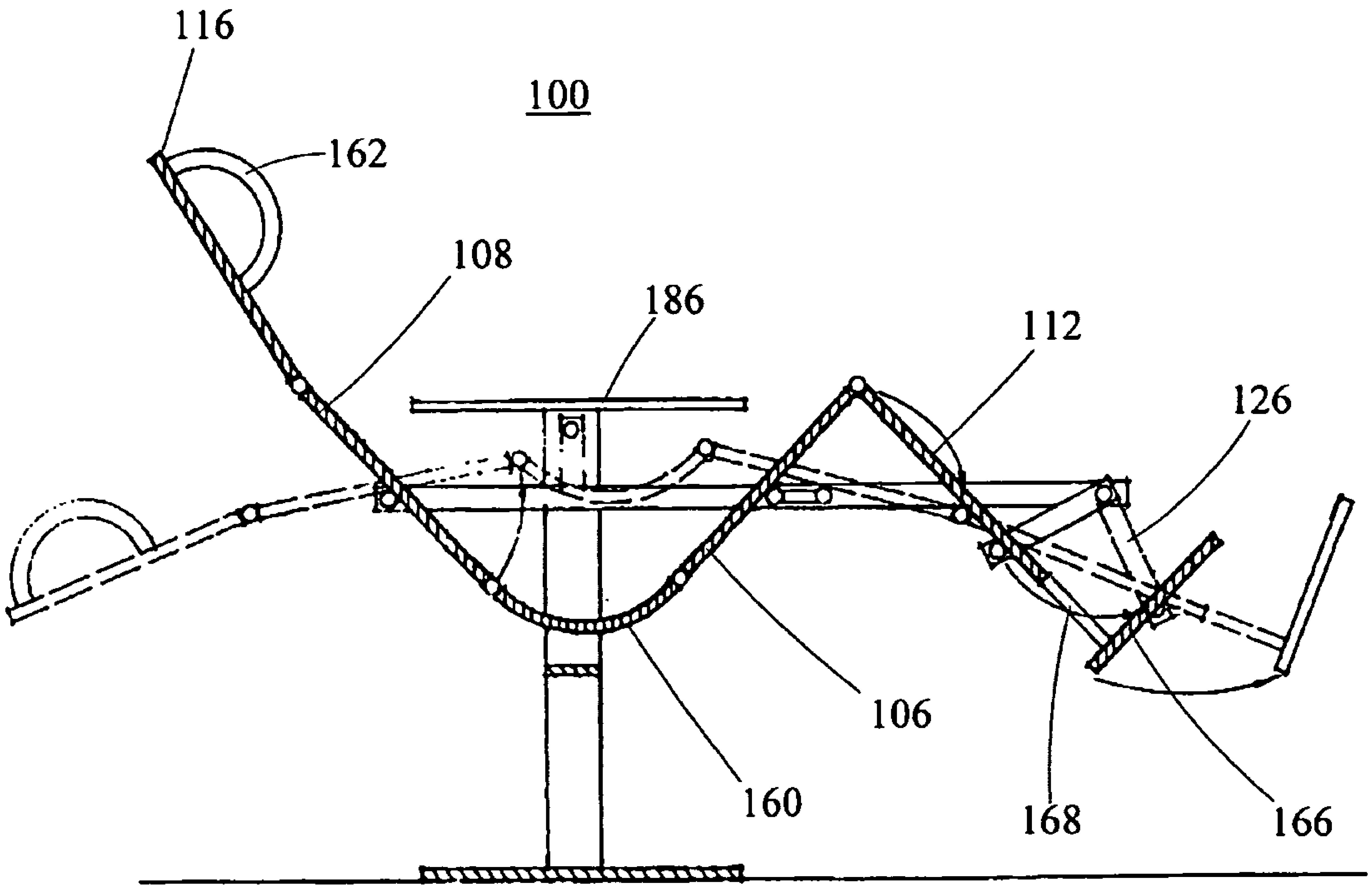


FIG. 16a

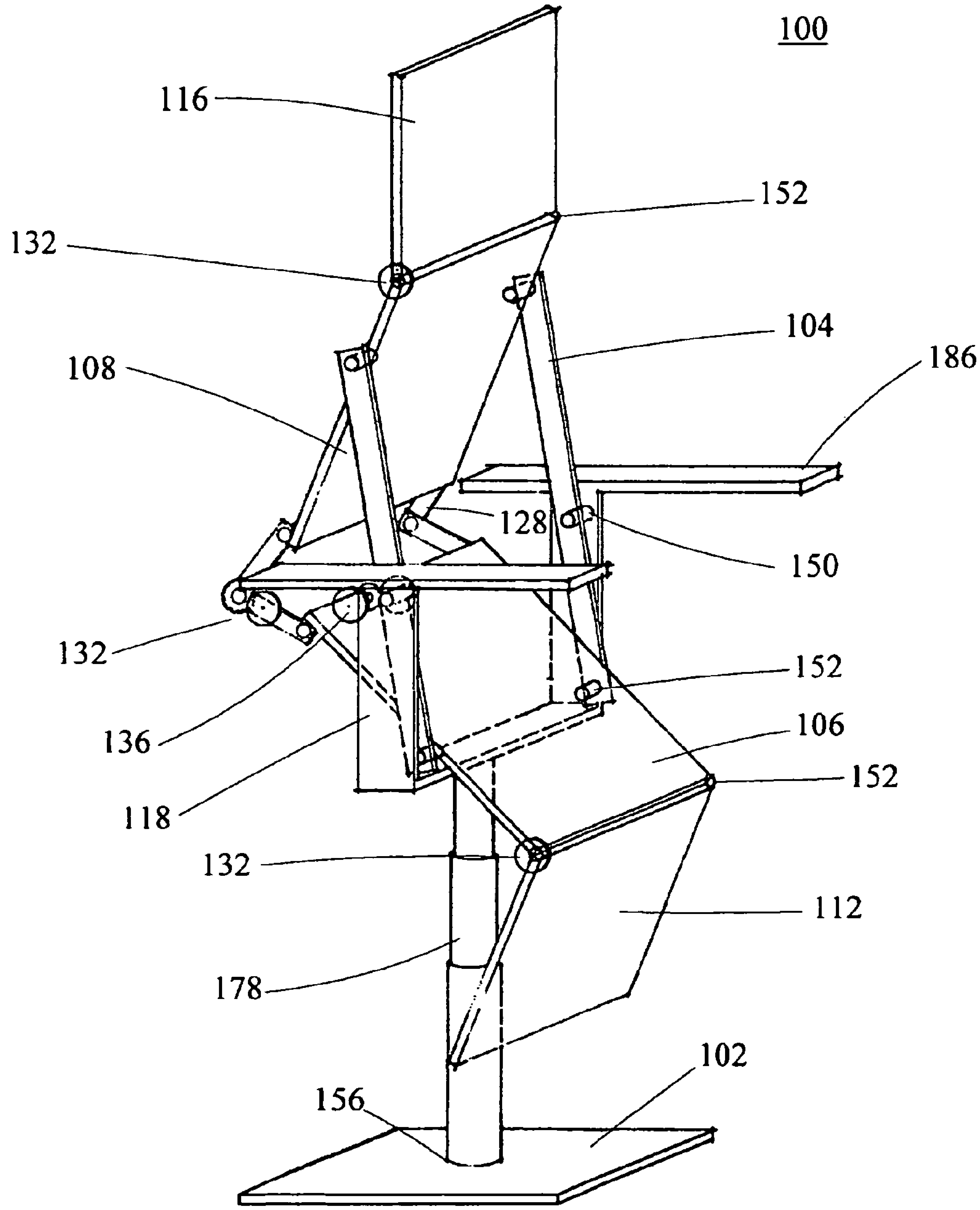

100
116
152
132
104
108
186
128
150
132
152
136
106
118
152
132
112
178
102
156

FIG. 16b

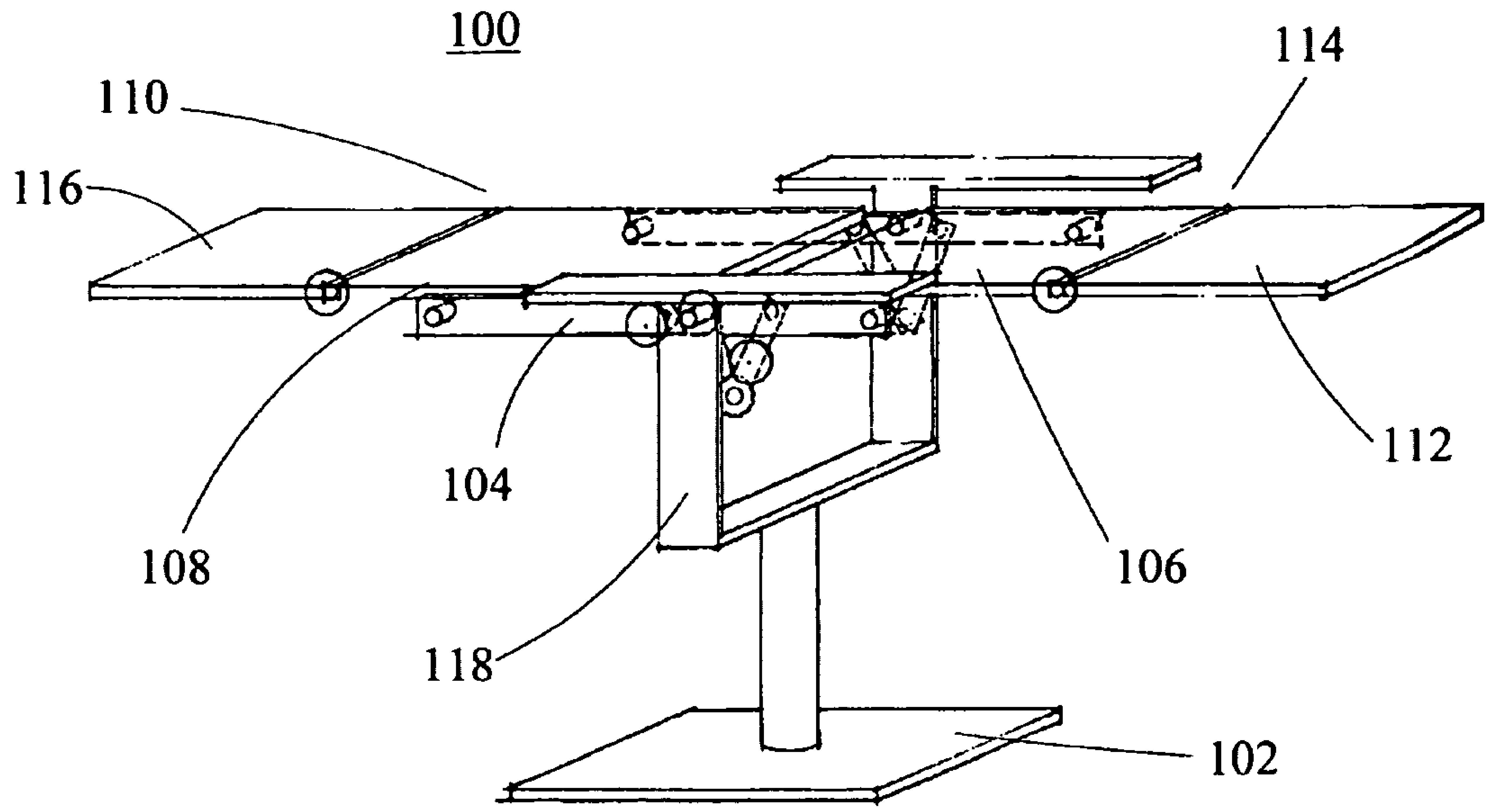
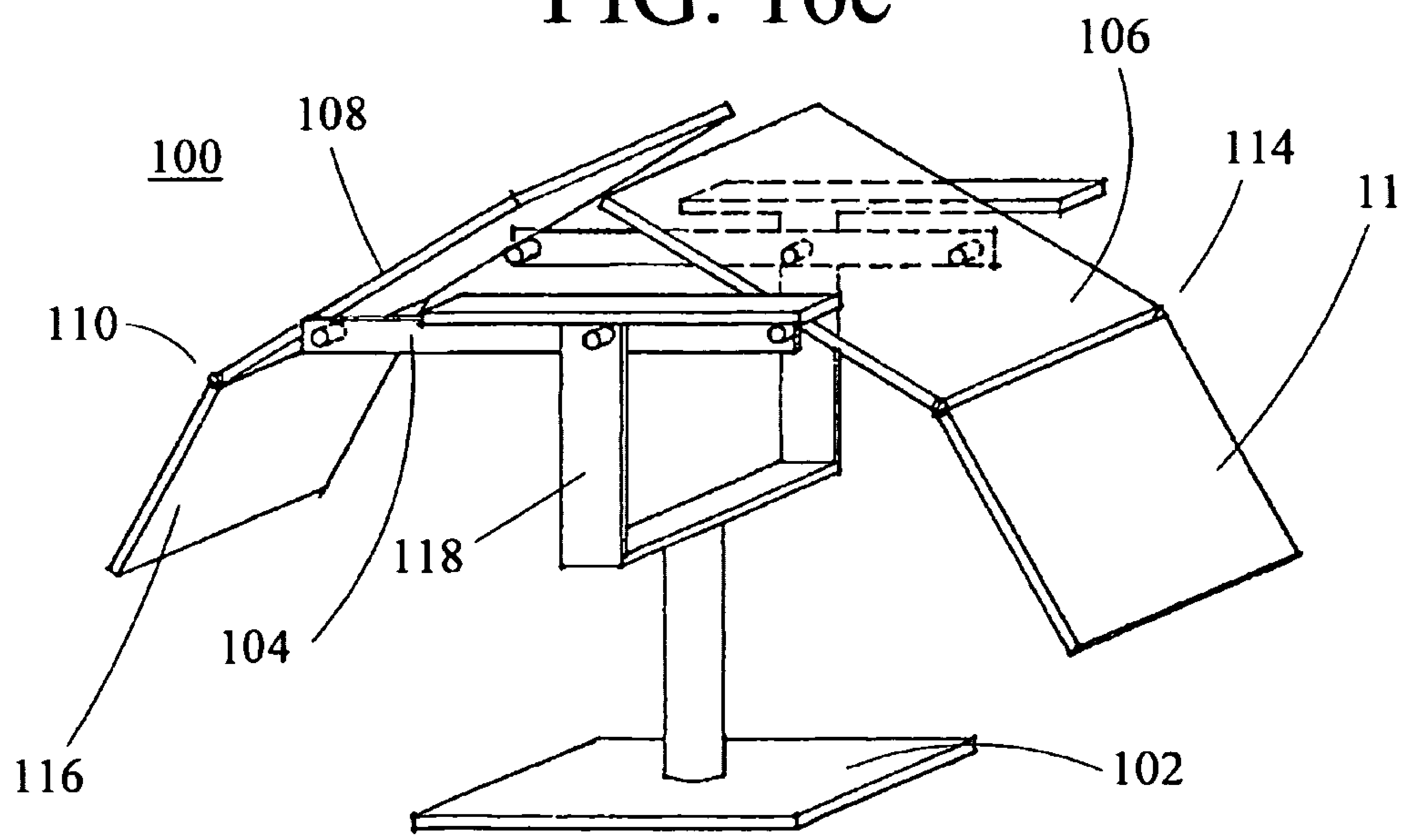


FIG. 16c



DYNAMIC FURNITURE

Matter enclosed in heavy brackets [ ] appears in the original patent but forms no part of this reissue specification; matter printed in italics indicates the additions made by reissue.

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

The present invention relates to the field of human supports and more specifically to the field of adjustable, therapeutic furniture commonly known as recliners.

BACKGROUND

Furniture possesses many uses. Without delving deeply into the history of furniture, there have evolved two primary classes of furniture dedicated to supporting a human in repose: beds and chairs. Beds are designed to accommodate a human lying generally flat, and chairs are adapted to accommodate a more contorted, seated human body arrangement. Although recliners exist that allow multiple positions, such recliners have inherent drawbacks: for example, a user is either in one of the preset reclining positions, or is in an unstable in-between state; and often a user cannot flex his back beyond an angle of 180 degrees.

There is a need for a single article of furniture that can adjust to the many positions of human repose, rather than limited specific preset positions. Of particular interest, are medical patients having mobility issues. It is often the case that a patient has an issue standing, lying down, or even moving from one article of furniture to another. The problem becomes further complicated when moving a patient into or from one article of furniture to another becomes inherently destructive to the patient's health. Current furniture is either functionally insufficient, or overly complicated and specialized.

Although simple furniture suitable to accommodate a human in various states of repose is a rare find, other devices with highly adjustable body members suitable to greatly alter the configuration of a human do exist. Such devices tend to include exercise equipment. For example, in U.S. Pat. No. 6,435,611 there is disclosed an exercise device having two body supports which move in similar rotation and inverse elevation to one another to change from a chair configuration, where one support is higher than the other, to a spine tensioning apparatus, where the supports are near equal in elevation. Preferably body supports are spaced apart from one another such that the only interconnecting human link between the two supports, when in a near equal elevation configuration, is the human spine. The spine, in this configuration is then subjected to similar forces as a simple beam supported by two separate forces, tension, compression, shear and moment. The spine is aided by and through tension and contraction and increased blood flow and afforded the ability for spinal muscle, nerve and soft tissue development and maintenance. The supports, independent of each other, comprise an upper body support and a lower body support and allow an individual's body to practice spine enhancement, development, & or traction, lying or any combination thereof, or alternately, face up, face down, or on either left or right side. The apparatus is also applicable to retrofitting existing chairs.

Although this exercise device includes two rotatable platforms which allow a significant degree of freedom of motion to the user, its primary purpose is to tension a spine rather than to support a human in various states of repose. Adapted to

provide spinal tension rather than body support, this exercise device's body support platforms are purposefully static internally and limited to circularly-rotating platforms. The body supports are not dynamically motionable to allow changing into different positions of repose while the user remains within the furniture.

Therefore there is a need for a single article of furniture designed to allow a user to occupy multiple states of repose and to easily reach those states of repose without having to leave and reenter the furniture.

SUMMARY

The dynamic furniture of the present invention is designed to cooperate with the user to facilitate achieving countless seating positions—including the standing, lying, and inverted body positions. A user, which can be either the individual occupying the device or an attendant acting externally, can easily transition between the many positions the body can achieve. It solves many of the problems associated with previous articles of furniture, including: difficult or unsafe entrance into and out of a chair, difficult or unsafe entrance to or from bed; difficult transition between lying, sitting, and standing; and the ability of the user to easily change body position and angle of repose in order to minimize the ill effects of remaining in a relatively fixed position within the furniture for any length of time. The present invention will help a person transition from standing, to sitting, to reclining, to lying flat and more; and the user can experience the therapeutic motions between positions. The addition of locking controls allows a user enhanced manipulation with respect to position maintenence. Significantly, the user can flex his or her back in many angles of repose.

The present invention is directed to dynamic furniture for supporting a seated, standing, or reclining user in a home, office, medical facility, mass transport vehicle, mobile platform, or other location where the aspects of the present invention would be advantageous. The furniture includes a base, an actuator, a seat platform, and a back platform. The base acts to support the present invention and includes a portion adapted to contact a stable surface such as a floor, wall, ceiling, or mobile platform. The preferred base is a substantially flat plate with space to attach two rotatable connectors, though the base can be a curved plate or other shape as needed for other specific purposes—such as rocking or tilting. One or more path-joint assemblies connect the base to an actuator in such a manner as to permit the actuator assembly to move along a specific path relative to the base. The actuator in turn holds dynamic scat platform and dynamic back platform with separate, independent path-joint assemblies.

For reference purposes, it is helpful to discuss the actuator assembly in terms of a proximate portion and a distal portion. The proximate portion of the actuator assembly normally holds the seat platform and the distal portion of the actuator holds the back platform, as though one were facing the seat portion of a chair. The terms "seat" and "back" when used in conjunction with a platform correspond to the seat and back portions of the body of a user. The back platform normally contacts an upper portion of a human body, and the seat platform normally contacts a lower portion of a human body—though they can be reversed or used otherwise. In other embodiments of the present invention there are also leg rests, head rest, and other platforms connected.

The seat platform is attached to the actuator assembly in a manner that allows the seat platform to travel along a specific path relative to the actuator assembly. The back platform is attached to the actuator assembly in a manner that allows the back platform to move along a specific path relative to the actuator assembly. Preferred platforms are essentially panels, which may be flat or from slightly to moderately curved, sized to accept the various parts of the body for which the panel would be used.

The paths, as allowed by the path joints of the present invention, between components of the furniture include circular orbits and excentric orbits. A circular orbit occurs between two components when a path joint assembly restricts the motion of a first component to include only a uniform, substantially-circular motion relative to the second component. An excentric orbit occurs between two components when a path joint assembly allows the motion of a first component to include a non-uniform motion relative to the second component such that a non-circular path is allowed. By "orbit" it is meant that a component moves in relation to a second component due to one or more axes of restrained connection. The paths of the present invention need not be confined to two-dimensional motion, but may further include motion within a third-dimension.

It is an aspect of the present invention to provide a comfortable article of furniture that is relatively simple to enter and exit.

It is a further aspect of the present invention to provide an article of furniture that is relatively simple to manufacture, operate, and maintain.

It is also a further aspect of the present invention to provide an article of furniture that dynamically moves with the body of a user into the many desired states of repose, and can be moved by the user or an attendant to reposition the body of a seated user.

It is a still further aspect of the present invention to provide an article of furniture capable of achieving angles beyond 180 degrees.

These aspects of the invention are not meant to be exclusive. Furthermore, some features may apply to certain versions of the invention, but not others. Other features, aspects, and advantages of the present invention will be readily apparent to those of ordinary skill in the art when read in conjunction with the following description and accompanying drawings.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

FIG. **1** is a perspective view of an embodiment of the dynamic furniture.

FIG. **2** is a perspective view of an embodiment of the dynamic furniture.

FIG. **3** is a perspective view of an embodiment of the dynamic furniture.

FIG. **4**a is a sectional motion diagram of a path-joint assembly dynamically connecting a base to an actuator.

FIG. **4**b is a sectional motion diagram of a path-joint assembly dynamically connecting a base to an actuator.

FIG. **4**c is a sectional motion diagram of a path-joint assembly dynamically connecting a base to an actuator.

FIG. **4**d is a sectional motion diagram of a path-joint assembly dynamically connecting a base to an actuator.

FIG. **4**e is a sectional motion diagram of a path-joint assembly dynamically connecting a base to an actuator.

FIG. **5**a is a sectional motion diagram of a path-joint assembly dynamically connecting platforms to an actuator.

FIG. **5**b is a sectional motion diagram of a path-joint assembly dynamically connecting platforms to an actuator.

FIG. **6**a is a sectional motion diagram of a path-joint assembly dynamically connecting platforms to an actuator.

FIG. **6**b is a sectional motion diagram of a path-joint assembly dynamically connecting platforms to an actuator.

FIG. **7**a is a sectional motion diagram of a path-joint assembly dynamically connecting platforms to an actuator.

FIG. **7**b is a sectional motion diagram of a path-joint assembly dynamically connecting platforms to an actuator.

FIG. **8** is a perspective view of an embodiment of the dynamic furniture.

FIG. **9** is a sectional view of components of an embodiment of the dynamic furniture.

FIG. **10** is a sectional view of components of an embodiment of the dynamic furniture.

FIG. **11** is a sectional view of components of an embodiment of the dynamic furniture.

FIG. **12** is a sectional view of components of an embodiment of the dynamic furniture.

FIG. **13** is a sectional view of an embodiment of components of the dynamic furniture.

FIG. **14** is a sectional view of an embodiment of the dynamic furniture.

FIG. **15** is a sectional view of an embodiment of the dynamic furniture.

FIG. **16**a is a perspective view of an embodiment of the dynamic furniture.

FIG. **16**b is a perspective view of an embodiment of the dynamic furniture.

FIG. **16**c is a perspective view of an embodiment of the dynamic furniture.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Referring first to FIG. **1**, an embodiment of the dynamic furniture **100** is shown. The dynamic furniture **100** includes a base **102** which is located in a position to support the dynamic furniture **100**. There is no preferred shape or construction for such a purpose and the base **102** shown in FIG. **1** illustrates a configuration readily amenable to home and office use having a rectangular floor contact. As the base **102** must support the weight of a human being, often in motion within the present invention, the base **102** should be constructed of sturdy material. Examples of materials sufficient with the present invention include wood, metals, plastics, and composites having sufficient strength to accept component wear. Other base configurations will suit the present invention; however, the dynamic furniture **100** of FIG. **1** shows the preferred base **102** adapted to sit on the floor in a stable manner.

It is necessary for base **102** to support the actuator **104** while the actuator **104** is permitted to move only along a specific path with respect to the base **102**. For the embodiment shown in FIG. **1**, the actuator **104** is a curved plate and its path of movement is determined by the path-joint assembly which connects actuator assembly **104** to base **102**. The preferred embodiment of path-joint assembly for the curved actuator assembly **104**, as shown in FIG. **1**, incorporates the base **102** to the actuator assembly by means of a double-member excentric path joint assembly. The path-joint assembly includes front boom **170**, and a rear boom **172** that, in conjunction with the four rotatable connectors **152**, join the base **102** to the actuator assembly **104**. The front boom **170** has one of its sides circularly rotatably connected to a proximate portion of the actuator assembly **104**; and also the front boom **170** has its opposite side circularly rotatably connected to a proximate portion of the base **102**. A rear boom **172** similarly has one of its sides circularly rotatably connected to a distal portion of the actuator assembly **104**, and the rear boom **172** has its opposite side circularly rotatably connected to the other end of the base **102**. The path-joint assembly depicted in FIG. **1** permits the actuator assembly **104** to tilt back and forth into various positions along an excentric path relative to the base **102**. The actuator assembly **104** need not be shaped like the curved plate shown in FIG. **1**, and can include one or more curved bars, one or more straight bars, or other shapes and configurations capable of dynamically holding motionable platforms. A back platform **108** contacts an upper portion of a human body, and the seat platform **106** contacts a lower portion of a human body—though they can be reversed or used otherwise.

FIG. **2** and FIG. **3** disclose two positions of an embodiment of the dynamic furniture **100** with the seat platform **106** sized and shaped to accept a user's butt and legs, and the back platform **108** sized and shaped to accept the user's back and head. FIG. **2** and FIG. **3** each also show the dynamic furniture **100** with curved actuators **104**, and with two each of the double-member excentric path-joint assemblies forming a two-sided path-joint assembly. This preferred two-sided path-joint assembly includes front booms **170**, rear booms **172**, and multiple rotatable connectors **152**. Such a two-sided path-joint assembly operates in the same manner as the one-sided path-joint assembly previously disclosed, and any description of actuator assemblies or path-joint assemblies herein disclosed can be constructed in a one-sided or two-sided configuration. A path-joint assembly of the present invention is any joining mechanism, or one or more path joints that allows one component of the present invention to move, either circularly, excentrically, or otherwise, about another component of the present invention. A path-joint assembly may include two or more path-joints, that work together to enable one or more components to move about, or in relation to, another component of the present invention. A path joint assembly may also be tensioned to further enhance balance or stability.

FIG. **3** illustrates the dynamic furniture **100** positioned for a user lying down with legs up and back flexed; and FIG. **2** illustrates the dynamic furniture **100** in a position suitable for lounging or sitting. By "flexed" it is meant that the platforms of the dynamic furniture achieve a position greater than one-hundred-eighty degrees, such that if occupied, a user within would occupy a position that curves the body toward the spine. Due to the path joint assemblies of the present invention, embodiments of the present invention are additionally capable of forming both upright and reclining positions. By "upright," it is meant that a user within the furniture would occupy a seated position that curves the body toward the stomach. A "reclining position" of the present invention is a position that places the body in a substantially one-hundred-eighty degree position. The present invention is capable of achieving positions in the upright, reclining, and flexed states.

By using excentric path-joint assemblies, such as those shown in FIGS. **1**-**3**, the actuator assembly **104** is joined to base **102** in a manner that permits the actuator assembly to travel along an excentric orbit relative to the base **102**. By excentric orbit, it is meant that an edge of a portion of the actuator forges a path that when continued for a noticeable distance traces out an excentric shape with respect to the base. The path derived from an excentric path-joint assembly is advantageous because it is conducive to sustaining balance, for the user, while the user is remaining static or dynamically changing body positions within the furniture.

FIG. **4**a illustrates the motion of a straight bar actuator assembly **104** that is movably joined to base **102** with a double-boom excentric path joint assembly. The β arrows in FIG. **4**a illustrate the dynamic motion of the actuator assembly **104**, in relation to base **102**, which is permitted by the front boom **170** and rear boom **172** of the double-boom excentric path joint assembly. When the path joint assembly includes double booms as in FIG. **4**a, rather than the boom depicted in FIG. **1**, then the double booms can also cross each other. A floor-mounted embodiment, for example, works best when the double booms routinely cross each other.

An alternate embodiment of an excentric path-joint assembly is illustrated in FIG. **4**b. In FIG. **4**b, the actuator assembly **104** includes a straight bar, and base **102** includes a fixed base post **118** portion extending upward. A geared excentric path-joint assembly **144** connects the actuator **104** to the base post **118** portion of the base **102**. The β arrows in FIG. **4**b illustrate the motioning of the actuator assembly **104** that is permitted by this embodiment of the geared excentric path-joint assembly. FIG. **11** shows the geared excentric path-joint assembly **144** in greater detail.

The embodiment of the geared excentric path-joint assembly **144** shown in FIG. **11** comprises a double-hole bar **164** connecting the actuator gear-and-peg **192** to the base gear-and-peg **190**. The gear portion of the actuator gear-and-peg **192** is fixably attached to the actuator assembly **104**. The gear portion of the base gear-and-peg **190** is fixably attached to the base post **118**. The double-hole bar **164** is rotatably connected separately to each of the two pegs and keeps the two gears in mechanical communication so that the path swept out by the actuator assembly **104** is excentric relative to the base post **118**. Embodiments of the base post **118** may be directly secured to the floor, ceiling, wall, or a mobile platform.

The geared excentric path-joint **144** assembly depicted in FIG. **11** is preferably controlled by a dynamic-joint controller capable of selective lock and adjust control of the movement of the actuator relative to the base. FIG. **11** also depicts an excentric dynamic-joint controller **134** of the present invention. This actuator control allows a user or attendant to halt the motion of the actuator relative to base post **118**. It also allows a user or attendant to adjust the focus of the excentric path of the actuator assembly **104** with respect to base post **118**. Such a dynamic-joint controller is shown in FIG. **11** comprising control knob **124** in selective connection to the actuator gear-and-peg **192**, and a track **182** located within the base post **118**. The actuator gear-and-peg **192** is affixed to the actuator assembly **104**, the base gear-and-peg **190** is affixed to the base post **118**, and the double-hole bar **164** dynamically holds the mating gears together. Further, engaging control knob **124** locks the actuator assembly **104** to the base post **118**. Disengaging the control knob **124** then permits the actuator assembly to again achieve motion in relation to the base post **118**. Additionally, when the control knob is disengaged, a screwdriver or other such instrument may be inserted into the slot **193** within the peg portion of the base gear-and-peg **190** in order to adjust the normally fixed position of the base gear-and-peg **190** and reaffix it to base post **118**. This adjustment changes the focus of the excentric path of the actuator assembly **104**, relative to base post **118**, and thus changes the balance and stabilization realized by a seated user for his particular body type.

Returning to FIG. **1**, the preferred actuator assembly **104** is shown. The actuator assembly **104** dynamically supports both the rotatably attached seat platform **106** and, similarly, the rotatably attached back platform **108**. The preferred embodiment of actuator **104** includes an interior, open space; and the preferred structure for achieving this interior, open space is the illustrated curved plate actuator. The curved plate actuator **104** allows the back platform **108** and the seat platform **106** to achieve angles between each other ranging from less than eight-five degrees to more than one hundred ninety degrees—and those in between. This enables the dynamic furniture **100** to conform to the sitting and lying postures of a user situated there within, as well as other postures in-between and beyond—such as standing up or flexing one's back. This actuator assembly **104** configuration is preferred since it allows a user to easily enter and exit the chair from the front or either side, and it allows a disabled user to enter into the seated position of the dynamic furniture **100** by sliding over from another chair or from a lying position into a bed. Materials suitable for the actuator, as well as other components of the dynamic furniture, include wood, metals, plastics, and composites having sufficient strength to accept component wear, and to hold the weight of an individual in dynamic motion.

Turning to FIGS. **4**c and **4**d, the actuator assembly **104** includes a straight bar, and the excentric path-joint assembly includes a base track **182** and double contacts **122**. The base track **182** is attached to the base post **118** portion of the base **102**. The double contacts **122** are affixed to actuator **104**, and these double contacts are permitted only to slide within base track **182**. The β arrows in FIG. **4**c and FIG. **4**d illustrate the movements of the actuators **104** permitted by their respective excentric path-joint assemblies. The base track can be any shape sufficient to promote orbital motion of the actuator relative to the base **102**, such as that shown in FIG. **4**d in which both circular orbital and excentric orbital motions are allowed by the shape of the base track **182**.

Alternatively, other orbital path-joint assemblies may include any other mechanical attachment means suited to enable an orbital path of travel for the actuator **104** relative to base **102**.

Examples of embodiments of specific dynamics for seat platforms and back platforms relative to the actuator **104** are as diagrammed in FIG. **5**a, FIG. **5**b, FIG. **6**a, FIG. **6**b, FIG. **7**a, and FIG. **7**b. FIG. **5**ashows that the straight bar actuator assembly **104** holds the back platform **108** in orbital circular connection with circular path-joint assembly **150**; and straight bar actuator assembly **104** also holds seat platform **106** in orbital circular connection with a circular path-joint assembly **150**. The motions of these platforms are illustrated by the α arrows in FIG. **5**a.

FIG. **5**b shows a roller **154** rotatably connected to actuator **104**. FIG. **5**b also shows the seat platform **106** joined to actuator assembly **104** by frictional contact with roller **154**; and it shows the back platform **108** connected to the straight bar actuator **104** by the circular path-joint assembly **150**. The embodiment of the flex-joint **128** shown in FIG. **5**b is a one-pivot two-bar structure comprising a rear bar **176** attached to the edge of the back platform **108**, a front bar **174** attached to the edge of the seat platform **106**, and a rotatable connector **152** that rotatably connects the rear bar **176** to the front bar **174**. The flex-joint **128** of the present invention is a joining mechanism between the seat platform **106** and the back platform **108** that ties the motion of the seat platform **106** to that of the back platform **108**, and vice versa. When gravity causes seat platform **106** to remain in frictional connection with roller **154**, seat platform **106** is constrained to movement along the roller **154**. The combination of joints illustrated in FIG. **5**b then allows seat platform **106** to move along an excentric path β while back platform **108** moves along a circular path α.

FIG. **6**a shows the straight bar actuator assembly **104**, the back platform **108**, the seat platform **106**, an embodiment of the flex-joint **128** therebetween, and an extended path-joint assembly **130**. The flex-joint **128** of FIG. **6**a includes a two-pivot one-bar structure having two rotatable connectors **152** and double-hole bar **164**. One rotatable connector **152** rotatably connects one end of double-hole bar **164** to the edge of the back platform **108**, and the other rotatable connector **152** rotatably connects the other end of double-hole bar **164** to the edge of the seat platform **106**. The extended path-joint assembly **130** includes a double-hole bar **164** adapted to project the path of motion for the seat platform **106** either above or below the extended path-joint assembly **130**. With the circular path-joint assembly **150** joining the back platform **108** to the actuator **104**, the combination of joints illustrated in FIG. **6**a allows the seat platform **106** to move along the excentric path β while back platform **108** moves along circular path α.

FIG. **6**b shows the back platform **108** attached to the actuator **104** using a geared excentric path-joint assembly **144**, and the seat platform **106** attached to the actuator assembly **104** by another geared excentric path-joint assembly **144**. These path-joint assemblies enable the seat platform **106** to move along an excentric path β relative to the actuator assembly **104**, and back platform **108** to travel along an excentric path β relative to actuator assembly **104**. In FIG. **6**b, the flex-joint **128**, which joins the scat and back platforms together, is comprised of a three-pivot two-bar structure. This preferred embodiment of flex-joint **128** is comprised of two double-hole bars **164** and three rotatable connectors **152**: wherein one rotatable connector rotatably connects the two double-hole bars, another rotatable connector rotatably connects the seat platform **106** to the flex-joint **128**, and the final rotatable connector rotatably connects the back platform **108** to the flex-joint **128**. This arrangement provides a significant amount of stability and flexibility for the user.

FIG. **9** shows an enlargement of the path-joint assembly **144** that is shown in FIG. **6**b as connecting actuator **104** with seat platform **106**. The seat platform **106** is joined to actuator assembly **104** by the geared excentric path-joint assembly **144** comprising a double-hole bar **164**, actuator gear-and-peg **192**, and platform gear-and-peg **194**. The actuator gear-and-peg **192** is fixably attached to the actuator **104** with the peg protruding, the platform gear-and-peg **194** is fixably attached to the seat platform **106**, and the double-hole bar **164** is rotatably attached to each of the two pegs, thus keeping the two gears mechanically engaged. This geared excentric path-joint assembly **144** is capable of maintaining multiple, variable seat platform positions relative to the actuator **104** that can be altered by a user merely by repositioning his or her body position. Since the seat platform **106** is permitted to move only in an excentric path relative to actuator **104**, the platform is said to be in excentric connection with the actuator **104**.

FIG. **7**a shows the actuator assembly **104** with a seat platform **106** in excentric connection. It also shows the actuator **104** in excentric connection with the back platform **108**. The seat platform **106** is joined to the actuator assembly **104** by a deformable path-joint assembly **140**; and the back platform **108** is joined to the actuator **104** by a deformable path-joint assembly **140**. The deformable path-joint assembly **140** may be comprised of a resilient, flexible material that has a natural state of relaxation, can be deformed into various curved positions by the application of force, and will tend to spring back to its natural state of equilibrium. The preferred deformable path-joint assembly is a spring. The flex joint **128** is a rotatable connector. The combination of joints illustrated in FIG. **7**a enables seat platform **106** and back platform **108** to move along excentric paths β and β, respectively.

FIG. **7**b shows the back platform **108** rotatably connected to actuator assembly **104**, the seat platform **106** joined to the actuator **104** by the path-joint assembly, and the seat platform **106** joined to the back platform **108** by an embodiment of the flex-joint **128** capable of deformation. The deformable flex-joint **128** includes a deformable material that has a natural state of relaxation that can be deformed into one or more positions by the application of force. Preferred deformable flex-joints include a strip of fabric or elastic that is then attached between the back platform **108** and seat platform **106**. The path-joint assembly, in FIG. **7**b, includes a rotatable connector **152**, rotatably attached to the seat platform **106**, capable of sliding within track **182**. The combination of joints illustrated in s FIG. **7**b allows the seat platform **106** to move along an excentric path β while the back platform **108** moves along a fixed circular path α.

Turning to FIG. **8**, an embodiment of the dynamic furniture **100** is shown. This embodiment of the dynamic furniture **100** shows: the base **102** with a rectangular floor contact member; the base post **118** stemming upward from the floor via a telescoping assembly **178**, and an armrest **186** attached to the base post **118**. The flex-joint **128** joins the back platform **108** and the seat platform **106**, and the back platform **108** is rotatably attached to the straight actuator assembly **104** via circular path-joint assembly **150**. The seat platform **106** rests on the roller **154**, and the circular path-joint assembly **150** connects the actuator assembly **104** to the base post **118** portion of the base **102**. The circular path-joint assembly **150** shown between the actuator assembly **104** and the base post **118** is a rotatable connector that allows actuator **104** to tilt back and forth into various positions along a fixed circular path relative to the base post **118**. More specifically, the circular path-joint assembly **150** allows the actuator **104** to rotate vertically with respect to the base **102**. The motion enabled by the circular path-joint assembly is illustrated by the α arrows in FIG. **4**e; and the motions of the seat and back platforms are as diagrammed in FIG. **5**b. FIG. **4**e shows the base **102**, the base post **118** portion of base **102**, the actuator assembly **104**, circular path-joint assembly **150**, and the circular orbital motion that a circular path-joint assembly allows—as shown by the α arrows.

Alternative circular path-joint assemblies, and rotatable connectors, may include a peg turning within a hole, a rod turning within a sleeve, double contacts sliding within a circular track, or any other mechanical attachment means suited to allow a circular path of travel. By circular path of travel, it is meant that an edge of a portion of the actuator assembly **104** forges a path of travel that traces out a circular arc shape with respect to the base **102**.

Path-joint assemblies may alternatively include compound path-joints comprising two or more path-joint assemblies configured in series, such as the many types of universal joints which enable curvilinear paths which are not necessarily planar, and may also include spherical path-joint assemblies such as the many types of ball-and-socket or ball-in-socket joints.

The path-joint assembly need not join the base post **118** portion of base **102** to a center portion of the actuator assembly **104**, as shown in FIG. **4**e; the path-joint assembly need only be affixed to the base **102** in such a manner as to allow a substantial portion of the actuator assembly **104** to protrude and dynamically achieve its function of supporting other moving components of the dynamic furniture **100** such as back, seat, and leg rest platforms.

Returning to FIG. **8**, the present invention includes an upper portion **110** that includes back platform **108** with a head rest platform **116** connected by a rotatable connector **152**; and the seat platform **106** has a leg rest platform **112** connected by a rotatable connector **152**. Other embodiments of the dynamic furniture **100** may, however, include a fixably attached head rest or leg rest platform. Between the back platform **108** and the seat platform **106** is the flex-joint **128**, in FIG. **8**; and the leg rest platform **112** shown therein may include one or more portions that are independently adjustable to accommodate leg injuries. As the dynamic furniture **100** includes the aspects of both a chair and a cot, the preferred dimensions for the head rest platform **116**, the back platform **108**, the seat platform **106**, the leg rest platform **112**, and other platforms are simply that of a panel. Any dimensions for the platforms sculpted or padded to provide further comfort with a user may be applied to the present invention.

FIG. **10** shows a dynamic-joint controller **132**. As the present controller is applicable to many components of the present invention, the controller shall be discussed as connecting a generic first component **176** to a generic second component **174**. The first component may include the head rest platform **116**, back rest platform **108**, seat platform **106**, or leg rest platform **112**. The second component may include the head rest platform **116**, back rest platform **108**, seat platform **106**, or leg rest platform **112**—though the first component will differ from the second component. The first component **176** is rotatably connected to the second component **174**. The first component **176** and the second component **174** can be put in selective rotational connection by equipping either of the two components with additional parts. Thus equipped, a user can control the angle between the two components or any other furniture components attached thereto. FIG. **10** shows the two components equipped with the additional parts that make it capable of selective lock and adjust control of the angle between them. This preferred embodiment of the dynamic-joint controller includes a slave gear-and-peg **200**, control gear-and-peg **196**, and control knob **124**; and the first component **176** rotatably connected to the second component **174** such that the two gears can be engaged. The gear portion of slave gear-and-peg **200** is affixed to the first component **176**, and the control gear-and-peg **196** is rotatably connected to the second component **174**. Engaging and then turning the control knob **124** will rotate the first component **176** relative to the second component **174**. When the control knob **124** is engaged it can also be used to lock the first and second components together in the then-current position. When the slave and control gears are riot engaged, the first and second components bars are free to rotate, relative to each other. The controller shown in FIG. **10** can be adapted for use on flex-joints and other path-joint assemblies, or rotatable connectors.

For example, FIG. **12** illustrates a circular dynamic-joint controller **136** capable of selective lock and adjust control of the movement of actuator assembly **104** in relation to the base post **118** of the present invention. In FIG. **12**, the circular dynamic-joint controller **136** includes the control gear-and-peg **196**, which at one side is rotatably connected to base post **118** and at its other side is affixed to control knob **124**; and it shows that circular dynamic-joint controller **136** includes slave gear-and-peg **200**: the gear portion of which is affixed to the actuator **104**, and the peg portion of which is rotatably attached to the base post **118**.

The slave gear-and-peg **200** may also include stops **180** to limit dynamic motioning of the actuator assembly **104**, when needed, to an acceptable range for a specific user. In the preferred embodiment of the circular dynamic-joint controller **136**, as depicted in FIG. **12**, the control knob **124** can be pushed in to engage the gear portion of control gear-and-peg **196** with the gear portion of slave gear-and-peg **200**. When engaged, turning the control gear-and-peg **196** via the control knob **124** will rotate the actuator assembly **104** relative to the base post **118**. When the control knob **124** is engaged it can be used to lock the actuator **104** relative to the base post **118**. When engaged or disengaged, movement of actuator **104** is limited by stops **180**.

The flex-joint **128** of the embodiment in FIG. **13** includes a dynamic-joint controller capable of selective lock and adjust control, of the movement of the two platforms relative to each other, via rotation of control knob **124**. A preferred embodiment of this controller is shown in more detail in FIG. **10**. Other dynamic-joint controllers available to the trade, and capable of fulfilling the advantages of the present invention, are also acceptable. Turning to FIG. **14**, the dynamic furniture **100** includes the actuator assembly **104** attached to the base post **118** portion of base **102**; and the dynamic furniture also includes the seat platform **106** and the back platform **108**, each rotatably connected to the actuator **104** by one or more circular path-joint assemblies **150**. The seat platform **106** is rotatably connected to the actuator assembly **104** in a proximate position; and the back platform **108** is rotatably connected to the actuator **104** in a distal position. The terms 'proximate position' and 'distal position' as they relate to the actuator assembly **104** are purely for the purpose of explaining the attachment locations of the back platform **108** and seat platform **106**. If the actuator **104** is divided into two portions separated by an imaginary middle point, then proximate is meant merely to refer to one portion of the actuator assembly **104**, and distal is merely meant to refer to the other portion of the actuator assembly **104**.

In the dynamic furniture **100** embodiment in FIG. **14**, the flex-joint **128** joins the back platform **108** to the seat platform **106**. As FIG. **14** also shows, embodiments of the present invention might further include a leg rest platform guide **126**. The preferred leg rest platform guide **126** of the present invention includes a roller **154** attached to actuator assembly **104** that serves to restrict the rotation of the leg rest platform **112** in relation to seat platform **106**. The purpose of the leg rest platform guide **126** is to hold the leg rest platform **112** in a position that comfortably supports a user's legs in various positions of repose and throughout the range of motions involved in changing from lying flat to other positions. The preferred structure of the leg rest platform guide **126** includes roller **154** rotatably connected to actuator **104**. Gravity ensures the leg rest platform **112** remains in contact with the roller **154** during use; and because this preferred leg rest platform guide **126** is connected to the actuator **104**, the leg rest platform **112** will effectively adjust to the user as the user moves between positions, such as between a lying and a sitting position. For example, the leg rest platform guide **126** ensures that in a lying position, embodiments possessing the leg rest platform guide **126** have a leg rest platform **112** that contacts the legs of the user in a manner substantially planar with the seat platform **106**; and while progressing to a sitting position, the leg rest platform guide **126** ensures that the users legs will be supported while they progressively bend to ninety degrees or less. The embodiment shown in FIG. **14** also includes arm rest **186**, to facilitate moving ones body while within the dynamic furniture.

As shown in FIG. **15**, an embodiment of the dynamic furniture **100** might further include a butt platform **160** positioned between the seat platform **106** and the back platform **108**. The preferred version of the butt platform **160** is a curved panel rotatably connected at two ends of its periphery. At one end it is rotatably connected to the seat platform **106**; and at its opposite end it is rotatably connected to the back platform **108**. In this preferred embodiment, portions of the butt platform **160** are capable of rotation to positions both above and below the platforms to which it is connected. The embodiment shown in FIG. **15** also includes: arm rest **186**; head rest platform **116** with handle **162**; and rotatably attached leg rest platform guide **126**, as well as the leg rest platform **112** equipped with foot rest platforms **166** and foot rest adjusters **168** to further support a seated patient.

As shown in FIG. **14** and FIG. **15**, platforms connected to the actuator need not be connected to the extreme ends of the actuator; and a portion of the actuator can be extended to provide guidance and support for additional platforms attached thereto.

The flexibility of the dynamic furniture **100** allows it to be utilized for many, various purposes related to transportation, relaxation, repose, and examination. Turning to FIGS. **16**a, **16**b, and **16**c, an embodiment of the dynamic furniture **100** is shown to include additions and features that allow the present invention to include aspects of a chair, bed, lift chair, and body repositioning device in a single apparatus. FIG. **16**a shows the actuator **104** connected to base post **118** by the circular path-joint assembly **150** which includes circular dynamic-joint controller **136**. The seat platform **106** is connected to the actuator **104** by the rotatable connector **152**; and seat platform **106** is connected to the leg rest platform **112** by the rotatable connector **152** which includes a dynamic-joint controller **132**. FIG. **16**a also shows the back platform **108** connected to the actuator assembly **104** by the rotatable connector **152**, and the back platform **108** is connected to the head rest platform **116** by the rotatable connector **152** which includes the dynamic-joint controller **132**. The seat and back platforms are connected together by two of the flex-joints **128** of which one includes the dynamic-joint controller **132**.

FIG. **16**a shows the furniture **100** configured to assist the user in standing up. FIG. **16**b shows the furniture **100** configured for sleeping. FIG. **16**c shows the furniture flexed beyond horizontal.

The dynamic furniture **100** embodiment depicted herein may include a wheel assembly having multiple wheels affixed to the base **102**. Features which are further advantageous to the present invention include the telescoping assembly **178** pictured in FIG. **16**a. The telescoping assembly **178** provides the capability of the dynamic furniture to be raised and lowered. Other means within the trade for accomplishing the elevation adjustment are acceptable. Conjunctively, the base **202** further includes swivel **156** comprising a rotatable member that allows one portion of the base to rotate upon another portion of the base. The illustrated embodiment further includes armrests **186** affixed to the base posts **118**. Any convenience feature common in the furniture art, particularly padding, or power-assisted mobility and adjustability, may be included in the present invention, as important aspects of the present invention include comfort and service.

What is claimed is:

1. Dynamic furniture for supporting a seated or reclining user, said furniture comprising:

a base;

an actuator assembly consisting of two elongate, parallel members, each member having a proximate portion and a distal portion, wherein said actuator is in excentric, restrained, and substantially centralized orbital connection to said base between said proximate portions and distal portions of said members;

a seat platform, in orbital, restrained, and single connection to said proximate portion of said actuator assembly and disposed at least partially within said parallel members; and

a back platform, in orbital, restrained, and single connection to said **[**proximate**]** *distal* portion of said actuator assembly and disposed at least partially within said parallel members, and wherein said seat platform is capable of rotation about said seat platform orbital connection without displacing said back platform,

wherein said back platform is capable of rotation about said back platform orbital connection without displacing said seat platform,

wherein vertical displacement of said seat platform proximate to said seat platform orbital connection displaces said actuator to further displace said back platform, and

wherein vertical displacement of said back platform proximate to said back platform orbital connection displaces said actuator to further displace said seat platform.

2. The dynamic furniture of claim **1** whereby said seat platform and said back platform comprise orbital connections dimensioned to allow said seat platform and said back platform to selectively pass through a substantially planar orientation to achieve positions including an upright position, a reclining position, and a flexing position.

3. The dynamic furniture of claim **2** wherein said seat platform is in excentric orbital connection to said proximate portion of said actuator assembly.

4. The dynamic furniture of claim **3** wherein said back platform is in excentric orbital connection to said distal portion of said actuator assembly.

5. The dynamic furniture of claim **3** wherein said back platform is in circular orbital connection to said distal portion of said actuator assembly.

6. The dynamic furniture of claim **2** wherein said seat platform is in circular orbital connection to said proximate portion of said actuator assembly.

7. The dynamic furniture of claim **6** wherein said back platform is in circular orbital connection to said distal portion of said actuator assembly.

8. The dynamic furniture of claim **6** wherein said back platform is in excentric orbital connection to said distal portion of said actuator assembly.

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