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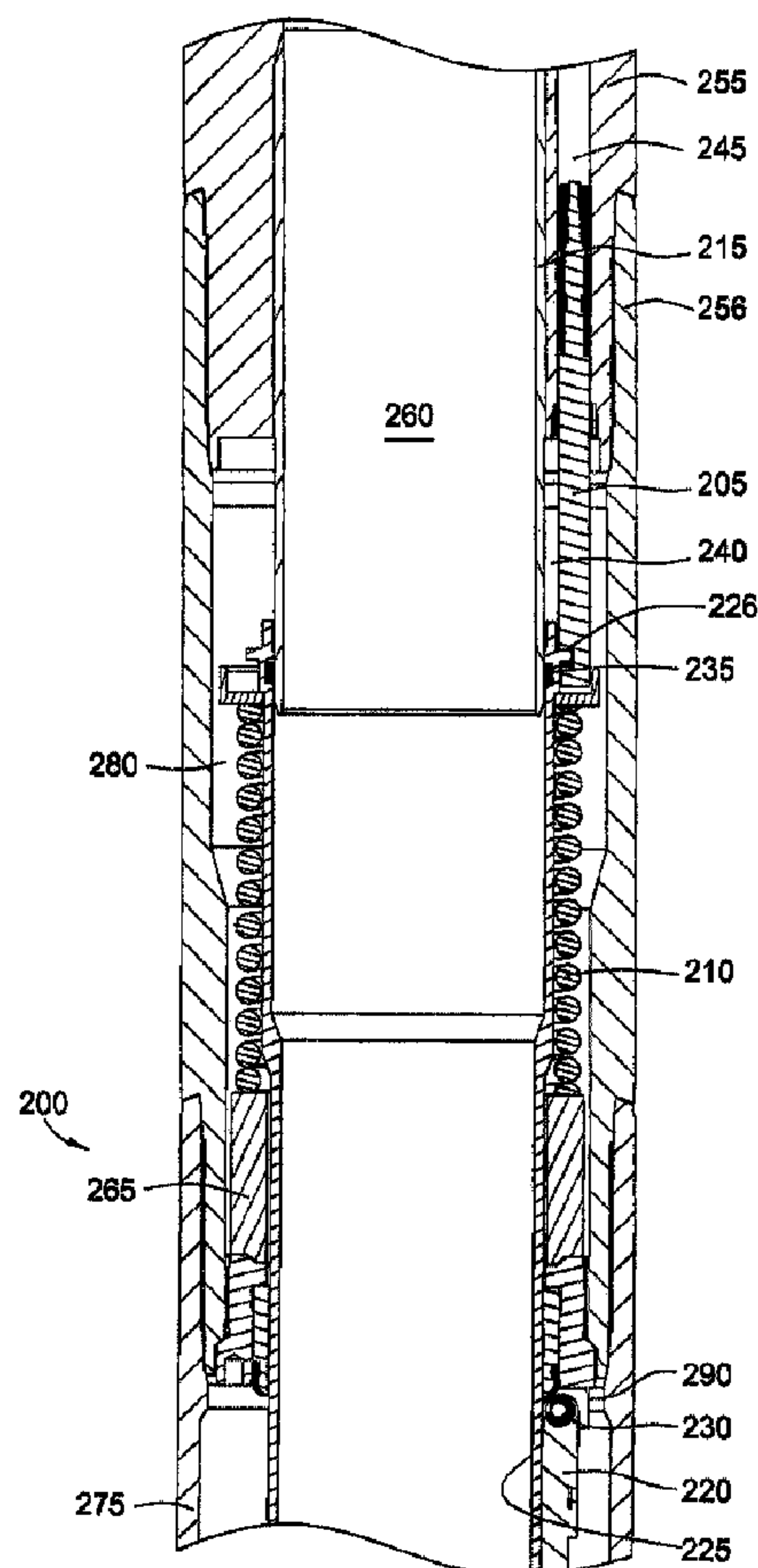
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(54) Titre : SOUPAPE DE SURETE DE TIGES RECUPERABLES TRAVERSANT DU CIMENT

(54) Title: CEMENT-THROUGH, TUBING-RETRIEVABLE SAFETY VALVE



(57) Abrégé/Abstract:

A subsurface safety valve is first provided. The safety valve generally comprises a tubular housing, an isolation sleeve disposed within an inner diameter of the tubular housing, with the isolation sleeve and the tubular body forming an annular area there



(57) **Abrégé(suite)/Abstract(continued):**

between, a flow tube movably disposed along a portion of the annular area, and a flapper. The flapper is pivotally movable between an open position and a closed position in response to longitudinal movement of the flow tube in order to open and close the valve. Preferably, the annular area is isolated from an inner diameter of the isolation sleeve in the open position. A method is also provided that allows for a cementing operation to be performed through an open safety valve.

ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

[0045] A subsurface safety valve is first provided. The safety valve generally comprises a tubular housing, an isolation sleeve disposed within an inner diameter of the tubular housing, with the isolation sleeve and the tubular body forming an annular area there between, a flow tube movably disposed along a portion of the annular area, and a flapper. The flapper is pivotally movable between an open position and a closed position in response to longitudinal movement of the flow tube in order to open and close the valve. Preferably, the annular area is isolated from an inner diameter of the isolation sleeve in the open position. A method is also provided that allows for a cementing operation to be performed through an open safety valve.

CEMENT-THROUGH, TUBING-RETRIEVABLE SAFETY VALVE

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

Field of the Inventions

[0002] Embodiments of the present invention are generally related to safety valves. More particularly, embodiments of the invention pertain to subsurface safety valves configured to permit a cementing operation of a wellbore there through.

Description of the Related Art

[0003] Surface-controlled, subsurface safety valves (SCSSVs) are commonly used to shut-in oil and gas wells. Such SCSSVs are typically fitted into a production tubing in a hydrocarbon producing well, and operate to selectively block the flow of formation fluids upwardly through the production tubing should a failure or hazardous condition occur at the well surface.

[0004] SCSSVs are typically configured as rigidly connected to the production tubing (tubing retrievable), or may be installed and retrieved by wireline without disturbing the production tubing (wireline retrievable). During normal production, the subsurface safety valve is maintained in an open position by the application of hydraulic fluid pressure transmitted to an actuating mechanism. The actuating mechanism in one embodiment is charged by application of hydraulic pressure. The hydraulic pressure is commonly a clean oil supplied from a surface fluid reservoir through a control line. A pump at the surface delivers regulated hydraulic fluid under pressure from the surface to the actuating mechanism through the control line. The control line resides within the annular region between the production tubing and the surrounding well casing.

[0005] Where a failure or hazardous condition occurs at the well surface, fluid communication between the surface reservoir and the control line is broke. This, in turn, breaks the application of hydraulic pressure against the actuating mechanism. The actuating mechanism recedes within the valve, allowing the flapper to close against an annular seat quickly and with great force.

[0006] Most surface controlled subsurface safety valves are "normally closed" valves, i.e., the valve is in its closed position when the hydraulic pressure is not present. The hydraulic pressure typically works against a powerful spring and/or gas charge acting through a piston. In many commercially available valve systems, the power spring is overcome by hydraulic pressure acting against the piston, producing longitudinal movement of the piston. The piston, in turn, acts against an elongated "flow tube." In this manner, the actuating mechanism is a hydraulically actuated and longitudinally movable piston that acts against the flow tube to move it downward within the tubing and across the flapper.

[0007] During well production, the flapper is maintained in the open position by force of the piston acting against the flow tube downhole. Hydraulic fluid is pumped into a variable volume pressure chamber (or cylinder) and acts against a seal area on the piston. The piston, in turn, acts against the flow tube to selectively open the flapper member in the valve. Any loss of hydraulic pressure in the control line causes the piston and actuated flow tube to retract. This, in turn, causes the flapper to rotate about a hinge pin to its valve-closed position. In this manner, the SCSSV is able to provide a shutoff of production flow within the tubing as the hydraulic pressure in the control line is released.

[0008] During well completions, certain cement operations can create a dilemma for the operator. In this respect, the pumping of cement down the production tubing and through the SCSSV presents the risk of damaging the valve. Operative parts of the valve, such as the flow tube or flapper, could become cemented into place and inoperative. At the least, particulates from the cementing fluid could invade chamber areas in the valve and cause the valve to become inoperable.

[0009] In an attempt to overcome this possibility, the voids within the valve have been liberally filled with grease or other heavy viscous material. The viscous

material limits displacement of cement into the operating parts of the valve. In addition to grease packing, an isolation sleeve may be used to temporarily straddle the inner diameter of the valve and seal off the polished bore portion along the safety valve. However, this procedure requires additional trips to install the sleeve before cementing, and then later remove the sleeve at completion.

[0010] Therefore, a need exists for an apparatus and improved method for protecting the SCSSV from cement infiltrating the inner mechanisms of the valve during a cementing operation. There is a further need for an improved SCSSV that does not require elastomeric seals to seal off the flow tube or other operative parts of the safety valve during a cement-through operation. Still further, there is a need for an improved SCSSV that isolates certain parts of the valve from cement infiltration during a cement-through operation, without unduly restricting the inner diameter of the safety valve for later operations.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0011] A subsurface safety valve is first provided. The safety valve has a longitudinal bore there through. The safety valve generally comprises a tubular housing, a tubular isolation sleeve disposed within an inner diameter of the tubular housing, with the isolation sleeve and the tubular body forming an annular area there between, a flow tube movably disposed along a portion of the annular area, and a flapper. The flapper is pivotally movable between an open position and a closed position in response to longitudinal movement of the flow tube in order to selectively open and close the valve. Preferably, the annular area is isolated from an inner diameter of the isolation sleeve. In one embodiment, a seal ring is placed along an outer diameter of the isolation sleeve for sealingly receiving the movable flow tube and for providing the isolation of the annular area. Preferably, the isolation sleeve is stationary.

[0012] In operation, the valve permits fluid to flow through the inner diameter of the isolation sleeve when the flapper is in the open position, but the valve is sealed to fluid flow when the flapper is in the closed position.

[0013] In one embodiment, the safety valve further includes a piston disposed above the flow tube, wherein the piston acts against the flow tube in response to hydraulic pressure in order to move the flow tube longitudinally. Preferably, the valve also includes a biasing member acting against the piston in order to bias the piston and connected flow tube to allow the flapper to close. An example of a biasing member is a spring. The piston may be either a rod piston or a concentric annular piston.

[0014] A method for controlling fluid flow in a wellbore is also provided. In one embodiment, the method includes the steps of placing a safety valve in series with a string of production tubing. The production tubing has a bore there through, and the safety valve may be as described above. The method also includes the steps of running the production tubing and safety valve into the wellbore, placing the flapper in its open position, and pumping cement into the bore of the production tubing and through the safety valve. In one embodiment, the method also includes further pumping cement into an annulus formed between the production tubing and the surrounding wellbore to form a cement column, thereby securing the production tubing in the wellbore, providing fluid communication between the bore of the tubing and a selected formation along the wellbore, and producing the well by allowing hydrocarbons to flow through the production tubing and the opened safety valve. Preferably, the step of providing fluid communication between the bore of the tubing and a selected formation along the wellbore is accomplished through use of a perforating gun.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0015] So that the manner in which the above recited features of the present invention can be understood in detail, a more particular description of the invention, briefly summarized above, may be had by reference to embodiments, some of which are illustrated in the appended drawings. It is to be noted, however, that the appended drawings illustrate only typical embodiments of this invention and are therefore not to be considered limiting of its scope, for the invention may admit to other equally effective embodiments.

[0016] Figure 1 is a cross-sectional view of a wellbore illustrating a production tubing having a safety valve in accordance with an embodiment of the present invention.

[0017] Figure 2 provides a cross-sectional view of a tubing-retrievable safety valve, in one embodiment. Here, the safety valve is in its open position.

[0018] Figure 3 is an enlarged cross-sectional view of the safety valve of Figure 2. Again, the flow tube is positioned to maintain the safety valve in its open position.

[0019] Figure 4 is a cross-sectional view illustrating the tubing-retrievable safety valve of Figure 2 in a closed position.

[0020] Figure 5 is an enlarged cross-sectional view of the safety valve of Figure 4. The flow tube is again positioned to maintain the safety valve in its closed position.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

[0021] The present invention is generally directed to a tubing-retrievable subsurface safety valve for controlling fluid flow in a wellbore. Various terms as used herein are defined below. To the extent a term used in a claim is not defined below, it should be given the broadest definition persons in the pertinent art have given that term, as reflected in printed publications and issued patents. In the description that follows, like parts are marked throughout the specification and drawings with the same reference numerals. The drawings may be, but are not necessarily, to scale and the proportions of certain parts have been exaggerated to better illustrate details and features described below. One of normal skill in the art of subsurface safety valves will appreciate that the various embodiments of the invention can and may be used in all types of subsurface safety valves, including but not limited to tubing retrievable, wireline retrievable, injection valves, or subsurface controlled valves.

[0022] For ease of explanation, the invention will be described generally in relation to a cased vertical wellbore. It is to be understood; however, that the invention may be employed in an open wellbore, a horizontal wellbore, or a lateral

wellbore without departing from principles of the present invention. Furthermore, a land well is shown for the purpose of illustration; however, it is understood that the invention may also be employed in offshore wells or extended reach wells that are drilled on land but completed below an ocean or lake shelf.

[0023] **Figure 1** presents a cross-sectional view of an illustrative wellbore **100**. The wellbore is completed with a string of production tubing **120** therein. The production tubing **120** defines an elongated bore through which fluids may be pumped downward, or pumped or otherwise produced upward. The production tubing **120** includes a safety valve **200** in accordance with an embodiment of the present invention. The safety valve **200** is used for selectively controlling the flow of fluid in the production tubing **120**. The valve **200** may be moved between an open position and closed position by operating a control **150** in communication with the valve **200** through a line **145**. The operation of the valve **200** is described in greater detail below in connection with **Figures 2 - 5**.

[0024] During the completion operation, the wellbore **100** is lined with a string of casing **105**. Thereafter, the production tubing **120** with the safety valve **200** disposed in series is deployed in the wellbore **100** to a predetermined depth. In connection with the completion operation, the production tubing **120** is cemented *in situ*. To accomplish this, a column of cement is pumped downward through the bore of the production tubing **120**. Cement is urged under pressure through the open safety valve **200**, through the bore of the tubing **120**, and then into an annulus **125** formed between the tubing **120** and the surrounding casing **105**. Preferably, the cement **160** will fill the annulus **125** to a predetermined height, which is proximate to or higher than a desired zone of interest in an adjacent formation **115**.

[0025] After the cement **160** is cured, the formation **115** is opened to the bore of the production tubing **120** at the zone of interest. Typically, perforation guns (not shown) are lowered through the production tubing **120** and the valve **200** to a desired location proximate the formation **115**. Thereafter, the perforation guns are activated to form a plurality of perforations **110**, thereby establishing fluid communication between the formation **115** and the production tubing **120**. The perforation guns can be removed or dropped off into the bottom of the wellbore below the perforations. Hydrocarbons (illustrated by arrows) may subsequently flow

into the production tubing **120**, through the open safety valve **200**, through a valve **135** at the surface, and out into a production flow line **130**.

[0026] During this operation, the valve **200** preferably remains in the open position. However, the flow of hydrocarbons may be stopped at any time during the production operation by switching the valve **200** from the open position to the closed position. This may be accomplished either intentionally by having the operator remove the hydraulic pressure applied through the control line **145**, or through a catastrophic event at the surface such as an act of terrorism. The valve **200** is demonstrated in its open and closed positions in connection with **Figures 2 – 5**.

[0027] **Figure 2** presents a cross-sectional view illustrating the safety valve **200** in its open position. A bore **260** in the valve **200** allows fluids such as uncured cement to flow down through the valve **200** during the completion operation. In a similar manner, the open valve **200** allows hydrocarbons to flow up through the valve **200** during a normal production operation.

[0028] The illustrative valve **200** includes a top sub **270** and a bottom sub **275**. The top **270** and bottom **275** subs are threadedly connected in series with the production tubing (shown in **FIG. 1**). The valve **200** further includes a housing **255** disposed intermediate the top **270** and bottom **275** subs. The housing **255** defines a tubular body that serves as a housing for the valve **200**. The tubular housing **255** preferably includes a chamber **245** in fluid communication with a hydraulic control line **145**. The hydraulic control line **145** carries fluid such as a clean oil from the control reservoir **150** down to the chamber **245**.

[0029] In the arrangement of **Figure 2**, the chamber **245** is configured to receive a piston **205**. The piston **205** typically defines a small diameter piston which is movable within the chamber **245** between an upper position and a lower position. Movement of the piston **205** is in response to hydraulic pressure from the line **145**. It is within the scope of the present invention, however, to employ other less common actuators such as electric solenoid actuators, motorized gear drives, and gas charged valves (not shown). Any of these known or contemplated means of actuating the subsurface safety valve **200** of the present invention may be employed.

[0030] As illustrated in **Figure 2**, the valve **200** also may include a biasing member **210**. Preferably, the biasing member **210** defines a spring **210**. The spring **210** resides in the tubular body **255** below the piston **205**. In one optional aspect, the lower portion of the tubular body **255** defines a connected spring housing **256** for receiving the spring **210**. A lower end of the spring **210** abuts a spacer bearing **265** that is adjacent to the spring housing **256**. An upper end of the spring **210** abuts a lower end of the piston **205**. The spring operates in compression to bias the piston **205** upward. Movement of the piston **205** from the upper position to the lower position compresses the biasing member **210** against the spacer bearing **265**. In the arrangement of **Figures 2** and **4**, an annular shoulder **206** is provided as a connector between the piston **205** and the spring **210**.

[0031] Disposed below the spacer bearing **265** is a flapper **220**. The flapper **220** is rotationally attached by a pin **230** to a flapper mount **290**. The flapper **220** pivots between an open position and a closed position in response to movement of a flow tube **225**. A shoulder **226** is provided for a connection between the piston **205** and the flow tube **225**. In the open position, a fluid pathway is created through the bore **260**, thereby allowing the flow of fluid through the valve **200**. Conversely, in the closed position, the flapper **220** blocks the fluid pathway through the bore **260**, thereby preventing the flow of fluid through the valve **200**.

[0032] Further illustrated in **Figure 2**, a lower portion of the flow tube **225** is disposed adjacent the flapper **220**. The flow tube **225** is movable longitudinally along the bore **260** of the housing **255** in response to axial movement of the piston **205**. Axial movement of the flow tube **225**, in turn, causes the flapper **220** to pivot between its open and closed positions. In the open position, the flow tube **225** blocks the movement of the flapper **220**, thereby causing the flapper **220** to be maintained in the open position. In the closed position, the flow tube **225** allows the flapper **220** to rotate on the pin **230** and move to the closed position. It should also be noted that the flow tube **225** substantially eliminates the potential of contaminants, such as cement, from interfering with the critical workings of the valve **200**. However, it is desirable that additional means be provided for preventing contact by cement with the flapper **220** and other parts of the valve **200**, including

the flow tube 225 itself. To this end, the valve 200 also includes a sleeve 215 which is disposed adjacent the housing 255.

[0033] Each of **Figures 2 – 5** shows an isolation sleeve 215 adjacent to the bore 260 of the valve 200. The sleeve 215 serves to isolate the bore 260 of the valve from at least some operative parts of the valve 200. The sleeve 215 has an inner diameter and an outer diameter. The inner diameter forms a portion of the bore 260 of the valve, while the outer diameter provides an annular area 240 vis-à-vis the inner diameter of the tubular housing 255. Preferably, the sleeve 215 is press fit into the housing 255. An upper portion of the flow tube 225 movably received within the annular area.

[0034] In one embodiment, a plurality of notches 295 may optionally be radially disposed at the lower end of the flow tube 225. The notches 295 are constructed and arranged to allow pressure communication between the bore 260 of the valve 200 and the annular area 240 inside the tubular housing 255. This, in turn, provides pressure balancing and helps prevent burst or collapse of the thin isolation sleeve 215 and the flow tube 235. Where notches 295 are employed, it is desirable that the notches 295 be small enough to discourage cement or particles from entering the bottom of the flow tube 225. It is preferred, however, that notches not be employed, but that the flow tube 235 be fabricated from a material sufficient to withstand anticipated burst and collapse pressure differentials between the bore 260 and the annular area 240. Similarly, it is preferred that the sleeve 215 also be fabricated from a material sufficient to withstand anticipated burst and collapse pressure differentials between the bore 260 and the annular area 240.

[0035] A seal ring 235 is preferably provided at an interface between the sleeve 215 and the movable flow tube 225. Preferably, the seal ring 235 is fixed along the outer diameter of the sleeve 215 at a lower end of the sleeve 215. The seal ring 235 would then be stationary and the flow tube 225 would move through the seal ring 235. Alternatively, the seal ring 235 is placed in a groove in an upper end of the flow tube 225. In this respect, the movement of the piston 205 in response to the hydraulic pressure in the line 145 would also cause the seal ring 235 and flow tube 225 to move. In so moving, the seal ring 235 would traverse upon the outer diameter of the isolation sleeve 215.

[0036] Where a seal is provided, the isolation sleeve **215** fluidly seals an inside of the chamber housing **255**. In an alternative embodiment, the sleeve **215** could be machined integral to the housing **255**. The primary reason for the seal ring **235** is to prevent contaminants, such as cement, from entering into the annular area **240** adjacent the piston **205**. Typically, the seal ring **235** creates a fluid seal between the flow tube **225** and the stationary sleeve **215**.

[0037] **Figure 3** presents an enlarged cross-sectional view of a portion of the safety valve **200** of **Figure 2**. The flow tube **225** is more visible here. Again, the flow tube **225** is positioned to maintain the safety valve **200** in its open position. This position allows cement or other fluids to flow down through the bore **260** during completion operations, and allows hydrocarbons to flow up through the bore **260** during production. In either case, the flow tube **225** also protects various components of the valve **200**, such as the biasing member **210** and the flapper **220**, from cement or contaminants that will flow through the bore **260**. Furthermore, the flow tube **225** in the open position prevents the flapper **220** from moving from the open position to the closed position.

[0038] Typically, the flow tube **225** remains in the open position throughout the completion operation and later production. However, if the flapper **220** is closed during the production operation, it may be reopened by moving the flow tube **225** back to the open position. Generally, the flow tube **225** moves to the open position as the piston **205** moves to the lower position and compresses the biasing member **210** against the spacer bearing **265**. Typically, fluid from the line (not shown) enters the chamber **245**, thereby creating a hydraulic pressure on the piston **205**. As more fluid enters the chamber **245**, the hydraulic pressure continues to increase until the hydraulic pressure on the upper end of the piston **205** becomes greater than the biasing force **210** on the lower end of the piston **205**. At that point, the hydraulic pressure in the chamber **245** causes the piston **205** to move to the lower position. Since the flow tube **225** is operatively attached to the piston **205**, the movement of the piston **205** causes longitudinal movement of the flow tube **225** and the seal ring **235**.

[0039] It is also noted that the flow tube **225** also may aid in providing isolation of fluids from the annular area **240**. In this respect, the bottom of the flow tube **225** is

dimensioned to land on a shoulder of the lower sub 275 when the flow tube 225 is moved to the open position (seen in **Figure 2**). An elastomeric seal member (not shown) may be provided at the bottom of the flow tube 225 to engage the lower sub 275. Preferably though, a seal member is provided along a shoulder of the sub 275 to meet the bottom of the flow tube 225 in the valve's 200 open position.

[0040] **Figure 4** is a cross-sectional view illustrating the tubing-retrievable safety valve 200 of **Figure 2** in its closed position. Generally, in the production operation, fluid flow through the production tubing may be controlled by preventing flow through the valve 200. More specifically, the flapper 220 seals off the bore 260, thereby preventing fluid communication through the valve 200.

[0041] During closure, fluid in the chamber 245 exits into the line 145, thereby decreasing the hydraulic pressure on the piston 205. As more fluid exits the chamber 245, the hydraulic pressure continues to decrease until the hydraulic pressure on the upper end of the piston 205 becomes less than the opposite force on the lower end of the piston 205. At that point, the force created by the biasing member 210 causes the piston 205 to move to the upper position. Since the flow tube 225 is operatively attached to the piston 205, the movement of the piston 205 causes the movement of flow tube 225 and the seal ring 235 into the annular area 240 until the flow tube 225 is substantially disposed within the annular area 240. In this manner, the flow tube 225 is moved to the closed position.

[0042] **Figure 5** is an enlarged cross-sectional view illustrating the flow tube 225 in the closed position. Here, the piston 205 is raised within the chamber 245. In this respect, the spring 210 of **Figure 5** is seen expanded vis-à-vis the spring 210 of **Figure 3**. This indicates that the biasing action of the spring 210 has overcome the piston 205. As the piston 205 is raised, the connected flow tube 225 is also raised. This moves the lower end of the flow tube 225 out of its position adjacent the flapper 220. This, in turn, allows the flapper 220 to pivot into its closed position. In this position, the bore 260 of the valve 200 is sealed, thereby preventing fluid communication through the valve 200. More specifically, flow tube 225 in the closed position no longer blocks the movement of the flapper 220, thereby allowing the flapper 220 to pivot from the open position to the closed position and seal the bore 260.

[0043] Although the invention has been described in part by making detailed reference to specific embodiments, such detail is intended to be and will be understood to be instructional rather than restrictive. It should be noted that while embodiments of the invention disclosed herein are described in connection with a subsurface safety valve, the embodiments described herein may be used with any well completion equipment, such as a packer, a sliding sleeve, a landing nipple and the like.

[0044] While the foregoing is directed to embodiments of the present invention, other and further embodiments of the invention may be devised without departing from the basic scope thereof, and the scope thereof is determined by the claims that follow.

CLAIMS:

1. A downhole apparatus having a bore there through, comprising:
 a tubular housing;
 a tubular isolation sleeve disposed within an inner diameter of the tubular
 5 housing, the isolation sleeve and the tubular housing forming an annular area there
 between;
 a flow tube movably disposed along a portion of an outer diameter of the
 isolation sleeve;
 a flapper, the flapper being pivotally movable relative to the housing between
 10 an open position and a closed position in response to the longitudinal movement of
 the flow tube, wherein the flapper permits fluid flow through the bore in the open
 position and prevents fluid flow through the bore in the closed position; and
 a seal ring provided at an interface between the isolation sleeve and the flow
 tube for providing the isolation of the annular area.
- 15 2. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the seal ring is placed along an inner
 diameter of the flow tube.
3. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the annular area is isolated from the bore
 in the open position.
4. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the seal ring is placed along an outer
 20 diameter of the isolation sleeve for sealingly receiving the movable flow tube.
5. The apparatus of claim 3, wherein a bottom of the flow tube is configured to
 meet a shoulder in a lower sub when the flapper is in the open position, thereby
 further isolating the annular area.

6. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the apparatus permits fluid to flow through the bore when the flapper is in the open position.
7. The apparatus of claim 1, further comprising:
- a piston disposed in a chamber above the flow tube, wherein the piston acts
5 against the flow tube in response to hydraulic pressure in order to move the flow tube longitudinally.
8. The apparatus of claim 7, further comprising:
- a biasing member acting against the piston in order to bias the piston and connected flow tube to allow the flapper to close.
- 10 9. The apparatus of claim 8, wherein the piston is a rod piston.
10. A subsurface safety valve for controlling fluid flow in a wellbore, the valve having a longitudinal bore, and the valve comprising:
- a tubular housing;
- a tubular isolation sleeve disposed within an inner diameter of the tubular
15 housing, the isolation sleeve and the tubular housing forming an annular area there between that is isolated from an inner diameter of the isolation sleeve in an open position;
- a flow tube movably disposed along a portion of the annular area;
- a flapper, the flapper being pivotally movable relative to the housing between
20 the open position and a closed position in response to the longitudinal movement of the flow tube, wherein the flapper permits fluid flow through the bore in the open position and prevents fluid flow through the bore in the closed position; and

a seal ring placed along an outer diameter of the isolation sleeve for sealingly receiving the movable flow tube and for providing the isolation of the annular area.

11. The valve of claim 10, wherein isolation of the annular area is further provided by configuring a bottom of the flow tube to meet a shoulder in a lower sub
5 when the flapper is in the open position.

12. The valve of claim 10, further comprising:

a rod piston disposed above the flow tube in the annular area, wherein the rod piston acts against the flow tube in response to hydraulic pressure in order to move the flow tube longitudinally; and

10 a biasing member acting against the rod piston in order to bias the rod piston and connected flow tube to allow the flapper to close.

13. A method for controlling fluid flow in a wellbore, comprising the steps of:

placing a safety valve in series with a string of production tubing, the production tubing having a bore there through, and the safety valve comprising:

15 a tubular housing;

a tubular isolation sleeve disposed within an inner diameter of the tubular housing, the isolation sleeve and the tubular housing forming an annular area there between, wherein the annular area is isolated from an inner diameter of the isolation sleeve;

20 a flow tube movably disposed along a portion of the annular area; and

a flapper, the flapper being pivotally movable relative to the housing between an open position and a closed position in response to longitudinal movement of the flow tube, wherein the flapper permits fluid flow through the

bore in the open position and prevents fluid flow through the bore in the closed position;

running the production tubing and safety valve into the wellbore;

placing the flapper in its open position; and

5 pumping cement into the bore of the production tubing and through the safety valve.

14. The method of claim 13, further comprising the steps of:

10 further pumping cement into an annulus formed between the production tubing and the surrounding wellbore to form a cement column, thereby securing the production tubing in the wellbore;

15 providing fluid communication between the bore of the tubing and a selected formation along the wellbore; and

16 producing the well by allowing hydrocarbons to flow through the production tubing and the opened safety valve.

15 15. The method of 14, further comprising the step of:

17 placing the flapper in its closed position.

18 16. The method of claim 14, wherein in the step of providing fluid communication between the bore of the tubing and a selected formation along the wellbore comprises:

20 running a perforating gun into the bore of the production tubing proximate the desired formation; and

activating the perforating gun, thereby forming a plurality of perforations in a wall of the production tubing and through the surrounding cement column.

17. The method of claim 16, wherein the step of providing fluid communication between the bore of the tubing and a selected formation along the wellbore further
5 comprises:

removing the perforating gun from the wellbore.

18. The method of claim 13, wherein the valve further comprises a seal ring provided at an interface between the isolation sleeve and the flow tube for providing the isolation of the annular area.

10 19. The method of claim 18, wherein the seal ring is placed along an outer diameter of the isolation sleeve for sealingly receiving the movable flow tube.

20. The method of claim 13, wherein:

the valve further comprises a piston disposed above the flow tube, wherein the piston acts against the flow tube in response to hydraulic pressure in order to
15 move the flow tube longitudinally; and

the step of placing the flapper in its open position comprises actuating the piston to act against the flow tube so as to permit fluid to flow through the inner diameter of the isolation sleeve.

21. The method of claim 20, wherein the piston is a rod piston.

20 22. The method of claim 21, wherein the flow tube is connected to the rod piston and the valve further comprises a biasing member acting against the rod piston in order to bias the rod piston and connected flow tube to allow the flapper to close.

23. The method of claim 18, wherein the seal ring is placed along an inner diameter of the flow tube.
24. A method for using the apparatus of claim 1 in a wellbore, comprising the steps of:
- 5 placing the apparatus of claim 1 in series with a string of production tubing, the production tubing having a bore there through;
- running the production tubing and the apparatus into the wellbore;
- placing the flapper in its open position; and
- pumping cement into the bore of the production tubing and through the
- 10 apparatus.
25. A downhole apparatus having a bore there through, comprising:
- a tubular housing having a tubular inner portion, a tubular outer portion, and an annular area formed between the inner and outer portions;
- a flow tube movably disposed along a portion of an outer diameter of the
- 15 inner portion of the housing; and
- a flapper, the flapper being pivotally movable relative to the housing between an open position and a closed position in response to longitudinal movement of the flow tube, wherein the flapper permits fluid flow through the bore in the open position and prevents fluid flow through the bore in the closed position; and
- 20 a seal ring provided at an interface between the housing and the flow tube for providing the isolation of the annular area.
26. The apparatus of claim 25, wherein the annular area is isolated from the bore in the open position.

27. The apparatus of claim 25, wherein the seal ring is placed along an outer diameter of the inner portion of the housing for sealingly receiving the movable flow tube.

28. The apparatus of claim 26, wherein a bottom of the flow tube is configured to
5 meet a shoulder in a lower sub when the flapper is in the open position, thereby further isolating the annular area.

29. The apparatus of claim 25, wherein the valve permits fluid to flow through the bore when the flapper is in the open position.

30. The apparatus of claim 25, further comprising:

10 a piston disposed in a chamber above the flow tube, wherein the piston acts against the flow tube in response to hydraulic pressure in order to move the flow tube longitudinally.

31. The apparatus of claim 30, further comprising:

a biasing member acting against the piston in order to bias the piston and
15 connected flow tube to allow the flapper to close.

32. The apparatus of claim 31, wherein the piston is a rod piston.

33. The apparatus of claim 25, wherein the seal ring is placed along an inner diameter of the flow tube.

34. A method for using the apparatus of claim 25 in a wellbore, comprising the
20 steps of:

placing the apparatus of claim 25 in series with a string of production tubing, the production tubing having a bore there through;

running the production tubing and the apparatus into the wellbore;

placing the flapper in its open position; and

pumping cement into the bore of the production tubing and through the apparatus.

35. A method for controlling fluid flow in a wellbore, comprising the steps of:

5 placing a safety valve in series with a string of production tubing, the production tubing having a bore there through, and the safety valve comprising:

a tubular housing;

10 a tubular isolation sleeve disposed within an inner diameter of the tubular housing, the isolation sleeve and the tubular housing forming an annular area there between;

a flow tube movably disposed along a portion of the annular area; and

15 a flapper, the flapper being pivotally movable relative to the housing between an open position and a closed position in response to longitudinal movement of the flow tube, wherein the flapper permits fluid flow through the bore in the open position and prevents fluid flow through the bore in the closed position;

running the production tubing and safety valve into the wellbore;

placing the flapper in its open position; and

20 pumping cement into the bore of the production tubing and through the safety valve;

further pumping cement into an annulus formed between the production tubing and the surrounding wellbore to form a cement column, thereby securing the production tubing in the wellbore;

providing fluid communication between the bore of the tubing and a selected formation along the wellbore, comprising:

running a perforating gun into the bore of the production tubing proximate the desired formation,

5 activating the perforating gun, thereby forming a plurality of perforations in a wall of the production tubing and through the surrounding cement column, and

removing the perforating gun from the wellbore;

producing the well by allowing hydrocarbons to flow through the production
10 tubing and the opened safety valve; and

placing the flapper in its closed position.

36. A method for controlling fluid flow in a wellbore, comprising the steps of:

placing a safety valve in series with a string of production tubing, the production tubing having a bore there through, and the safety valve comprising:

15 a tubular housing;

a tubular isolation sleeve disposed within an inner diameter of the tubular housing, the isolation sleeve and the tubular housing forming an annular area there between;

a flow tube movably disposed along a portion of the annular area;

20 a piston disposed above the flow tube, wherein the piston acts against the flow tube in response to hydraulic pressure in order to move the flow tube longitudinally; and

a flapper, the flapper being pivotally movable relative to the housing between an open position and a closed position in response to longitudinal movement of the flow tube, wherein the flapper permits fluid flow through the bore in the open position and prevents fluid flow through the bore in the closed position;

running the production tubing and safety valve into the wellbore;

placing the flapper in its open position by actuating the piston to act against the flow tube so as to permit fluid to flow through the inner diameter of the isolation sleeve; and

pumping cement into the bore of the production tubing and through the safety valve;

further pumping cement into an annulus formed between the production tubing and the surrounding wellbore to form a cement column, thereby securing the production tubing in the wellbore;

providing fluid communication between the bore of the tubing and a selected formation along the wellbore, comprising:

running a perforating gun into the bore of the production tubing proximate the desired formation, and

activating the perforating gun, thereby forming a plurality of perforations in a wall of the production tubing and through the surrounding cement column;

producing the well by allowing hydrocarbons to flow through the production tubing and the opened safety valve; and

placing the flapper in its closed position.

37. The method of claim 36, wherein the piston is a rod piston.

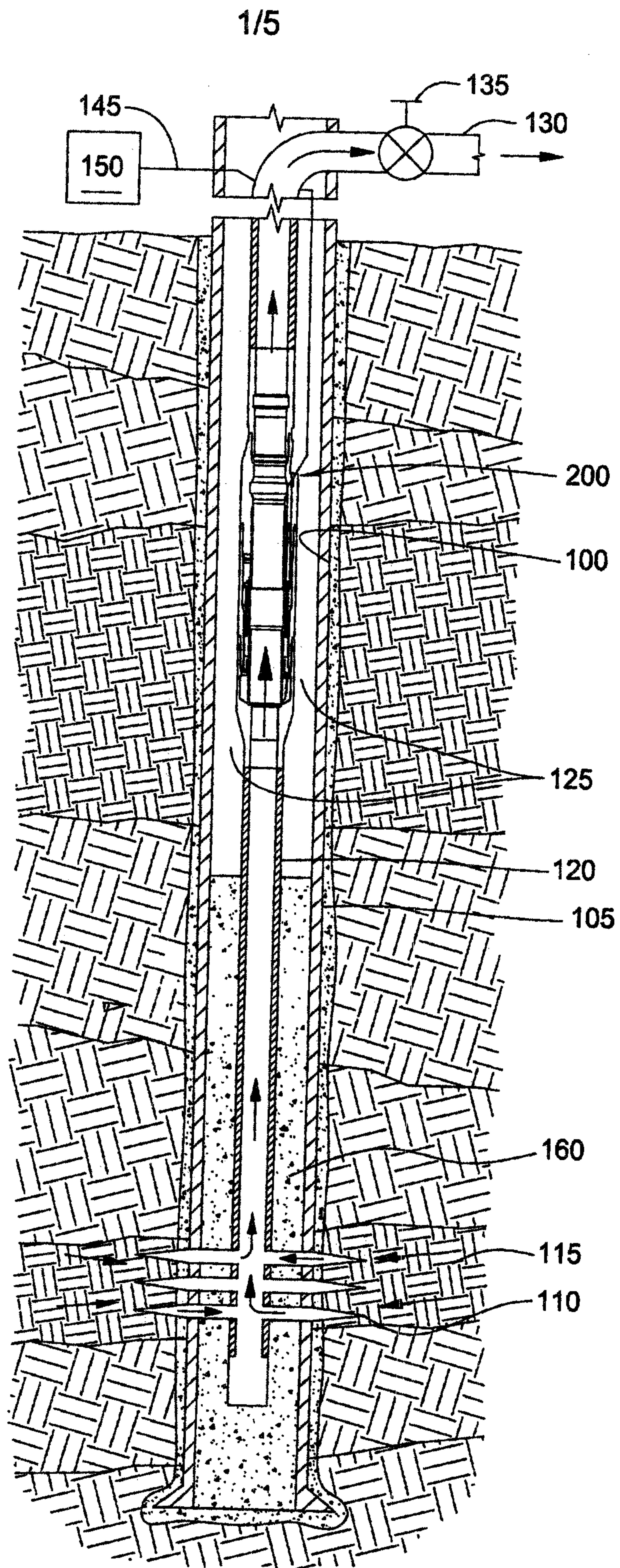
38. The apparatus of claim 1, further comprising a lower sub connected to the housing, wherein a bottom of the flow tube directly lands on a shoulder in the lower sub when the flapper is in the open position, thereby further isolating the annular
5 area.

39. The apparatus of claim 38, wherein a plurality of notches are radially disposed in the bottom of the flow tube and the notches are configured to discourage cement from entering the bottom of the flow tube.

40. The apparatus of claim 25, further comprising a lower sub connected to the
10 housing, wherein a bottom of the flow tube directly lands on a shoulder in the lower sub when the flapper is in the open position, thereby further isolating the annular area.

41. The apparatus of claim 40, wherein a plurality of notches are radially disposed in the bottom of the flow tube and the notches are configured to
15 discourage cement from entering the bottom of the flow tube.

FIG. 1



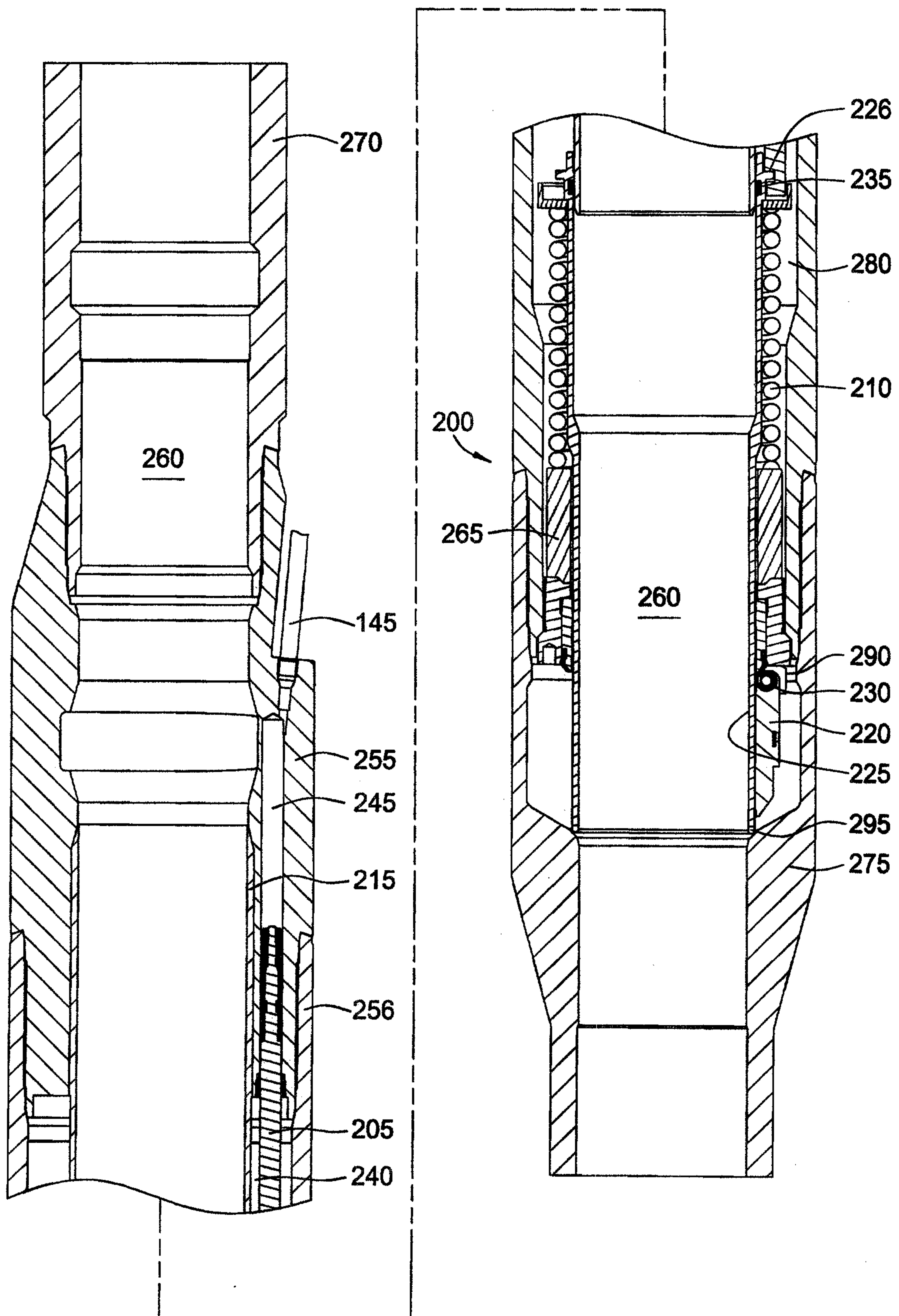
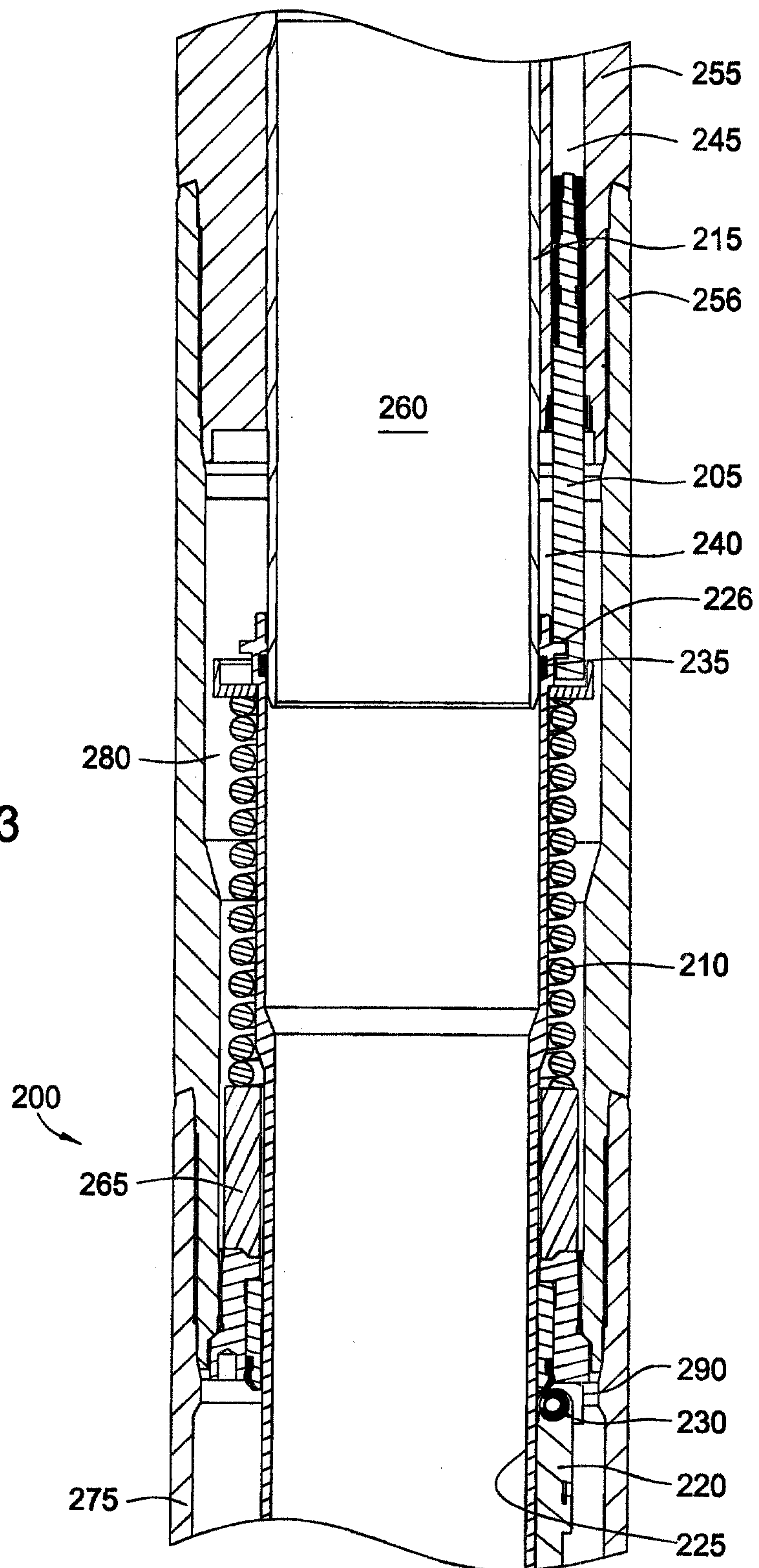


FIG. 2

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FIG. 3



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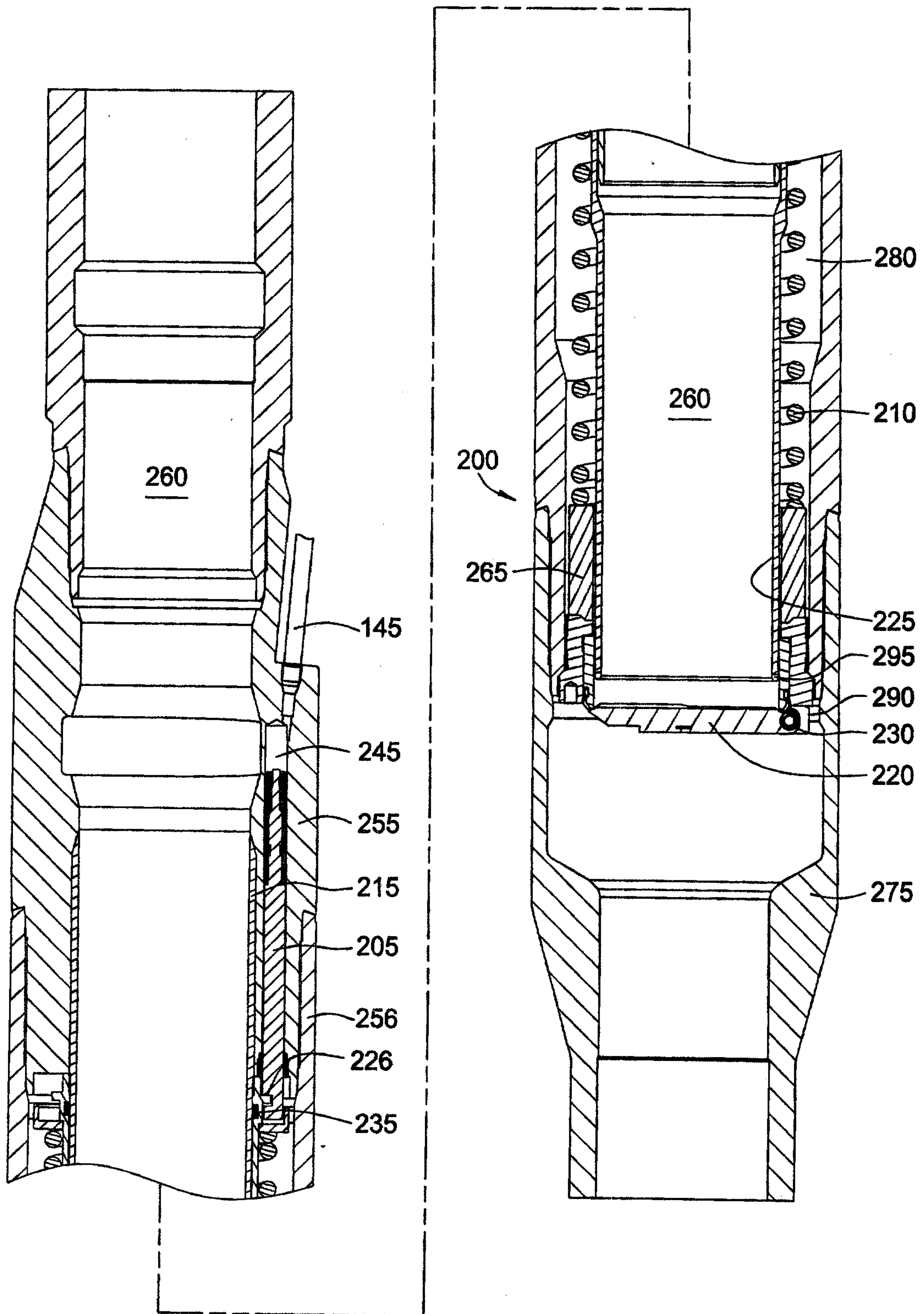


FIG. 4

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FIG. 5

