

IMPROVEMENTS RELATING TO LUGGAGE LATCHING SYSTEMS

Background of the Invention

5 The invention relates to luggage articles such as attache cases and the like and to latching systems for such articles.

10 In recent years, the popularity of attache cases such as leather or vinyl covered with wood-frame cases, for example, has been on the increase. Such cases commonly employ a pair of latch assemblies on opposite sides of a central carrying handle and a trend has developed for the use of combination locks in conjunction with such assemblies. Further, with a view toward simplifying the operation of such cases, there have been previous proposals involving the use of a single actuator and locking mechanism for operating the separate latch assemblies.

15 Due to the increasing popularity of attache cases of the above type, and due to the large number of individual case manufacturers, there is a demand for diversification in the design of the luggage latching and locking system hardware. It is desirable, therefore, for a hardware manufacturer to
20 produce hardware which is adaptable to diverse customer requirements, while at the

same time being relatively economical to manufacture and simple to install and operate. The present invention is more particularly directed towards this end.

- 5 According to the invention there is provided a luggage article latching system as set out in claim 1 of the claims of this specification.

This application is one of four applications numbered 8425793-6 divided from co-pending application number
10 8129877 (Serial No. 2094388) which all relate to similar subject matter and reference should be made to those applications.

The invention may be stated to reside in the concept of providing luggage hardware in modular form. In
15 accordance with this concept, an elongate latch console assembly may be provided which can be attached interiorly to one section of a luggage article, and which may

include spaced, hasp-engageable and disengageable latches and operating means therefor, the latches being adapted to cooperate with fixed hasps on a hasp assembly which can be attached interiorly to another section of the
5 article. The console may be designed to function with separate manual actuator and lock assemblies which may be assembled to the console by a hardware manufacturer in different configurations to produce latching systems of different appearance and/or function to meet indi-
10 vidual customer preferences. Additionally, the console may be designed to operate with a composite actuator and lock assembly, and the console components themselves may be designed for assembly within the console in different operating modes, for example, to adapt the console sel-
15 ectively to left or right-hand operation.

Hardware in accordance with the invention lends itself to assembly of the console and the lock and actuator assemblies in the required configuration by the hardware manufacturer, and simple installation of the
20 assembled system onto an otherwise completed luggage article.

Specific features of the invention will be apparent from the ensuing description and claims taken in conjunction with the attached drawings.

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Description of Drawings

Figure 1 is a perspective view of an attache case incorporating a latching system in accordance with the invention;

5 Figure 2 is an exploded perspective view of certain of the individual assemblies constituting the latching system, such assemblies being shown in their relationship to the body section of the attache case;

10 Figure 3 is an exploded perspective view of a hasp assembly of the system and the lid of the attache case;

Figure 4 is an exploded perspective view of the latch console assembly of the latching system;

15 Figure 5 is an elevational view of the latch console assembly with the cover plate removed and with the console latches shown in engagement with their respective hasps;

Figure 6 is a view similar to Figure 5 showing the latches released from the hasps;

20 Figure 7 is an exploded perspective view of an actuator assembly of the latching system;

Figure 8 is an elevational view, partly broken away, of a lock assembly of the latching system shown in assembled relation with the latch console and body section
25 of the attache case;

Figure 9 is a sectional view on line 9-9 of Figure 8;

Figure 10 is a sectional view on line 10-10 of Figure 9;

Figure 11 is a sectional view of the lock assembly similar to Figure 9 but shown in a combination-changing position;

Figure 12 is a perspective view of a shift member used in the lock assembly;

Figure 13 is a perspective view of a pivotal bolt of the lock assembly shown with part of a slide rod of the latch console;

Figure 14 is a composite end view of a combination dial and a combination sleeve;

Figure 15 is a perspective view of parts of the latching system and attache case illustrating the manner of preparing the case for installation of the system;

Figure 16 is an elevational view of a latch console assembly similar to Figure 5 but showing components of the console arranged in an alternative, reverse configuration;

Figure 17 is a perspective view of the latch console assembly as shown in Figure 16 with the lock assembly and actuator assembly attached;

Figure 18 is a perspective view of the latch console assembly with a centrally attached composite lock and actuator assembly; and

Figure 19 is a view similar to Figure 18 but showing the composite lock and actuator assembly attached to the console in an offset position.

Description of Preferred Embodiments

Referring initially to Figure 1, there is shown an attache case 10, which may be of known vinyl or leather covered wood-frame construction and which includes a body section 12 and a hinged lid 14. The case is fitted with a conventional handle 16 mounted on a front wall 12a of the body section, by handle studs 18a and 18b, and a latching system (shown in more detail in Figures 2 and 3) is provided for releasably latching the body section 10 to the hinged lid. In Figure 1, only exteriorly exposed parts of the latching system are visible, notably a latch actuator 20 on one side of handle 16, dials 22 and a shift member 24 of a combination lock on the other side of handle 16, and escutcheon plates 26a and 26b surrounding the lock parts and actuator respectively. When dials 22 are set on combination, the case can be opened by drawing actuator 20 to the left to release the latching system, as will be described, and when the dials are off combination, the lock prevents the case from being opened.

As shown in Figure 2, body section 12 of the case is equipped with an elongate latch console assembly A (attached interiorly to wall 12a as will be described), an actuator assembly B, fitting in an opening 34b of wall 12a and incorporating actuator 20, and a lock assembly C incorporating the combination lock and fitting in a further opening 34a in wall 12a.

Actuator assembly B and lock assembly C are attached to console A (preferably prior to shipment by the manufacturer) by means of flanges 36, 38 on the respective assemblies, which align with corresponding openings in the console as will be described. Flanges 36, 38 may have openings, as shown, for screwing the flanges to the console, or alternatively the flanges may be formed with rearwardly extending shanks for riveting the flanges to the console.

10 The latch console A includes longitudinally spaced pivoting latches 40a and 40b, and drive means for operating the latches in unison. In use, actuator 20 is connected with the drive means for operating the latches and the combination lock cooperates with the drive means to selectively prevent it being operated by the actuator.

Escutcheon plates 26a and 26b frame openings 34a, 34b on the exterior of wall 12a and the plates have rearwardly projecting shanks 42a and 42b extending through wall 12a and attached, as by screws 44 (see Figure 9) to latch console A through further openings in the console as will be described.

Mounting brackets 28a and 28b, which attach to side walls 12b and 12c of the case body, by screws or other fastening means, may be provided for supporting latch console A, or the support provided by the escutcheon plate shanks 42a and 42b and screws 44 may be sufficient to adequately secure the console. As shown in Figure 2, brackets 28a and 28b may have channel-like portions for

receiving the opposite ends of the latch console while allowing lengthwise adjustment prior to final fixing.

Latches 40a and 40b cooperate with fixed hasps 48a, 48b on a rod 30 forming part of a hasp assembly D (Figure 3) attached interiorly to the case lid 14 by mounting brackets 32a and 32b which connect to side walls 14b and 14c of the lid. Brackets 32a and 32b also have channel-like sections receiving the end portions of rod 30 and providing for lengthwise adjustment so that the hasps and latches can be accurately aligned. Hasp assembly 30 and brackets 32a, 32b may be plastic moldings.

The construction of latch console A will now be described with particular reference to Figures 4 to 6. The console may include an elongate tray-like base plate 50, the aforementioned latches 40a and 40b, drive means for the latches in the form of an elongate slide rod 52, latch springs 54a and 54b, hasp ejectors 56a and 56b, hasp ejector springs 58a and 58b and a cover plate 60. Conveniently, the base plate, latches and slide rod may be plastic moldings, and the remaining parts may be made of metal.

Right-hand latch 40a is in the form of a crank having a mounting section formed with opposed journals 62a, 62a' by which the latch is mounted in corresponding holes 64a, 64a' in the base plate and cover plate, respectively, a hooked hasp-engaging section 66a and an actuating section 68a formed with a cam surface 70a. In the

assembled configuration of the console, illustrated in Figures 5 and 6, latch 40a is mounted for counter-clockwise pivoting movement from a hasp-engaging position (Figure 5) to a hasp-disengaging position (Figure 6).

5 An opening 72a in latch 40a houses spring 54a, and the spring operates against a base plate post 74a projecting into opening 72a to provide biasing means urging the latch towards the hasp-engaging position. An opening 76a in side wall 78 of the base plate provides access to
10 latch 40a for hasp 48a.

Similarly, the left-hand latch 40b is also in the form of a crank having a mounting section formed with opposed journals 62b, 62b' by which the latch is mounted in corresponding holes 64b, 64b' in the base plate and
15 cover plate, respectively, a hooked hasp-engaging section 66b and an actuating section 68b formed with a cam surface 70b. In the assembled configuration of the console, illustrated in Figures 5 and 6, latch 40b is mounted for clockwise pivoting movement from a hasp-engaging
20 position (Figure 5) to a hasp-disengaging position (Figure 6). An opening 72b in latch 40b houses spring 54b, and the spring operates against a base plate post 74b projecting into opening 72b to provide biasing means urging the latch towards the hasp-engaging position. An
25 opening 76b in side wall 78 of the base plate provides access to latch 40b for hasp 48b.

Hasp ejector 56a fits between base plate projections 80a and 82a, the latter serving as a guide, and

spring 58a urges the ejector towards opening 76a. When hasp 48a is engaged (Figure 5), spring 58a is compressed and when latch 40a releases the hasp, the ejector urges the hasp upwardly by extension of spring 56a to facilitate opening of the attache case by lifting the lid. Ejector 56b is similarly arranged at the left end of the base plate between projections 80b and 82b, to act on hasp 48b.

Slide rod 52 is guided for lengthwise movement in an elongate base plate channel 84 defined between wall 78 and a land surface 86, and the rod is formed at its opposite ends with latch-actuating lobes 88a, 88b. Lobe 88a has a cam surface 90a providing cooperative camming means with cam surface 70a of latch 40a and lobe 88b has a cam surface 90b providing cooperative camming means with cam surface 70b of latch 40b.

When the latches are engaged with the respective hasps, the slide rod is in a right-hand position with respect to the base plate (Figure 5), and when the rod is moved lengthwise to the left in channel 84 (by means of actuator 20, as will be described), the cooperative camming surfaces effect simultaneous pivoting movement of the latches, in opposite senses respectively, from their hasp-engaging positions to their hasp-disengaging positions (Figure 6) accompanied by compression of latch springs 54a, 54b. Then, when the hasps are ejected and the actuator has been released, springs 54a, 54b return the respective latches to their hasp-engaging positions and through the cooperative camming surfaces, also return the slide rod to its initial position.

Lobe 88b of slide rod 52 is provided with an opening 96 for receiving a drive member of the actuator assembly and lobe 88a has an opening 98 for receiving a locking member of the lock assembly. Further, the slide rod may have centrally disposed mounting recesses 100 to receive a mounting bracket or the like for providing similar drive and locking means for the rod if the console is to be used with a centrally located composite lock and actuator assembly in place of the separate assemblies B and C (see Figure 18).

It may here be noted that when the latches are in their hasp-engaging positions (Figure 5) they are free to pivot toward their hasp-disengaging positions independently of movement of the slide rod. Thus, when the hasps are disengaged, they can be re-engaged by effecting a camming action between hasp surfaces 92a and 92b and complementary latch surfaces 94a and 94b. Accordingly, the latch system incorporates a scramble feature enabling the hasps to be engaged even when the slide rod is locked in position by the combination lock.

Cover plate 60 (Figure 4) includes an elongate slot 102 aligned with opening 96 in the slide rod and through which the actuator drive member projects into opening 96, the slot being of sufficient length to provide the required travel of the slide rod to release the latches. A smaller opening 104 at the opposite end of the cover plate provides access for the locking member into the slide rod opening 98. The cover plate and base plate

have aligned openings 106, 106' used for assembling the cover plate to the base plate by means of the screws or rivet shanks carried by the flanges 36, 38 on actuator assembly B and lock assembly C. Openings 46 in the base plate and 46' in the cover plate receive the screws, such as screws 44 (Figure 9), which connect to the escutcheon plates 26a, 26b and fasten the console and attached lock and actuator assemblies to the attache case. The cover plate and base plate may also include further aligned openings 110, if it is required to fasten the attache case handle 16 through the latch console, and centrally disposed openings 107, 107' and 47, 47' for mounting a composite lock and actuator assembly and single escutcheon plate.

As shown in Figures 4 to 6, the components of the latch console are assembled for right-to-left movement of the slide rod to effect opening of the latches and for receipt of the actuator assembly B at the left end and lock assembly C at the right end of the console, respectively. In accordance with the invention, however, the console components can also be assembled in a reverse mode, for left-to-right movement of the slide rod to effect latch opening, with the actuator assembly at the right end of the console and the lock assembly at the left end. As indicated by the dashed-line arrows in Figure 4, such reverse assembly may be effected by inverting and transposing the latches and by lengthwise inversion of the slide rod and cover plate relative to

the base plate. The console is shown assembled in the reverse mode in Figure 16 with the cover plate removed.

Actuator assembly B is shown in detail in Figure 7 in conjunction with lobe 88b of slide rod 52. The assembly includes a body member 112 integrally formed with the flanges 36 and having a face plate portion 114 formed with a central opening 116. As previously indicated, the flanges may be formed with screw holes 118 for attaching the assembly to the latch console, or alternatively, the flanges may have rearwardly extending rivet shanks or the like. Further, the flanges may have central openings 120 to receive shanks 42b of escutcheon plate 26b (Figure 1).

The manual actuator 20 sits on face plate portion 114 and has an integral block 122 on its back face projecting through opening 116. An actuator bracket 124 is attached to block 122, for example by screws 126, the bracket including a projecting tab 128 adapted to fit through slot 102 in cover plate 60 of the latch console into opening 96 in slide rod 52. Tab 128 thus forms a drive member for moving the slide rod responsive to manual movement of actuator 20. A spring 130 mounted between a plug 132 integral with body member 112 and a further tab 134 on bracket 124 urges the actuator to the right as illustrated.

With the above arrangement, when actuator assembly B is attached to latch console A, manual movement of actuator 20 to the left against spring 130 draws slide rod 52 to the left thus releasing the latches 40a and 40b. When the actuator is released, latch springs 54a and 54b return the latches and slide rod to their initial positions and spring 130 returns the actuator to its rest position.

The relative locations of tab 128, slot 102 in the console cover plate, and opening 96 in slide rod 52 may be such that when the latch console is assembled in the reverse mode as shown in Figure 16 and the actuator assembly is swung around and mounted at the right end of the console, for left-to-right movement of actuator 20 (see Figure 17), tab 28 will still accurately align with slot 102 and opening 96.

Lock assembly C is shown in detail more particularly in Figures 8-14. A main body member 136 of the lock assembly is integrally formed with the mounting flanges 38 in like manner to the body member 112 of the actuator assembly. Flanges 38 also have screw openings 138 (or alternatively may again have rivet shanks) for attachment of the lock assembly to the latch console and the screw openings or shanks are preferably on the same centers as those of the actuator assembly. Openings 140 between flanges 38 provide passage for the escutcheon plate fastening screws 44.

The outer surface 140 of member 136 forms the face plate of the combination lock and is provided with openings 142 for the respective combination dials 22 and a further opening 144 for shift member 24. A dished cover plate 146 is secured internally to body member 136 (by suitable fasteners 148) to define with the body member a lock casing. A shaft 150 is mounted within the casing on suitable support surfaces of the body

member and cover plate, the shaft having an integral or fixed collar 152 adjacent one end. Carried on the shaft, between collar 152 and a coil compression spring 154 are axially abutting combination sleeves 156, the left ends of which are formed as cams 158. On the opposite side of collar 152, shaft 150 carries the shift member 24. Spring 154 acts between a washer 160 and the endmost sleeve to urge the assembly of shaft, sleeves, and shift member to the right.

10 The sleeves are each encircled in known manner by one of the dials 22, the sleeves being coupled for rotation with the dials by means of sleeve teeth 162 engaging openings 164 in the respective dials (see Figure 14). The dials each have a peripheral series of combination indicia with detents 166 therebetween and a dial spring 170 on the base of cover plate 146 has pairs of arms 172 (see Figure 10) for engaging the detents, so that the dials may be manually rotated in equal increments between the respective indicia settings.

20 A bolt 174 (see Figure 13) is pivotally mounted within the lock casing by means of projecting ears 178 carried in suitable openings (not shown) in opposite end walls of cover plate 146. The bolt has cross-bars 180 formed with V-shaped ridges adapted to engage in corresponding V-shaped notches 182 in the cams 158 (see Figures 10 and 14). Slots 184 between the bolt cross-bars accommodate the dials.

The bolt is urged upwardly by means of bolt springs 186 on the base of cover plate 146, the springs being located in bolt bosses 188, so that the ridge portions of the cross-bars contact the peripheries of the cams 158.

5 When all the cams are aligned so that the bolt ridges are all received in the respective cam notches (the on combination setting of the lock) the bolt is raised under the influence of springs 186, as shown in Figures 8 and 9 and in full line in Figure 10. When, however, any one or
10 more of the cams is rotated by one or more dial-indicium settings away from the on-combination setting, the relevant ridge portion of the bolt is moved out of its respective notch by a camming action, so that the bolt is lowered to the position shown in phantom in Figure 10,
15 the ridge portion then engaging the circular periphery of the respective cam. (A more detailed description of a lock of this nature is contained in copending U.S. patent application Serial No. 033,540 to Remington, filed April 26, 1979 and commonly assigned herewith. The entire
20 disclosure of the copending application is incorporated herein by reference.)

The free edge of the bolt opposite pivots 178 is bent down and projects through an opening 190 on one side of the lock casing. A depending tab 192, forming
25 a locking member for the latch console slide rod, is provided on the free edge. When the lock assembly is suitably attached on the console cover plate, and the bolt is in its locked, lowered position (the lock being off combination), tab 192 engages in opening 98 in the console

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slide rod through opening 104 in the cover plate and prevents the slide rod from being operated by the manual actuator, so that the attache case can be locked closed. When the lock dials are moved to the on-combination setting, the bolt is allowed to rise, as described above,
5 to lift tab 192 from within opening 98 and allow the manual actuator to operate the console slide rod and latches. The dials thus form control means for tab 192.

In the illustrated embodiment, tab 192 is
10 asymmetrically located as between the left and right-hand flanges 38 of body member 136. Accordingly, if the lock assembly and actuator assembly are to be transposed into the positions illustrated in Figure 17 (the latch console being assembled in the Figure 16 mode), a substi-
15 tute bolt 174 with a repositioned tab 192 may be provided in order properly to position the tab in relation to openings 98 and 104.

Shift member 24 may be used to change the set combination of the lock by uncoupling the sleeves from the
20 dials when the lock is on-combination, allowing one or more of the dials to be rotated relative to the associated sleeve or sleeves. As seen more particularly in Figure 12, the shift member has a body section 194 defining a transverse slot 196 through which shaft 150
25 passes when the lock is assembled, and a cam surface 198, an actuator portion 200 and a blocking portion 202. A rear section 204 of the body portion 194 fits in a recess 206 in body member 136 of the lock (see Figures 9 and 11)

to locate and guide the shift member for translatory movement transversely of the shaft.

When the lock bolt is lowered, the lock being off combination, an edge surface 208 of the bolt (see Figures 5 10 and 13) is in blocking relationship to blocking section 202 of the shift member, to prevent the member being moved transversely. When the lock is on combination, however, and the bolt is raised, surface 208 clears blocking section 202 and the shift member can be moved transversely 10 to the right as shown in Figure 10. This movement effects a camming action between surface 198 of the shift member and shaft collar 152, shifting the shaft and sleeves to the left as seen in Figure 10, so that the sleeves are uncoupled from the dials. The shifted position of the 15 lock is shown in Figure 11. In this position, shaft collar 152 engages a flat surface 210 of the shift member to prevent spring 154 from forcing the sleeves and shaft back into the Figure 9 position. Accordingly, the shift member can be released and the lock's combination can be 20 adjusted. It will also be noted that in the shifted position, blocking section 202 of the shift member sits under the bolt thereby preventing the bolt from being lowered and avoiding a possible loss of the set combination.

After the combination has been adjusted, the shift 25 member can be returned to its initial position, thereby allowing spring 154 to force the sleeves back into coupling engagement with the dials and setting the new combination.

As previously indicated, the screw openings or shanks on flanges 36 and 38 of the actuator and lock assemblies are preferably on the same centers, to facilitate the transposition of these assemblies. Further, the body members of the respective assemblies may have the same outer profile, to provide a balanced appearance to the attache case and to facilitate the mounting of the assembled hardware on the case by allowing openings 34a and 34b in wall 12a of the case (see Figures 2 and 16) to be identical irrespective of the mode in which the hardware is assembled and providing uniformity in the dimensions of escutcheon plates 26a and 26b.

Figure 15 illustrates a convenient way in which the hardware may be simply installed on the attache case. Such assembly may for example be done after the case is otherwise fully assembled and covered. It is preferred for console A to be supplied to a luggage manufacturer with the actuator and lock assemblies B and C already in place. A suitable template or jig arrangement E, diagrammatically illustrated in Figure 15, may also be supplied for facilitating the formation of openings 34a and 34b in wall 12a of the case and also for locating the positions for forming openings to accept screws or the like for brackets 28a and 28b. (A similar jig or template may be supplied for forming openings in the case lid for attachment of hasp assembly D, or alternatively, a composite jig arrangement may be provided for forming the openings in both the case body member and lid.)

After suitably piercing the required openings in the case body member, it is merely necessary to insert the lock and actuator assemblies through openings 34a, 34b from the interior of the case and secure the hardware by insertion of the escutcheon plates from the exterior. Where separate lock and actuator assemblies are provided, as illustrated, it may be possible to dispense with brackets 28a and 28b, with the escutcheon plate attachments providing the sole support for the hardware.

10 To provide flush fitting of the latch console against the interior of wall 12a, recesses may be formed in the wall to accommodate flanges 36, 38 of the actuator and lock assemblies or alternatively, an insert sheet may be used.

After attachment of the latch console, the hasp assembly may be attached to the case lid by means of brackets 32a, 32b. Horizontal alignment of the latches and hasps may be checked by closing and opening the case, and the hasp assembly may then be fixed longitudinally by driving twist nails, screws or the like, through the case lid into holes 93 in rod 30 (see Figure 3). The provision of a single rod 30 incorporating both hasps provides accurate spacing and alignment of the hasps to relieve the luggage manufacturer of a hasp-aligning operation.

To further increase the versatility of the system in providing luggage hardware which can be produced from the same components in a variety of different appearances, the outer surfaces of, for example, actuator 20 and body

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members 112 and 136 may be covered with metallic covering sheets (as for example, sheet 212, see Figures 8 and 9) selected from a range of such sheets having different surface finishes. Covering sheets of this nature and the manner in which they may be secured are disclosed in co-
5 pending U.S. patent application to O. Vincent Scarnecchia, Serial No. 219,956, filed December 24, 1980, titled "Improvements Relating to Combination Locks", and commonly assigned herewith. The entire disclosure of the copending
10 application is incorporated herein by reference.

Figure 18 shows an arrangement wherein the latch console A, as previously described, is provided with a composite, centrally located, lock and actuator assembly F in place of the separate assemblies of the previous
15 embodiment. In this arrangement, slide 52 is provided with a central bracket, attached to one of the recesses 100 (see Figure 4) to cooperate with assembly F and suitable openings (not shown) are formed in cover plate 60 to provide access to the bracket. Lock and actuator assembly
20 F may be of a type in which an actuator drive member engages an opening in the slide rod bracket and the lock has a locking member adapted to enter a further opening in the bracket to lock the slide rod in similar manner to the individual assemblies previously described. Alternati-
25 vely, assembly F may be of the type in which a locking member acts directly on the actuator rather than on the latch console slide member. A lock of this type is shown, for example, in U.S. Patent No. 3,800,571 to Heine, issued

April 2, 1974, and commonly assigned herewith. In this case, only a single opening need be provided in the slide rod.

Figure 19 shows an arrangement in which the combined lock and actuator assembly F is mounted at the right end of console A, and it will be appreciated that with this arrangement a suitably located opening is again provided in the slide rod for the actuator drive member and a further opening for the locking member, if appropriate. The system shown in Figures 18 and 19 may be installed on a luggage case in a similar manner to the previously described embodiments and using the latch console end brackets 28a and 28b for stability, since only a single escutcheon plate will be used.

It will be seen from the foregoing description that the invention provides a latching hardware system for luggage articles which is extremely versatile and can be assembled to provide a variety of configurations, appearances or operating modes, all using the same basic latch console components. The latch console can be used with cases of different width and wall thickness and can be easily mounted using unsophisticated tools. The inventive system provides excellent alignment characteristics of the latches and hasps, with no rivets being visible from the top of the case, and provides automatic closure and smooth operation. Production costs may be made competitive with the cost of two conventional combination locks.

**CLAIMS**

1. A latching system for a luggage article including an elongate latch console for attachment interiorly to one wall of the article, the console comprising, integrally, a base plate, a cover plate attached to the base plate, a pair of spaced, hasp-engageable and disengageable latches between said plates, drive means between said plates for operating the latches in unison, an actuator assembly mounted on said cover plate for receipt in an opening in said wall, the actuator assembly including a manual actuator for operating the drive means and adapted to be exposed on the exterior of said wall of the article and including a drive member connecting said actuator to said drive means through a slot in said cover plate, and attachment means for securing said console as a unit in engagement with the interior of said wall with said actuator assembly received in said opening.

2. A latching system as defined in Claim 1, further comprising lock means for preventing or allowing actuator-initiated movement of said drive means via said drive member.

3. A latching system as defined in Claim 2, wherein said lock means is part of said actuator assembly.



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4. A latching system as defined in Claim 2, wherein
said lock means is a further assembly mounted on said
cover plate in spaced relation to said actuator assembly
and wherein said lock means includes a movable locking
5 member insertable through a corresponding opening in said
cover plate to engage said drive means for blocking move-
ment of the same.

5. A latching system as defined in Claim 4, wherein
said lock means comprises a combination lock having a
10 pivotal bolt constituting said movable locking member.
