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(54) **SNOW VEHICLE**

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(71) Applicant: **Polaris Industries Inc.**, Medina, MN (US)

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(57) **ABSTRACT**

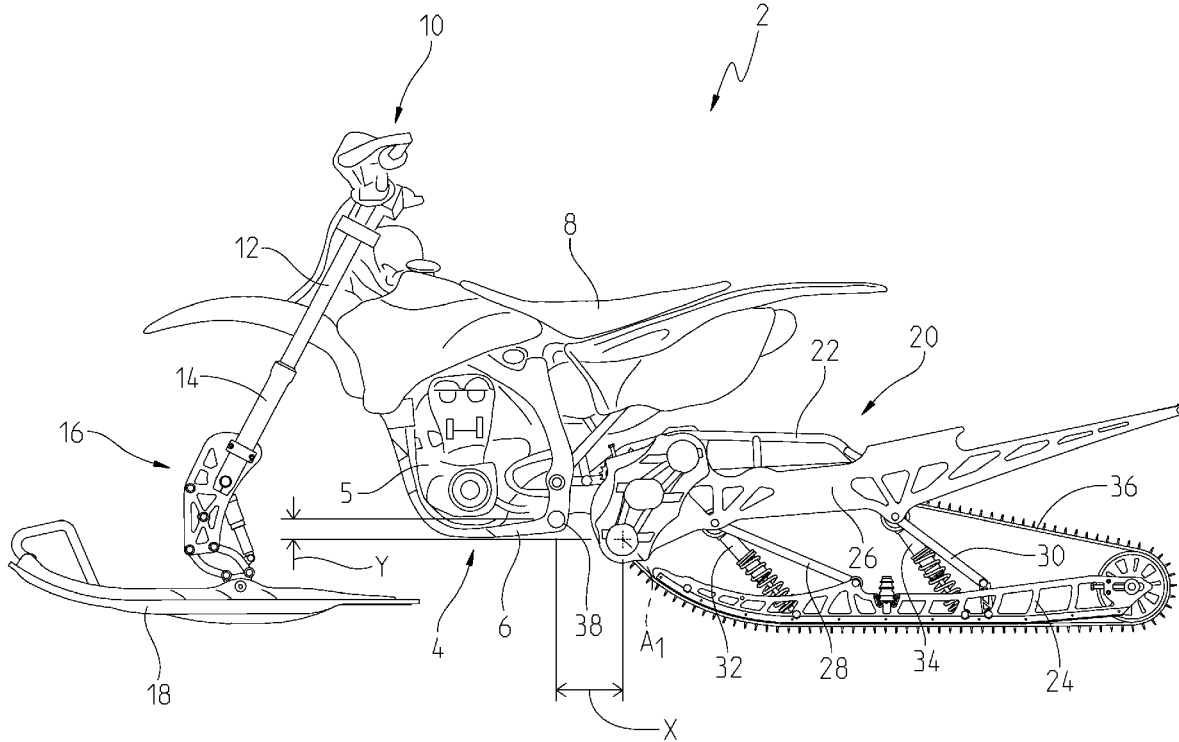
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(22) Filed: **Nov. 6, 2015**

A snow vehicle is disclosed comprising a vehicle frame, a propulsion unit coupled to the frame, and a front ski steered by a steering mechanism. The front of the vehicle includes a first front suspension and a second front suspension coupled to the ski. The rear suspension includes a bumper assembly preventing bottoming out of the rear suspension. The rear suspension is coupled to the vehicle frame such that the longitudinal spacing between the vehicle frame and rear suspension is adjustably controllable.

Publication Classification

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B62K 13/08 (2006.01)
B62M 9/16 (2006.01)



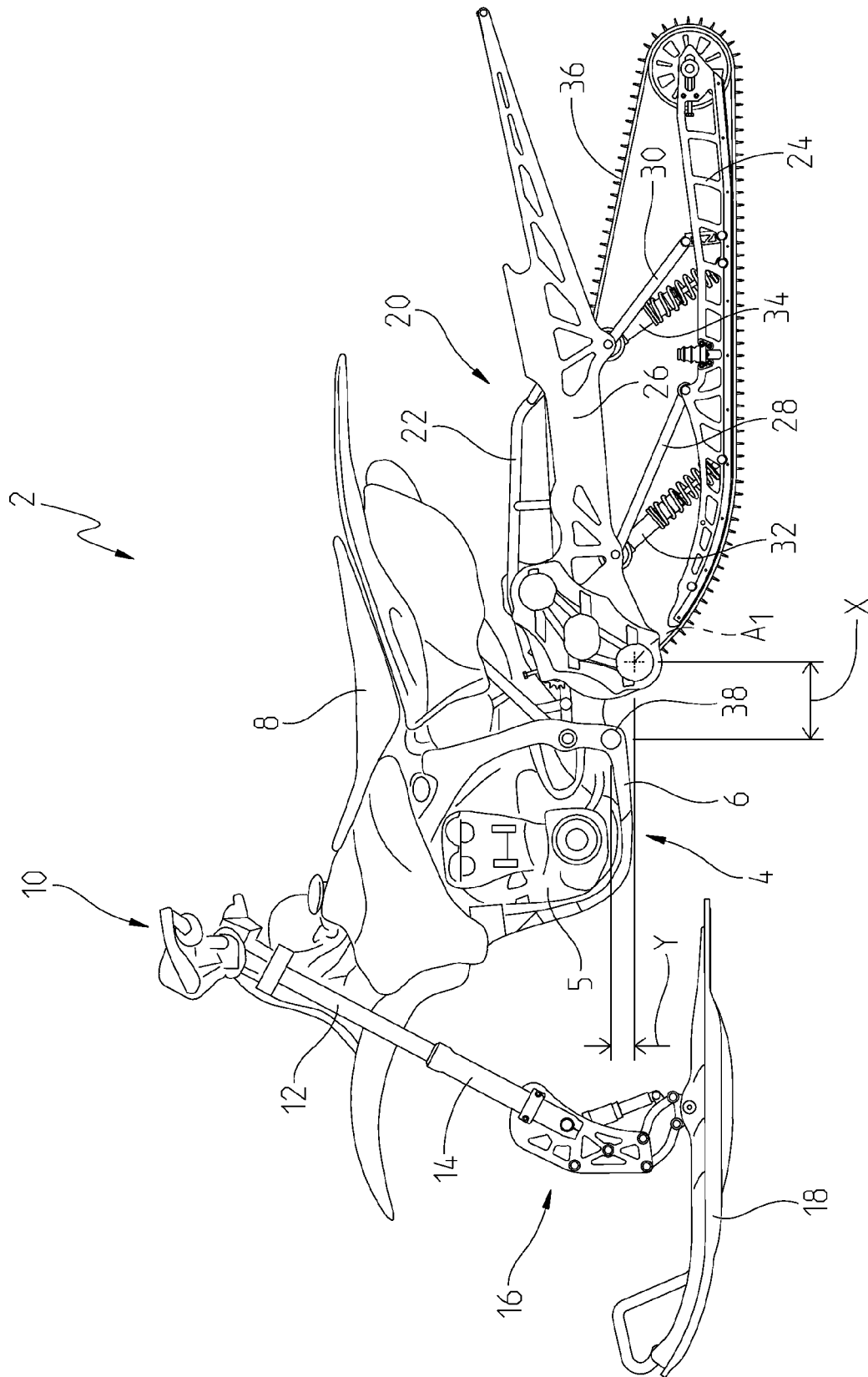


Fig. 1

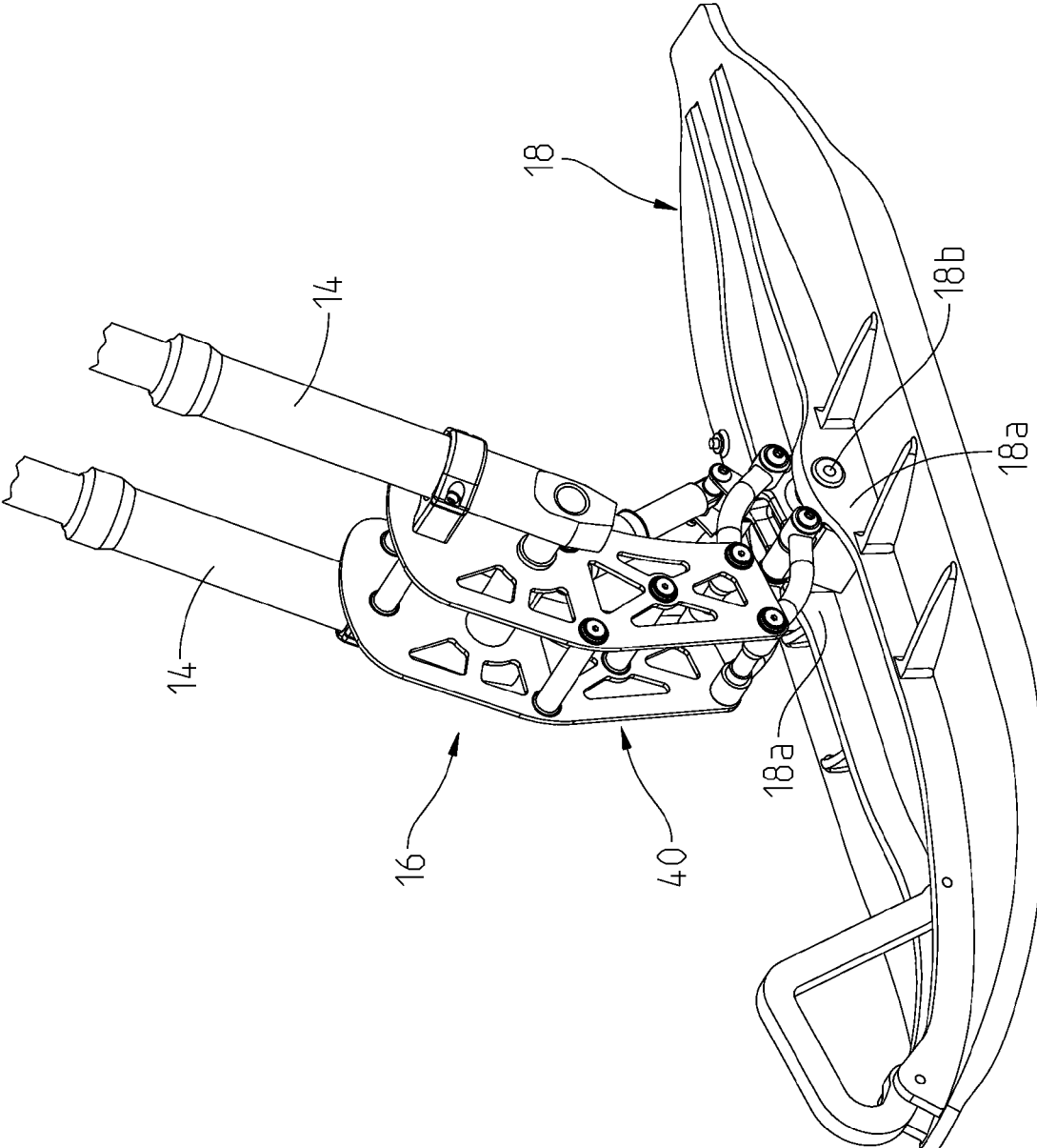


Fig. 2A

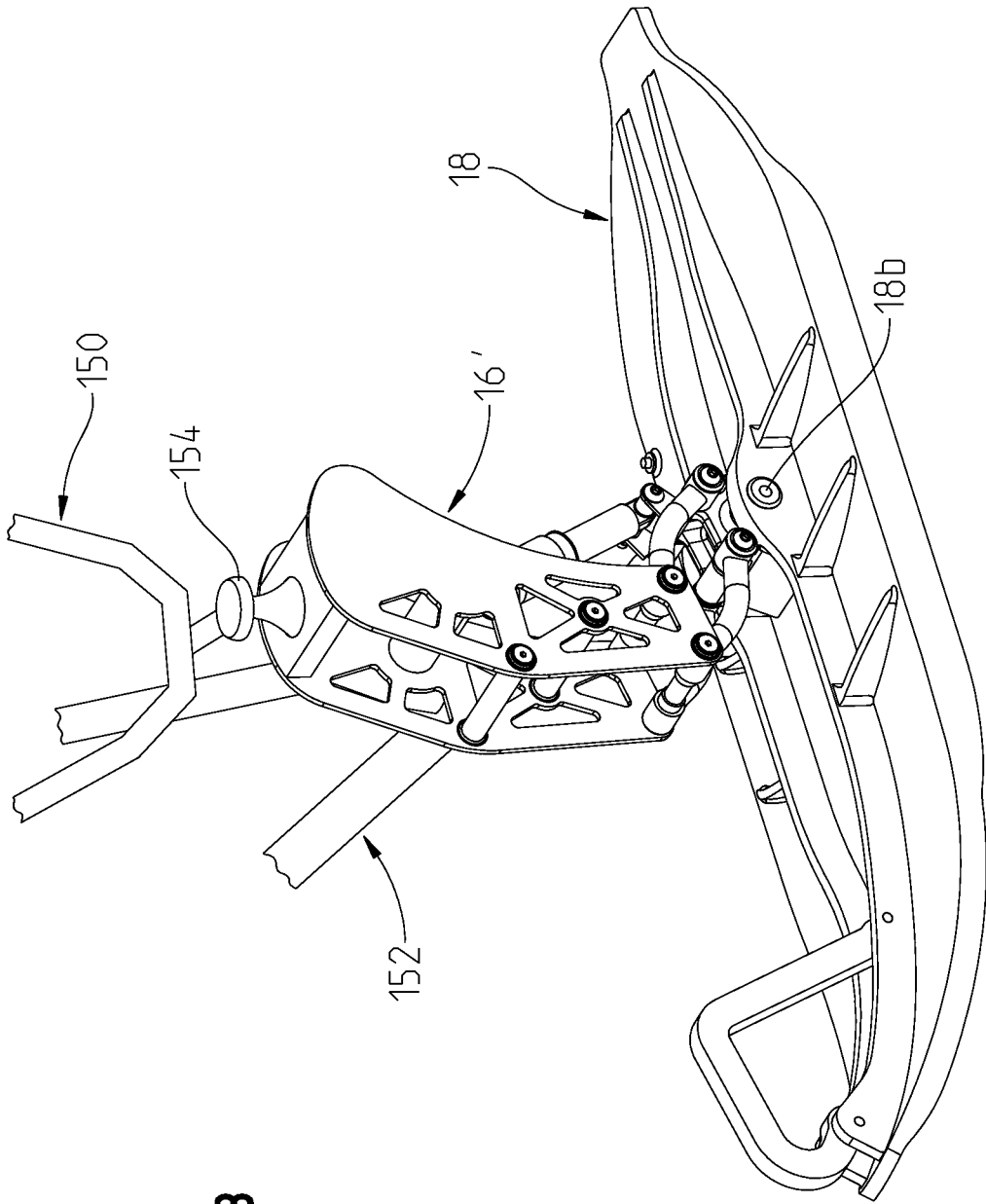


Fig. 2B

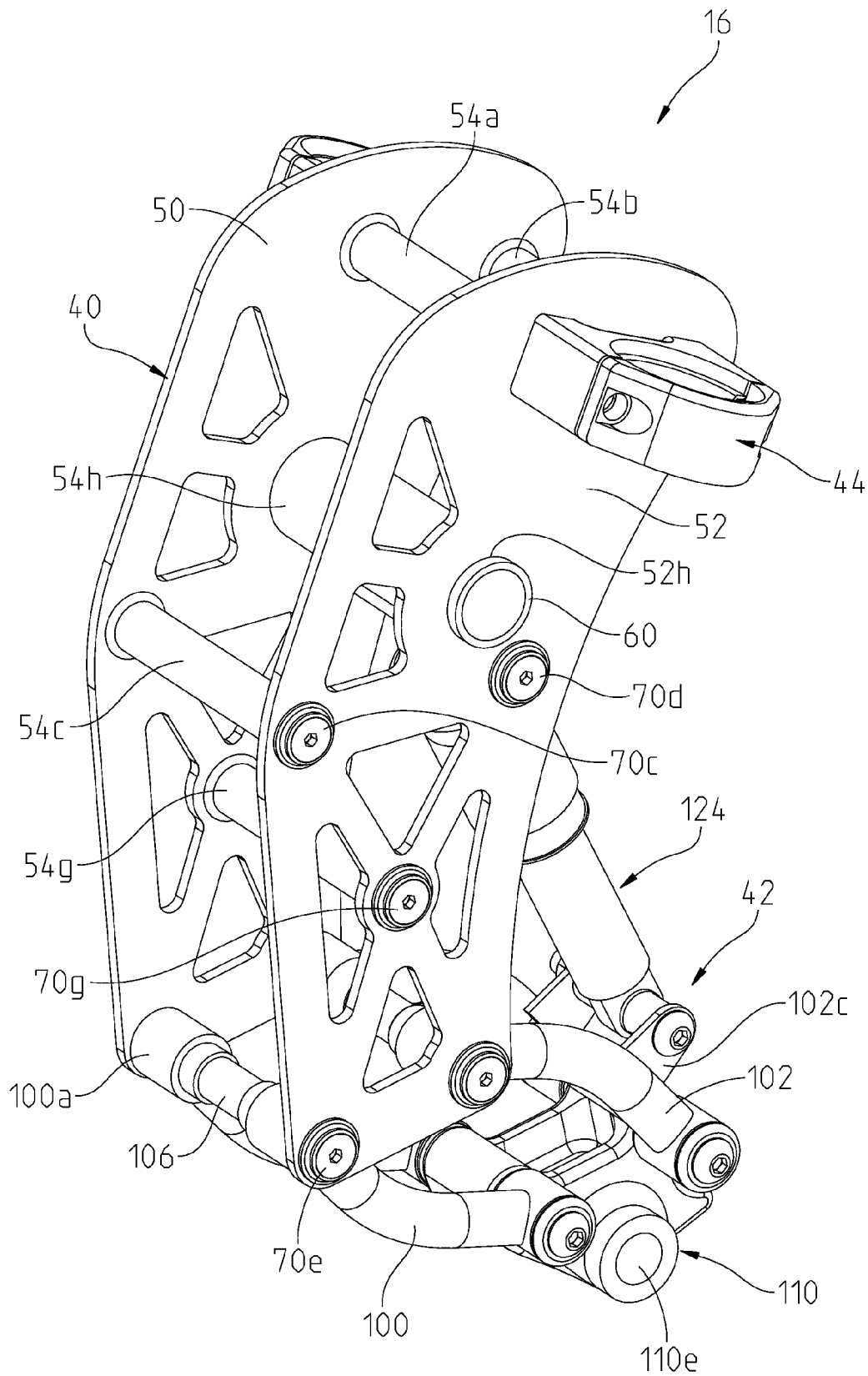


Fig. 3

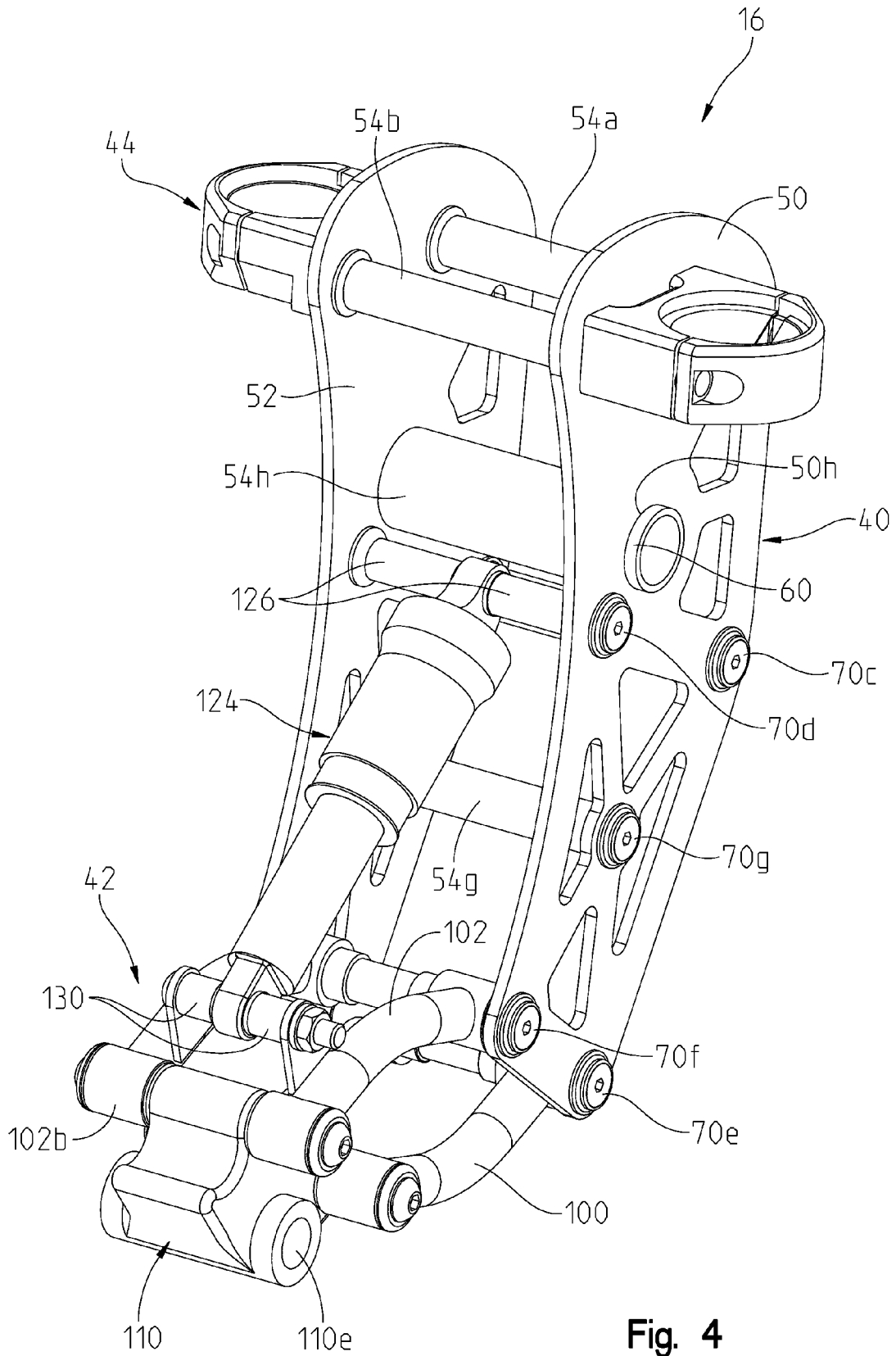
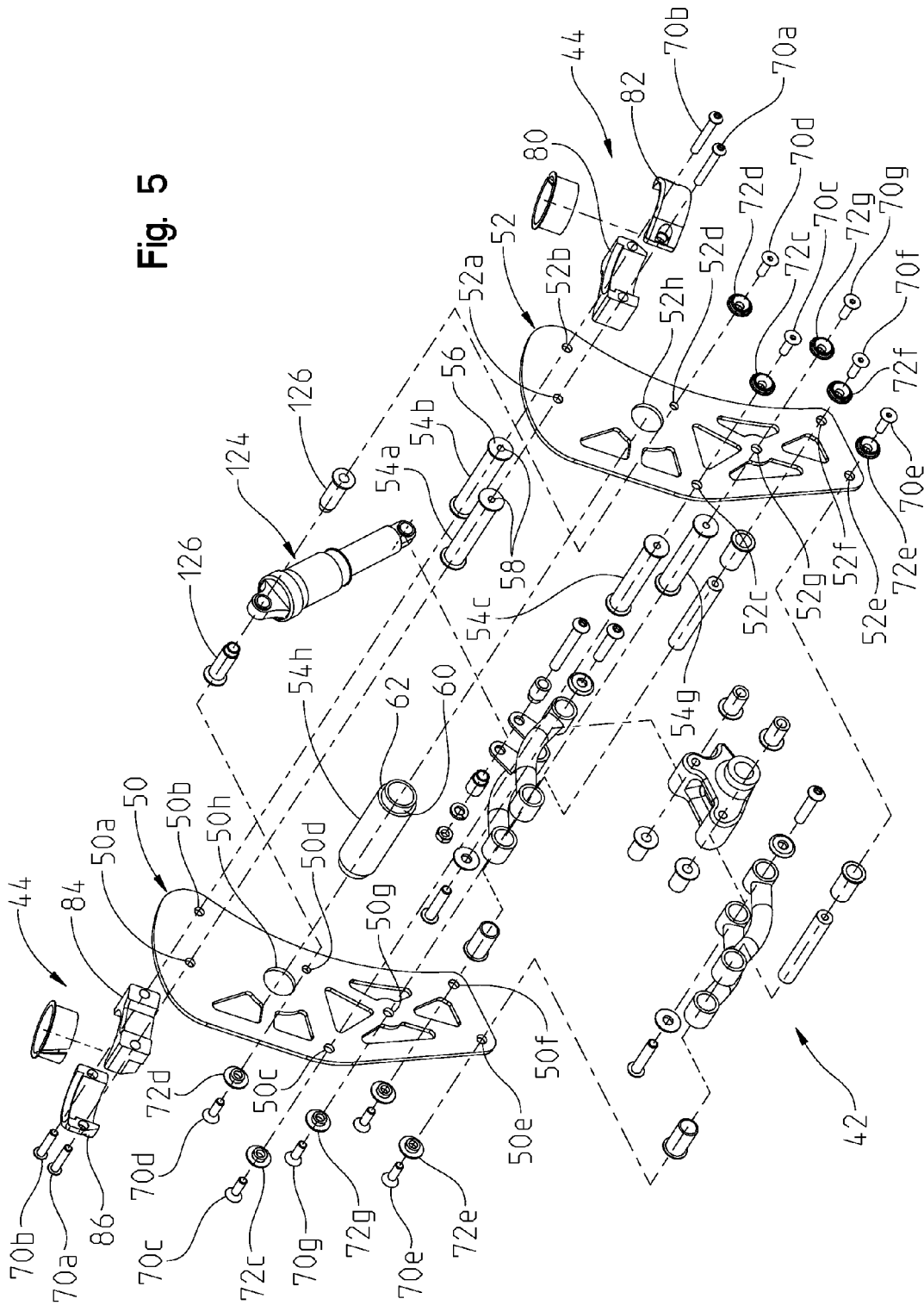


Fig. 4

Fig. 5



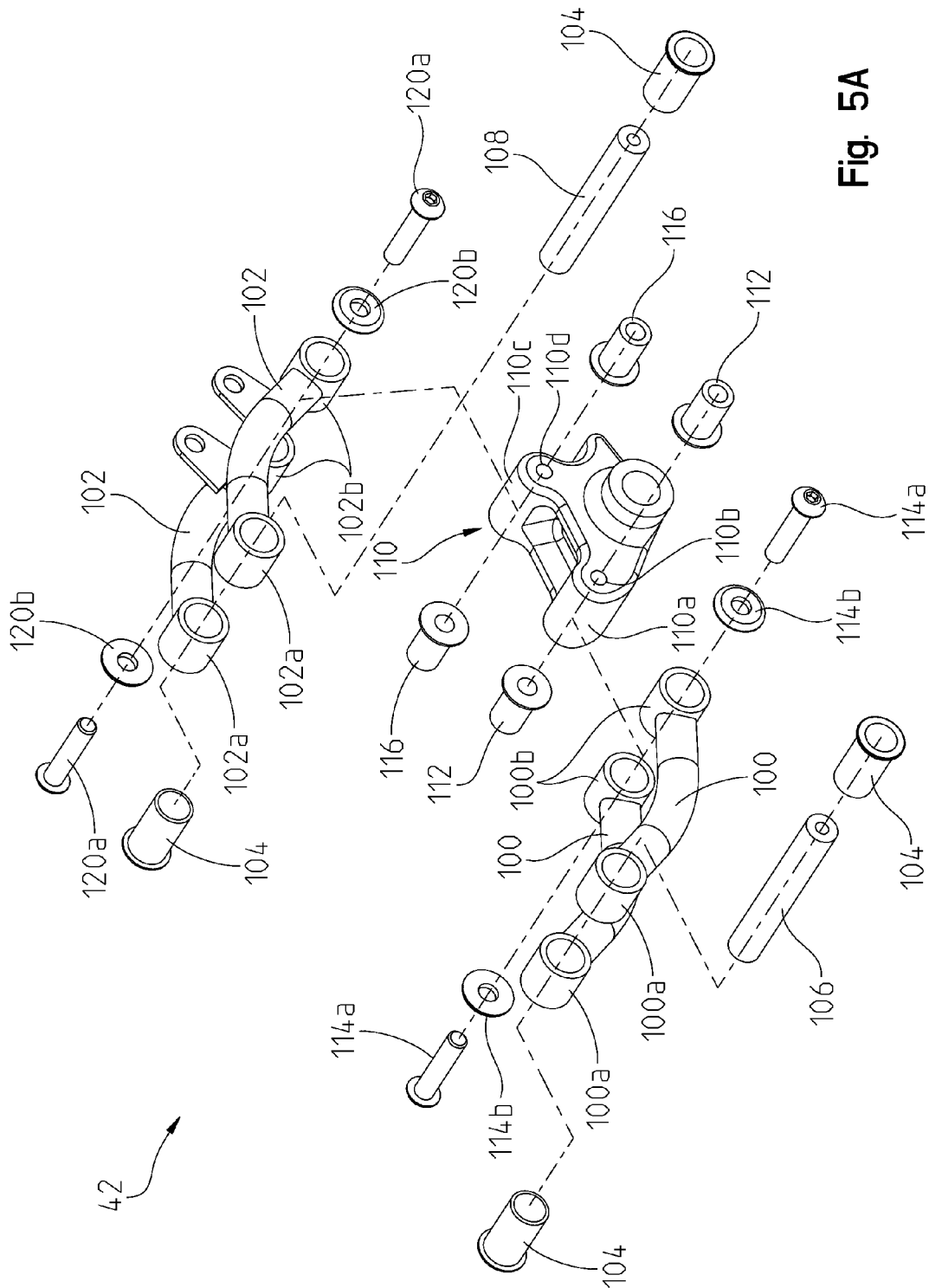


Fig. 5A

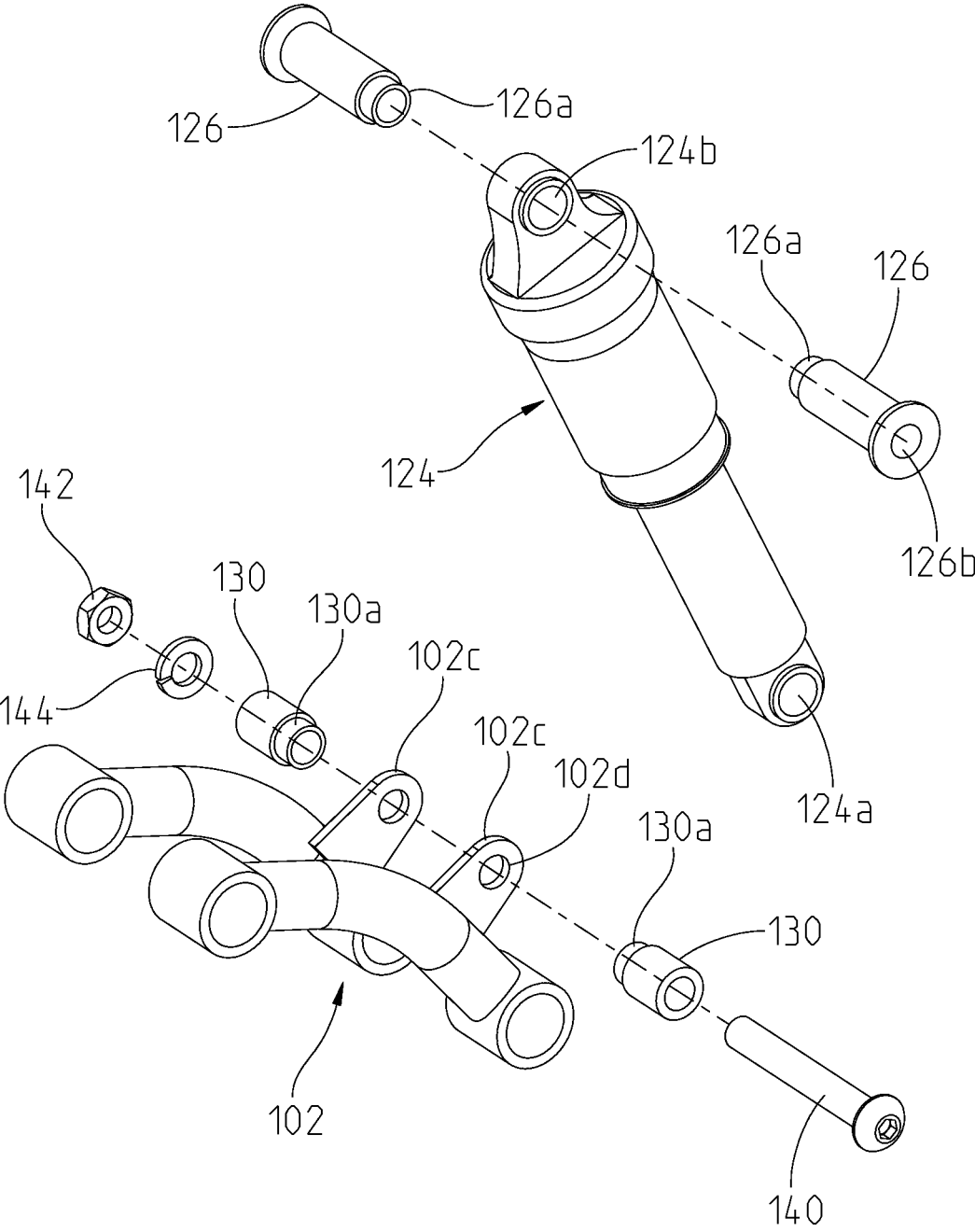


Fig. 5B

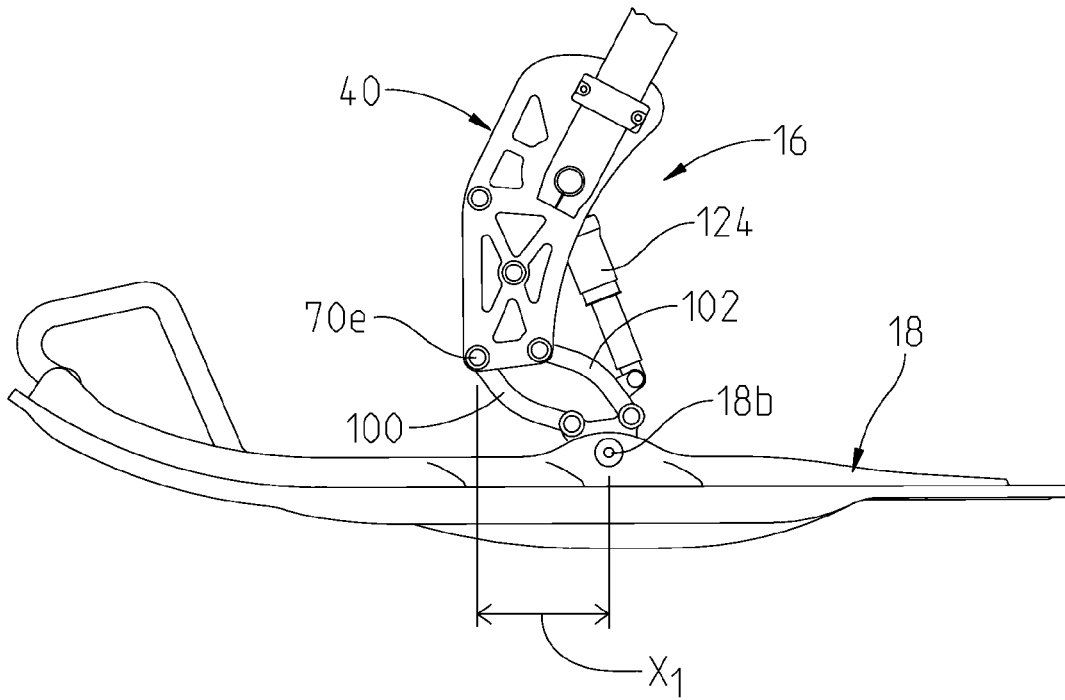


Fig. 6A

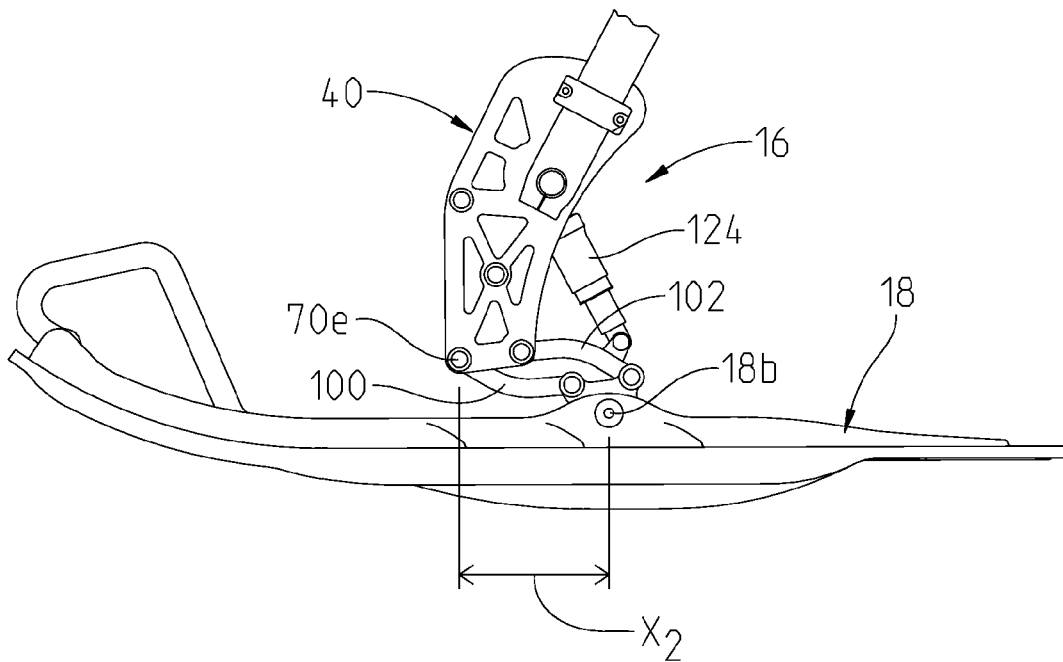


Fig. 6B

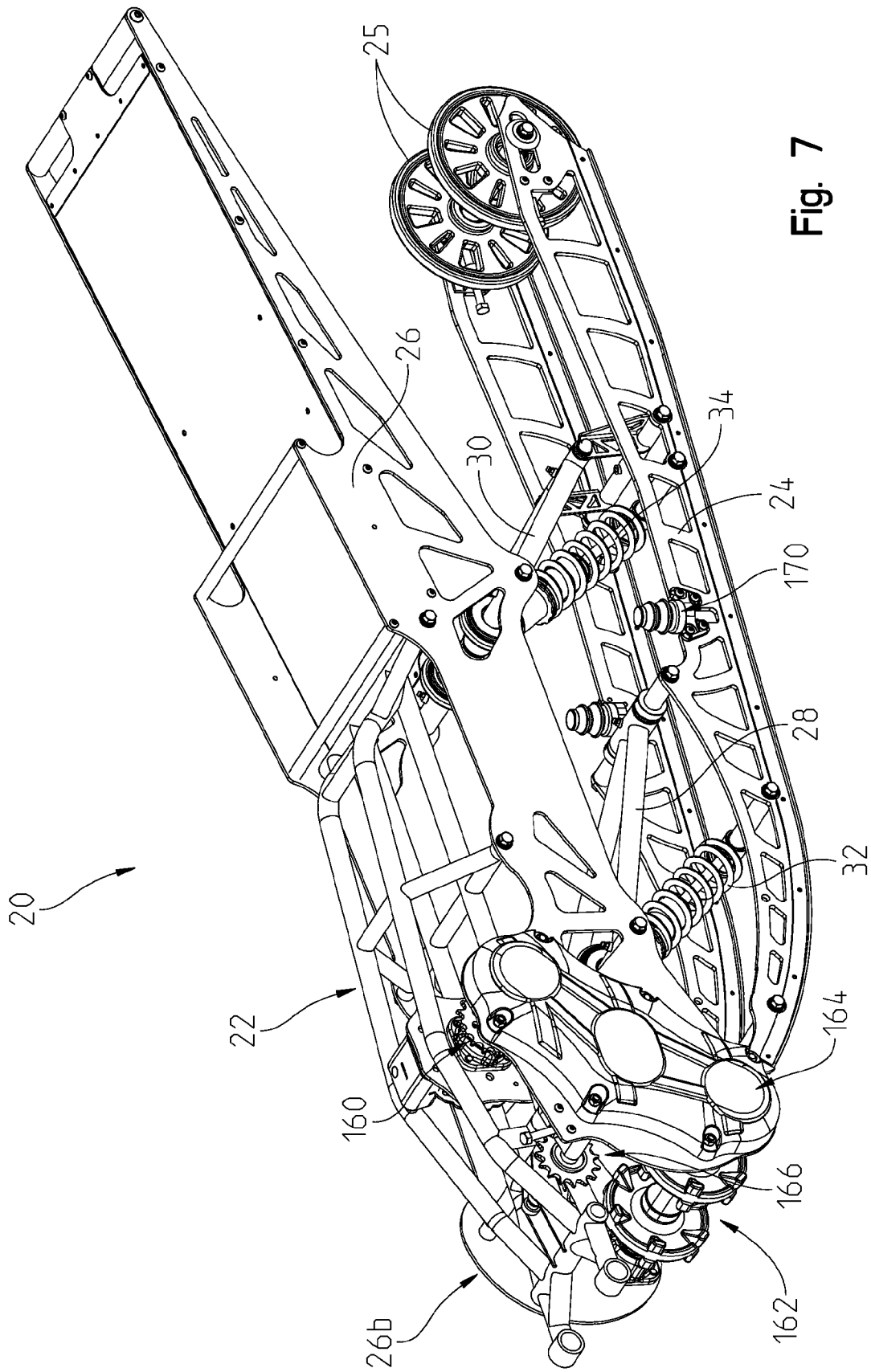


Fig. 7

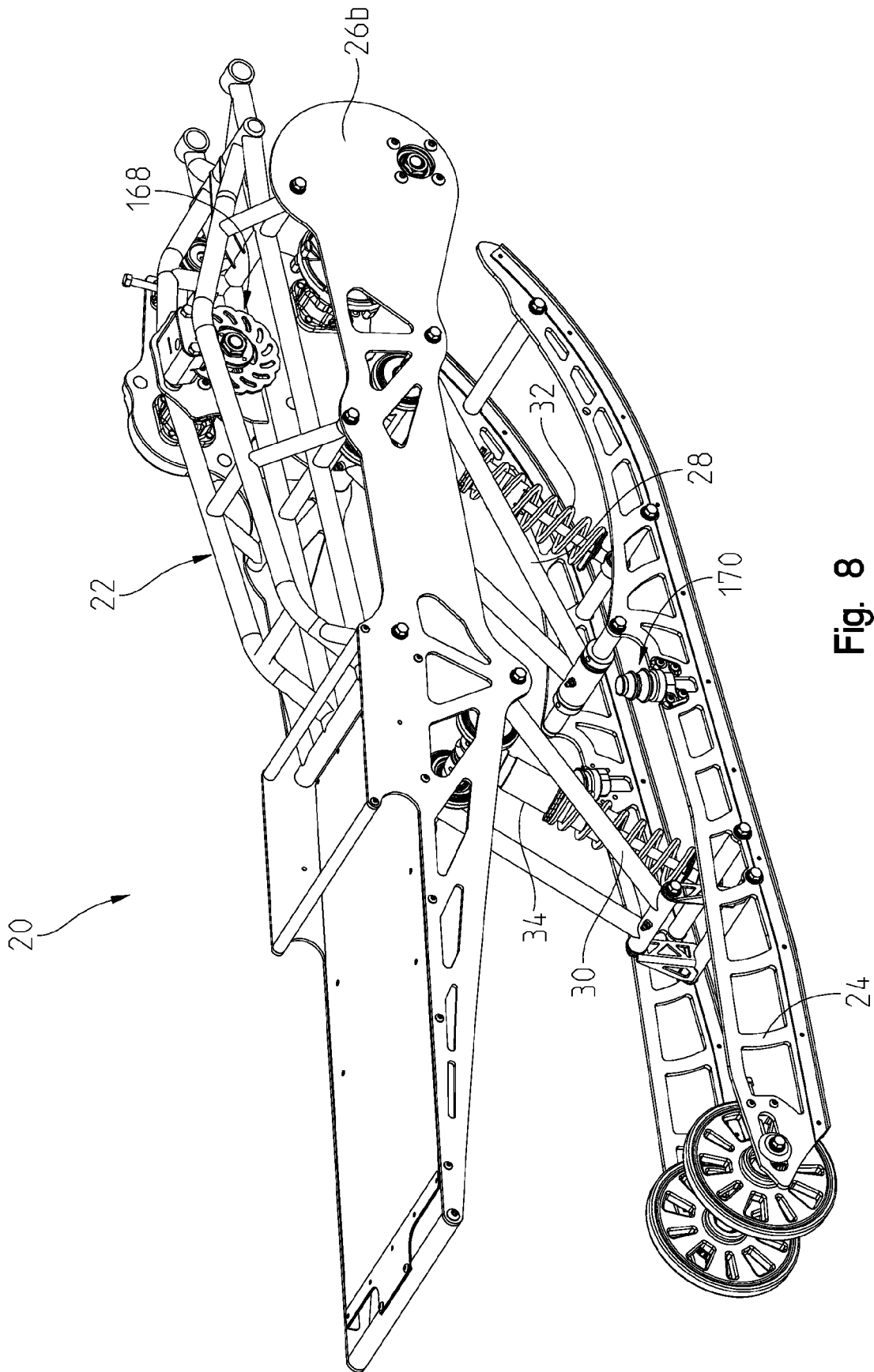


Fig. 8

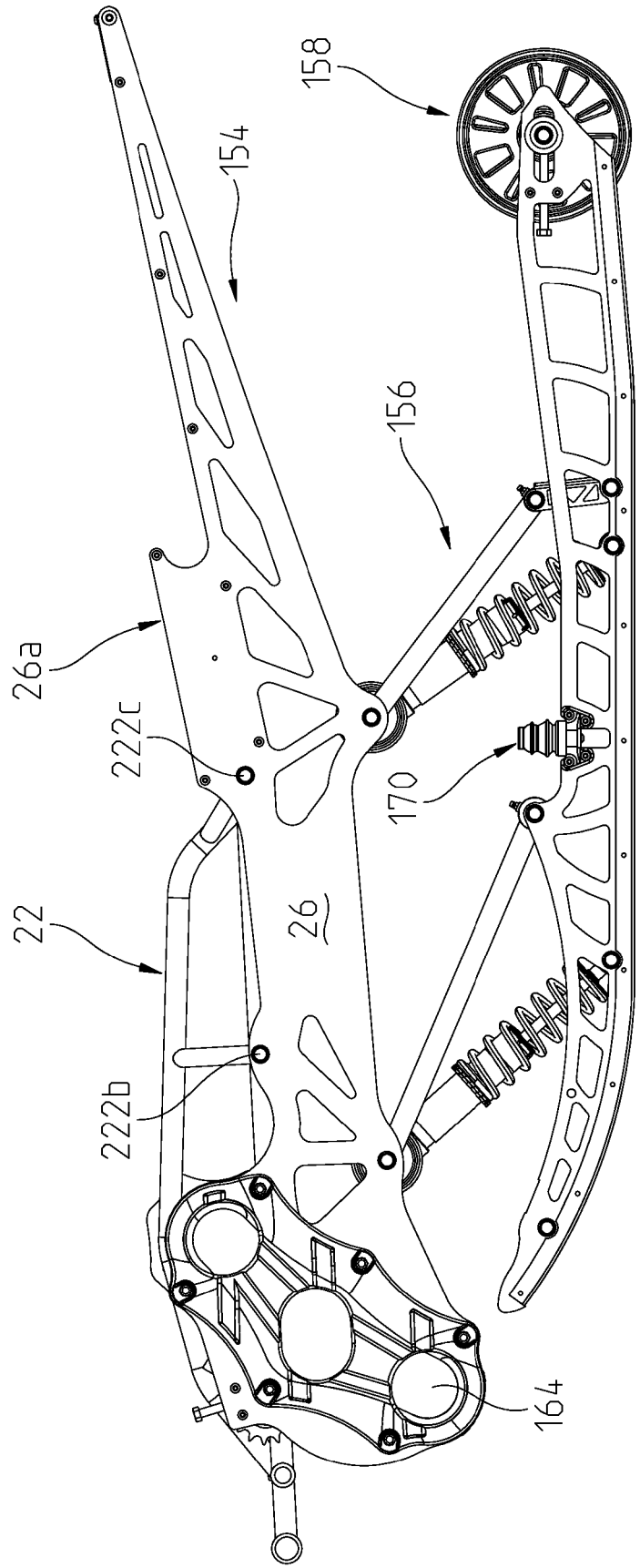


Fig. 9

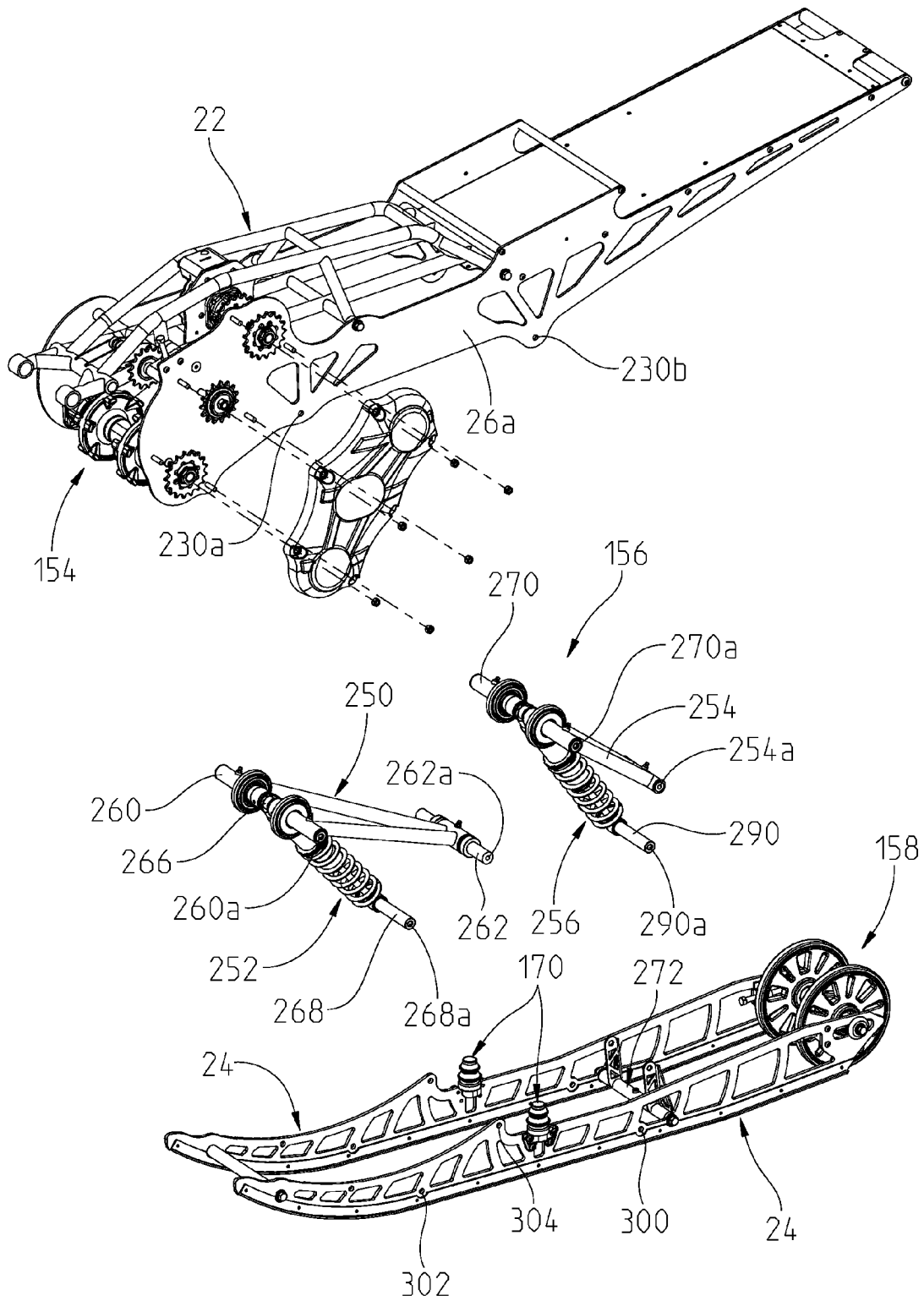


Fig. 11

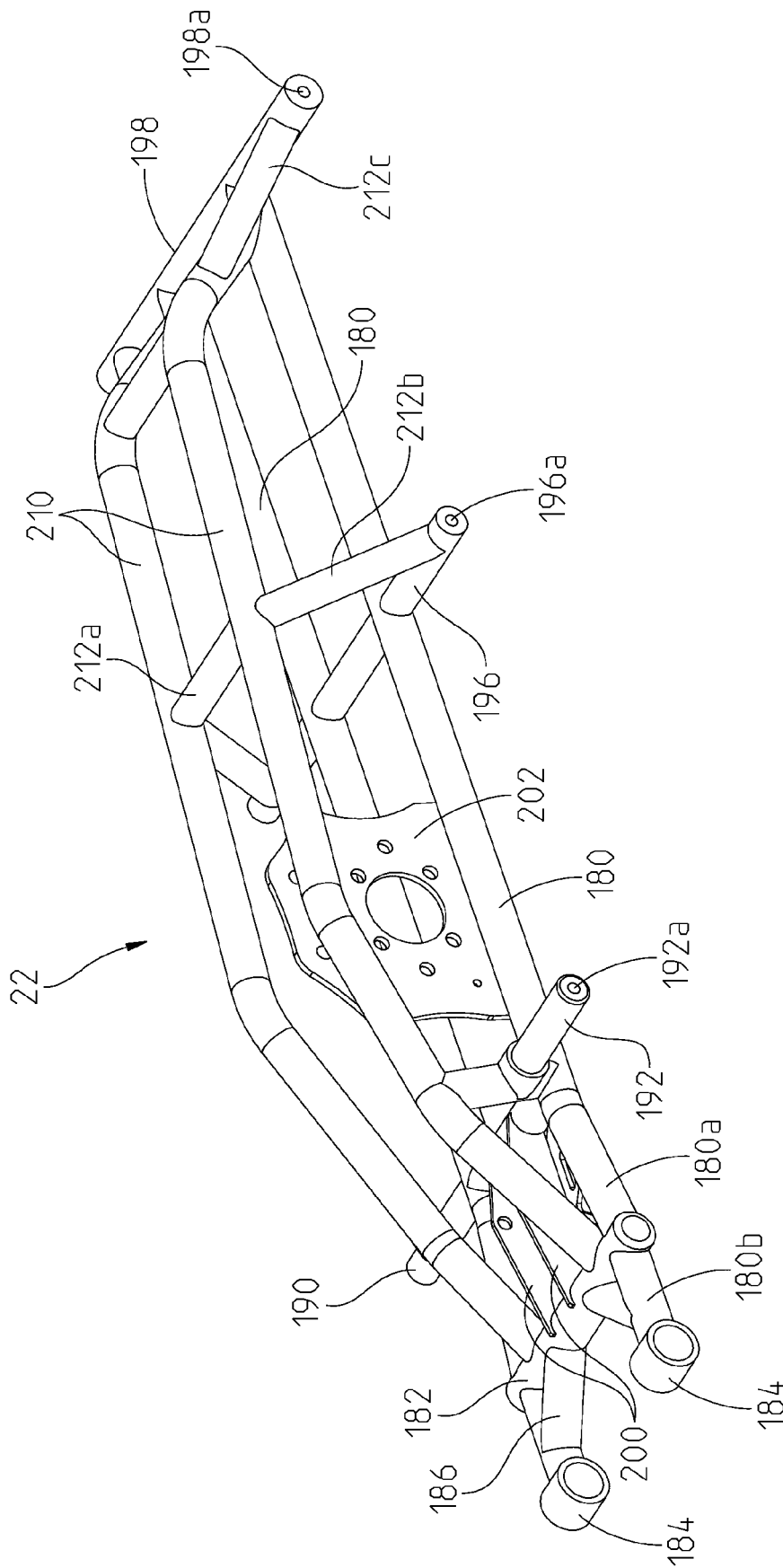


Fig. 12

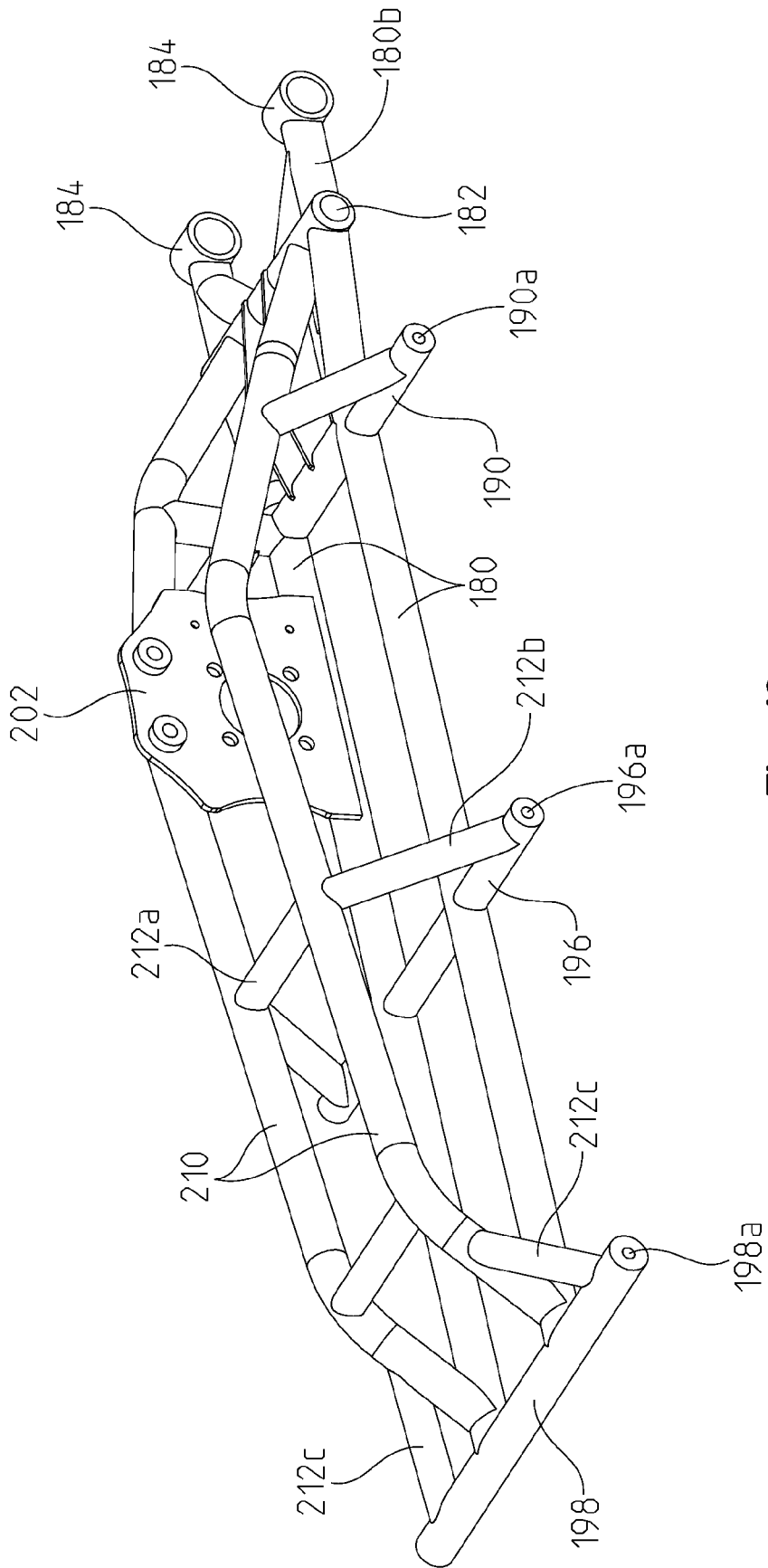


Fig. 13

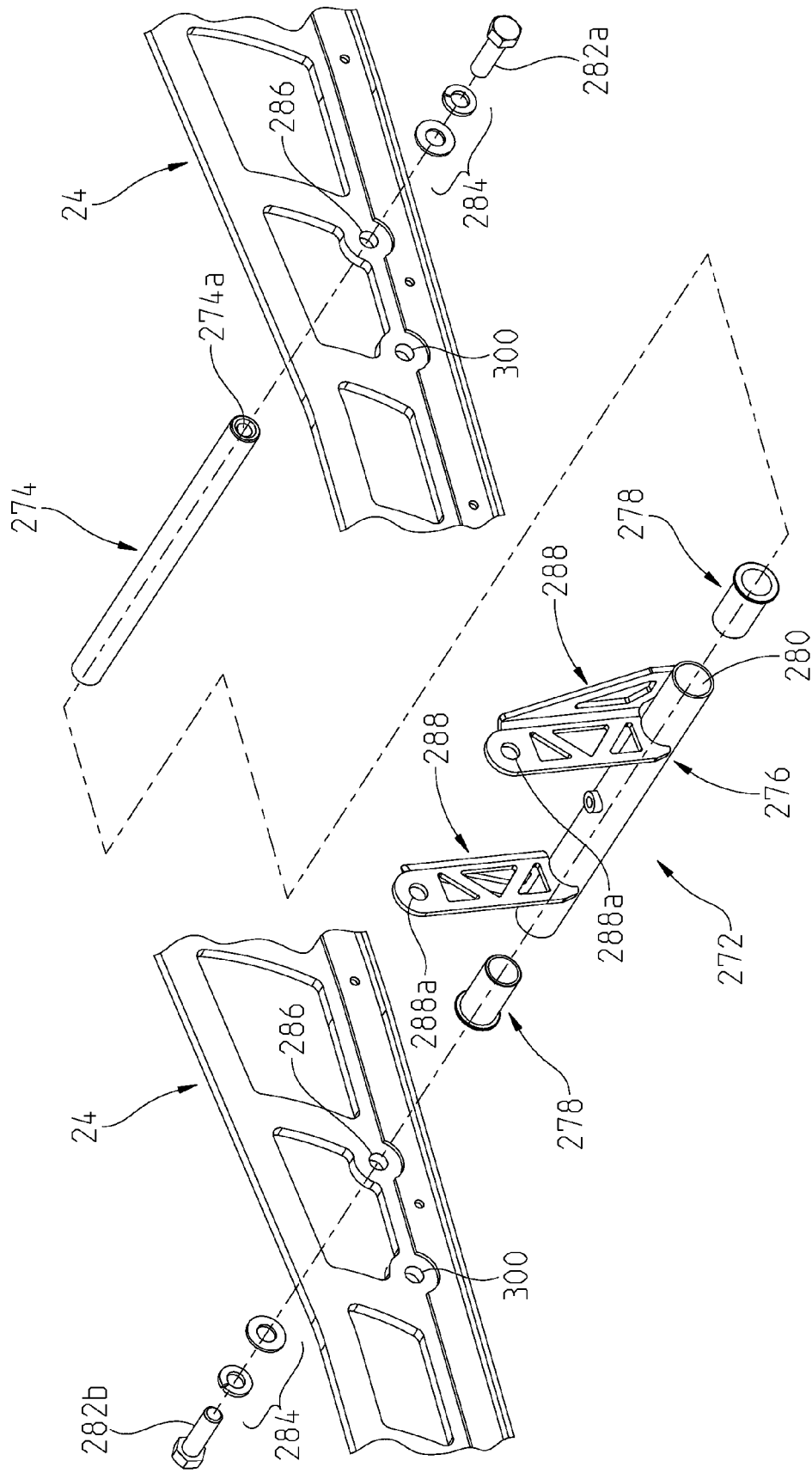


Fig. 14

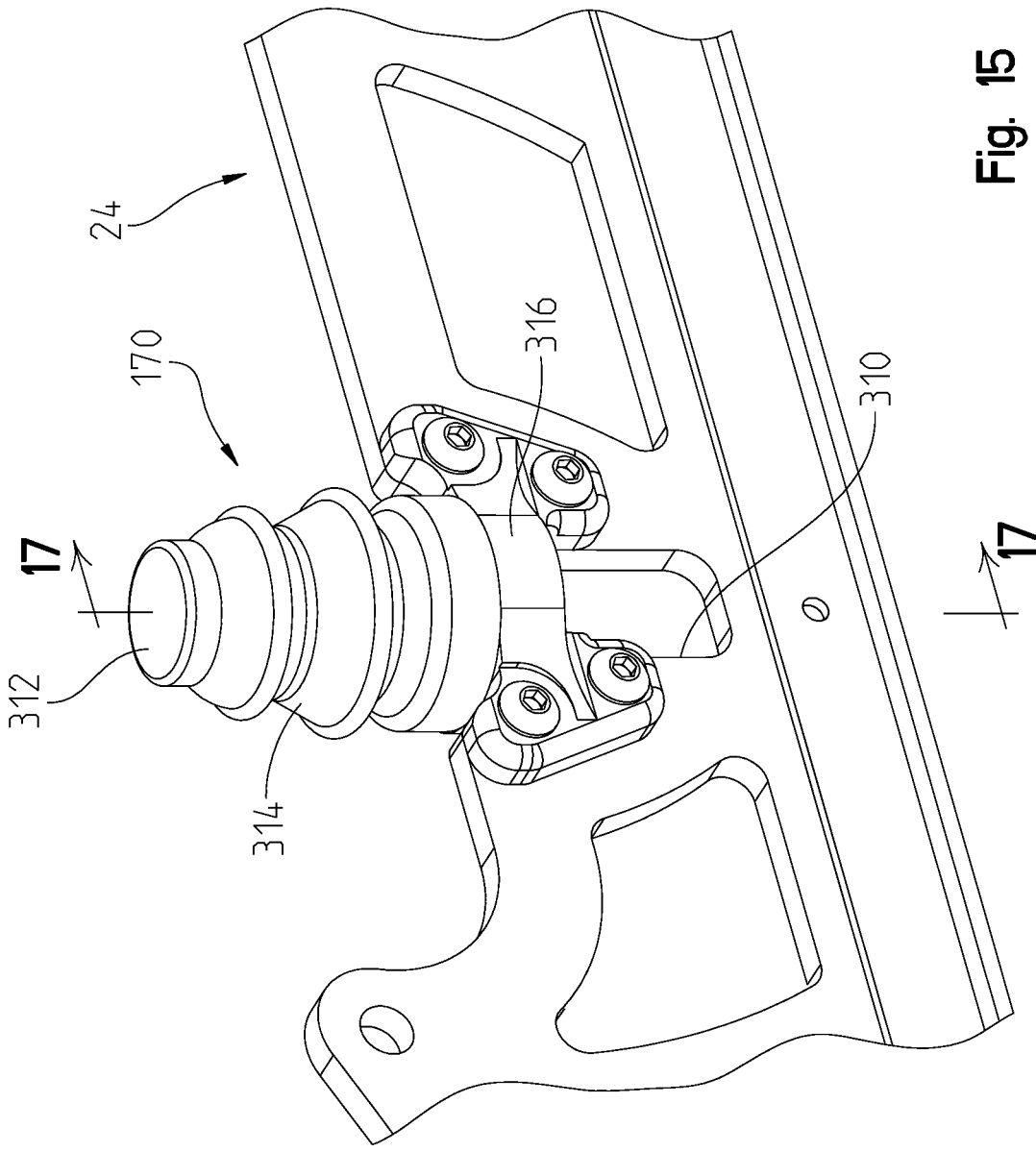


Fig. 15

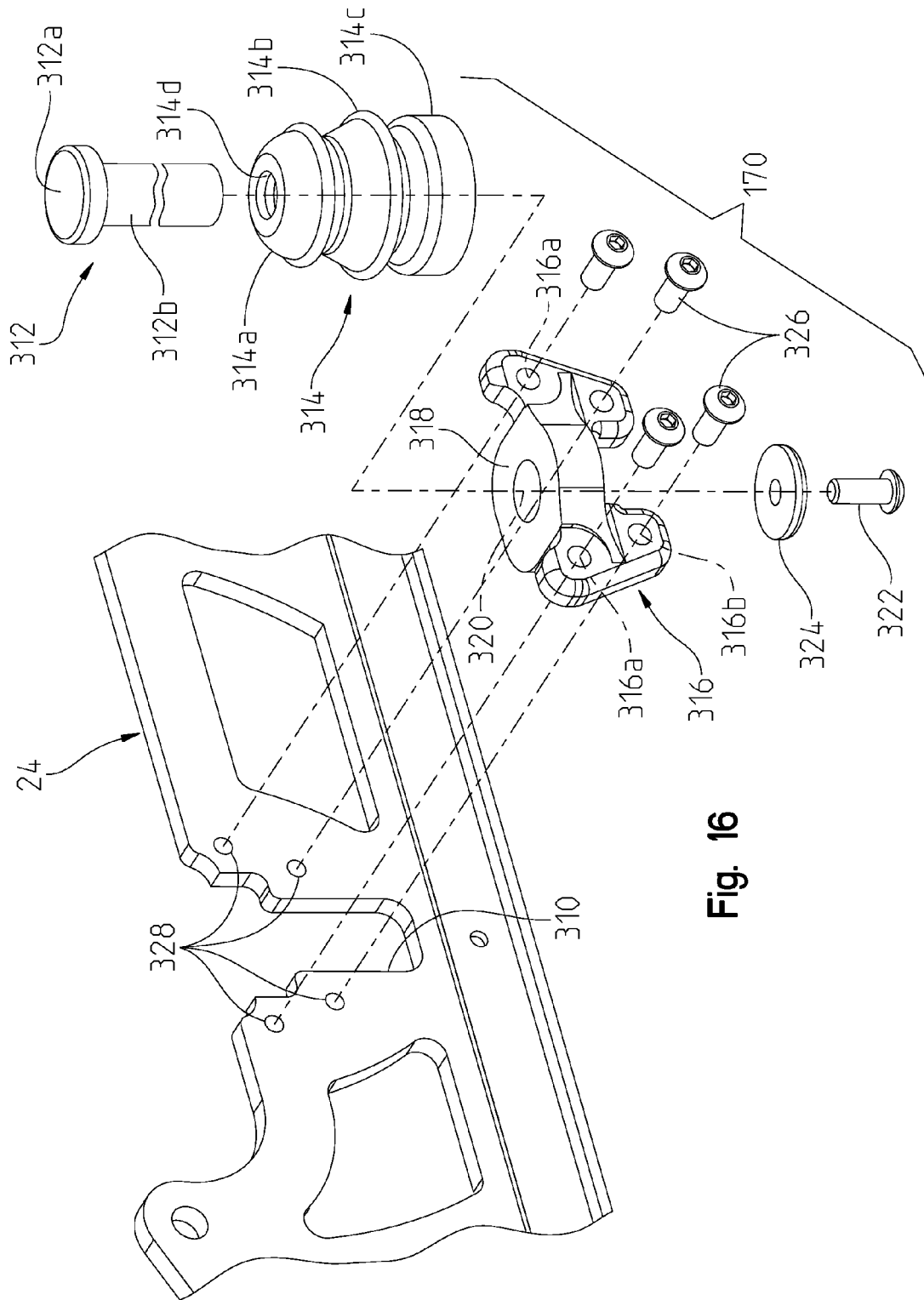


Fig. 16

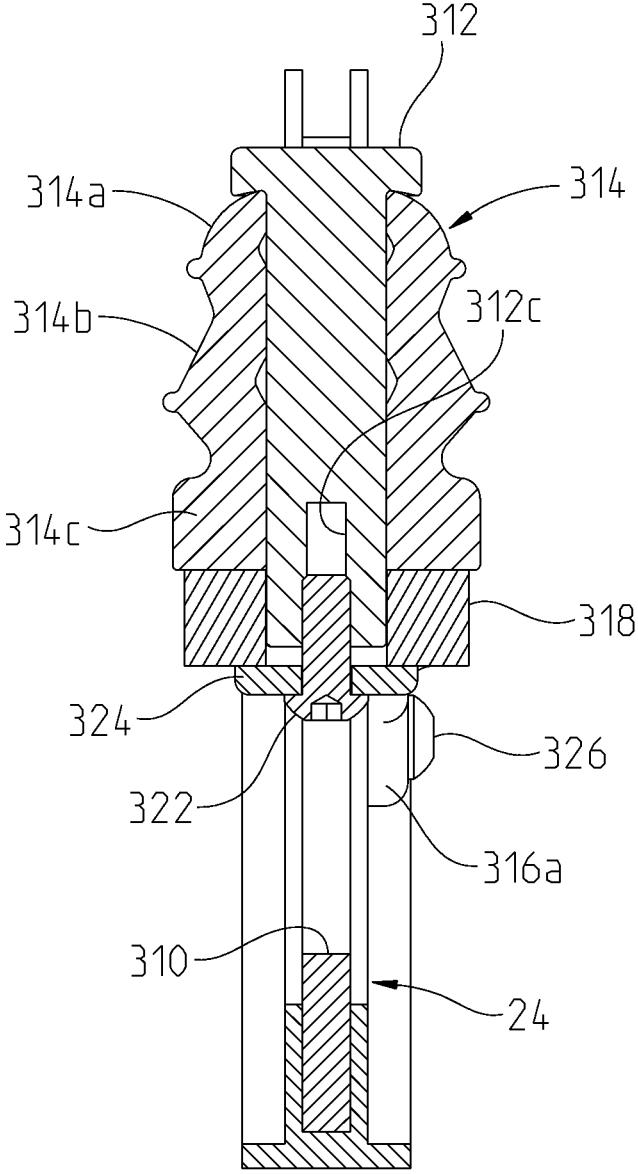


Fig. 17

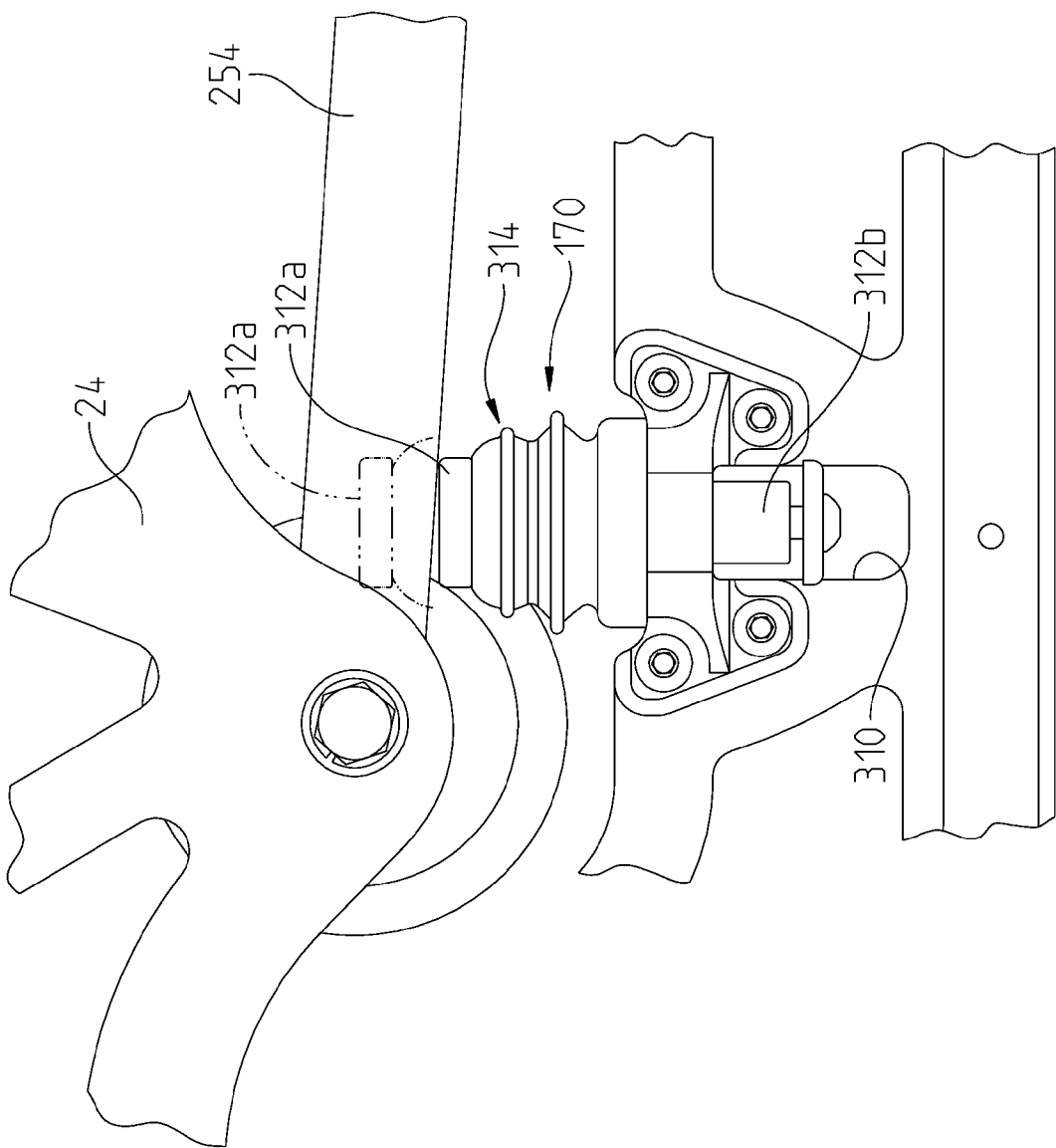


Fig. 18

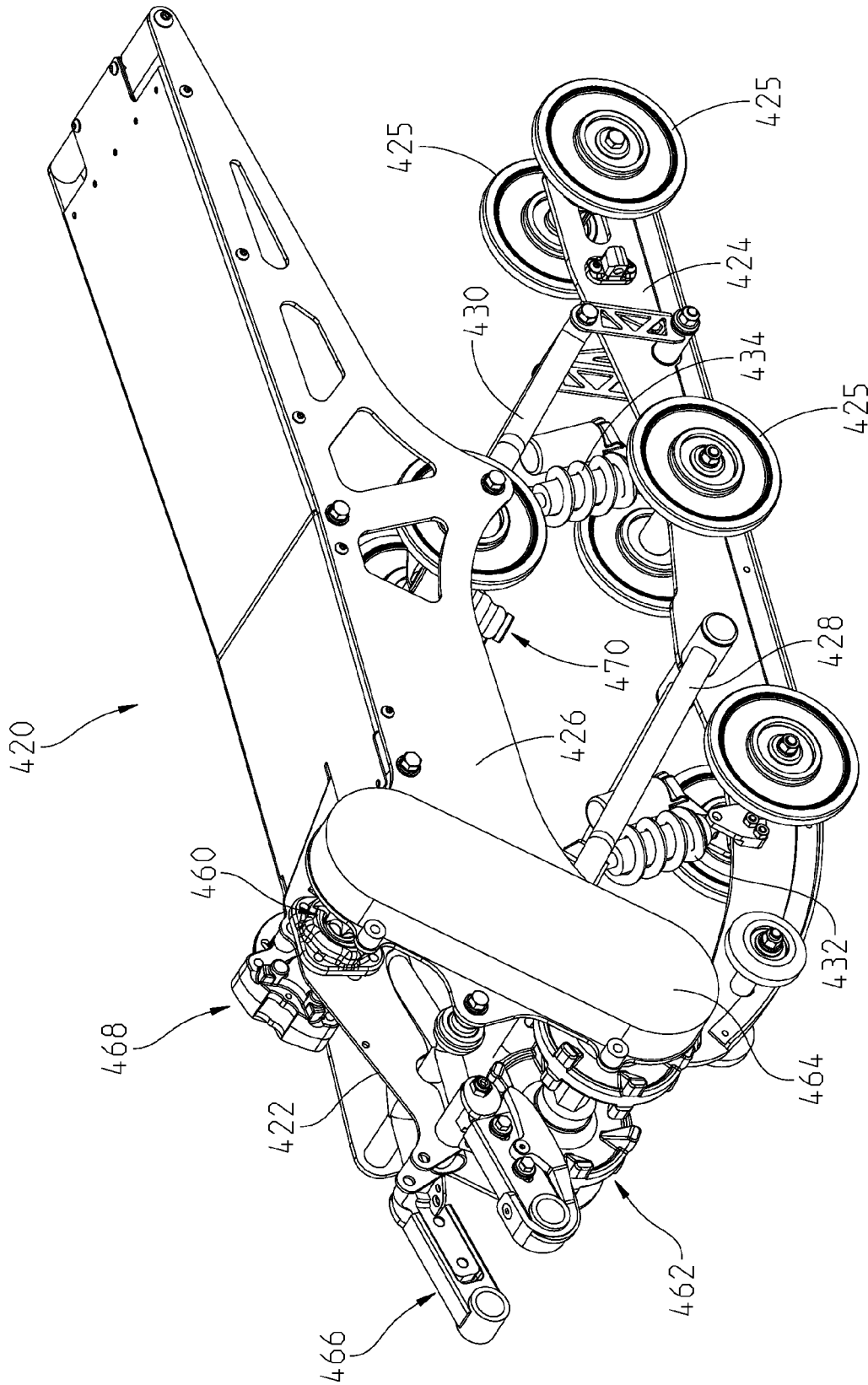


Fig. 19

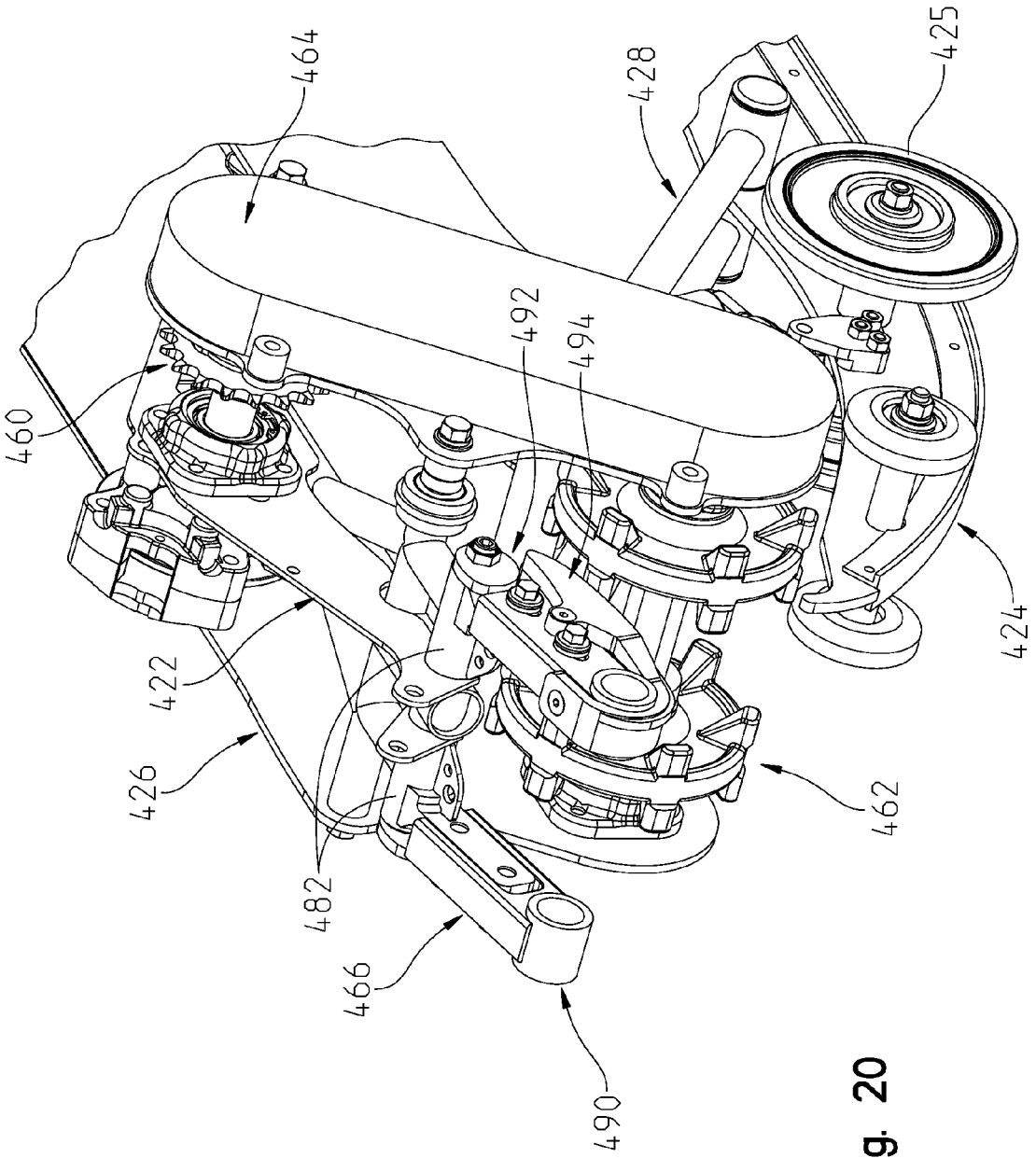


Fig. 20

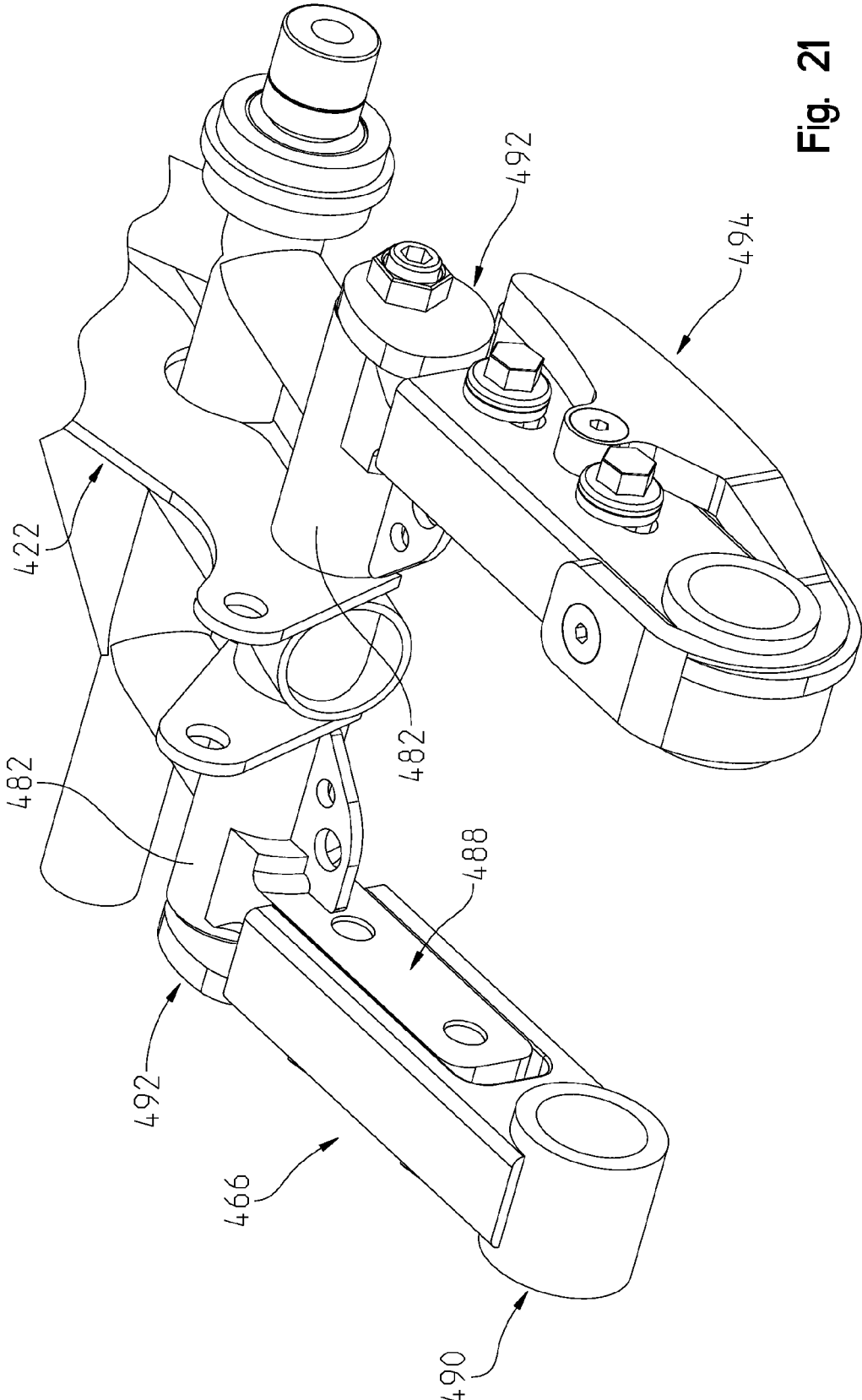


Fig. 21

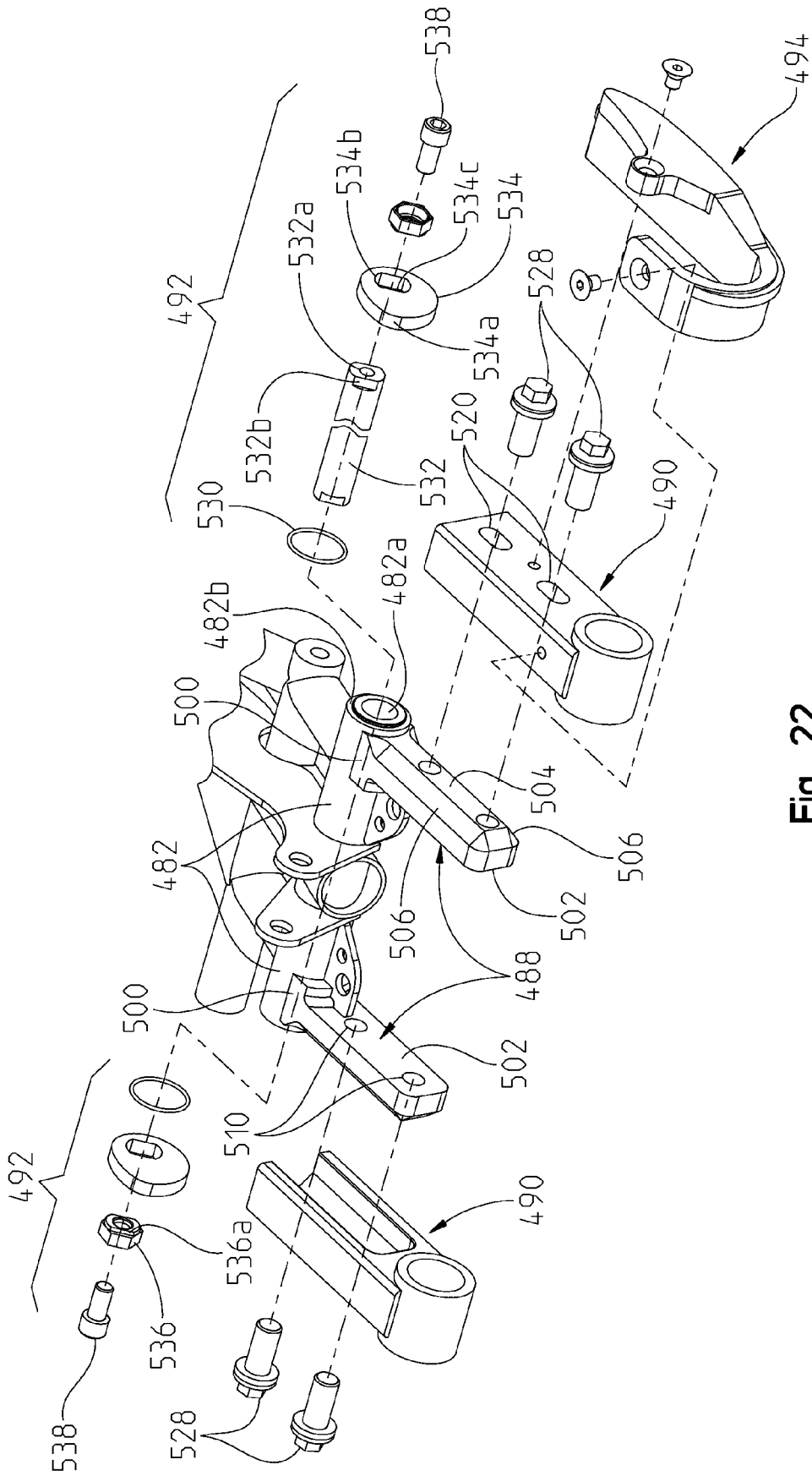


Fig. 22

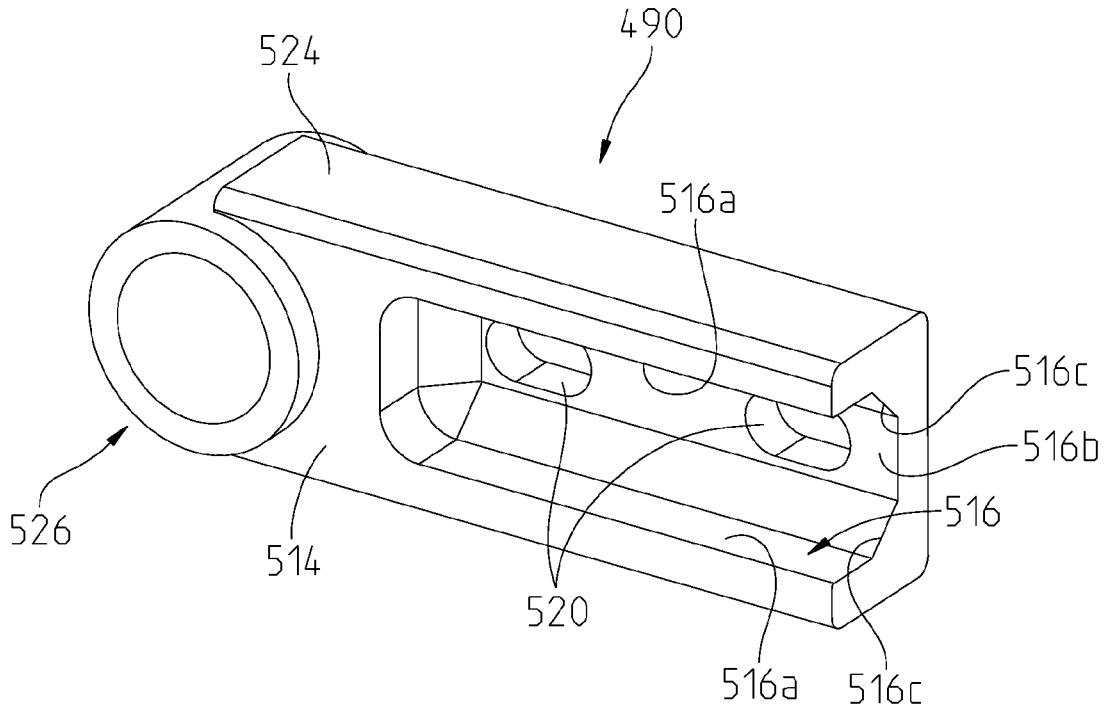


Fig. 23

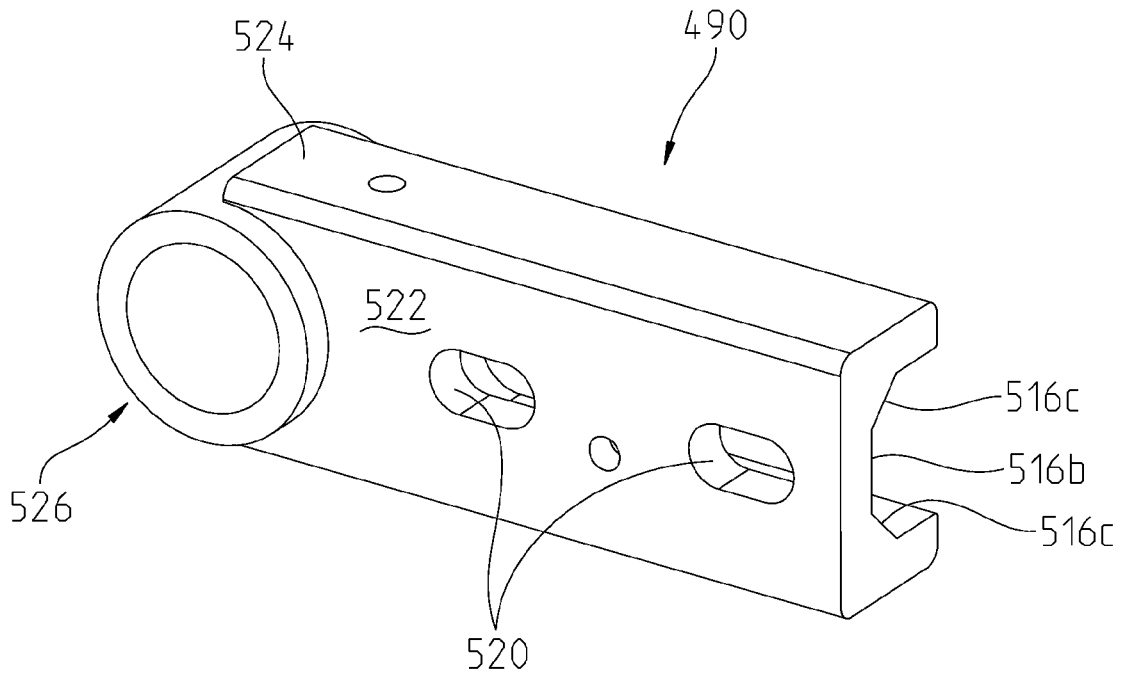


Fig. 24

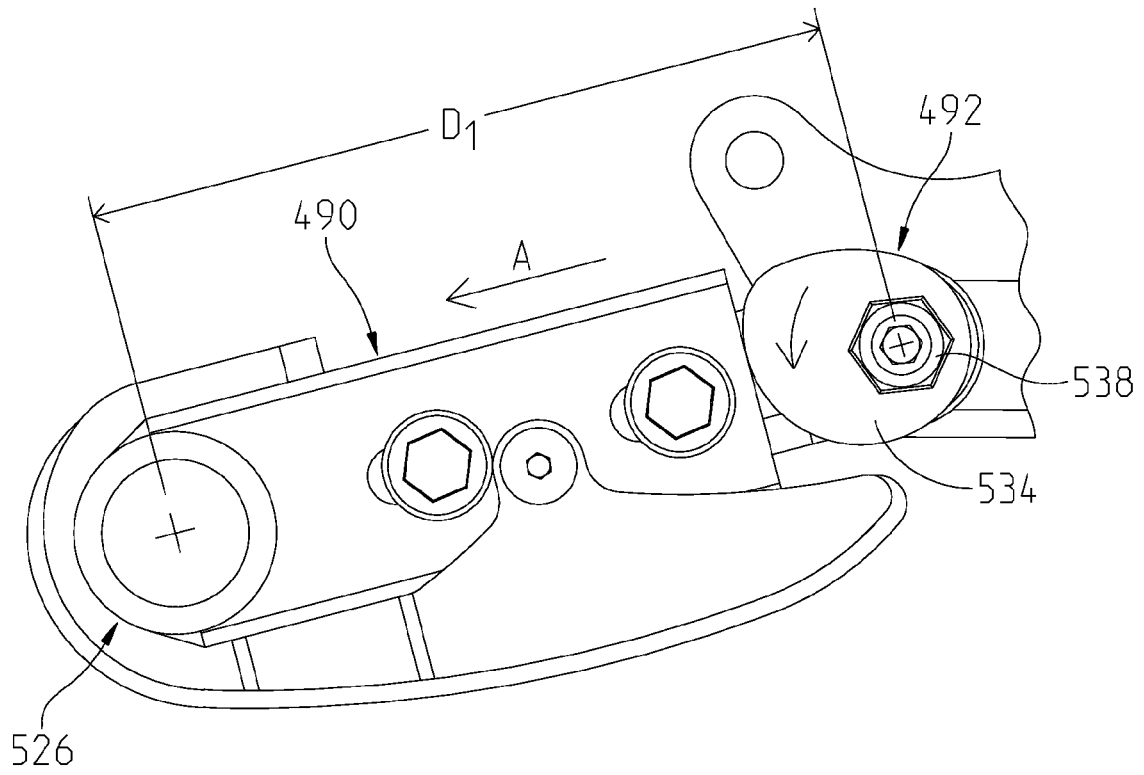


Fig. 25A

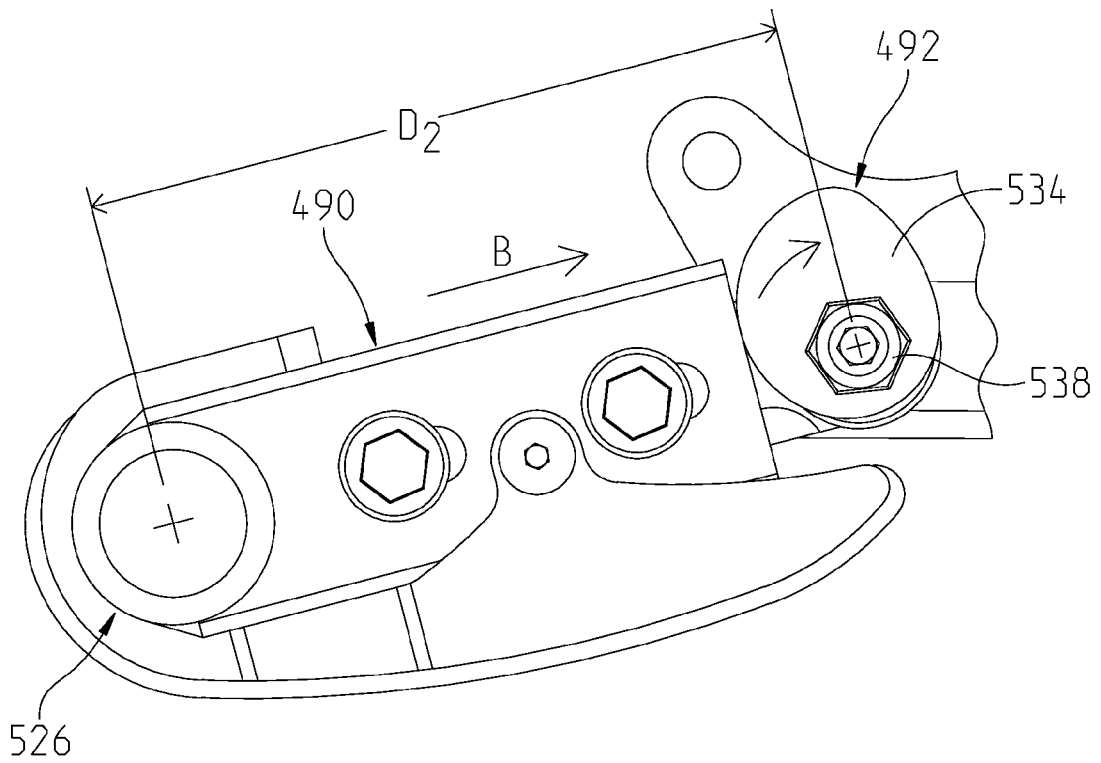


Fig. 25B

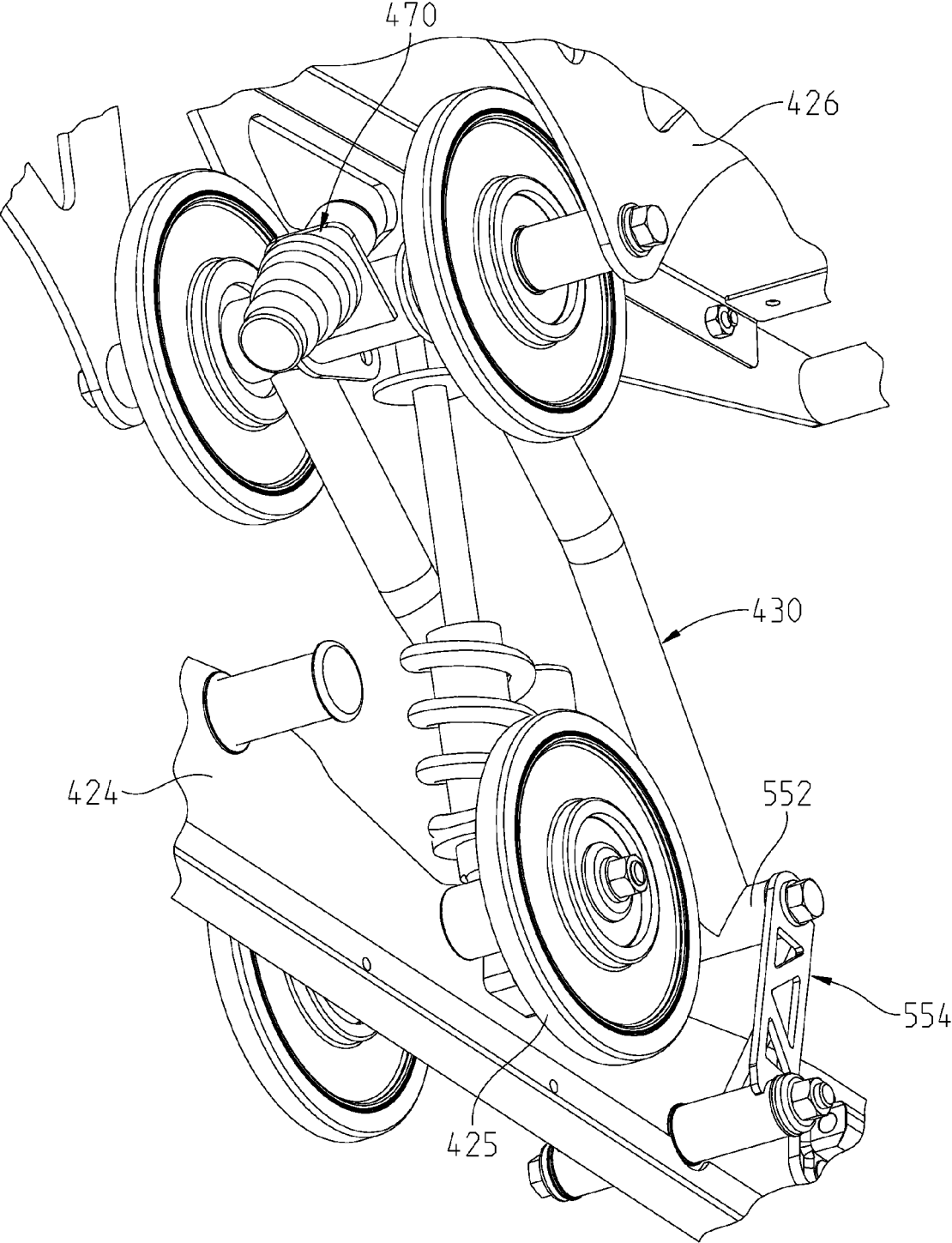


Fig. 26

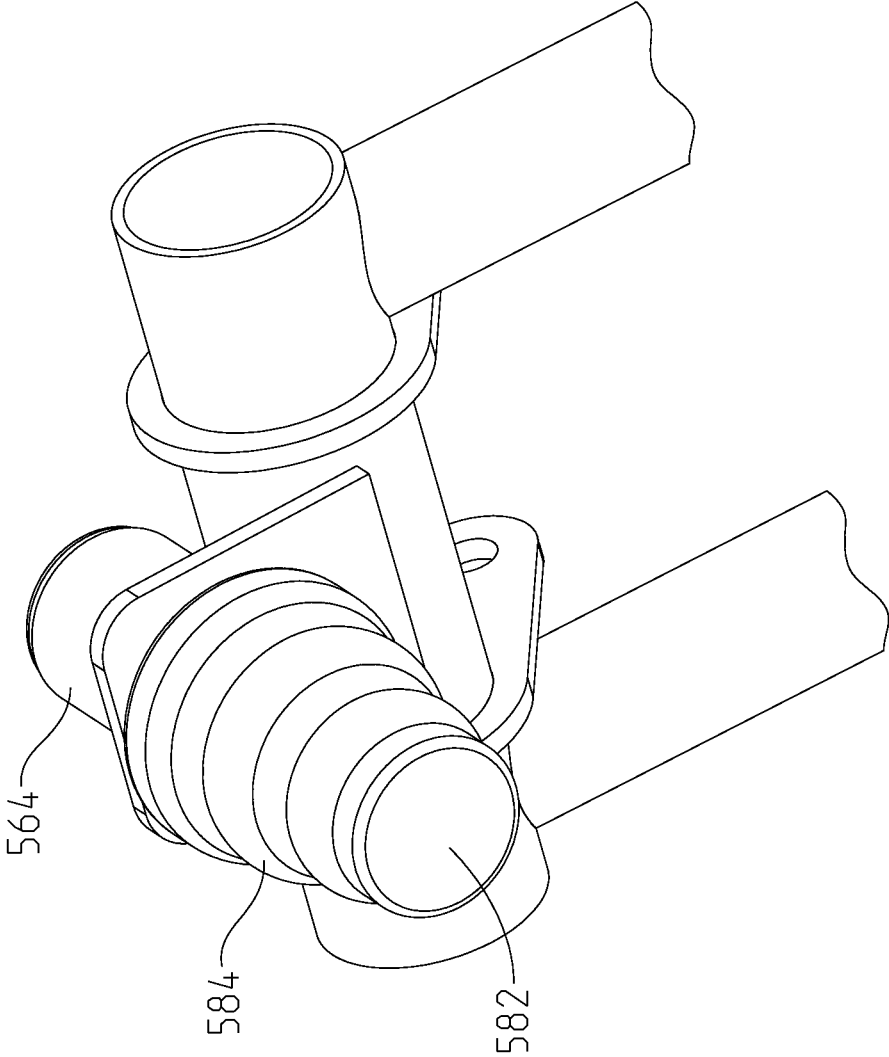


Fig. 27

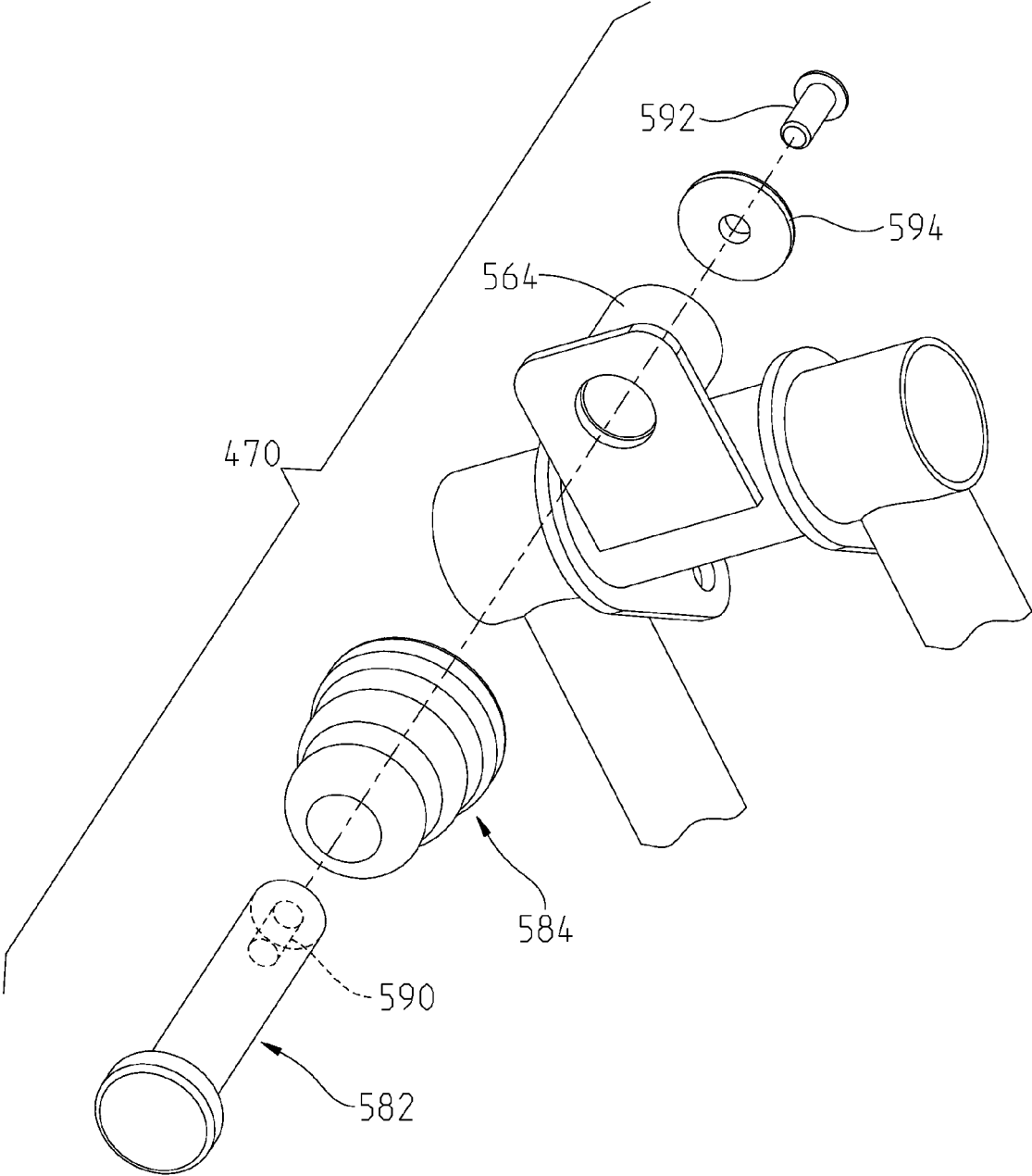


Fig. 28

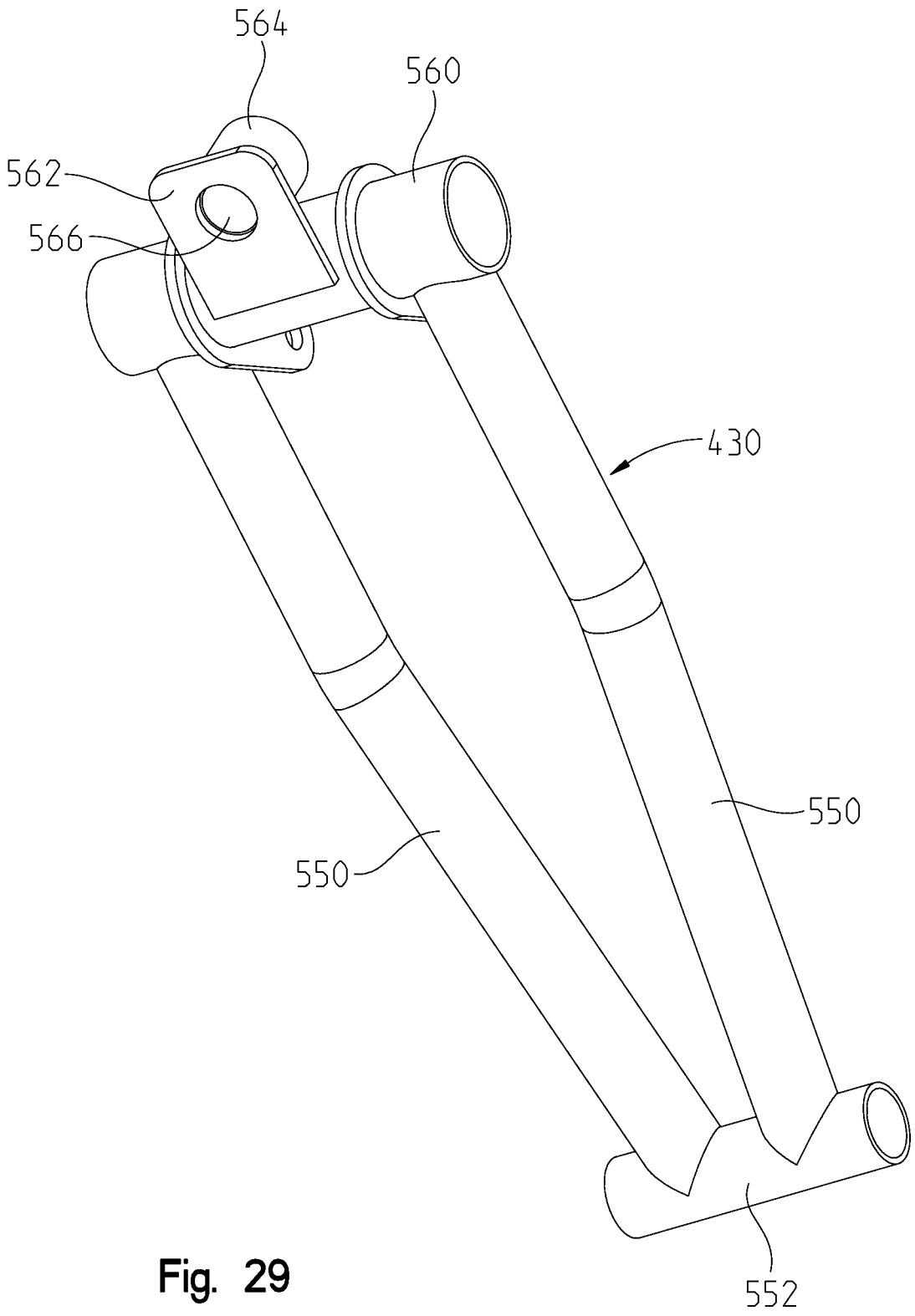


Fig. 29

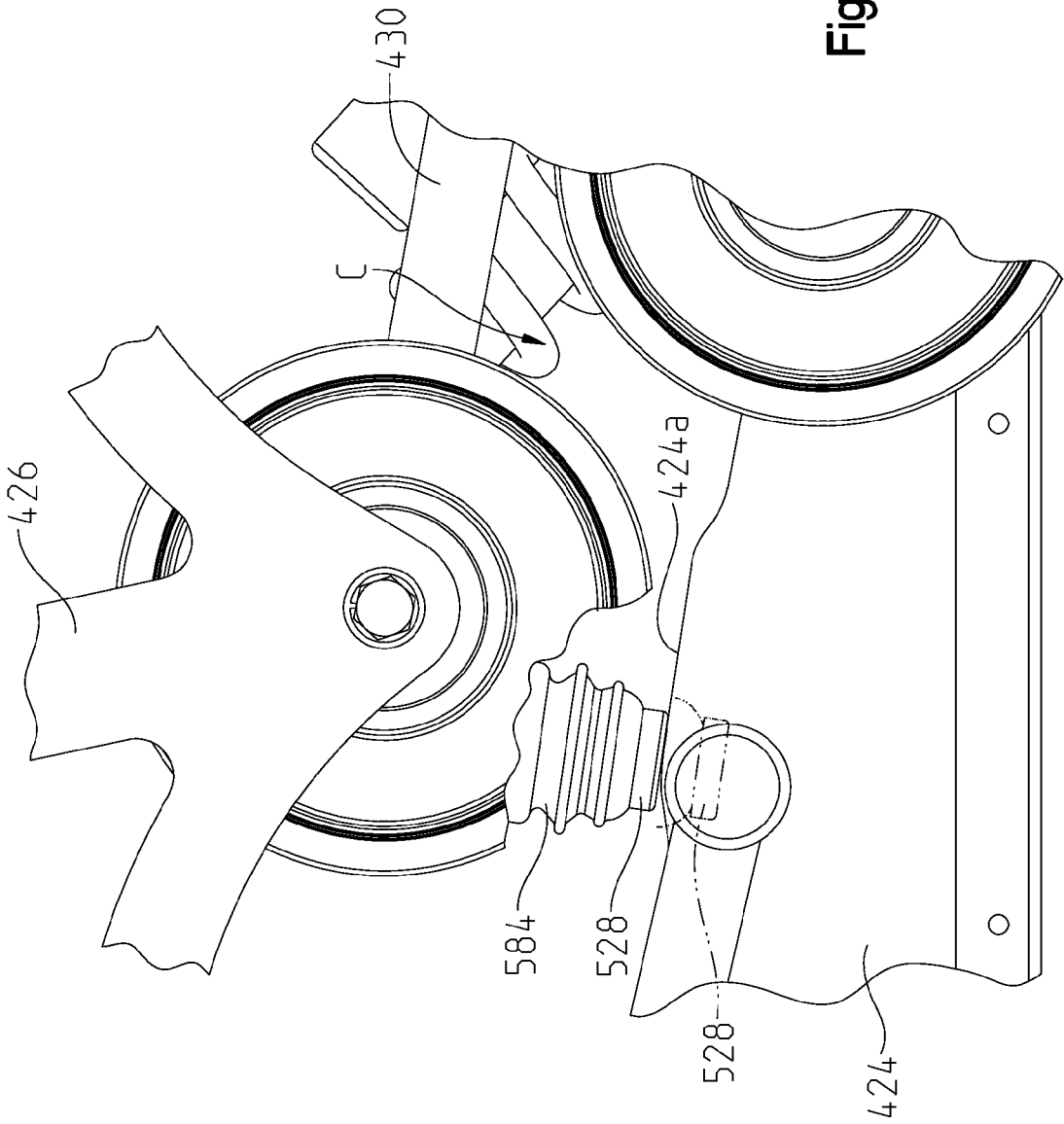


Fig. 30

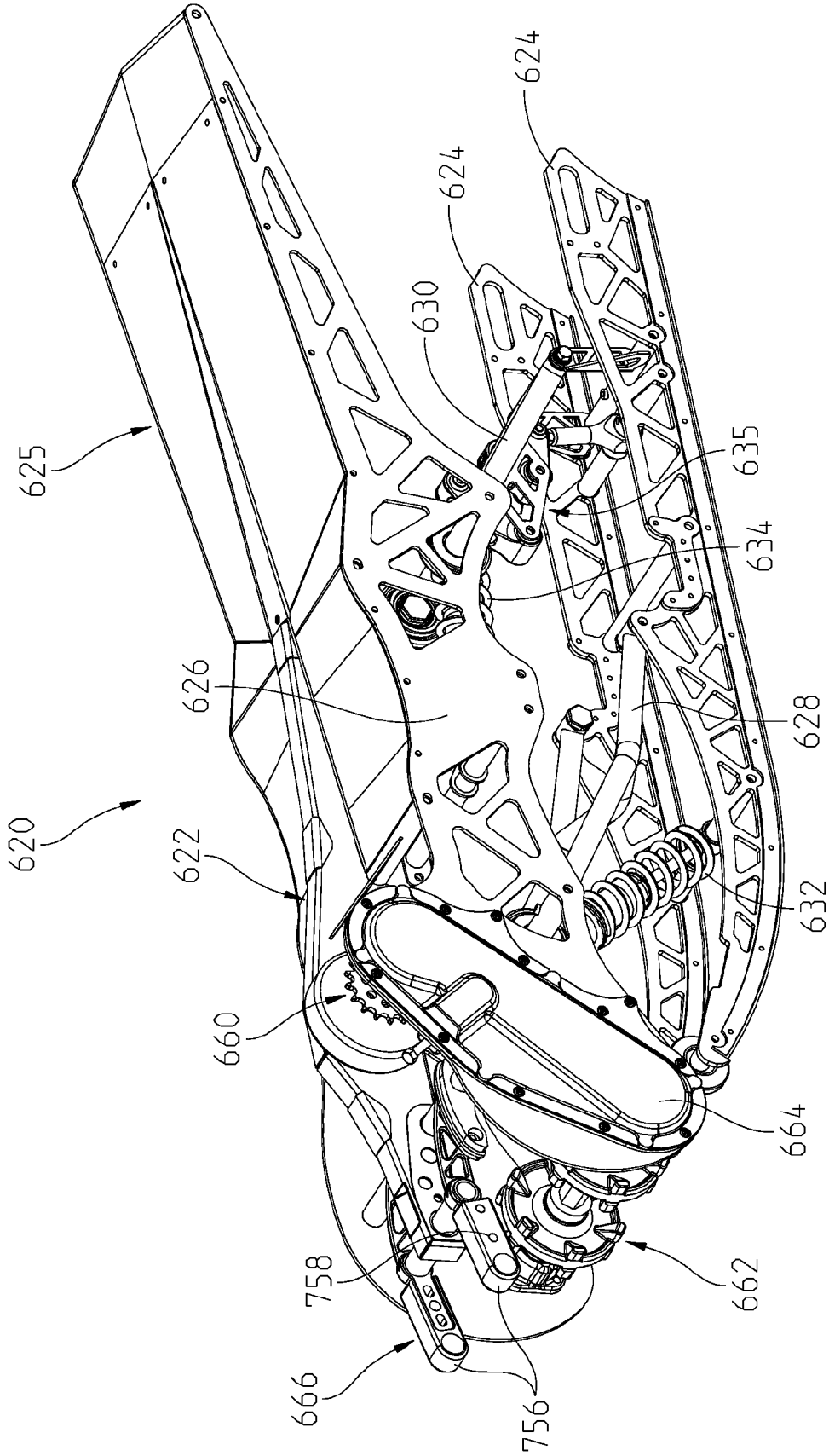


Fig. 31

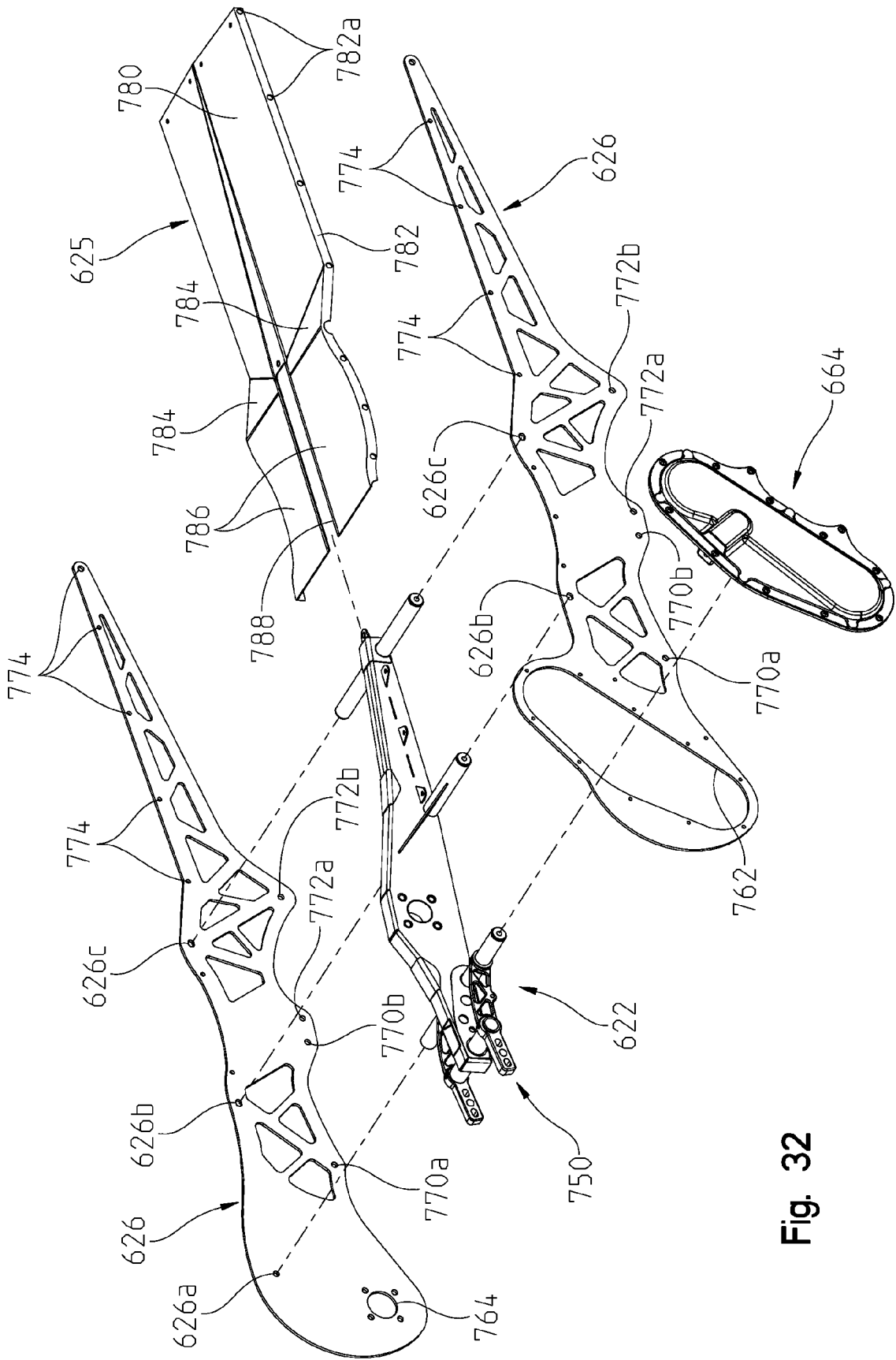


Fig. 32

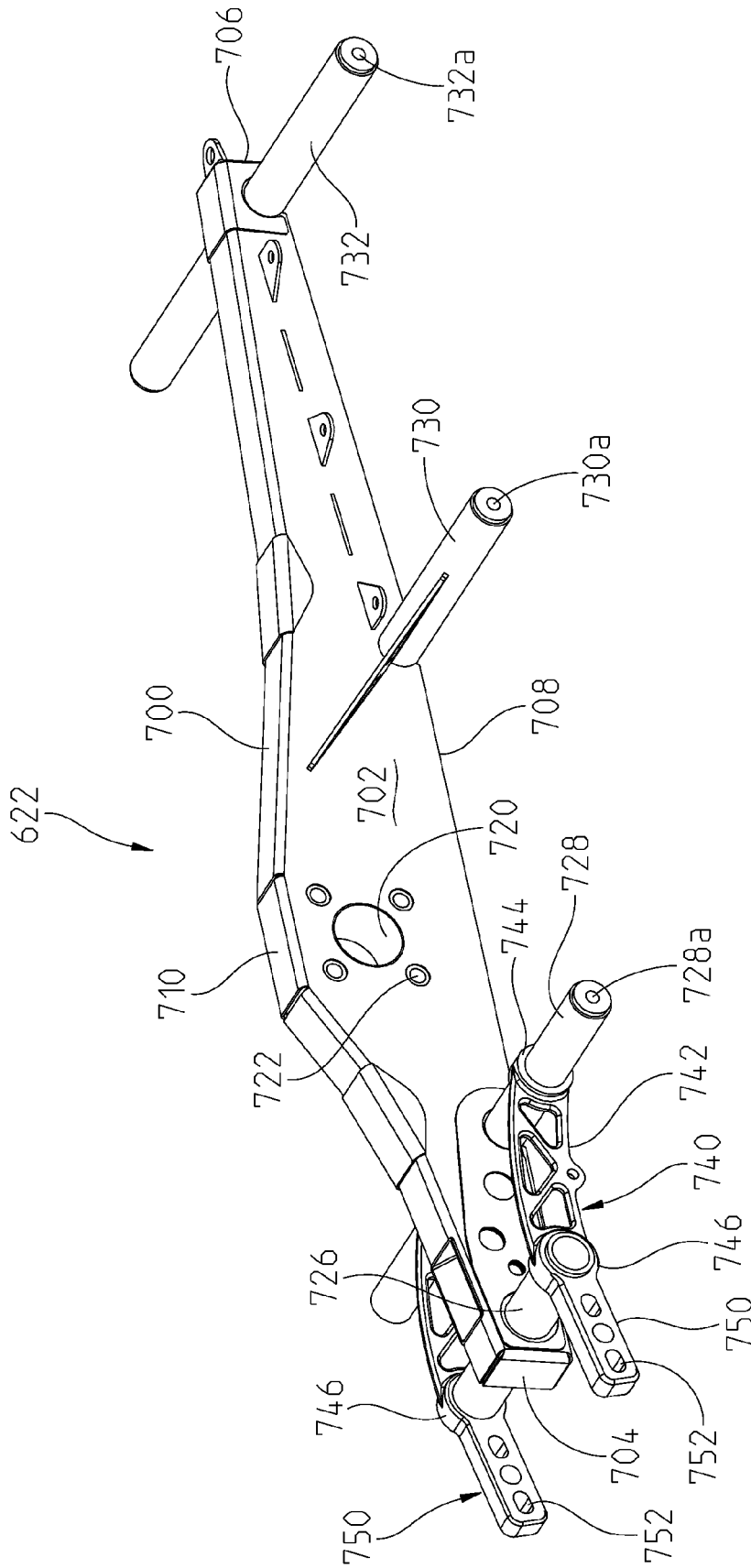


Fig. 33

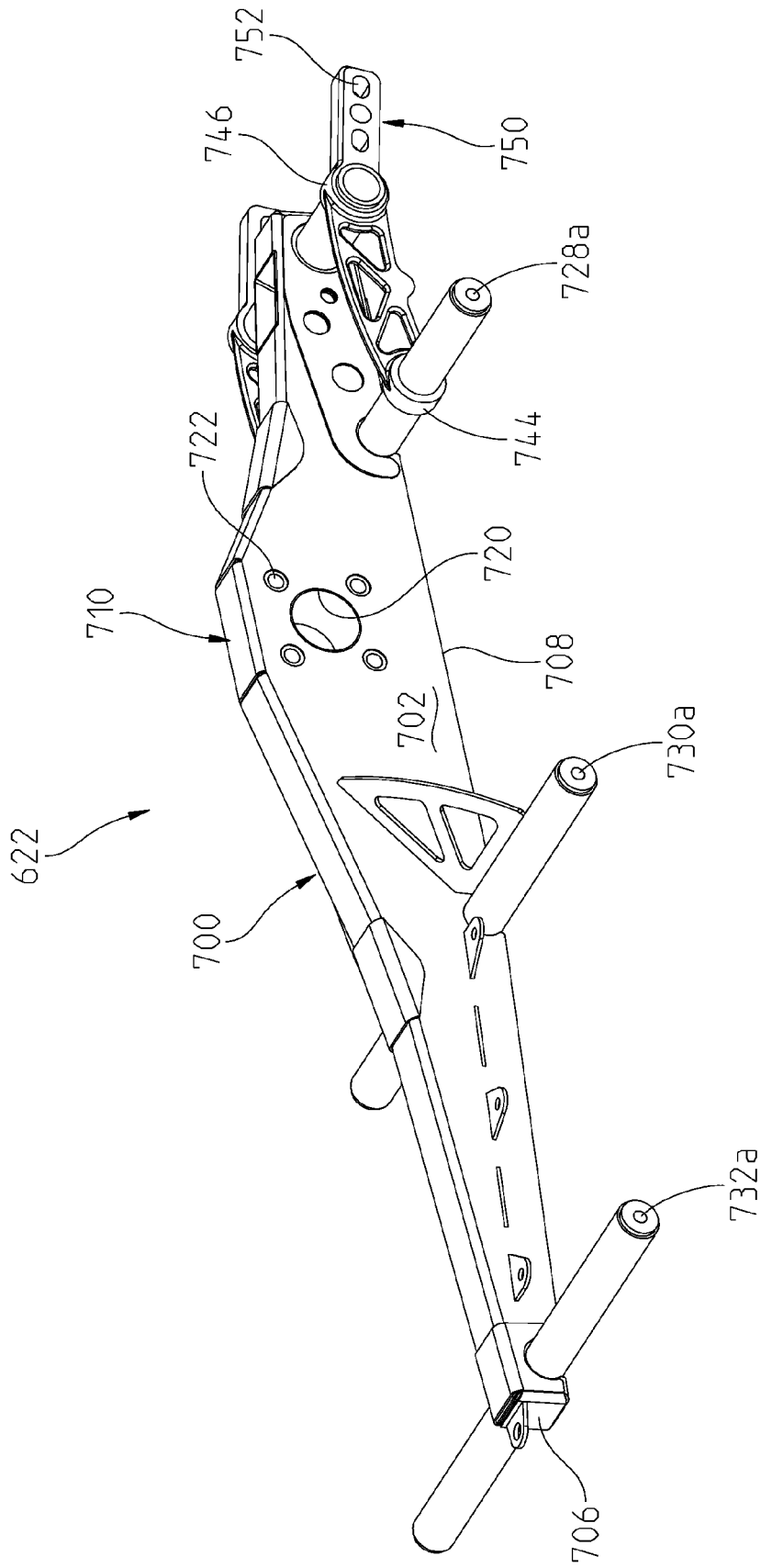


Fig. 34

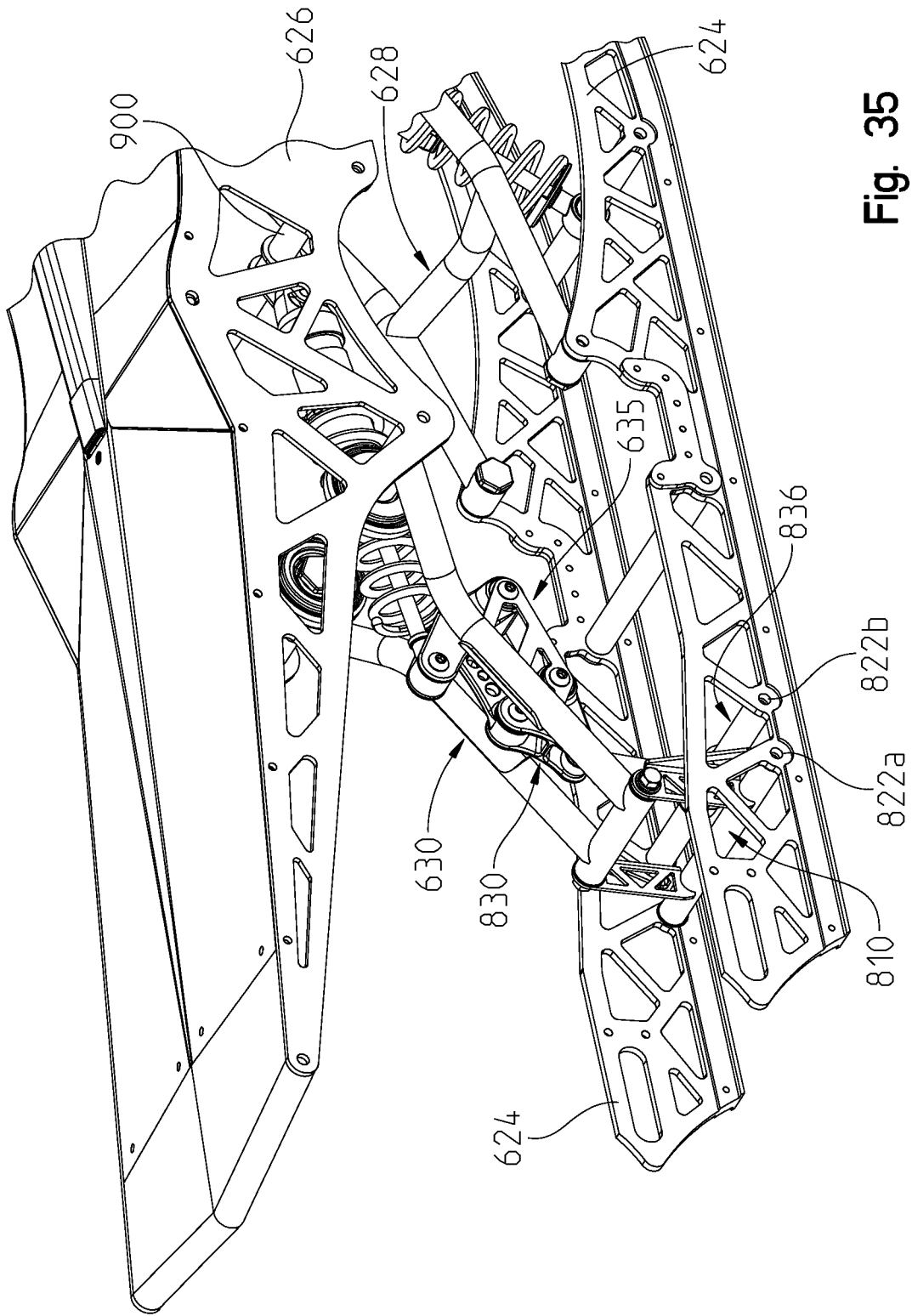


Fig. 35

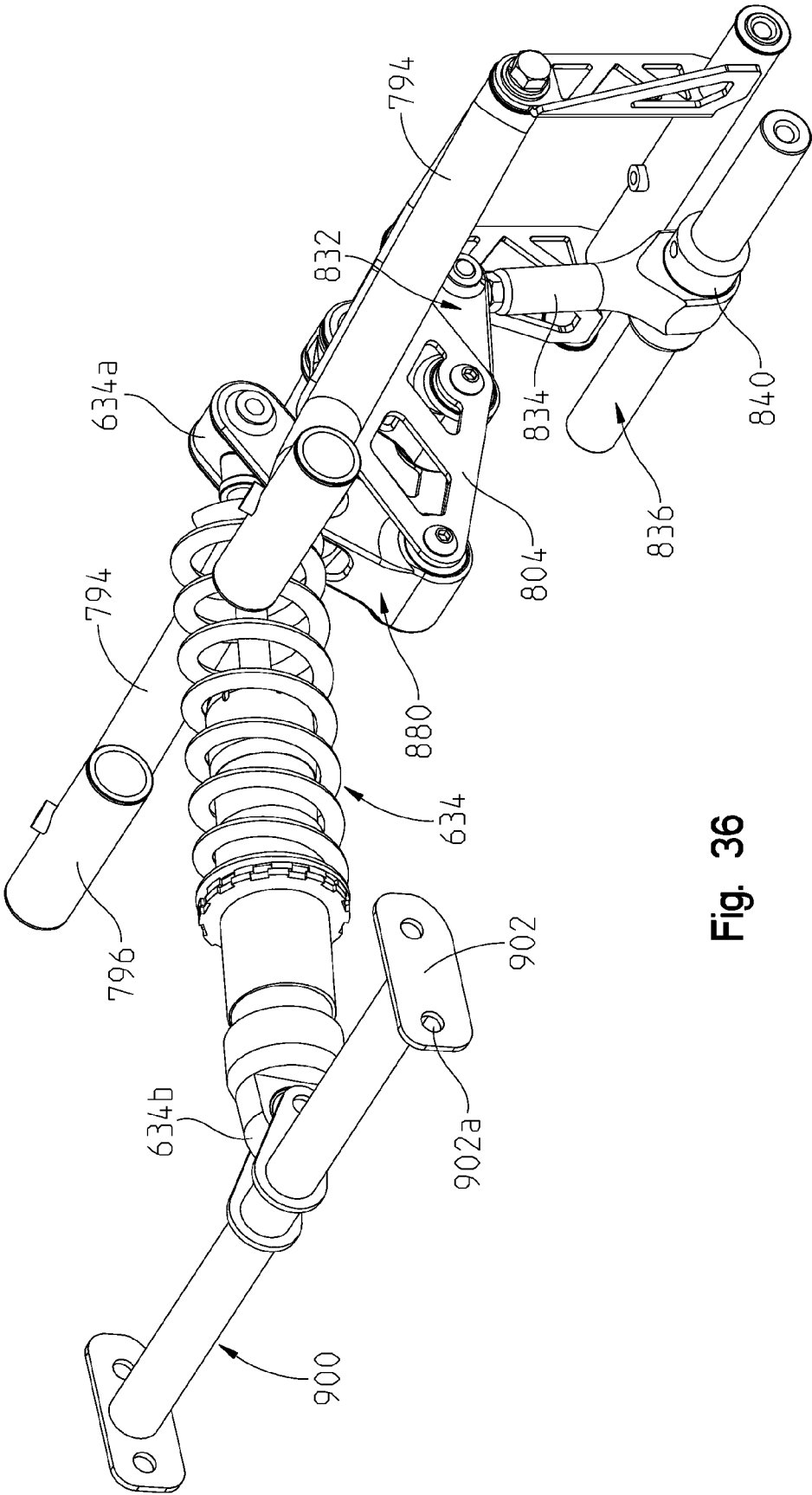


Fig. 36

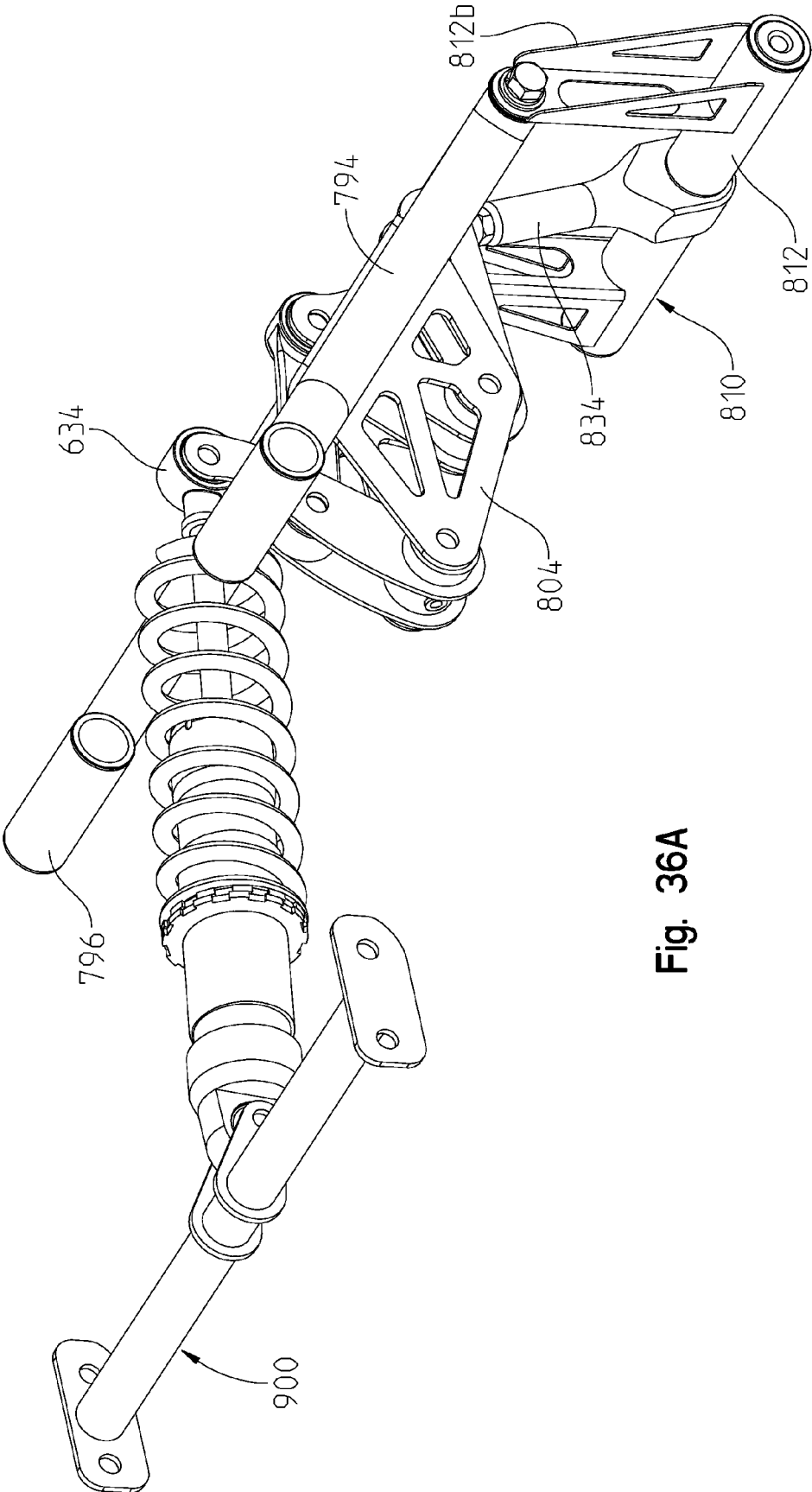


Fig. 36A

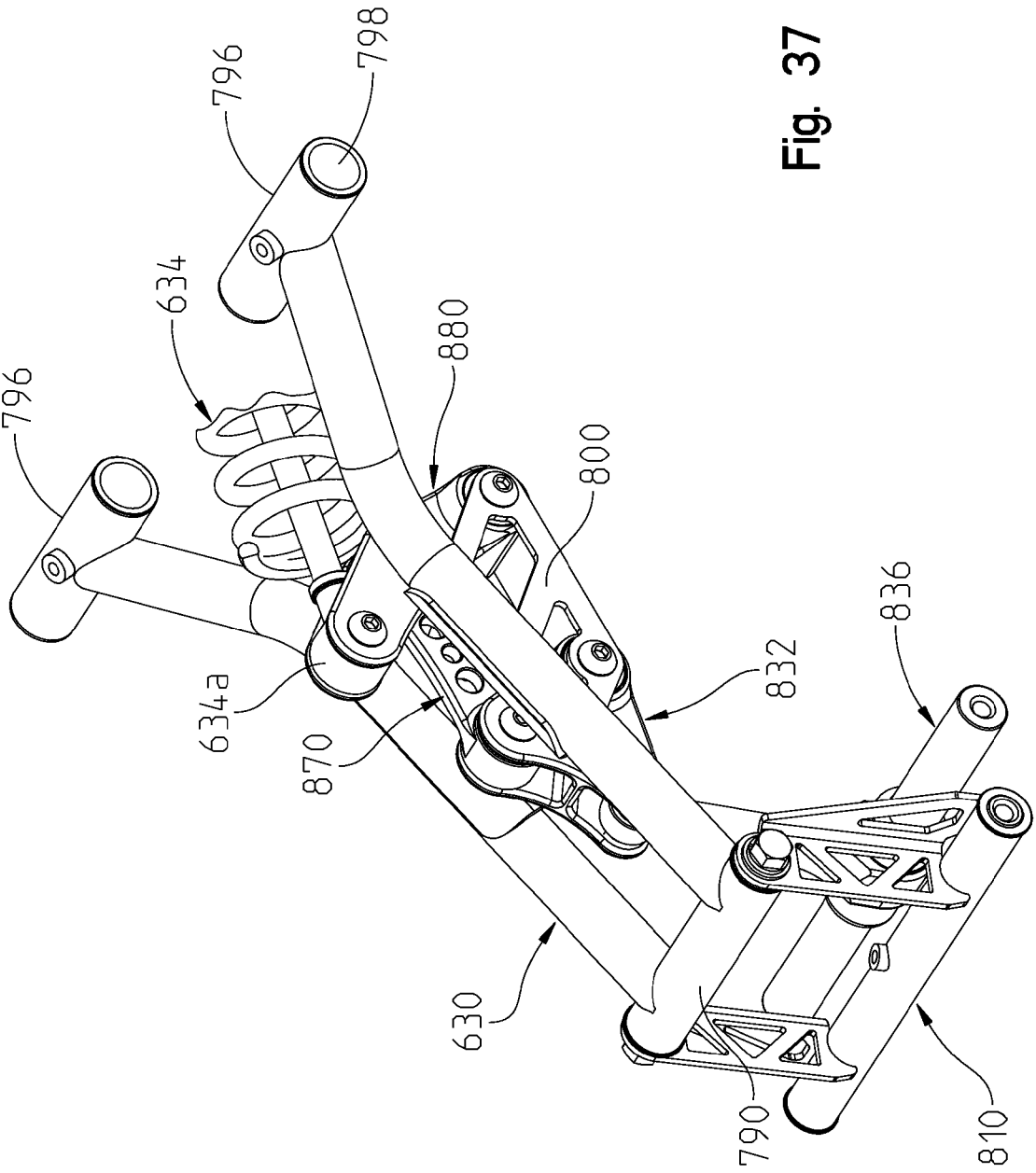


Fig. 37

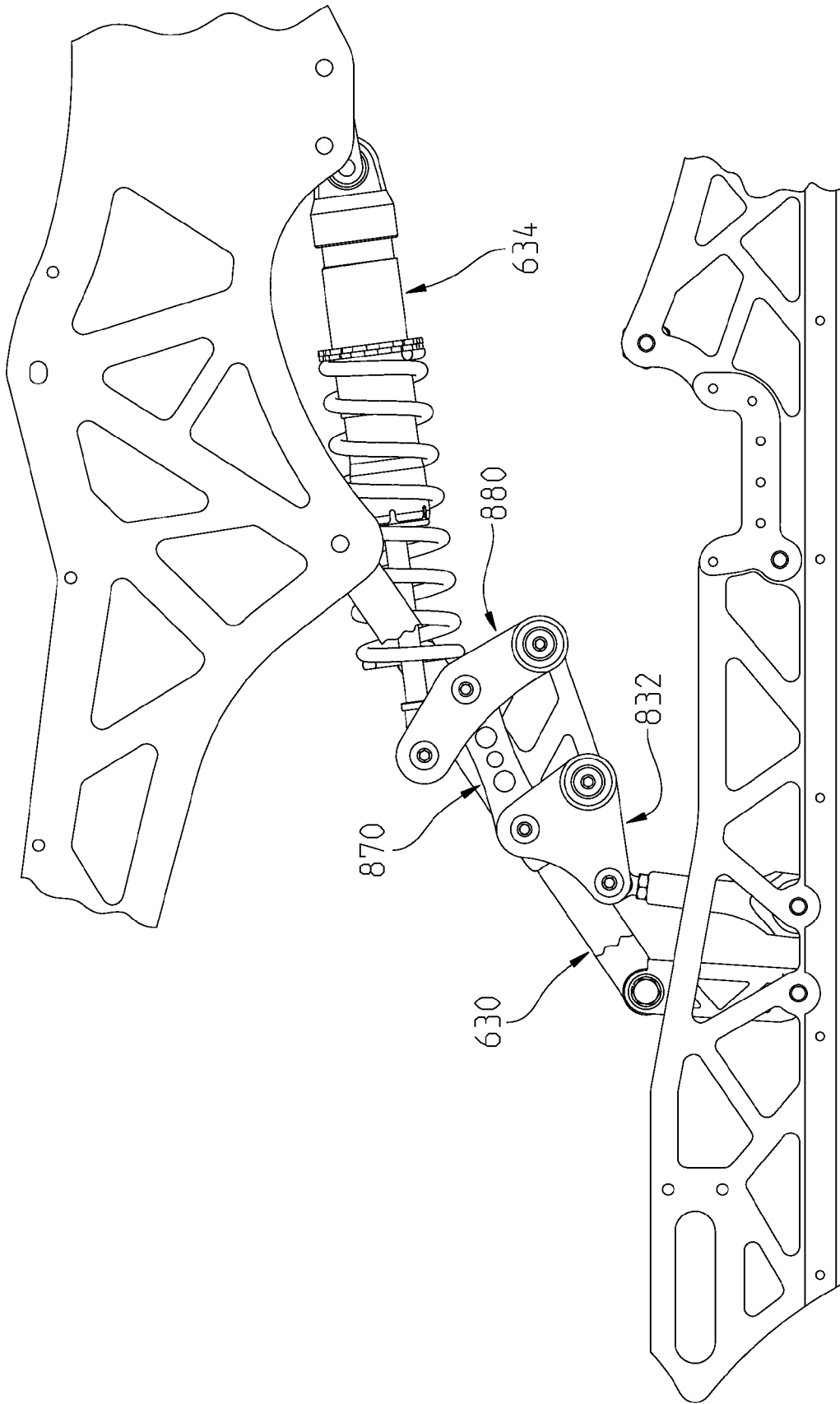


Fig. 39

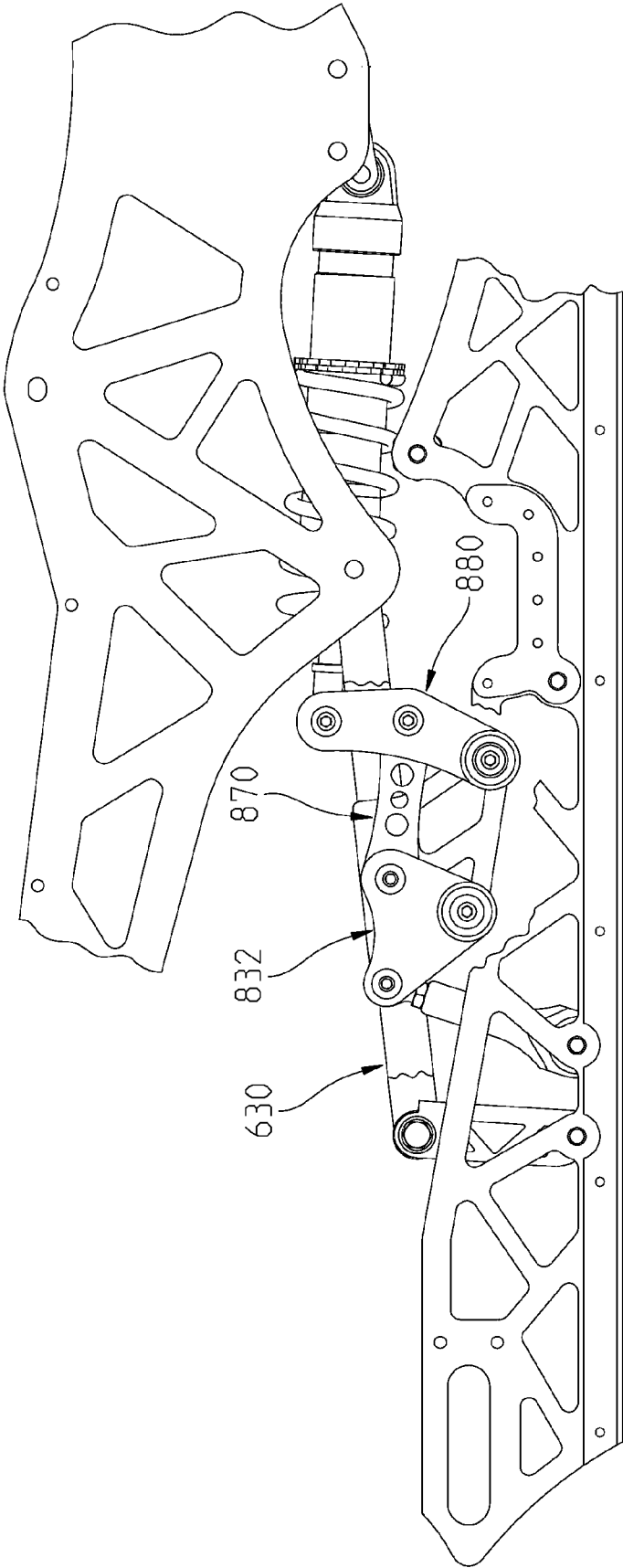


Fig. 40

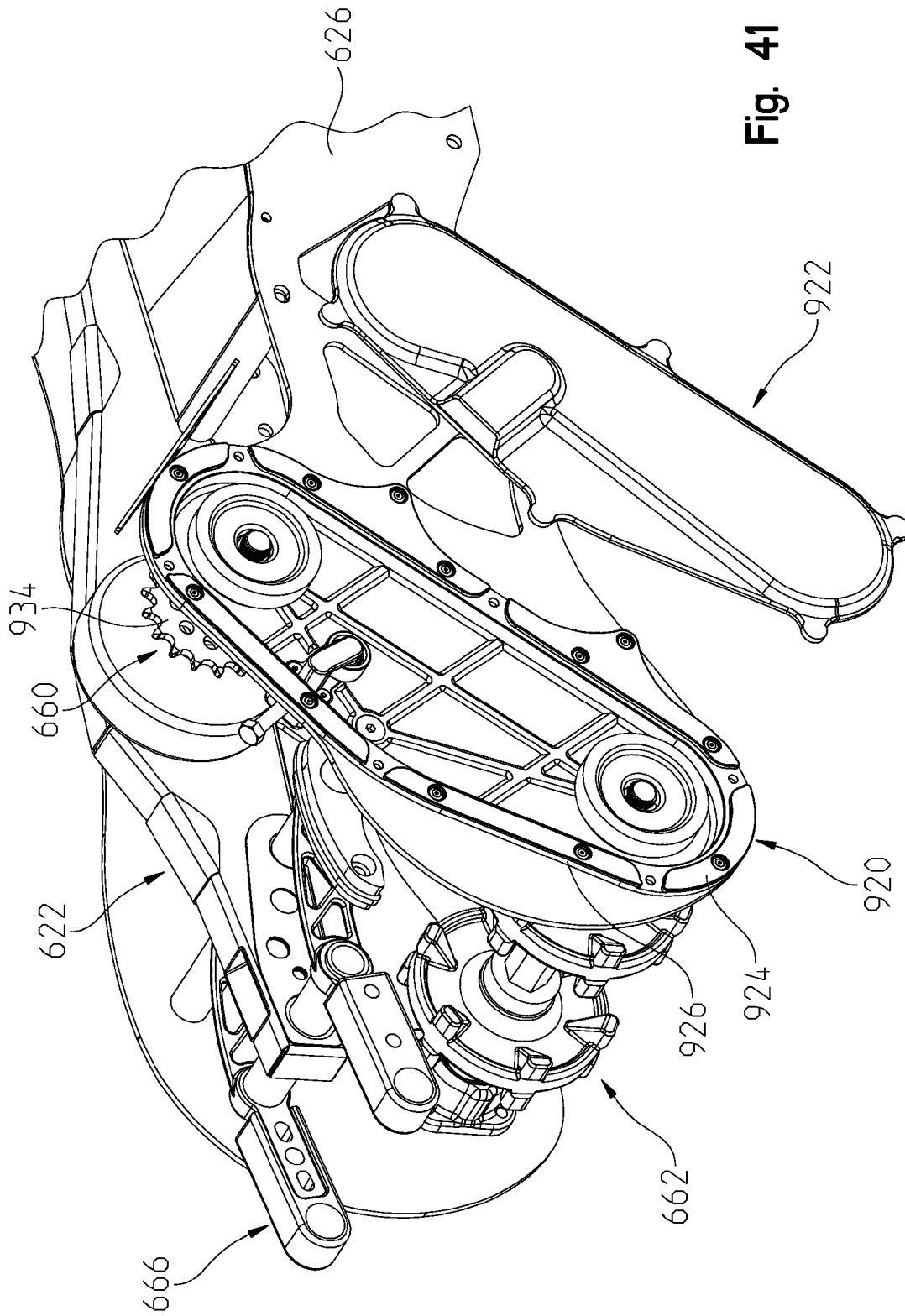


Fig. 41

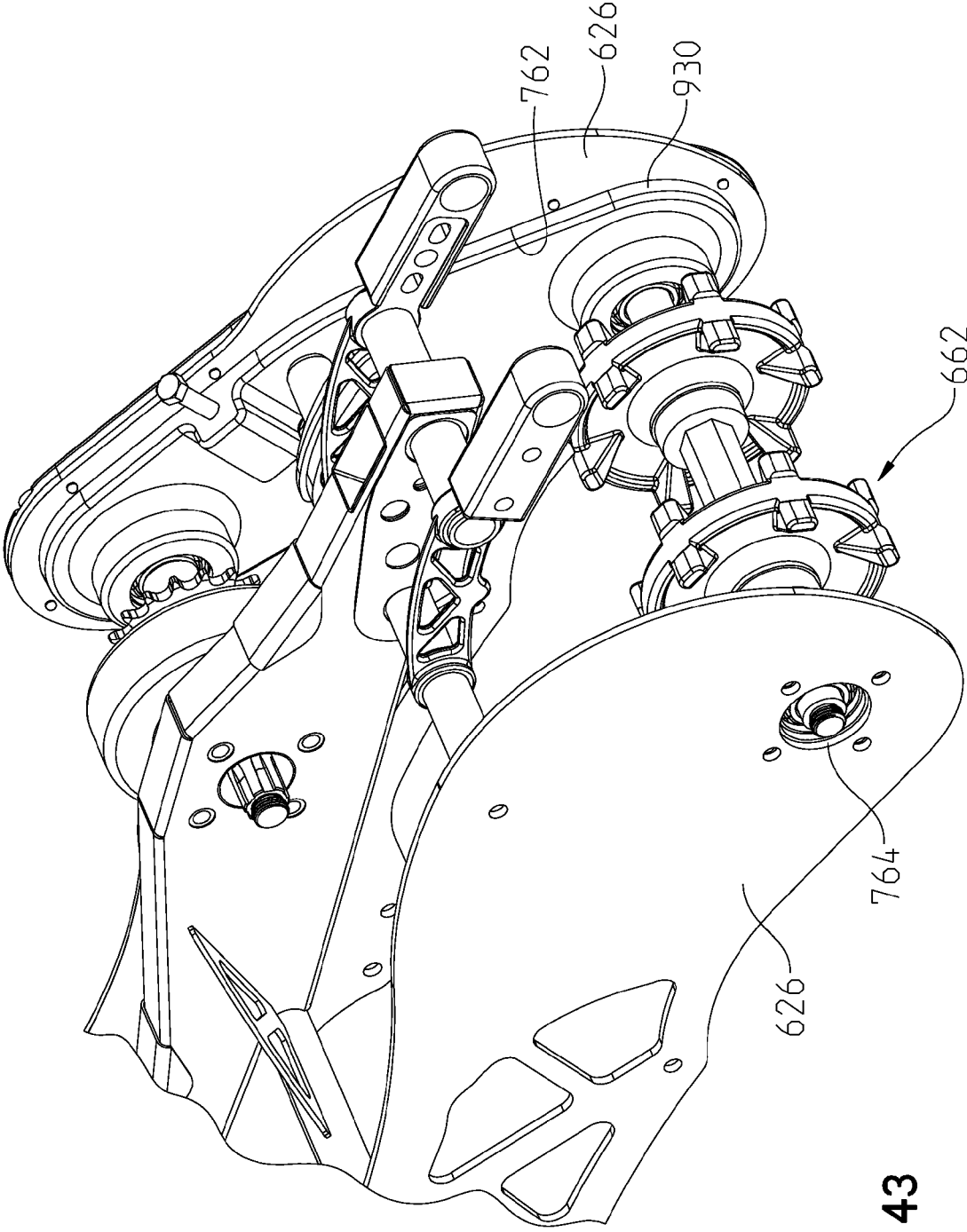


Fig. 43

SNOW VEHICLE

BACKGROUND

[0001] The present disclosure relates to snow vehicles including snowmobiles and or snow bikes.

[0002] Many types of vehicles are configured with tracks to drive in the snow. Regardless of whether the vehicle is a snowmobile or a wheeled vehicle converted to a tracked vehicle, tracked vehicles typically include a drive shaft mounted to a suspension system that supports the endless track. The drive shaft typically includes drive sprockets that engage the endless track. Irregularities in the snow and ice covered terrain cause the suspension system to move. Shock absorbers are typically used to absorb the movement of the suspension system. Common suspension systems are configured to collapse towards the tracked vehicle when absorbing the movement. However, in some situations, the irregularities in the terrain cause movement in the suspension away from the tracked vehicle that is not accommodated by the suspension system.

[0003] In the case of snow bikes, the front suspension comprises the suspension of the motorbike or dirt bike, that is, a front shock absorber. In the case of snowmobiles, the front suspension is typically includes two control arms, also known as double A-arms. However the front snowmobile suspension can also be a trailing arm suspension. The suspension described herein would typically supplement any of the front suspensions discussed above, although it could also be the primary suspension.

[0004] One such snow vehicle is shown in our U.S. Pat. No. 8,910,738, the subject matter of which is incorporated herein by reference. This patent discloses a conversion of a motorbike into a snow vehicle where the motorbike powertrain is utilized to power the track of the converted snow vehicle.

SUMMARY

[0005] In a first embodiment, a snow vehicle comprises a vehicle frame; a propulsion unit coupled to the frame; at least one front ski; a steering mechanism coupled to the frame; a first front suspension coupled to the frame; a second front suspension coupled to the at least one ski; a rear suspension coupled to the frame, the rear suspension comprising: at least one slide rail; at least one control arm coupled between the slide rail and the frame; at least linear force element coupled between the slide rail and the frame; and at least one carrier roller coupled to the at least one slide rail and the frame; a bumper assembly preventing bottoming out of the rear suspension; and a drive system comprising a drive track slidably guided by the at least one slide rail and drivably coupled to the propulsion unit.

[0006] In another embodiment, a snow vehicle comprises a vehicle frame; a propulsion unit coupled to the frame; at least one front ski; a steering mechanism coupled to the frame; a first front suspension coupled to the frame; a second front suspension coupled to the at least one ski; a rear suspension coupled to the frame, the rear suspension comprising: at least one slide rail; at least one control arm coupled between the slide rail and the frame; at least linear force element coupled between the slide rail and the frame; and at least one carrier roller coupled to the at least one slide rail and the frame; and a drive system comprising a drive track slidably guided by the at least one slide rail and

drivably coupled to the propulsion unit; wherein the longitudinal spacing between the vehicle frame and rear suspension is adjustably controllable.

[0007] In another embodiment, a kit for converting a motorcycle into a snow vehicle comprises at least one front ski; a front suspension for dampened coupling between a frame of the motorcycle and the at least one ski, the front suspension comprising a coupler for coupling the front suspension to the ski; a rear suspension for coupled to the frame of the motorcycle, the rear suspension comprising: at least one slide rail; at least one control arm coupled between the slide rail and the frame; at least linear force element coupled between the slide rail and the frame; and at least one carrier roller coupled to one of the slide rail and the frame; and a drive system comprising a drive track slidably guided by the at least one slide rail and drivably coupled to a propulsion unit of the motorcycle.

[0008] In another embodiment, a rear suspension for a snow vehicle, comprises at least one slide rail; a frame; at least one control arm coupled between the slide rail and the frame; at least linear force element coupled between the slide rail and the frame; at least one carrier roller coupled to one of the slide rail and the frame; a drive system comprising a drive track slidably guided by the at least one slide rail and drivably coupled to the propulsion unit; and a bumper assembly coupled to the rear suspension and positioned to prevent contact of the at least control arm and a remaining portion of the rear suspension.

[0009] In another embodiment, a rear suspension for a snow vehicle comprises at least one slide rail; a frame; at least one control arm coupled between the slide rail and the frame; at least linear force element coupled between the slide rail and the frame; at least one carrier roller coupled to one of the slide rail and the frame; a drive system comprising a drive track slidably guided by the at least one slide rail and drivably coupled to the propulsion unit; and a chain tensioner coupled to the frame at a forward end thereof, the chain tensioner comprising at least one first elongate portion, at least one second elongate portion, a mounting portion coupled to the at least one second elongate portion, and fasteners coupling the at least one first elongate portion and at least one second elongate portion together, wherein the at least one second elongate portion is movable relative to the at least one first elongate portion to vary a distance between the mounting portion and the remainder of the frame.

[0010] In another embodiment, a snow vehicle comprises a vehicle frame; a foot peg positioned on the vehicle frame for a rider's foot; a propulsion unit coupled to the frame; at least one front ski; a steering mechanism coupled to the frame; a front suspension coupled to the frame; a rear suspension coupled to the vehicle frame, the rear suspension comprising: a suspension frame; at least one slide rail; at least one control arm coupled between the slide rail and the frame; at least linear force element coupled between the slide rail and the frame; and at least one carrier roller coupled to the at least one slide rail and the frame; a drive system comprising a drive track slidably guided by the at least one slide rail and drivably coupled to a drive axis (A_1) to the propulsion unit; wherein a vertical distance (Y_1) between a top of the foot peg to the drive axis (A_1) is less than 5" (inches), and a vertical distance (Y_2) between the drive axis (A_1) and a bottom of the drive track is greater than 11" (inches).

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0011] The invention will now be described in relation to the drawing figures where:

[0012] FIG. 1 is a side view of one of the embodiments of snow vehicle as disclosed in the present disclosure;

[0013] FIG. 2A shows a left front perspective view of the front suspension coupled to the snow vehicle;

[0014] FIG. 2B is a front suspension similar to that of FIG. 2A showing the front suspension coupled to a conventional snowmobile;

[0015] FIG. 3 is a front left perspective view of the suspension assembly;

[0016] FIG. 4 is a rear right perspective view of the suspension assembly of FIG. 3;

[0017] FIG. 5 is a view similar to that of FIG. 3 showing the suspension in an exploded manner;

[0018] FIG. 5A is an enlarged portion of the linkage assembly shown in FIG. 5;

[0019] FIG. 5B is an enlarged portion of the shock absorber mounting as shown in

[0020] FIG. 5;

[0021] FIG. 6A shows a side view of the front suspension coupled to a ski in the fully extended position;

[0022] FIG. 6B shows the front suspension of FIG. 6A in a full trounce position;

[0023] FIG. 7 shows a front left perspective view of the rear suspension shown in FIG. 1;

[0024] FIG. 8 shows a rear right perspective view of the rear suspension shown in FIG. 7;

[0025] FIG. 9 shows a left side plan view of the suspension shown in FIG. 7; respectively;

[0026] FIG. 10 shows a left side plan view of the suspension shown in FIG. 7;

[0027] FIG. 11 shows a front left perspective view of the rear suspension of FIG. 7 in an exploded manner;

[0028] FIG. 12 shows a front left perspective view of an upper frame portion of the rear suspension assembly;

[0029] FIG. 13 shows a rear right perspective view of the upper frame portion shown in FIG. 12;

[0030] FIG. 14 shows a rear suspension coupler coupled to the slide rails;

[0031] FIG. 15 shows an enlarged perspective view of the bumper assembly;

[0032] FIG. 16 is an exploded view of the bumper assembly of FIG. 15;

[0033] FIG. 17 is a cross-sectional view of the bumper assembly shown through lines 17-17 of FIG. 15;

[0034] FIG. 18 shows a side view of the bumper assembly in full extension (dotted lines) and in full trounce (solid lines);

[0035] FIG. 19 shows a front left perspective view of a second embodiment of the rear suspension;

[0036] FIG. 20 shows an enlarged portion of the front of the suspension shown in FIG. 19;

[0037] FIG. 21 shows an enlarged view of the chain tensioner located at the front of the rear suspension assembly of FIG. 19;

[0038] FIG. 22 shows an exploded view of the chain tensioner shown in FIG. 21;

[0039] FIGS. 23 and 24 show opposite views of the chain tensioner bar;

[0040] FIGS. 25A and 25B show extreme positions of the chain tensioner in use;

[0041] FIG. 26 shows a front perspective view of the bumper assembly of the rear suspension of FIG. 19;

[0042] FIG. 27 shows an enlarged view of the mounting of the bumper assembly to the rear control arm;

[0043] FIG. 28 shows an exploded view of the bumper assembly of FIG. 27;

[0044] FIG. 29 shows an underside perspective view of the rear control arm;

[0045] FIG. 30 shows a side view of the bumper assembly in contact with the slide rail in a trounce position (solid lines) and prior to contact (dotted lines);

[0046] FIG. 31 shows a front perspective view of a third embodiment of rear suspension;

[0047] FIG. 32 is an exploded view of the rear suspension of FIG. 31;

[0048] FIG. 33 shows an enlarged view of main frame portion of the third rear suspension;

[0049] FIG. 34 shows a rear perspective view of the main frame portion of FIG. 33;

[0050] FIG. 35 shows a rear perspective view of the suspension assembly coupled to the rear control arm;

[0051] FIG. 36 shows a front perspective view of the suspension assembly shown in FIG. 35;

[0052] FIG. 36A shows an alternate embodiment of the rear suspension assembly of FIG. 36;

[0053] FIG. 37 shows a rear perspective view of the suspension assembly shown in FIG. 36;

[0054] FIG. 38 shows an exploded view of the suspension assembly shown in FIGS. 36 and 37;

[0055] FIG. 39 shows the suspension assembly of FIGS. 37 and 38 when in an extended position;

[0056] FIG. 40 shows the suspension assembly of FIG. 39 when in the trounce position;

[0057] FIG. 41 shows an enlarged front left perspective view of a front end of FIG. 31;

[0058] FIG. 42 shows a partially exploded view of FIG. 41; and

[0059] FIG. 43 shows an enlarged front right perspective view of a front end of FIG. 31.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE EMBODIMENTS

[0060] With reference first to FIG. 1, a snow vehicle is shown generally at 2 as comprised of a motorcycle portion 4 having a propulsion unit 5, which is shown as a two-cylinder motorcycle engine, a frame 6, an operators seat 8, and a steering assembly 10 which includes a front fork 12. A first suspension member is shown at 14 as a shock absorber assembly axially coupled with the forks 12. A second front suspension assembly is shown at 16 which couples the steering assembly 10 directly to a ski 18. A rear suspension assembly 20 is shown having an upper frame portion 22, slide rails 24, side panels 26, control arms 28, 30, linear force elements 32 and 34 (shown as shock absorbers) and an endless belt or drive track 36. With reference still to FIG. 1, the snow vehicle 2 includes a foot peg 38 for the rider to position their foot thereon during a ride.

[0061] With reference now to FIGS. 2A and 3-5, the front suspension assembly 16 will be described in greater detail. As shown best in FIGS. 3 and 4, front suspension assembly 16 generally includes a spindle body 40, a lower linkage portion 42, and a mounting portion 44. As shown best in FIG. 5, spindle portion 40 is generally comprised of two plates 50 and 52 where each plate includes a plurality of

apertures. Namely, plate **50** includes apertures **50a-50g** together with an enlarged aperture at **50h**. Likewise, plate **52** includes apertures **52a-52g** and an enlarged aperture at **52h**. Spindle portion **40** also includes a plurality of spacers to space the plates **50** and **52** apart, namely spacers **54a**, **54b**, **54c**, and **54g**. An enlarged spacer is provided at **54h**. It should be noted each of the spacers **54a**, **54b**, **54c**, and **54g** are somewhat spool-shaped having an enlarged head portion **56** at each end as well as threaded openings **58** at each end. Enlarged spacer **54h** is embossed at each end to define a reduced diameter section **60** defining shoulders **62**.

[0062] Thus, the spindle portion may be preassembled by placing the reduced diameter portion **60** of spacer **54h** into respective apertures **50h** and **52h**. This positions the reduced diameter portion **60** through the corresponding apertures **50h** and **52h** as shown in FIGS. **3** and **4**. Spacers **54c** and **54g** may then be aligned with corresponding apertures **50c**, **52c**; and **50g**, **52g**. Fasteners and washers may then be positioned against plates **50** and **52** to retain the two plates together and coupled to the spacers. Namely, fastener **70c** and washer **72c** may be aligned with aperture **52c** and brought into threaded engagement with threaded aperture **58** of spacer **54c**. Likewise, fasteners **70g** and washers **72g** may be received through apertures **50g** and **52g** to be received into the threaded ends **58** of spacer **54g**. The fasteners should be brought into engagement with the threaded apertures of their corresponding spacers but not fully torqued down at this position as other spacers and assembly is required within the spindle assembly.

[0063] With reference still to FIG. **5**, mounting portion **44** is shown including clamp halves **80**, **82**; **84**, **86**. Each of the pairs of clamp halves includes semi-cylindrical openings which may encompass the front forks of the motorcycle frame as described above with reference to FIG. **1**. Thus, spacers **54a** and **54b** are now aligned with respective pairs of apertures **50a**, **50b**; **52a** and **52b**; and fasteners **70a** and **70b** are received through their respective apertures as shown in FIG. **5**. This brings fasteners into engagement with the threaded ends **58** of the corresponding spacers **54a** and **54b** to a position where the clamp may be closed.

[0064] With reference now to FIG. **5A**, the link assembly **42** is shown and will be described in greater detail. As shown best in FIG. **5A**, link assembly **42** includes front links or control arms **100** and rear links or control arms **102**. Each control arm **100** includes an upper coupling **100a** and a lower coupling at **100b**. Likewise, control arms **102** include upper couplings at **102a** and lower couplings at **102b**. Each of the upper couplings **100a** and **102a** receive sleeves **104** which are profiled to be received in the couplings **100a**, **102a**. Spacers **106** and **108** respectively, are then inserted through corresponding couplings **100a**, **102a** and into sleeves **104**. Likewise, spacer **108** is received into couplings **102a**, and into sleeves **104**. Thus, control arms **100** and **102** may be aligned with respective apertures **50e**, **52e**, and **50f**, **52f** (FIG. **5**) and fastened to the spindle assembly by way of fasteners and washers **70e**, **72e** and **70f**, **72f**.

[0065] With reference again to FIG. **5A**, linkage assembly **42** further includes a knuckle **110** having a front pivot coupling **110a** having an aperture at **110b** and a rear pivot coupling **110c** having an aperture **110d**. Sleeves **112** may be received in lower couplings **100b** of control arms **100** (in the orientation shown in FIG. **5A**) and then couplings **100b** may be received in alignment with apertures **110b** whereupon fasteners **114a** and washers **114b** may be aligned with

threaded apertures **110b** to couple control arms **100** with the knuckle **110**. In a like manner, sleeves **116** may be received in lower couplings **102b** (in the orientation shown in FIG. **5A**) whereby couplings **102b** and sleeves **116** are received over rear pivot coupling **110c** and in alignment with threaded apertures **110d**. Thereafter, fasteners **120a** and washers **120b** may be aligned with sleeves **116** to couple alignment arms **102** with knuckle **110**.

[0066] Finally, with reference to FIG. **5B**, linkage **42** further includes a shock absorber **124** having a lower coupling at aperture **124a** and an upper coupling at aperture **124b**. Split sleeves **126** include reduced diameter portions **126a** and threaded apertures at **126b**. Split sleeves **126** may be positioned with reduced diameter portions **126a** in apertures **124b** and the shock may be coupled to the spindle assembly by way of fasteners **70d** and washers **70e** positioned through apertures **50d** (FIG. **5**) and into threaded engagement with threaded apertures **126b**. The lower aperture **124a** of shock **124** may then be coupled to bracket arms **102c** as shown in FIG. **5B**. Sleeves **130** are positioned with reduced diameter portions **130a** within the shock aperture **124a**. The sleeves **130** and the shock aperture **124a** are then aligned with apertures **102d** whereupon fastener **140** may be received through sleeves **130**, apertures **102d** and receive a fastener **142** and lock washer **144**. Thus, the entire assembled second suspension system **16** is shown in FIGS. **3** and **4** where knuckle **110** is shown as providing an aperture **110e** for coupling to ski **18** as shown above in FIG. **2A**. That is, ski **18** includes ski rails **18a** whereby a pin **18b** may be received through the rails and into aperture **110e** for retaining ski **18** to the second suspension system **16**. Ski **18** could be similar to that shown in U.S. Pat. No. 8,381,857, the subject matter of which is incorporated herein by reference.

[0067] Thus, in operation and with reference to FIGS. **6A** and **6B**, ski **18** is shown in a fully extended position in FIG. **6A** and in a full trounce position in FIG. **6B**. As shown in FIG. **6B**, control arms **100** and **102** are shown collapsed with the shock absorber **124** in a stroked position. Advantageously, the ski is lifted up and rearwardly relative to spindle assembly **40**. It is lifted upwardly in the sense that it rotated (in the clockwise sense as viewed in FIG. **6B**). It is rotated in the range of 1-5°. It also moves rearwardly, for example, the position of the pin **18b** which couples the ski to knuckle **110** moves rearwardly from the positions shown in FIG. **6A** to the position shown in FIG. **6B**. That is, the distance in FIG. **6A** between the upper pivot point of front control arm **100** (about fastener **70e**) is shown as X_1 , whereas in FIG. **6B** the distance is shown as X_2 , where X_2 is greater than X_1 . This provides an enhanced suspension system in that the ski is lifted up and rearward; for example, if the snow bike is going over a rock or log, the ski is lifted up and over the log rather than pushing the ski into the log. This movement also reduces the friction between the ski and the snow due to the lifting of the ski.

[0068] It should be understood that the spindle assembly may also be usable on a conventional snow mobile, and as shown in FIG. **2B**, spindle **16'** is shown coupled to upper and lower alignment arms or control arms **150**, **152**, where upper control arm **150** is coupled to spindle assembly **16'** by way of a ball joint at **154**. Although not shown in FIG. **2B**, lower control arm **152** would also be coupled by way of a ball joint to spindle assembly **16'**. It should be further understood that spindle assembly **16** or **16'** could be adapted for use with a trailing arm type snowmobile suspension of the type shown

in U.S. Pat. No. 6,328,124, the subject matter of which is incorporated herein by reference. A full description of the front suspension is described in our co-pending patent application Ser. No. _____, filed Nov. 6, 2015 (Attorney Docket Number PLR-01-27450.02P), incorporated herein by reference.

[0069] With reference now to FIGS. 7-19, rear suspension 20 will be described in greater detail. As shown, and in particular with reference to FIGS. 9-11, rear suspension 20 includes an upper portion 154, an intermediate suspension portion 156 and a lower portion 158. As shown, intermediate suspension portion 156 is coupled to the upper and lower portions 154, 158 in a four bar linkage fashion allowing the upper and lower portions 154, 158 to move relative to each other in dampened fashion. In addition to the items already described on rear suspension 20, rear suspension 20 includes a drive system 160 which is input from the propulsion unit 6 by way of a chain; a belt drive system 162 driven by drive system 160 through gear casing or chain case 164 and a chain tensioner 166 (FIG. 7) which is moveable into the drive chain for taking up slack. As shown best in FIG. 8, a disc brake 168 is shown on the backside of drive system 160 for braking the snow bike. Furthermore, a bumper system 170 is shown which as described herein, prevents a crash between upper and lower portions 154, 158 of the rear suspension 20.

[0070] With reference now to FIGS. 12 and 13, upper frame member 22 will be described in greater detail. As shown, upper frame 22 includes two longitudinal frame members 180 extending lengthwise the entire length of the frame member 22. Frame member 180 is interrupted at a front end thereof by way of front cross bar 182 which couples to a front end portion 180a of frame member 180. Frame portions 180b extend forwardly from cross-bar 182 and include front coupling members 184 which couple to a rear section of motorcycle portion 4 (FIG. 1). Frame members 186 reinforce frame members 180b and cross tube 182 in a triangular manner, and while shown as frame tubes, gussets could also be used such as a triangular plate portion welded in place between frame members 180b and cross tube 182. As shown best in FIG. 13, cross tube 190 couples together frame members 180, where an end of cross tube 190 includes a threaded aperture at 190a. As shown best in FIG. 12 a cross tube portion 192 is positioned above frame member 180 and includes a threaded aperture at 192a. As shown in both FIGS. 12 and 13 a cross tube 196 is positioned rearwardly of cross tube 190 and also couples together frame members 180. Cross tube 196 includes a threaded aperture at 196a. Finally, a cross tube 198 is positioned at a rear of frame member 22 and includes threaded apertures 198a. Brackets 200 are positioned intermediate cross tubes 182 and 190 to retain chain tensioner 166 and bracket 202 is attached to frame member 180 to attach drive member 160. Upper frame members 210 extend from cross tube 182 rearwardly to cross tube 198 and include reinforcing frame members 212a, 212b, and 212c.

[0071] Upper frame portion 154 (FIGS. 9-11) further includes the side panels 26 and more particular left side panel 26a and right side panel 26b coupled to the upper frame member 22. As shown best in FIGS. 9 and 11, side panel 26a is formed of a panel, such as an aluminum or stainless steel panel and is configured to couple to the left side of upper frame member 22. In particular, panel 26 includes apertures to receive fasteners 222a which couples

to threaded aperture 192a (FIG. 12), fastener 222b to couple threaded fastener 196a (FIG. 12) and fastener 222c to fasten to threaded aperture 198a (FIG. 12). As shown in FIG. 11, left side panel 26a further includes apertures 230a and 230b for coupling to the intermediate suspension portion 156 as will be described herein. As shown in FIG. 11, side panel 26a further includes apertures 230c and 230d for receipt therethrough of a driveshaft for drive member 160 and an aperture for receipt of drive shaft for belt drive 162.

[0072] With reference now to FIG. 10, right hand side panel 26b includes apertures for receipt of fasteners 240a (for coupling with aperture 198a); fastener 240b (for coupling with threaded aperture 196a) and fastener 240c (for coupling with threaded aperture 198a). Side panel 26b also includes apertures for receipt of fasteners 242a and 242b which couple with intermediate suspension portion 156 as described herein. Side panel 26b also includes a mounting area 244 for coupling belt drive 162 (FIG. 7).

[0073] With reference again to FIG. 11, intermediate suspension 156 is comprised of a front control arm 250, a front shock absorber at 252, a rear control arm 254, and a rear shock absorber at 256. As shown, front control arm 250 has an upper axle at 260 and a lower axle at 262. Upper axle 260 includes threaded apertures 260a and lower axle 262 includes threaded apertures 262a. Shock absorber 252 is coupled to upper axle 260 at 266 and includes a lower axle at 268 having a threaded aperture 268a. Rear control arm 254 includes an upper axle 270 having a threaded aperture at 270a and a lower axle 272 and mounted between slide rails 24, as described herein.

[0074] With reference now to FIG. 14, lower axle assembly 272 includes a spacer 274 having threaded apertures at 274a and axle 276 is slidably receivable over spacer 274 and sleeves 278 which are received in open ends 280 of axle member 276. As shown, when spacer 274 is received through sleeves 278 and axle member 276, fasteners 282a and 282b may be received through washers 284, through apertures 286 of slide rails 24 such that axle member is rotatable about spacer 274. It should be appreciated that the spacer 274 is slightly longer than the axle 276, allowing the axle 276 to rotate about spacer 274. Axle member 276 includes link arms 288 having apertures at 288a for coupling to rear control arm 254. With reference again to FIG. 11 rear control arm 254 includes threaded apertures 254a at a lower end thereof that may be coupled to apertures 288a (FIG. 14) with fasteners (not shown). With respect still to FIG. 11, rear shock absorber 256 includes a lower axle 290 having a threaded aperture at 290a.

[0075] In addition to apertures 286 (FIG. 14) slide rails 24 also include apertures 300, 302, and 304 (FIG. 11). Thus, and with reference to FIG. 11, intermediate suspension portion 156 may be coupled to slide rails 24 by way of fasteners through apertures 302 into threaded apertures 268, by fasteners extending through apertures 304 into threaded apertures 262a and fasteners through apertures 300 and into threaded aperture 290a.

[0076] With reference now to FIGS. 15-18, bumper assembly 170 will be described in greater detail. As shown in FIG. 15, bumper assembly 170 is shown mounted to slide rail 24 above a slot 310 of slide rail 24. Bumper assembly 170 generally includes a plunger at 312, a spring grommet 314 and a carrier mount at 316. With reference now to FIG. 16, the bumper assembly 170 is shown exploded away from slide rail 24. As shown, plunger 312 includes a head portion

312a, a shank portion **312b** and a threaded aperture at **312c** (see FIG. 17). Spring grommet **314** includes a pair of resilient bellows **314a** and **314b** coupled to a base portion **314c** with an aperture **314d** extending downwardly through spring grommet **314** and profiled to receive plunger **312**. Carrier mount **316** includes flanges **316a** which flank a base portion **318** which includes an aperture **320** profiled to receive shank portion **312b** of plunger **312** as described herein.

[0077] To assemble the bumper assembly, plunger **312** is installed through aperture **314d** of spring grommet **314** with base portion **314c** positioned on base **318** of carrier mount **316**. If desired, a thrust washer could be positioned under the head portion **312a** and above the spring grommet **314**. Fastener **322** may then be positioned through washer **324** and threadably received into threaded aperture **312c** of plunger **312**. Fasteners **326** are then positioned through apertures **316b** of flanges **316a** to couple the bumper assembly to threaded apertures **328** on slide rail **24**. A cross-sectional view of FIG. 17 shows the bumper assembly as applied to the side of slide rail **24**. As should be appreciated from FIG. 17, flanges **316a** are offset asymmetrically with base **318** of mount **316** such that the plunger is centered with the slot **310**. Thus, as shown in FIG. 18, during a jounce, rear control arm **254** collapses and is aligned with bumper assembly **170**, and in particular with the head portion **312** of plunger **312**, causing spring grommet **314** to compress causing the shank portion **312b** to extend into slot **310**.

[0078] With reference now to FIGS. 19-30, a second embodiment of a rear suspension will be described. With reference to FIG. 19 a second rear suspension is shown at **420** having a frame **422** with a single slide rail **424** where carrier rollers **425** flank single side rail **424**. Rear suspension **420** further includes side panels **426**, a front control arm **428**, rear control arm **430**, front shock absorber **432** and rear shock absorber **434**. As in the first embodiment, rear suspension **420** includes an input drive **460**, belt drive **462** coupled together by way of chain case **464**, a chain tensioner **466** and a braking system **468**. Rear suspension **420** further includes a rear bumper assembly **470** as described herein. With reference now to FIGS. 20-25, chain tensioner **466** will be described in greater detail.

[0079] As shown first in FIGS. 20 and 21, frame **422** includes a front cross bar at **482** with elongate extension bars **488** coupled to cross bar **482** and extending generally forward. Sliding mounts **490** are coupled to elongate extension bars **488** and are slidable relative thereto. Chain tensioner **466** further includes a locking mechanism at **492** and a chain guide at **494**.

[0080] As shown best in FIG. 22, elongate extension bars **488** include an inner end at **500** which is coupled to the cross bar **482**, an inner surface **502** which is substantially flat, and an outer surface at **504** having triangulated edges at **506**. Each of the bars **488** includes apertures at **510**. As shown in FIGS. 23 and 24, sliding mounts **490** are shown, where in FIG. 23 an inner surface **514** is shown having an integrated channel at **516**. The channel **516** includes upper and lower surfaces **516a**, an inner flat surface at **516b**, and triangulated surfaces **516c**, which as should be appreciated, align with and cooperate with triangulated surfaces **506** on bars **488**. Apertures **520** extend through inner surface **516b** and are slotted in a longitudinal direction.

[0081] As shown in FIG. 24, sliding mounts **490** include an outside flattened surface at **522**. A front end **524** of the

sliding mount **490** includes a coupler at **526** which is substantially similar to coupler **184** (FIG. 12) to couple the rear suspension **420** to the motorcycle frame. However, in this embodiment, the chain is tightened by providing longitudinal flexibility in the position of the rear suspension relative to the motorcycle frame. In that regard, fasteners **528** (FIG. 22) are provided which are receivable through slotted apertures **520** and into threaded engagement with threaded apertures **510**. The triangulated surfaces **506**, **516c** allows vertical alignment of the sliding mounts relative to the bars **488** and positioning fasteners **528** into threaded engagement with threaded apertures **510** allows sliding mounts **490** to be moveable longitudinally to the extent of the slotted apertures **520**, as described further herein.

[0082] With reference now to FIG. 22, locking mechanism **492** will be described. As shown in FIG. 22, cross bar **482** includes an aperture at **482a** and has an undercut portion at **482b**. The locking mechanism is comprised of O-rings **530**, a rod **532**, a locking cam **534** and fasteners **536**, **538**. Rod **532** has an aperture at **532a** and a flattened surface at **532b**. Locking cam has an eccentric lobe at **534a** and an aperture at **534b** having flattened inner surfaces at **534c**. Fastener **536** has flattened surfaces at **536a**.

[0083] Thus, once the rear suspension **420** is positioned on the motorcycle frame, the rear suspension can be moved rearwardly to tighten the chain whereupon the threaded fasteners **528** can be tightened to the position to retain sliding mounts **490** relative to bars **488**. At this point, the O-rings **530** can be received over each end of the cross bar **482** and be received in the undercut portion **482b**. Rod **532** is then received into aperture **482a** and locking cams **534** are positioned over the ends of rod **532** aligning the flattened surfaces **532b**, **534c**. Fasteners **536** may be received in aperture **534b** and fasteners **538** may be brought into threaded engagement with threaded apertures **532a** of rod **532**. Two wrenches may now be used to bring the locking mechanism into a full locking condition, for example, a box wrench or adjustable wrench may be used with fastener **536** whereby a torque may be applied to the locking cam **534** to position it against the sliding mount **490**. At the same time, a second wrench such as an allen wrench may be used to tighten the fasteners **538** to bring the locking mechanism in a fully locked position.

[0084] This is shown in diagrammatic form in FIGS. 25A and 25B where in the position of FIG. 25A sliding lock **490** is moved to the full left position into the direction of arrow A and locking cam **534** is rotated in the counter-clockwise direction until it abuts the end of sliding **490**. In this position, a distance between the center of the mounting member **526** and the fastener **538** is a distance D_1 . With reference now to FIG. 25b, the sliding mount **490** is moved to the fully right hand position in the direction of arrow B and locking cam **534** is rotated in a clockwise position to accommodate the lateral movement of the locking mount **490**. The corresponding distance in this position is D_2 , where D_1 is greater than D_2 .

[0085] With reference now to FIGS. 26-39, bumper assembly **470** will be described in greater detail. As opposed to the first embodiment of rear suspension **20** where the bumper assembly **170** was provided on the slide rail, and the control arm rotated into the bumper assembly, this embodiment is exactly the opposite; that is, the bumper assembly **470** is mounted to the control arm **430** and the movement of

the control arm downwardly provides contact between the slide rail 424 and the bumper assembly 470.

[0086] As shown best in FIGS. 27-29, the control arm 430 includes two arm members 550 (FIG. 29) with a lower coupler 552 which mounts to a link assembly 554 (FIG. 26) and an upper coupler at 560 which couples to side panels 426 (FIG. 26). Rear control arm 430 further includes a mount or bracket at 562 having a base portion 564 with an aperture 566 extending therethrough. Bumper assembly 470 is substantially similar to bumper assembly 170 including a plunger 582, spring grommet 584, fastener 592 and washer 594. The fully assembled position of the bumper assembly 470 is shown in FIG. 27 where plunger 582 is positioned through spring grommet 584 with fastener and washer positioned against base portion 564 and fastener 592 threaded into threaded engagement with threaded aperture 590 (FIG. 28).

[0087] As shown in FIG. 30, in this embodiment, when rear control arm 430 rotates in the direction downwardly in the direction of arrow C, plunger 528 contacts an upper edge 424a of slide rail 424. The extent of travel upwardly of plunger 528 is shown by the difference between the plunger 528 in solid lines versus plunger 528 in phantom lines.

[0088] With reference now to FIGS. 31-40, a third embodiment of a rear suspension will be described. With reference to FIG. 31 a third rear suspension is shown at 620 having a frame 622, slide rails 624, top tunnel portion 625, side panels 626, a front control arm 628, rear control arm 630, front shock absorber 632 and rear shock absorber 634. A progressive rate linkage 635 is coupled between the rear control arm and the frame as described herein. As in the first embodiment, rear suspension 620 includes an input drive 660, belt drive 662 coupled together by way of chain case 664, and a chain tensioner 666. With reference now to FIGS. 32-34, frame 622, side panels 624 and top tunnel 625 will be described in greater detail.

[0089] With reference first to FIGS. 33 and 34, frame 622 is shown as a unibody construction having an elongate frame member or spine 700 with a generally rectangular cross-section. Spine 700 has side walls 702 with a front-end at 704, a rear end at 706, a lower wall 708 and a top wall 710. Frame member 700 could be manufactured from one or multiple sheets of rigid material such as aluminum or steel where portions of the sheet are stamped and formed into the box-shaped configuration shown in FIGS. 33 and 34 and bonded together such as by welding or industrial adhesives and the like. Frame member 700 could also be manufactured from a casting, such as an aluminum casting.

[0090] Side walls 702 include an enlarged aperture 720 extending therethrough encircled by apertures 722. Apertures 720 is profiled to receive input drive 660 (FIG. 31) and attached thereto by way of fasteners through apertures 722. Frame 622 further includes four cross bars; a first cross bar 726, a second cross bar 728, a third cross bar 730, and a fourth cross bar 732. Each of the cross bars 728-732 include threaded apertures 728a, 730a, and 732a respectively.

[0091] As shown best in FIG. 33, a portion of chain tensioner 666 (FIG. 31) is defined by a unitary member 740 which may be a casting or forging of metal or aluminum which includes a body portion at 742 having two coupling members 744 and 746 encircling the cross bars 726 and 728. As shown, a portion of cross bar 728 protrudes beyond the coupler 744 whereas coupler 746 encapsulates an end portion of cross bar 726. Couplers 744 and 746 may be coupled

to their corresponding cross bars 728, 726 by such means as industrial adhesives, fasteners or welding. Extension bars 750 extend forwardly from couplers 746 and include elongated apertures at 752. Chain tensioner 666 further includes slide mounts 756 (FIG. 31) having apertures at 758. Chain tensioner 666 operates in substantially the same way as chain tensioner 466 with the only difference being in the location of the slotted apertures 752.

[0092] With reference again to FIG. 32, right side panel 626 include apertures 626a, 626b and 626c which align with corresponding apertures 728a, 730a and 732a (FIG. 34). Left side panel 626 includes a large aperture 762 to receive the chaincase 664, and apertures 730a and 732a. Right side panel 626 includes an aperture 764 for receiving an opposite end of belt drive 662 (FIG. 31). Each of the side panels 626 also include pairs of apertures 770a, 770b and 772a, 772b for coupling of the suspension as provided herein. Side panels 626 also include a plurality of apertures 774 for coupling of the top panel or tunnel portion 625.

[0093] As shown in FIG. 32, top panel 625 includes a stamped and formed piece of material such as aluminum or steel with a generally flat portion at 780 having folded flaps 782 at the marginal edges thereof. Inclined portions at 784 lead into top panel portions 786 having a slot 788 extending therebetween. The marginal edges 782 includes a plurality of apertures at 782a for coupling with the plurality of apertures 774 in side panels 626 to retain the top panel 625 to the side panels 626. At the same time the slot 788 allows the top panel portions 786 to flank the frame portion 622 as best shown in FIG. 31.

[0094] With reference now to FIGS. 35-38, progressive rate linkage 635 will be described in greater detail. With reference first to FIG. 38, rear control arm 630 will be described having a lower coupler 790 having openings at 792 with frame members 794 extending upwardly and forwardly terminating in couplers at 796 having openings at 798. Midway up frame members 794 are two bracket members 800 having a portion 802 mounted to the frame member 794 and a portion 804 depending downwardly therefrom having a front aperture at 806 and a rear aperture at 808.

[0095] The mounting of rear control arm 630 to slide rails 624 is done by way of a link assembly 810 having a tubular portion 812 having threaded apertures at 812a and an upstanding bracket at 812b having apertures at 812c. An axle 816 is provided having threaded apertures at 816a. Thus, coupler 790 is coupled to brackets 812b by positioning axle 816 through coupler 790, and by aligning apertures 816a and 812c together, whereupon fasteners 818 and washers 820 can couple control arm 630 to link assembly 810. That combination may be coupled to the slide rails 624 by positioning a fastener (not shown) through apertures 822a (FIG. 35) and threadably engaging threaded apertures 812a.

[0096] A triangular link assembly 830 is shown in FIG. 35 coupled to bracket 800. As shown in FIG. 38, triangular link assembly 830 includes a triangular link 832, an adjustable link 834 and an axle at 836. As shown best in FIG. 38, triangular link 832 has three pivotal points at 832a, 832b and at enlarged opening 832c. Adjustable link 834 includes a shank portion at 834a and a coupler at 834b. Shank portion 834a includes a threaded aperture at 834c and coupler 834b includes an opening at 834d. Adjustable link 834 also includes a ball joint portion 834e having a ball joint with an

aperture at **834f**. Adjustable link is assembled by threading nut **834g** onto threaded portion **834e** and then threading threaded portion **834e** into threaded aperture **834c**. It should be appreciated that the linear length of the adjustable link **834** may be adjusted by the location of the lock nut **834g** relative to the shank portion **834a**. Adjustable link **834** is now positioned over axle **836** with bushings **838** positioned in apertures **834d**. Couplers **840** may now be slidably received over axle member **836** and against coupler **834b** and locked in place.

[0097] Axle **836** may be coupled to slide rails **624** by inserting a fastener (not shown) through apertures **822b** (FIG. 35) and aligning them with the apertures **836a** (FIG. 38). It should be appreciated that ball joint opening **834f** is coupled to triangular link aperture **832a** by way of a fastener **832d**. It should also be appreciated that aperture **832c** of triangular link **832** is coupled to aperture **808** of bracket **800**. To that end, aperture **832c** receives bearings **850a**, spacer **852a**, grommets **854a** and washers **856a**. That assembly is then positioned relative to aperture **808** of bracket **800**, whereby fasteners **858a** may be received through apertures **808** and threaded into spacer **852a**.

[0098] Linkage **635** further includes a link **870** having a coupler **872** and **874**. Coupler **872** may be coupled to aperture **832b** of triangular link **832** by positioning bearings **850b** in each of the couplers **872** and **874** followed by spacers **852b** and washers **856b**. A fastener **858b** may then be positioned into aperture **832b** through the spacer **852b** and coupler **872** and into a threaded aperture on the opposite side of the triangular link **832**.

[0099] Linkage **635** further includes a link **880** having a lower coupler at **882** having an aperture at **882a** and two link arms **884** having apertures at **886** and **888**. Link **870** is coupled to link **880** by way of a fastener **858b** extending through aperture **888** of link **880** and through bearing **850b**, spacer **852b**, washers **856b** and coupling opening **874** of link **870**. Meanwhile, link **880** is coupled to bracket **800** by positioning bearings **850c**, spacer **852c**, grommet **854c** and washer **856c** in aperture **882a**, whereupon a fastener **858c** may be received through opening **882a** of link **880** and through aperture **806** of bracket **800**. This couples both the triangular link **832** and the link **880** to the bracket **800**, with the link **870** coupled between the triangular link **830** and link **880**.

[0100] Finally, shock absorber **634** may be installed in the assembly. Shock absorber **634** includes a coupling at **634a** which couples to aperture **886** of link **880**. Upper end of shock **634** includes a coupling **634b** coupled to an axle member **900** (FIG. 36) which is shown in FIG. 35 as coupled to an inside of side panels **626**. Namely axle **900** includes brackets **902** having apertures at **902a** which may receive fasteners therethrough and into side panel **626**.

[0101] In operation, and with reference to FIGS. 36 and 37, when the control arm **630** begins to rotate in a downward sense, triangular link **832** will rotate about bracket **800** causing link **870** to push the link **880** forward. As link **870** is coupled to a midpoint of link **880**, the shock is compressed or stroked at a greater rate than it would with a direct connection. This is also shown diagrammatically in FIGS. 39 and 40 where control arm is moved from the position shown in FIG. 39 to a collapsed position shown in FIG. 40. This movement causes triangular link **832** to rotate in the clockwise sense (as viewed in FIGS. 39 and 40) which causes link **870** to push link **880** forward and due to the

connection of the shock **634** to the upper end of link **880**, the shock is stroked at a greater rate and at a progressive rate.

[0102] Alternatively, and with respect to FIG. 36A, adjustable link **834** could be coupled directly to the tubular portion **812** of link assembly **810**.

[0103] With reference now to FIGS. 41-43, the application of the chain case **664** to the belt drive **662** will be described in greater detail. As shown best in FIG. 41, chain case **664** includes a drive portion **920** and a cover **922**. Drive portion **920** includes housing **924** having an outer flange **926** that overlaps opening **762** and a reduced profile portion **930** (FIG. 43) which protrudes through opening **762**.

[0104] As shown best in FIG. 42, input drive **660** includes a sprocket **934** having an output coupler **936** for coupling to input driveshaft **938** of chain case **922**. A drive sprocket is shown as coupling to a sprocket **940** which is driven by a belt or chain. A driven sprocket **942** is coupled to the drive sprocket **940** which in turn drives belt drive **662** by way of a drive shaft **944** to sprockets **946**. An idler roller **950** is shown having a tensioner **952** for tensioning the chain or belt. Drive shaft has a shaft coupling **954** which couples to a bearing **956** mounted on an inside of side panel **626**.

[0105] Due to the compactness of the suspension frame **622**, the volume of space beneath the frame **622** is open, which allows the belt drive **662** as assembled to the drive portion **920** (as shown in FIG. 42) to be installed through the opening **762** and under the frame **622**, to a position where shaft coupling **954** couples to the bearing **956**. Drive portion **920** may be coupled to side panel **626**, by way of a fastener **960** positioned through aperture **962** and threadably engaged with threaded aperture **728a**; as well as with fasteners **964** (such as rivets) positioned through aperture **968** and engaged with aperture **762a**.

[0106] With reference now to FIG. 1, the location of the drive axis of the belt drive is shown as A_1 , where a vertical distance from the top of the foot peg **38** to drive axis distance A_1 is shown as Y, and a horizontal distance from the center of the foot peg **38** to drive axis A_1 is shown as X. An attempt has been made in the embodiments herein to move the drive axis A_1 up out of the snow of the snow as much as possible for deep snow applications. Thus for the embodiments of FIGS. 7 and 31, the dimension X is in the range of 6.222" to 7.922" and more specifically in the range of 7.000"-7.500". In the embodiment shown X=7.422". For the embodiments of FIGS. 7 and 31, the dimension Y is in the range of 3.400"-5.400" and more specifically in the range of 3.750"-4.500". In the embodiment shown Y=3.900".

[0107] Thus, as the foot peg **38** locates the rider, an attempt has been made to keep the distance Y to a minimum. As the foot peg **38** tends to dictate the location of the rider, the distance X was selected to center the driver's mass with the mass of the vehicle.

[0108] Although a chain case is shown in the embodiments of FIGS. 7, 19 and 31, a belt drive could be used such as that shown in U.S. Pat. No. 8,919,477, the subject matter of which is disclosed herein by reference. This belt drive is designed to not require a tensioning device, such that the belt drive of U.S. Pat. No. 8,919,477 could replace any of the aforementioned chain cases **164**, **464**, and/or **664**.

[0109] While this invention has been described as having an exemplary design, the present invention may be further modified within the spirit and scope of this disclosure. This application is therefore intended to cover any variations, uses, or adaptations of the invention using its general

principles. Further, this application is intended to cover such departures from the present disclosure as come within known or customary practice in the art to which this invention pertains.

1. A snow vehicle comprising:
 - a vehicle frame;
 - a propulsion unit coupled to the frame;
 - at least one front ski;
 - a steering mechanism coupled to the frame;
 - a first front suspension coupled to the frame;
 - a rear suspension coupled to the frame, the rear suspension comprising:
 - at least one slide rail;
 - at least one control arm coupled between the slide rail and the frame;
 - at least linear force element coupled between the slide rail and the frame; and
 - at least one carrier roller coupled to the at least one slide rail and the frame;
 - a bumper assembly preventing bottoming out of the rear suspension; and
 - a drive system comprising a drive track slidably guided by the at least one slide rail and drivably coupled to the propulsion unit.
2. The snow vehicle of claim 1, wherein the rear suspension comprises a suspension frame.
3. The snow vehicle of claim 2, wherein the vehicle frame is a motorcycle frame and the suspension frame is coupled to the motorcycle frame.
4. The snow vehicle of claim 1, wherein the bumper assembly is coupled to the rear suspension and positioned to prevent contact of the at least control arm and a remaining portion of the rear suspension.
5. The rear suspension of claim 4, wherein the bumper assembly is mounted intermediate the at least control arm and the at least one slide rail, and the bumper assembly resiliently contracts during jounce.
6. The rear suspension of claim 5, wherein the bumper assembly comprises a spring grommet and a carrier mount.
7. The rear suspension of claim 6, wherein the bumper assembly further comprises a plunger extending through the spring grommet.
8. The rear suspension of claim 7, wherein the plunger comprises a head portion and a shank portion.
9. The rear suspension of claim 8, wherein the spring grommet includes an aperture extending downwardly there-through and profiled to receive the plunger.
10. The rear suspension of claim 6, wherein the spring grommet includes a pair of resilient bellows coupled to a base portion.
11. The rear suspension of claim 10, wherein the carrier mount includes flanges which flank a base portion of the carrier mount.
12. The rear suspension of claim 5, wherein the bumper assembly is mounted on the at least one slide rail and the at least control arm contacts the bumper assembly during jounce.
13. The rear suspension of claim 12, comprising two slide rails and two control arms wherein the bumper assembly is mounted on the slide rails and the control arms contact the bumper assembly during jounce.
14. The rear suspension of claim 12, wherein the at least one slide rail is slotted at a top edge thereof, and the bumper assembly is mounted over the slot.

15. The rear suspension of claim 14, wherein the bumper assembly comprises a plunger which aligns with the slotted slide rail, and the plunger moves into the slot during jounce.

16. The rear suspension of claim 5, wherein the bumper assembly is mounted on the at least control arm and the bumper assembly contacts the at least one slide rail during jounce.

17. The rear suspension of claim 16, wherein the at least control arm comprises a bracket which mounts the bumper assembly thereto.

18. A snow vehicle comprising:

- a vehicle frame;
 - a propulsion unit coupled to the frame;
 - at least one front ski;
 - a steering mechanism coupled to the frame;
 - a first front suspension coupled to the frame;
 - a second front suspension coupled to the at least one ski;
 - a rear suspension coupled to the frame, the rear suspension comprising:
 - at least one slide rail;
 - at least one control arm coupled between the slide rail and the frame;
 - at least linear force element coupled between the slide rail and the frame; and
 - at least one carrier roller coupled to the at least one slide rail and the frame; and
 - a drive system comprising a drive track slidably guided by the at least one slide rail and drivably coupled to the propulsion unit;
- wherein the longitudinal spacing between the vehicle frame and rear suspension is adjustably controllable.

19. The snow vehicle of claim 18, wherein the rear suspension comprises a suspension frame.

20. The snow vehicle of claim 19, wherein the vehicle frame is a motorcycle frame and the suspension frame is coupled to the motorcycle frame.

21. The snow vehicle of claim 20, wherein drive system comprises an input drive shaft and an endless drive mechanism coupling the propulsion unit to the drive shaft.

22. The snow vehicle of claim 21, wherein the endless drive mechanism is a chain coupling a sprocket of the propulsion unit to the drive shaft.

23. The snow vehicle of claim 22, wherein the longitudinal spacing is adjustably controllable by way of a chain tensioner coupled to the suspension frame at a forward end thereof and to the vehicle frame.

24. The snow vehicle of claim 23, wherein the chain tensioner comprises at least one first portion, at least one second portion, and a mounting portion coupled to the at least one second portion, wherein the at least one second portion is movable relative to the at least one first portion to vary a distance between the mounting portion and the remainder of the frame.

25. The snow vehicle of claim 24, wherein the first portion is a first elongate portion, and the second portion is a second elongate portion, and fasteners coupling the at least one first elongate portion and at least one second elongate portion together.

26. The rear suspension of claim 25, wherein the at least one first elongate portion is a first elongate bar having mounting apertures, and the at least one second elongate portion is a second elongate bar having mounting apertures.

27. The rear suspension of claim 26, wherein one of the elongate bars is slidably received over the other of the elongate bars.

28. The rear suspension of claim 25, wherein the at least one first elongate portion is a first elongate bar having mounting apertures, and the mounting apertures on one of the elongate bars are slotted in the elongate direction.

29. A kit for converting a motorcycle into a snow vehicle comprising:

at least one front ski;

a front suspension for dampened coupling between a frame of the motorcycle and the at least one ski, the front suspension comprising a coupler for coupling the front suspension to the ski;

a rear suspension for coupled to the frame of the motorcycle, the rear suspension comprising:

at least one slide rail;

at least one control arm coupled between the slide rail and the frame;

at least linear force element coupled between the slide rail and the frame; and

at least one carrier roller coupled to one of the slide rail and the frame; and

a drive system comprising a drive track slidably guided by the at least one slide rail and drivably coupled to a propulsion unit of the motorcycle.

30. The kit of claim 29, wherein the front suspension comprises a spindle body and at least one control arm coupled to the ski.

31. The kit of claim 30, wherein the front suspension coupler comprises a knuckle coupled to the ski, and the at least one control arm comprises two control arms coupled between the knuckle and the spindle, and a linear force element is coupled between the knuckle and the spindle.

32. The kit of claim 31, wherein the two control arms extend from the spindle in a generally rearward direction, and wherein the two control arms upon collapse, move the ski rearwardly and upwardly.

33. A rear suspension for a snow vehicle, comprising:

at least one slide rail;

a frame;

at least one control arm coupled between the slide rail and the frame;

at least linear force element coupled between the slide rail and the frame;

at least one carrier roller coupled to one of the slide rail and the frame;

a drive system comprising a drive track slidably guided by the at least one slide rail and drivably coupled to the propulsion unit; and

a bumper assembly coupled to the rear suspension and positioned to prevent contact of the at least control arm and a remaining portion of the rear suspension.

34. The rear suspension of claim 33, wherein the bumper assembly is mounted intermediate the at least control arm and the at least one slide rail, and the bumper assembly resiliently contracts during jounce.

35. The rear suspension of claim 34, wherein the bumper assembly is mounted on the at least one slide rail and the at least control arm contacts the bumper assembly during jounce.

36. The rear suspension of claim 35, comprising two slide rails and two control arms wherein the bumper assembly is

mounted on the at least one slide rail and the control arms contact the bumper assembly during jounce.

37. The rear suspension of claim 35, wherein the at least one slide rail is slotted at a top edge thereof, and the bumper assembly is mounted over the slot.

38. The rear suspension of claim 37, wherein the bumper assembly comprises a plunger which aligns with the slotted slide rail, and the plunger moves into the slot during jounce.

39. The rear suspension of claim 34, wherein the bumper assembly is mounted on the at least control arm and the bumper assembly contacts the at least one slide rail during jounce.

40. A rear suspension for a snow vehicle comprising:

at least one slide rail;

a frame;

at least one control arm coupled between the slide rail and the frame;

at least linear force element coupled between the slide rail and the frame;

at least one carrier roller coupled to one of the slide rail and the frame;

a drive system comprising a drive track slidably guided by the at least one slide rail and drivably coupled to the propulsion unit; and

a chain tensioner coupled to the frame at a forward end thereof, the chain tensioner comprising at least one first elongate portion, at least one second elongate portion, a mounting portion coupled to the at least one second elongate portion, and fasteners coupling the at least one first elongate portion and at least one second elongate portion together, wherein the at least one second elongate portion is movable relative to the at least one first elongate portion to vary a distance between the mounting portion and the remainder of the frame.

41. The rear suspension of claim 40, wherein the at least one first elongate portion is a first elongate bar having mounting apertures, and the at least one second elongate portion is a second elongate bar having mounting apertures, and wherein one of the elongate bars is slidably received over the other of the elongate bars.

42. The rear suspension of claim 40, wherein the at least one first elongate portion is a first elongate bar having mounting apertures, and the mounting apertures on one of the elongate bars are slotted in the elongate direction.

43. A snow vehicle comprising:

a vehicle frame;

a foot peg positioned on the vehicle frame for a rider's foot;

a propulsion unit coupled to the frame;

at least one front ski;

a steering mechanism coupled to the frame;

a front suspension coupled to the frame;

a rear suspension coupled to the vehicle frame, the rear suspension comprising:

a suspension frame;

at least one slide rail;

at least one control arm coupled between the slide rail and the frame;

at least linear force element coupled between the slide rail and the frame; and

at least one carrier roller coupled to the at least one slide rail and the frame;

- a drive system comprising a drive track slidably guided by the at least one slide rail and drivably coupled at a drive axis (A_1) to the propulsion unit;
- wherein a vertical distance (Y) between a top of the foot peg to the drive axis (A_1) is less than 5" (inches), and a horizontal distance (X) between the drive axis (A_1) and a bottom of the drive track is less than 9" (inches).
- 44.** The snow vehicle of claim **43**, wherein the dimension X is in the range of 6.222"-7.922".
- 45.** The snow vehicle of claim **44**, wherein the dimension X is in the range of 7.000"-7.500".
- 46.** The snow vehicle of claim **45**, wherein the dimension X is approximately 7.4".
- 47.** The snow vehicle of claim **43**, wherein the dimension Y is in the range of 3.400"-5.400".
- 48.** The snow vehicle of claim **47**, wherein the dimension Y is in the range of 3.750"-4.500".
- 49.** The snow vehicle of claim **48**, wherein the dimension Y is approximately 3.9".

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