US 20030228800A1

(19) United States

(12) Patent Application Publication (10) Pub. No.: US 2003/0228800 A1

Suzuki et al. (43) Pub. Date: Dec. 11, 2003

(54) SURFACE-MOUNT ELECTRICAL CONNECTOR HAVING SHELL WITH FRONT AND REAR MOUNTING POSTS FORMED ADJACENT FRONT AND REAR ENDS OF THE SHELL

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(21) Appl. No.: **10/454,955**

(22) Filed: **Jun. 5, 2003**

(30) **Foreign Application Priority Data**

Jun. 7, 2002 (JP) 167307/2002

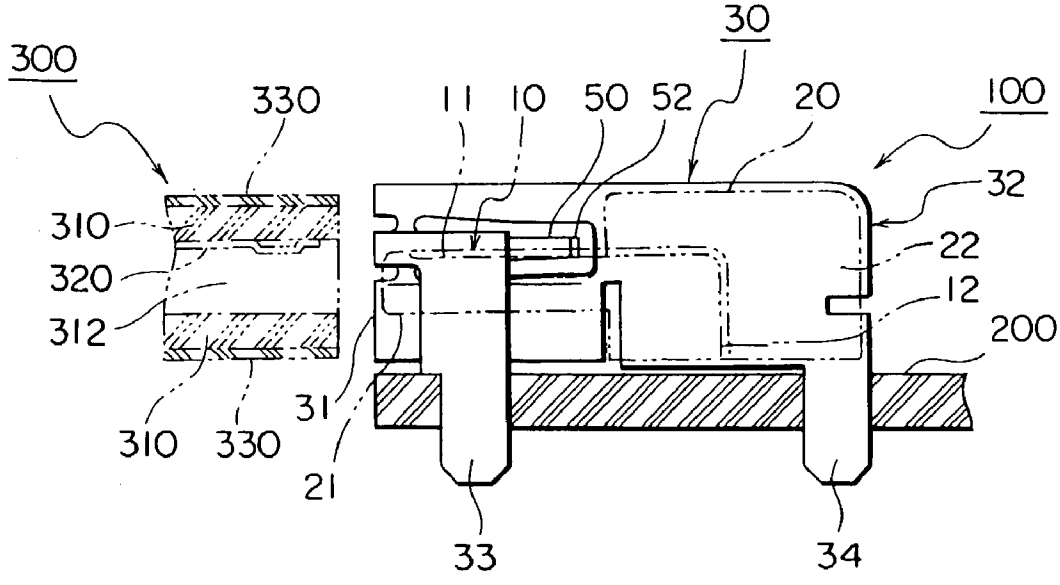
Publication Classification

(51) **Int. Cl.**[7] **H01R 13/648**

(52) **U.S. Cl.** **439/607**

(57) **ABSTRACT**

A shell (**30**) included in an electrical connector has a top wall (**40**) having a first front end (**40***a*), a bottom wall (**42**) having a second front end (**42***a***1, 42***b* **1**), and side walls (**44**) having third front ends (**44***a*), respectively. The first to the third front ends (**40***a*, **42***a***1, 42***b***1, 44***a*) constitutes a front edge (**31**) of the shell (**30**), the front edge (**31**) defining an opening for receiving another shell of a mating connector inserted along an insertion direction into the shell (**30**). From the front edge (**31**), a pair of front mounting posts (**33**) continues rearwardly in the insertion direction and extends downwardly in a vertical direction below the bottom wall (**42**). Adjacent to a rear end (**32**) opposite to the front edge (**31**), a pair of rear mounting posts (**34**) is provided. Each of the rear mounting posts (**34**) is spaced from the corresponding front mounting post (**33**) in the insertion direction and extends downwardly in the vertical direction below a plane on which the bottom wall (**42**) is laid.



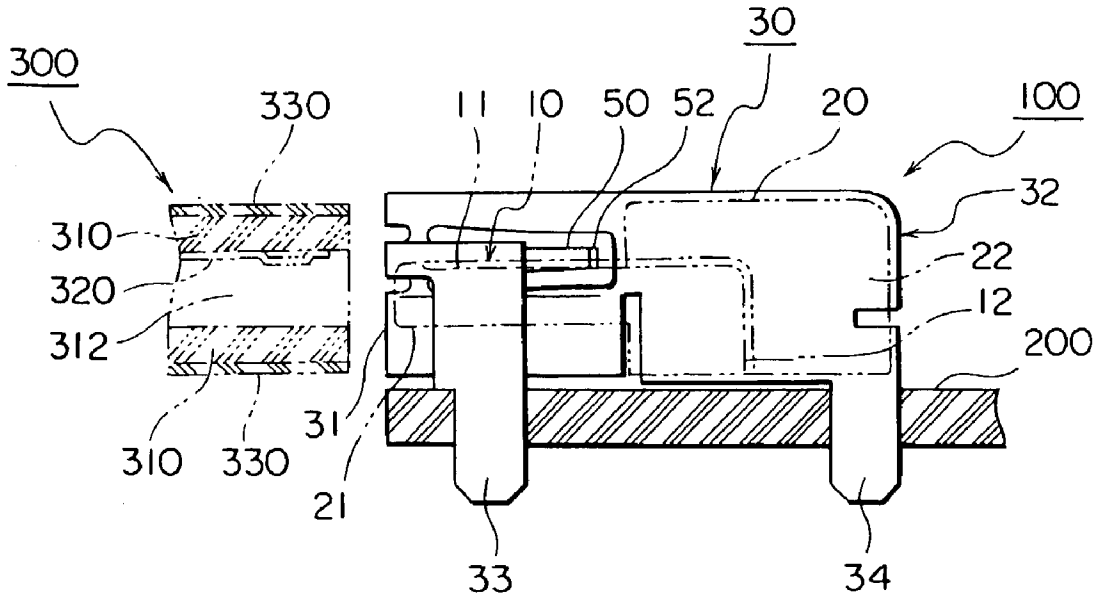

300
330
11
10
50
52
30
20
100
32
310
320
312
22
12
200
310
330
31
21
33
34

FIG. 1

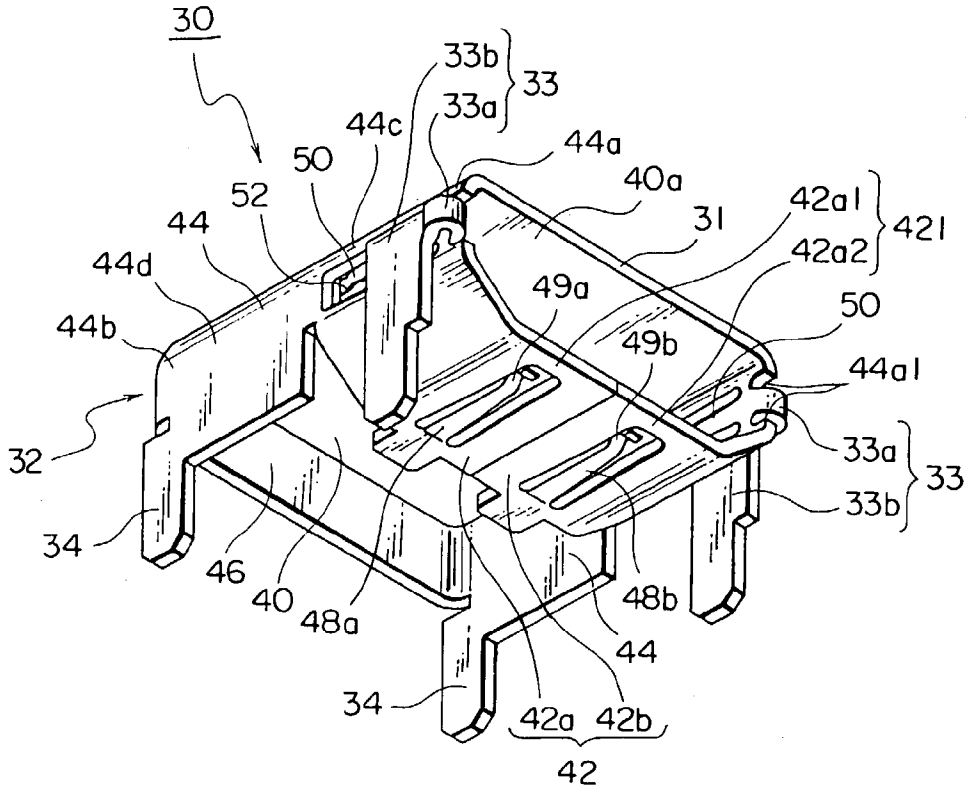

30
33b
33a
33
44c
50
44a
52
40a
42a1
42a2
421
44
31
44d
49a
50
44b
49b
44a1
32
33a
33
33b
34
46
40
48a
48b
44
34
42a
42b
42

FIG. 2

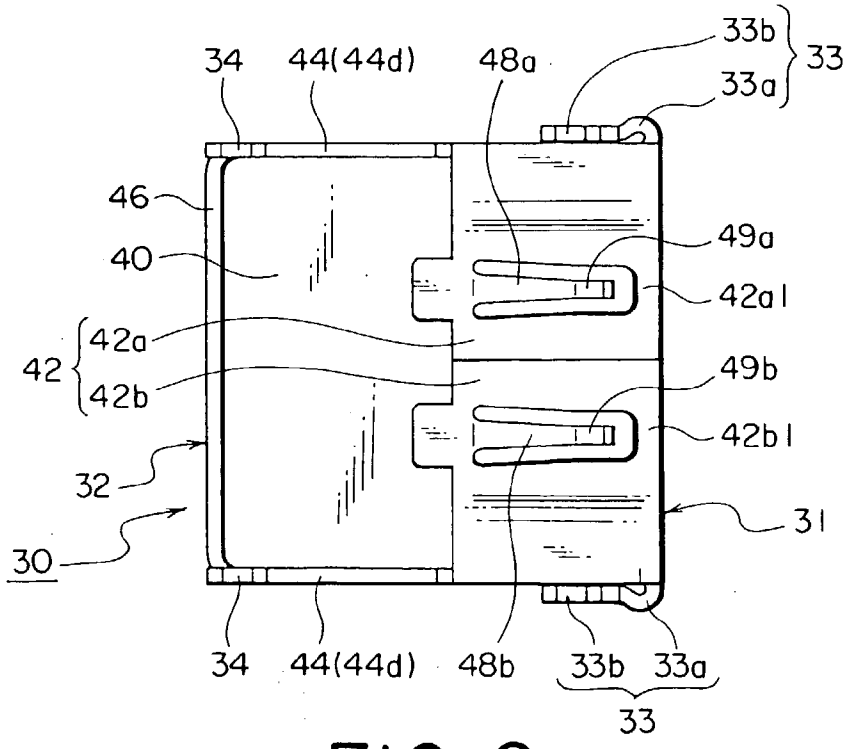

34
44(44d)
48a
33b
33a
33
46
49a
40
42a1
42a
42
42b
49b
42b1
32
31
30
34
44(44d)
48b
33b
33a
33

FIG. 3

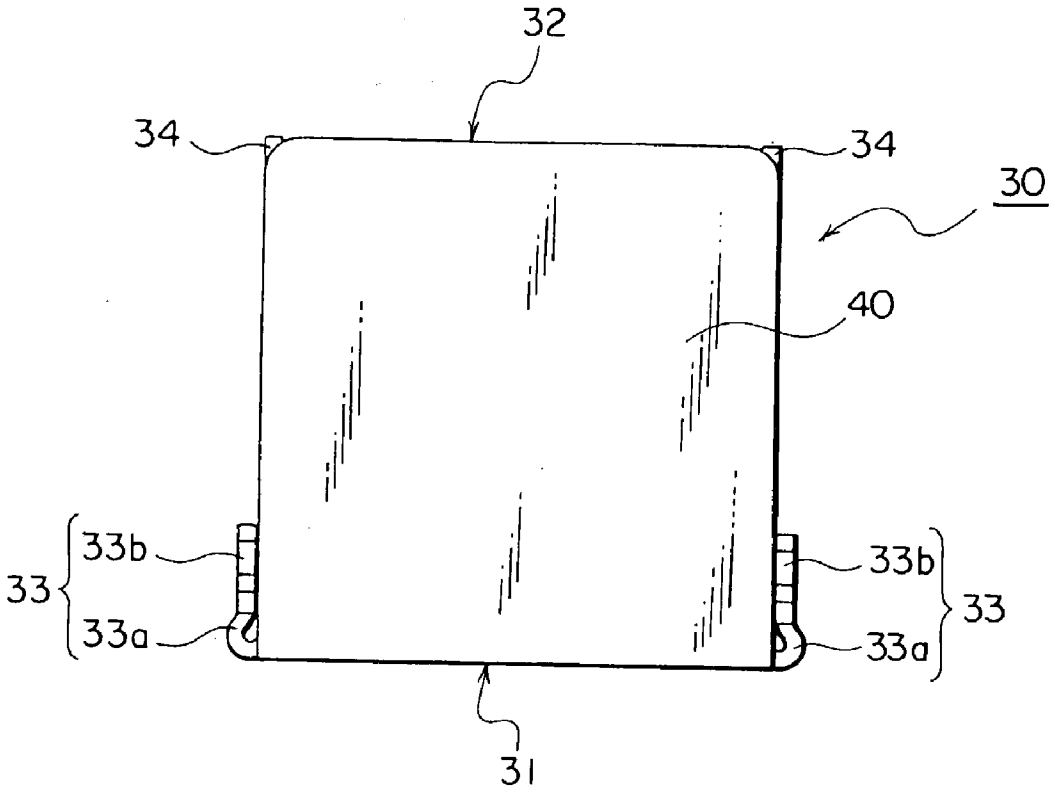

32
34
34
30
40
33
33b
33a
33b
33a
33
31

FIG. 4

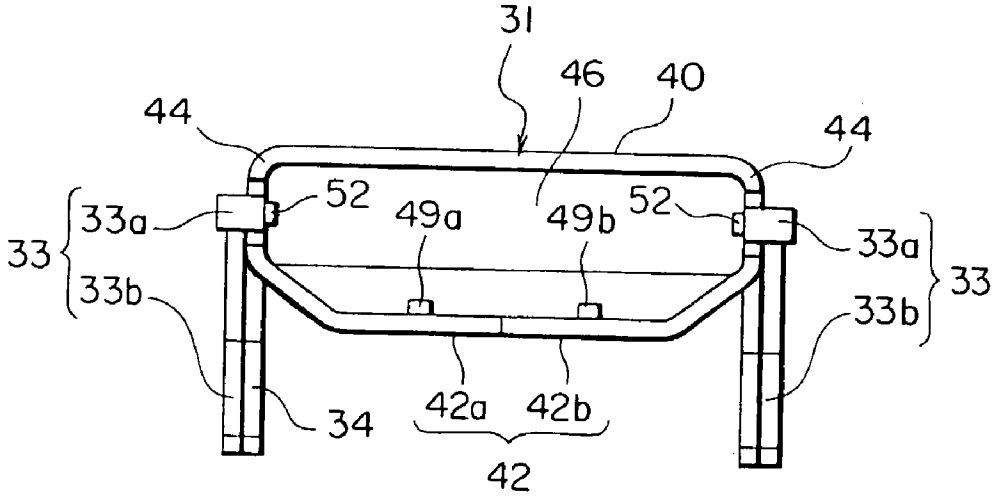

31
46
40
44
44
52
49a
49b
52
33
33a
33b
33a
33b
33
34
42a
42b
42

FIG. 5

SURFACE-MOUNT ELECTRICAL CONNECTOR HAVING SHELL WITH FRONT AND REAR MOUNTING POSTS FORMED ADJACENT FRONT AND REAR ENDS OF THE SHELL

[0001] This invention claims priority to prior application JP 2002-167307, the disclosure of which is incorporated herein by reference.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[0002] This invention relates to an electrical connector for surface mounting on a circuit board and, in particular, to a structure of a shell in the electrical connector.

[0003] JP-A 11-26105 discloses an electrical connector having a folded sheet metal shell, which comprises a pair of front mounting posts and a pair of rear mounting posts in order to securely fix the electrical connector onto a circuit board. The front mounting posts are connected to plate-like arms which extend forward from a rear end of the shell along side walls of the shell. Each of the plate-like arms is formed with an aperture which is positioned near to the front mounting post. To position the respective front mounting posts and keep their positions, the apertures are engaged with engagement portions which are provided for the side walls by making cuts into the side walls.

[0004] For highly reliable fixation of the connector onto the circuit board, it is preferable that the front mounting posts are positioned as close to a front end of the shell as possible. In addition, it is further preferable that there is a large distance between the front and the rear mounting posts.

[0005] However, the disclosed shell has a problem on its fixation. In order to form the front mounting posts closer to the front end of the shell, the corresponding plate-like arm inevitably becomes long. The long plate-like arm is a wasted part because the plate-like arm serves only to support the front mounting post but does not provide any effects for the shell.

[0006] In addition, the shell has another problem on its electromagnetic property. The plate-like arm is a cantilever having a free end, to which the front mounting post is connected. The engagement portion formed in the side wall is a necessary part for keeping the position of the front mounting post. On the other hand, the engagement portion is formed in the side wall by making a cut into the side wall as mentioned above. The cut degrades the electromagnetic property of the shell, i.e. a shielding function of the shell.

[0007] There is a need for a shell having front mounting posts and rear mounting posts, wherein the front mounting posts are positioned as near to a front end of the shell as possible without causing problems as mentioned above.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0008] It is an object of the present invention to provide an electrical connector having a shell which is provided with front mounting posts near a front end of the shell while meeting the need mentioned above.

[0009] This invention is applicable to an electrical connector for surface mounting on a circuit board, which comprises a plurality of contacts, an insulator holding the contacts, and a shell surrounding the insulator. According to the invention, the shell comprises a front edge defining an opening for receiving a mating shell of a mating connector inserted along an insertion direction into the shell; a pair of front mounting posts each of which continues from the front edge and extends downwardly; and a pair of rear mounting posts for fixedly mounting the shell onto the circuit board in cooperation with the front mounting posts. Each of the rear mounting posts is spaced from the corresponding front mounting post in the insertion direction and extends downwardly.

[0010] According to an embodiment of this invention, the shell has a rear end opposite to the front edge in the insertion direction, and the rear mounting posts are positioned adjacent to the rear end.

[0011] According to another embodiment, the shell has a top wall having a first front end, a bottom wall having a second front end, and side walls having third front ends, respectively. The side walls are spaced from each other in a lateral direction perpendicular to the insertion direction and connects the top and the bottom walls in a vertical direction perpendicular to the insertion direction and to the lateral direction. The first to the third front ends constitute the front edge. Each of the front mounting posts is connected to the corresponding third front end.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0012] **FIG. 1** is a side view showing a connector according to an embodiment of the present invention and a mating connector;

[0013] **FIG. 2** is a perspective view showing a shell included in the connector of **FIG. 1**;

[0014] **FIG. 3** is a bottom view showing the shell of **FIG. 2**;

[0015] **FIG. 4** is a top view showing the shell of **FIG. 2**; and

[0016] **FIG. 5** is a front view showing the shell of **FIG. 2**.

DESCRIPTION OF PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

[0017] With reference to **FIG. 1**, an electrical connector **100** according to one embodiment of the present invention is a surface mountable connector on a circuit board **200**, such as a printed circuit board. The electrical connector generally comprises a plurality of contacts **10**, an insulator **20** holding the contacts **10**, and a shell **30** surrounding the insulator **20**. In this embodiment, the insulator **20** is comprised of a front portion **21** and a rear portion **22**, wherein the sectional profile of the front portion **21** is thinner than that of the rear portion **22**. Each of the contacts **10** has a contact portion **11** extending in a longitudinal direction of the connector **100** and a terminal end **12** to be connected to a circuit formed on the circuit board **200**. The contact portion **11** is arranged in the upper surface of the front portion **21** of the insulator **20**.

[0018] The shell **30** is fabricated by stamping out, forming, and folding up from a single sheet of metal material. That is, the shell **30** according to this embodiment is a folded sheet metal shell. The shell **30** has a front edge **31** defining an opening and a rear end **32** opposite to the front edge **31** in the longitudinal direction. Through the opening defined

by the front edge **31**, the front portion **21** of the insulator **20** and the contacts **10** can be seen.

[**0019**] In order to securely fix the electrical connector **100** onto the circuit board **200**, the shell **30** comprises a pair of front mounting posts **33** and a pair of rear mounting posts **34**. The front mounting posts **33** continue from the front edge **31** in the longitudinal direction, while extending in a vertical direction perpendicular to the longitudinal direction. The rear mounting posts **34** are spaced from the respective front mounting posts **33** in the longitudinal direction and are positioned adjacent to the rear end **32**. In this embodiment, the front and rear mounting posts **33**, **34** are inserted into through holes or slits formed in the circuit board **200**, so that the electrical connector **100** is fixedly mounted on the circuit board **200**. However, the front and rear mounting posts **33**, **34** may be modified so that they have bent shapes and are to be connected to pads formed on the circuit board **200**. In consideration of the various modifications a person skilled in the art can reach easily, the term "mounting post" also includes one having a bent shape or a shape other than a straight or flat plate-like shape.

[**0020**] A mating connector **300** to be mated with the connector **100** has an insulator, a plurality of contacts and a shell, which are referred to as a mating insulator **310**, mating contacts **320** and a mating shell **330**, in order to distinguish them from the insulator **20**, the contacts **10** and the shell **30** of the connector **100**.

[**0021**] The mating insulator **310** defines an accommodation space **312**, which accommodates the front portion **21** of the insulator **20** when the mating connector **300** is mated with the connector **100**. The mating contacts **320** are arranged on the upper-inner surface of the mating insulator **310** so that, when the front portion **21** of the connector **100** is accommodated in the mating insulator **310**, the mating contacts **320** are brought into contact with the contacts **10**. The mating shell **330** covers the mating insulator **310** and is to be inserted into and fitted with the shell **30**. In this connection, the longitudinal direction of the connector **100** is also referred to as an insertion direction in the present application. The mating insulator **310** and the mating shell **330** are sized such that the mating shell **330** can be tightly inserted into the shell **30** through the opening thereof, while the mating insulator **310** can accommodate the front portion **21** to make electrical connections suitable.

[**0022**] With reference to FIGS. **2** to **5**, the structure of the shell **30** is explained in detail.

[**0023**] The shell **30** has a top wall **40**, a bottom wall **42**, side walls **44** and a rear wall **46**. The top wall **40** has a first front end **40***a*. The bottom wall **42** is opposite to the top wall **40** in the vertical direction. The bottom wall **42** has about half size of the top wall **40** in the insertion direction and also has a smaller size than the top wall **40** in a lateral direction perpendicular to the insertion direction and to the vertical direction. The bottom wall **42** has a second front end **42***l*. The side walls **44** are spaced from each other in the lateral direction. The side walls **44** have third front ends **44***a* and rear ends **44***b*, respectively. The first to the third front ends **40***a*, **42***l*, **44***a* constitute the front edge **31** of the shell **30** to form a tubular enclosure. The rear wall **46** connects between the rear ends **44***b* of the side walls **44** in the lateral direction so that it constitutes the rear end **32** of the shell **30**.

[**0024**] The bottom wall **42** is comprised of two wall parts **42***a*, **42***b*, which are disposed on the same plane. The edges of the wall parts **42***a*, **42***b* in the lateral direction abut on each other. Each of the wall parts **42***a*, **42***b* is provided with a lower spring tongue **48***a*, **48***b*, which has a free end nearer to the front end than to the rear end **32** of the shell **30**. The free end of the lower spring tongue **48***a*, **48***b* is formed with a pressing projection **49***a*, **49***b* which projects toward the inside of the shell **30**. The pressing projection **49***a*, **49***b* of the lower spring tongue **48***a*, **48***b* presses the mating shell **330** against the top wall **40** when the mating shell **330** is inserted into the shell **30**. In other words, the lower spring tongue **48***a*, **48***b* serves to securely holding the mating shell **330** in the vertical direction in cooperation with the top wall **40** when the mating shell **330** is inserted into the shell **30**.

[**0025**] Each of the side walls **44** has a front and a rear portions **44***c*, **44***d*. Each front portion **44***c* of the side wall **44** has a bent shape so as to connect the top wall **40** and the bottom wall **42** which is smaller than the top wall **40** in the lateral direction. The front portion **44***c* of the side wall **44** is provided with a side spring tongue **50**, which has a free end nearer to the rear end **32** than to the front end of the shell **30**. As clearly seen from **FIG. 2**, the free end of the side spring tongue **50** extends in the direction opposite to the free end of the lower spring tongue **48***a*, **48***b* extending. The free end of the side spring tongue **50** is formed with a pressing projection **52** which projects toward the inside of the shell **30**. The pressing projection **52** presses the mating shell **330** toward the inside of the shell in the lateral direction when the mating shell **330** is inserted into the shell **30**. In other words, the side spring tongue **50** serves to securely holding the mating shell **330** in the lateral direction in cooperation with the other side spring tongue **50** when the mating shell **330** is inserted into the shell **30**.

[**0026**] Each rear portion **44***d* of the side wall **44** has a flat shape while not connected to the bottom wall **42** directly. Directory from the rear portion **44***d* of the side wall **44**, the rear mounting post **34** extends downwardly in the vertical direction below a plane on which the bottom wall **42** is laid. The rear mounting post **34** has also a flat shape laid on the same plane as the rear portion **44***d* of the side wall **44**. In this embodiment, the rear mounting post **34** is not connected to the rear wall **46** directly but via the rear portion **44***d* of the side wall **44**. However, the rear mounting post **34** may be connected to the rear wall **46** directly.

[**0027**] Each of the front mounting posts **33** has a folded portion **33***a* and a flat plate like elongated portion **33***b*. The folded portion **33***a* continues from the corresponding third front end **44***a* of the side wall **44** and is curved rearwardly in the insertion direction. Specifically, the third front end **44***a* has two small cuts **44***a***1** to make the folded portion **33***a* easily. The folded portion **33***a* is connected to the plate-like portion **33***b* in the insertion direction. The plate-like portion **33***b* extends downwardly in the vertical direction below the bottom wall **42**, i.e. the corresponding wall part **42***a*, **42***b*, while partially facing the corresponding side wall **44** in the lateral direction. The plate-like portion **33***b* is laid on a plane parallel to the side wall **44** but different from the side wall **44** so that the plate-like portion **33***b* is laid on a plane different from that of the corresponding rear mounting post **34**.

[**0028**] With the structure explained above, the front mounting posts **33** can be provided adjacent to the front edge **31** of the shell **30** without any wasted parts. In addition,

because the front mounting post **33** is formed by a folding-up operation that does not need large cuts into the shell **30**, the shell **30** can provide a good electromagnetic property, i.e. a good shielding function. Because the shell **30** has large distances between the front and the rear mounting posts **33**, **34**, the shell **30** becomes tolerant to a tilting force which is caused by an insertion of the mating shell **330** to the shell **30** with an unallowable angel.

[**0029**] Although the rear mounting post **34** is laid on a plane different from that of the corresponding front mounting post **33** in the above-mentioned embodiment, the rear mounting post **34** may be laid on the same plane as the corresponding front mounting post **33** by forming the rear mounting post **34** in a similar manner of the formation of the front mounting post **33**.

What is claimed is:

1. An electrical connector for surface mounting on a circuit board, wherein the electrical connector comprises a plurality of contacts, an insulator holding the contacts, and a shell surrounding the insulator, wherein the shell comprises:

a front edge defining an opening for receiving a mating shell of a mating connector being inserted along an insertion direction into the shell;

a pair of front mounting posts, each of which continues from the front edge and extends downwardly; and

a pair of rear mounting posts for fixedly mounting the shell onto the circuit board in cooperation with the front mounting posts, wherein each of the rear mounting posts is spaced from the corresponding front mounting post in the insertion direction and extends downwardly.

2. The electrical connector according to claim 1, wherein the shell has a rear end opposite to the front edge in the insertion direction, and the rear mounting posts are positioned adjacent to the rear end.

3. The electrical connector according to claim 1, wherein: the shell has a top wall having a first front end, a bottom wall having a second front end, and side walls having third front ends, respectively; the side walls are spaced from each other in a lateral direction perpendicular to the insertion direction and connects the top and the bottom walls in a vertical direction perpendicular to the insertion direction and to the lateral direction; the first to the third front ends constitute the front edge; and each of the front mounting posts is connected to the corresponding third front end.

4. The electrical connector according to claim 3, wherein each of the rear mounting posts is connected to the corresponding side wall and extends from the corresponding side wall downwardly in the vertical direction.

5. The electrical connector according to claim 3, wherein: each of the front mounting posts comprises a folded portion and a plate-like portion; the folded portion continues from the corresponding third front end and is curved rearwardly in the insertion direction; the plate-like portion is connected to the folded portion in the insertion direction and extends downwardly in the vertical direction below the bottom wall, partially facing the corresponding side wall in the lateral direction.

6. The electrical connector according to claim 3, wherein each of the side walls has a front portion and a rear portion continuing from the front portion in the insertion direction, and the front portion is formed with a side spring tongue for securely holding the mating shell in the lateral direction when the mating shell is inserted into the shell through the opening defined by the front edge.

7. The electrical connector according to claim 3, wherein the bottom wall has at least one lower spring tongue for securely holding the mating shell in the vertical direction when the mating shell is inserted into the shell through the opening defined by the front edge.

8. The electrical connector according to claim 3, wherein the bottom wall is comprised of two parts, which continue from the respective side walls and are disposed on the same plane as each other.

9. The electrical connector according to claim 8, wherein the two parts of the bottom wall abut on or are fitted with each other.

10. The electrical connector according to claim 1, wherein the shell is a folded sheet metal shell obtainable by stamping out, forming and folding up from a single sheet of metal material.

* * * * *