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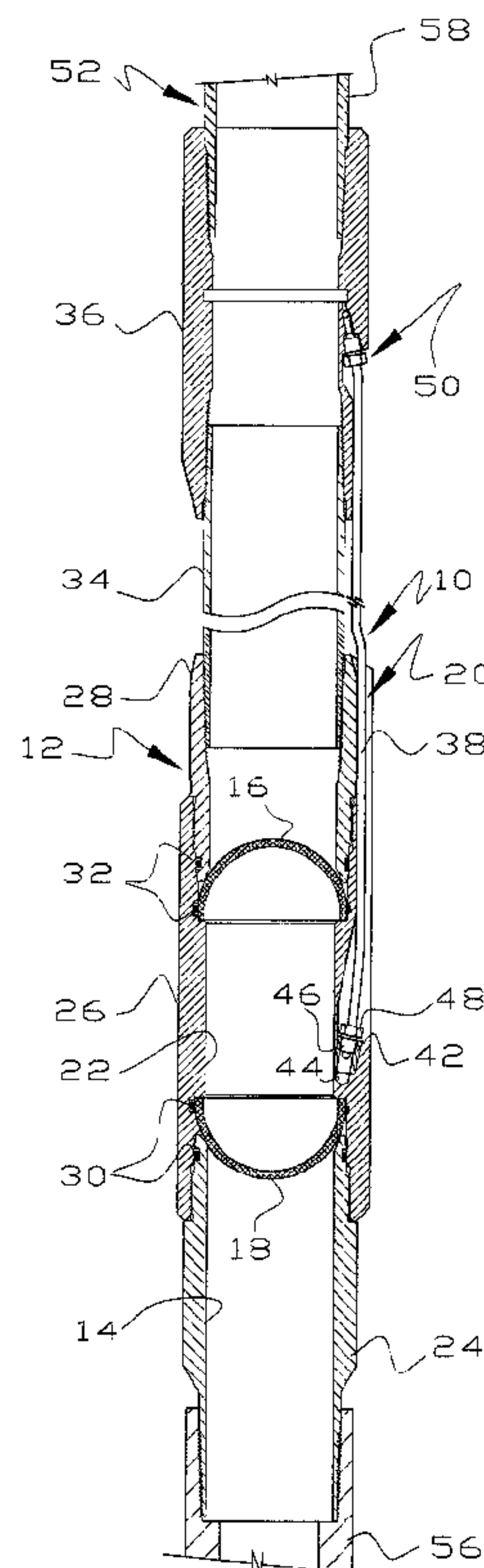
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(54) Titre : OUTIL D'ISOLATION A DISQUE DE RUPTURE

(54) Title: ISOLATION TOOL WITH RUPTURABLE DISC



(57) **Abrégé/Abstract:**

A down hole pressure isolation tool is placed in a pipe string and includes a pair of pressure discs having one side that is highly resistant to applied pressure and one side that ruptures when much lower pressures are applied to it. The weak sides of the pressure discs face each other. Rather than rupturing the discs by dropping a go-devil into the well, a first of the discs is ruptured or broken by the application of fluid pressure from the well head or surface. Formation pressure is then used, in different ways according to the different embodiments, to rupture the remaining disc.

Abstract of the Disclosure

A down hole pressure isolation tool is placed in a pipe string and includes a pair of pressure discs having one side that is highly resistant to applied pressure and one side that ruptures when much lower pressures are applied to it. The weak sides of the pressure discs face each other. Rather than rupturing the discs by dropping a go-devil into the well, a first of the discs is ruptured or broken by the application of fluid pressure from the well head or surface. Formation pressure is then used, in different ways according to the different embodiments, to rupture the remaining disc.

ISOLATION TOOL WITH RUPTURABLE DISC

This invention relates to a tool used in wells extending into the earth and, more particularly, to a tool for isolating one section of a pipe string from another section.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

There are a number of situations, in the completion of oil and gas wells, where it is desirable to isolate one section of a subterranean well from another. For example, in U.S. Patent 5,924,696, there is disclosed an isolation tool used alone or in combination with a packer to isolate a lower section of a production string from an upper section. This tool incorporates a pair of oppositely facing frangible or rupturable discs or half domes which isolate the well below the discs from pressure operations above the discs and which isolate the tubing string from well bore pressure. When it is desired to provide communication across the tool, the upper disc is ruptured by dropping a go-devil into the well from the surface or well head which falls into the well and, upon impact, fractures the upwardly convex ceramic disc. The momentum of the go-devil normally also ruptures the lower disc but

the lower disc may be broken by application of pressure from above, after the upper disc is broken, because the lower disc is concave upwardly and thereby relatively weak against applied pressure from above.

An important development in natural gas production in recent decades has been the drilling of horizontal sections through zones that have previously been considered uneconomically tight or which are shales. By fracing the horizontal sections of the well, considerable production is obtained from zones which were previously uneconomical. For some years, the fastest growing segment of gas production in the United States has been from shales or very silty zones that previously have not been considered economic. The current areas of increasing activity include the Barnett Shale, the Haynesville Shale, the Fayetteville Shale, and the Marcellus Shale in the United States, the Horn River Basin of Canada and other shale or shaley formations in North America and Europe.

It is no exaggeration to say that the future of natural gas production in the continental United States is from these heretofore uneconomically tight gas bearing formations. In addition, there are many areas of the world where oil and gas is produced and costs are, from the perspective of a United States operator,

exorbitantly high. These areas currently include offshore Africa, the Middle East, the North Sea and deep water parts of the Gulf of Mexico. Accordingly, a development that allows well completions at overall lower costs is important in many areas of the world and in many different situations.

Disclosures of interest relative to this invention are found in U.S. Patents 7,044,230; 7,210,533 and 7,350,582 and U.S. Printed Patent Applications S.N. 20070074873; 20080271898 and 20090056955.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

The device disclosed in U.S. Patent 5,924,696 can be used in a horizontal section of a well to isolate the well below the tool from pressure operations above the tool. However, the upper disc has to be broken or weakened in a mechanical fashion requiring a bit trip, typically a coiled tubing trip in modern high tech wells or a bit trip with a workover rig in more traditional environments, to fracture the upper disc because a go-devil dropped through the vertical section of the well does not have sufficient momentum to reach and then fracture the upper disc. Theoretically, sufficient pressure could be applied from above to break the upper disc from the concave side but this pressure is commonly so high that it

would damage or destroy other components of the production string. It has been realized that it would be desirable to provide an isolation tool which can be used in a horizontal section of a well without requiring a bit trip.

As disclosed herein, a pressure differential that is uniform across the pressure disc is created by manipulating pressure at the surface or through the well head to fracture a first of the discs. The other disc may be ruptured using pressure in the well. The exact sequence of breaking the discs may depend on the particular design employed and whether the isolation tool is located above or below a packer or other sealing element isolating the production string, typically from a surrounding pipe string.

Several embodiments of an isolation tool are disclosed that may be used in wells to temporarily isolate a section of the well below the tool from a section above the tool. These embodiments use a pressure differential to fracture a first of the discs. In one embodiment, a capillary tube is provided from above the upper disc to a location between the discs. In a second embodiment, a check valve admits pressurized well fluid between the discs so that one of the discs may be broken by reducing the pressure on one side of the isolation tool. In a third embodiment, an unvalved opening

admits pressurized well fluid between the discs so that one of the discs may be broken by reducing the pressure on one side of the isolation tool. In a fourth embodiment, a movable member is displaced by pressure supplied from above to break a first of the discs.

It is an object of this invention to provide an improved down hole well tool to isolate one section of a well from another.

A more specific object of this invention is to provide an improved isolation sub that can be manipulated by a pressure differential to place isolated sections of a well into communication.

These and other objects and advantages of this invention will become more apparent as this description proceeds, reference being made to the accompanying drawings and appended claims.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

Figure 1 is a cross-sectional view of one embodiment of an isolation tool that incorporates a pair of oppositely facing pressure discs;

Figure 2 is an exploded view of a component of the device of Figure 1;

Figure 3 is a schematic view of a well in which the isolation tool of Figure 1 is employed;

Figure 4 is a cross-sectional view of another embodiment of an isolation tool that incorporates a pair of oppositely facing pressure discs;

Figure 5 is an enlarged view of a valve assembly used in the embodiment of Figure 4;

Figure 6 is a view similar to Figure 2, illustrating operation of the embodiment of Figures 4 and 5;

Figure 7 is a partial view of another embodiment of this invention, based on the embodiment of Figure 4;

Figure 8 is a cross-sectional view of another embodiment of an isolation tool that incorporates a pair of oppositely facing pressure discs, illustrating the tool in a position where upper and lower sections of the well are isolated;

Figure 9 is a cross-sectional view of the embodiment of Figure 5 illustrating the tool in the process of breaking one of the pressure discs;

Figure 10 is an isometric view of a modified pressure dome;
and

Figure 11 is a view of the pressure dome of Figure 10 in an isolation tool.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

Referring to Figures 1-2, there is illustrated an isolation tool or sub 10 comprising a housing 12 having a passage 14 therethrough, upper and lower rupturable pressure discs 16, 18 and a capillary tube 20 opening into a chamber 22 between the discs 16, 18.

The housing 12 may comprise a lower end, pin body or pin 24, a central section 26, an upper end or box body 28 and suitable sealing elements or O-rings 30, 32 captivating the discs 16, 18 in a fluid tight manner. Except for the capillary tube 20, those skilled in the art will recognize the isolation sub 10, as heretofore described, as being typical of isolation subs sold by Magnum International, Inc. of Corpus Christi, Texas and as also described in U.S. Patent 5,924,696.

The capillary tube 20 may be external to the housing 12, or an internal passage may be provided, and may terminate in an extension of the central section 26 or in the upper section 28. One problem that is occasionally encountered is sufficient debris above the

upper disc 16 which might seal off pressure from reaching the capillary tube 20. To overcome this problem, the capillary tube 20 may be of greater length as by providing one or more pipe sections 34 of any suitable length connected to a collar or other sub 36 thereby elongating the housing 12. This will accommodate debris, such as sand or the like, from bridging off access to the top of the capillary tube 20.

The discs 16, 18 may be of any suitable type having the capability of being stronger in one direction than in an opposite direction. Conveniently, the discs 16, 18 may be curved or generally hemispherical domes made of any suitable material, such as ceramic, porcelain, glass and the like. Suitable ceramic materials, such as alumina, zirconia and carbides are currently commercially available from Coors Tek of Golden, Colorado. These materials are frangible and rupture in response to either a sharp blow or in response to a pressure differential where high pressure is applied to the concave side of the discs 16, 18. Because of their curved or hemispherical shape, half domes may be a preferred selection because of their considerable ability to resist pressure from the convex side, their much lower ability to resist pressure from the concave side, cost, reliability and frangibility. Ceramic

discs of this type are available in a variety of strengths but a typical disc may have the capability of withstanding 25,000 psi applied on the convex side but only 1500 psi applied on the concave side. In a typical situation, the discs 16, 18 may be 10-20 times stronger against pressure applied to the convex side than to the concave side. Any pressure disc which has greater strength in one direction than in the opposite may be used, another example of which are metal Scored Rupture Disc Assemblies available from Fike Corporation of Blue Springs, Missouri or BS&B of Tulsa, Oklahoma. The Fike discs that are stronger in one direction than the other are also concave on the weak side and convex on the other which is a convenient technique for making the discs stronger in one direction than in an opposite direction and thus responsive to different sized pressure differentials.

The capillary tube 20 includes a tube 38 of any suitable outside and inside diameter so long as it transmits pressure, either higher or lower than hydrostatic pressure in the well applied from above the tool 10. The tube 20 may be connected to the central section 26 in a recess 40 by a nipple 42 threaded, pressed or otherwise connected to the central section 26. The nipple 42 communicates with a passage 44 opening into the chamber

22 so any pressure, higher or lower than hydrostatic pressure, applied above the tool 10 is delivered between the discs 16, 18. A connector 46 may be threaded into the nipple 42 as driven by a wrench (not shown) acting on a polygonal nut 48. A similar or dissimilar fitting 50 may connect an upper end of the tube 38 to the collar 36.

Referring to Figure 3, a typical example of using the isolation tool 10 is illustrated. The isolation tool 10 may comprise part of a horizontal or inclined section of a production string 52 inside a casing string 54 which intersects a productive zone where one or more pipe joints 56 may be disposed below the tool 10 and a series of pipe joints 58 may be disposed above the tool 10 leading to the surface or well head so formation fluids may be produced. A typical use of the isolation tool 10 is to isolate the productive zone below a packer 60 from pressure operations above the tool 10 which operations typically set the packer 60. Another typical use of the isolation tool 10 is in setting a liner during drilling of a deep well.

At the outset and throughout the packer setting operation, there is hydrostatic pressure inside the production string 52 and in the annulus between the production string 52 and the casing

string 54, meaning there is hydrostatic pressure above the upper disc 16, in the chamber 22 and below the lower disc 18, so there is no pressure differential operating on the discs 16, 18 which would tend to break them. The packer 60 is set by applying pressure downwardly through the production string 52. Any pressure applied from above acts on both sides of the upper disc 16 so the upper disc 16 sees no pressure differential and there is no tendency of the upper disc 16 to fail. So long as the packer 60 is set by a pressure that is less than the sum of hydrostatic pressure at the tool 10 and the strength of the disc 18 against pressure applied on the concave side, the packer 60 may be manipulated without fracturing the lower disc 18.

After the packer 60 is set, pressure is applied from above and transmitted through the capillary tube 20 to a location between the discs 16, 18. This applied pressure is greater than the hydrostatic pressure in the well and creates a pressure differential which is uniform over the area of the disc 18 and which exceeds the ability of the concave side of the lower disc 18 to withstand it. The lower disc 18 then shatters or ruptures allowing well pressure to enter the chamber 22. When pressure in the production string 52 above the tool 10 is lowered, as by stopping the pumps which have

created the pressure to set the packer 60, by swabbing the production string 52, gas lifting the production string 52 or simply opening the production string 52 to the atmosphere at the surface or well head, well pressure acting on the concave side of the upper disc 16 exceeds its ability to withstand pressure in this direction whereupon the upper disc 16 fails thereby placing the production string 52, above and below the tool 10, in communication and allowing the well to produce. Thus, the tool 10 allows breaking of the discs 16, 18 to place the heretofore isolated parts of the well in communication by the application of pressure from above. In this situation, the pressure that breaks the lower disc 18 is applied from above and produces a pressure at the tool 10 that is greater than hydrostatic pressure but far less than what would rupture the disc 16 if applied from above.

Many, if not most, hydraulically set packers require more pressure above hydrostatic than the concave side of the lower disc 18 can withstand. To overcome this problem, an inline pressure disc 62 may be provided in the capillary tube 20 as shown best in Figure 3. In some embodiments, the pressure disc 62 may be located between the nipple 42 and the passage 44, may be located inside the nipple 42, inside the fitting 50 or any other suitable location.

The pressure disc 62 may be of any suitable type to provide a sufficient resistance to allow the packer 60 to be hydraulically set without rupturing the lower disc 18. In some embodiments, the pressure disc 62 is commercially available from Fike Corporation of Blue Springs, Missouri and known as Scored FSR Rupture Disc Assembly. In a typical situation, the packer 60 may require an applied pressure of 3500 psi above hydrostatic to set. In such situations, the pressure disc 62 may be selected to rupture at a substantially greater pressure, e.g. 4500 psi. Thus, the packer 60 would be set and then additional pressure would be applied to rupture the disc 62 which would place sufficient pressure in the chamber 22 to fracture the lower disc 18. The upper disc 16 would not rupture immediately because there is initially no pressure differential across the upper disc 16 because the pressure applied from the surface is on both sides of the upper disc 16. After the lower disc 18 fails, pump pressure applied from the surface is reduced whereupon formation pressure applied from below produces a pressure differential sufficient to rupture the upper disc 16.

In some embodiments, a check valve (not shown) may be provided in the fitting 50 to allow flow inside the tubing string 58 to enter the chamber 22 but prevent flow out of the chamber 22.

It will be seen that the tool 10 is designed to cause one of the pressure discs 16, 18 to fail by creation of a pressure differential that is substantially below the differential pressure which would cause failure if applied to the strong or convex side of the pressure discs 16, 18.

Referring to Figure 4, there is illustrated another isolation tool 70 providing a passage 72 therethrough and comprising, as major components, a housing 74, first and second pressure discs 76, 78 and a valve assembly 80 allowing hydrostatic pressure from outside the tool 70 to enter a chamber 82 between the pressure discs 76, 78.

The housing 74 may comprise a lower end or pin body 84, a central section or collar 86 providing a passage 88 into the chamber 82, an upper end or box body 90 and suitable sealing elements or O-rings 92, 94 captivating the discs 76, 78 in a fluid tight manner. The pressure discs 76, 78 may be of the same type and style as the pressure discs 16, 18 and are capable of resisting a greater pressure from one direction than the other. Except for the valve assembly 80, those skilled in the art will recognize the isolation sub 70, as heretofore described, as being typical of isolation subs sold by Magnum International, Inc. of Corpus

Christi, Texas and as also being described in U.S. Patent 5,924,-696.

The valve assembly 80 comprises a check valve which allows flow into the chamber 82 so hydrostatic pressure is delivered between the discs 76, 78 during normal operations, such as when the tool 70 is being run into a well. The valve assembly 80 may comprise a spring 96 biasing a ball check 98 against a valve seat 100. It will be seen that the check valve 80 allows the maximum hydrostatic pressure to which the tool 70 is subjected to appear in the chamber 82. Under normal conditions, there is no tendency for the pressure in the chamber 82 to rupture the discs 76, 78 because the same pressure exists on the inside and outside of the tool 70.

Referring to Figure 6, the isolation tool 70 is illustrated in a production string 102 inside a casing string 104. A pressure actuated packer 106 may be above the isolation tool 70. The production string 102 may extend past the tool 70 toward a hydrocarbon formation. Initially, the isolation tool 70 pressure separates the production string 102 into two segments. Because of the inherent strength of the convex side of the illustrated disc 76, the applied pressure may be sufficiently high to conduct any desired pressure operation. After the packer 102 is set or when it

is desired to place the well below the tool 70 in communication with the production string 102 above the tool 70, steps are conducted to reduce pressure above the upper disc 76. This may be done in any suitable manner, as by opening the production string 102 at the surface or through the well head, swabbing the production string 102, gas lifting the production string 102 or the like. When the pressure above the upper disc 76 declines sufficiently, a pressure differential is created across the upper disc 76 which is sufficient to rupture the upper disc 76. This pressure differential is much smaller than a pressure differential caused by the application of positive pressure to the convex side of the upper disc 76 that is sufficient to rupture it. For example, the convex side of the disc 76 may be rated to withstand a pressure differential of 25,000 psi but the embodiment of Figure 4 acts to rupture the upper disc 76 upon creating a much smaller pressure differential applied to the concave side of the disc 76.

After the upper disc 76 ruptures, pressure may be applied at the surface through the production string 102 by a suitable pump (not shown) to create a pressure differential across the lower disc 78 sufficient to rupture it. In this manner, the heretofore pressure separated sections of the well are now in communication.

Referring to Figure 7, there is illustrated another isolation tool 110 which may be identical to the tool 70 except that the check valve assembly 80 has been eliminated. Thus, the tool 110 may include a collar 112 having one or more continuously open or unvalved passages 114 therein communicating between the pressure discs. By continuously open, it is meant that the passage 114 is open when the tool 110 is in the well. Surprisingly, the tool 110 works in the same manner as the tool 70 because the passage 114 allows hydrostatic pressure to build up between the discs. When liquids above the upper disc are removed, a pressure differential is created across the upper disc in its weak direction thereby rupturing the upper disc. The lower disc is broken in the same manner as the lower disc 78 which may be by pumping into the tool 110. Besides the advantage of simplicity, the tool 110 also has an advantage when it becomes necessary or desirable to remove the production string and packer from the well without setting the packer. In the embodiment of Figures 4-5, pulling the tool 70 from the well will reduce pressure above the upper disc 76 and below the lower disc 78 so the trapped pressure in the chamber 82 will likely cause one of the discs 76, 78 to fail. By removing the check valve assembly 80, the isolation tool 110 may be pulled from the well

without rupturing either of the pressure discs because hydrostatic pressure will bleed off from between the discs at the same rate as it falls above the upper disc and below the lower disc. By eliminating the check valve assembly 80, there is created an isolation tool which will not rupture when the tool is pulled from the well.

Referring to Figures 8-9, there is illustrated another isolation tool 120 providing a passage 122 therethrough and comprising, as major components, a housing 124, first and second frangible pressure discs 126, 128 and an assembly 130 responsive to pressure inside the tool 120 to rupture the discs 126, 128.

The housing 124 may comprise a lower end or pin body 132, a central section or collar 134, a section 136 that cooperates with the assembly 130, an upper end or box body 138, and suitable sealing elements or O-rings 140, 142 captivating the discs 126, 128 in a fluid tight manner. Another set of seals or O-rings 144 seal between the section 136 and the box body 138.

The section 136 includes a wall 146 of reduced thickness providing a recess 148 open to the exterior of the tool 120 through one or more passages 150. The assembly 130 may include a sleeve 152 having an annular rim 154 comprising a pressure reaction

surface. An O-ring or other seal 156 may seal between the rim 154 and the inside of the wall 146 to provide a piston operable by a pressure differential between hydrostatic pressure in the well acting through the passage 150 against the underside 158 of the rim 154 and pressure applied from above acting on the top 160 of the rim 154. The sleeve 152 may normally be kept in place by a shear pin 162 or other similar device.

It will be seen that a pressure applied from above through the inside of the tool 120 passes through an opening 164 in the box body 138 and acts on the top 160 of the rim 154. When the downward force applied in this manner sufficiently exceeds the upward force on the rim 134 by hydrostatic pressure outside the tool 120, the shear pin 162 fails and the sleeve 152 moves from an upper position shown in Figure 8 to a lower position shown in Figure 9.

The bottom of the sleeve 152 may be equipped with a suitable aid to fracture the upper disc 126. This may be a pointed element 166 attached to the inside of the sleeve 152 in any suitable manner, as by a lattice work frame 168.

As in the previously described embodiments, the isolation tool 120 may be used in any situation where it is desired to pressure separate one section of a hydrocarbon well from another. Assuming

the tool 120 is run in a production string analogous to those shown in Figures 2 and 6, pressure applied from above is sufficient to hydraulically set a packer (not shown) but is not sufficient to shear the pin 162. After the packer (not shown) is set, additional pressure is applied from above which is sufficient to shear the pin 162 but is not sufficient to fracture the convex side of the disc 126. When the pin 162 shears, the sleeve 152 moves downwardly with sufficient force that the point 166 impacts the frangible disc 126 thereby rupturing it. Pressure inside the tool 120 is sufficient to rupture the much weaker lower disc 128 because the pressure differential is applied to the concave side of the disc 128.

Thus, in common with the tools 10, 70, the isolation tool 120 opens communication between the previously isolated parts of a well upon the application of pressure from above that is less than the rated capacity of the convex side of the upper disc 126.

Referring to Figures 10-11, an improved pressure disk 170 is illustrated having a generally hemispherical central section 172 providing a circular edge 174, a convex outer surface 176, a concave inner surface 178 and a cylindrical skirt 180 extending substantially from the circular edge 174 below the curved portion of the disk 170. The cylindrical skirt 180 includes an inner

cylindrical wall 182 and an outer cylindrical wall 184 providing an extended sealing area as shown in Figure 11 where multiple sealing elements or O-rings 186, 188 seal between the disk 170 and a housing 190 which may be part of an isolation tool 192 or other tool where a frangible pressure disk is necessary or desirable.

The advantage of the elongate cylindrical skirt 180 is it provides sufficient area for multiple sealing elements, such as a pair of O-rings or other seals or one or more seals with a backup seal or device. It is much simpler to seal against the outer cylindrical wall 184 than against a curved portion of the hemispherical central section 172. In fact, seals heretofore used with hemispherical pressure disks of the type disclosed herein were crushed to accommodate and seal against the arcuate side of the pressure disk. Sealing against the cylindrical surface 182 is much simpler, more reliable, more reproducible and more efficient. Thus, the skirt 180 may be of any suitable length sufficient to provide a cylindrical surface of sufficient length to receive at least one seal member on the O.D. and, preferably, two seal members. Thus, in a typical situation in disks 170 of 2" diameter and greater the skirt 180 may be at least 1" long.

The disk 170 may be made of any frangible material, such as ceramic, porcelain or glass, i.e. from the same materials as the pressure disks previously described.

It will be apparent that the outer cylindrical wall 184 may be manufactured in a variety of techniques. One simple technique is to grind the outer diameter of a hemispherical disk to provide the cylindrical wall 184. A preferred technique may be to manufacture the disk 170 with an elongate cylindrical skirt 180 as illustrated in Figures 10-11 and then grind the outer diameter to a smoothness compatible with O-ring type seals. This smoothness, known to machinists as a seal finish or O-ring seal finish is known more technically as 63-32 on a scale known as RMS or Root Mean Square. In this system, and simplified for purposes of illustration, the number is a measure, in microns, of the difference between the heights of small protrusions and the depths of small depressions in the surface. The smaller the number, the smoother the surface.

The scope of the claims should not be limited by the preferred embodiments set forth in the examples, but should be given the broadest interpretation consistent with the description as a whole.

CLAIMS:

1. A down hole well isolation tool comprising

a housing having a passage therethrough, an upper end and a lower end;

a first rupturable disc having a first side capable of withstanding a first pressure differential and a second side capable of withstanding a second pressure differential substantially greater than the first pressure, the second side of the first disc facing the upper housing end;

a second rupturable disc having a first side capable of withstanding a third pressure differential and a second side capable of withstanding a fourth pressure differential substantially greater than the third pressure differential, the second side of the second disc facing the lower housing end; and

means for rupturing one of the discs by creating a pressure differential across a weaker side of the one disc greater than the one disc can withstand.

2. The down hole well isolation tool of claim 1 wherein the rupturing means comprises means creating a pressure differential, uniform across the one disc, by applying pressure at a location between the first and second discs.

3. The down hole well isolation tool of claim 2 wherein the pressure differential creating means comprises a passageway through the closed housing wall between the first and second discs.

4. The downhole well isolation tool of claim 3 wherein the passageway opens into the tool at a location above the upper disc.

5. The downhole well isolation tool of claim 3 wherein the pressure differential creating means comprises a tube having one end communicating with the passageway and a second end communicating with the interior of the housing at a location above the first disc whereby pressure may be applied between the first and second discs from above the first and second discs.

6. The downhole well isolation tool of claim 2 wherein the pressure differential creating means comprises a passageway communicating from an exterior of the housing to a location between the first and second discs and a check valve in the passageway allowing fluid to enter between the discs and create a pressure therein.

7. The downhole well isolation tool of claim 2 wherein the pressure differential creating means comprises a continuously open passageway communicating from an exterior of the housing to a location between the first and second discs allowing fluid to enter between the discs and create a pressure therein.

8. The downhole well isolation tool of claim 2 wherein the pressure differential creating means comprises a continuously open passageway communicating from an exterior of the housing to a location between the first and second discs allowing fluid to enter between the discs and create a pressure therein.

9. The downhole well isolation tool of claim 1 wherein the first and third pressure differentials are equal.

10. The downhole well isolation tool of claim 1 wherein the second and fourth pressure differentials are equal.

11. A downhole well isolation tool having a passage therethrough and comprising a housing having therein a pair of pressure resistant rupturable discs temporarily blocking flow through the passage, each disc having a strong side more resistant to pressure applied in a first axial direction and a weak side less

resistant to pressure applied in a second opposite axial direction, an upper of the discs having its strong side facing an upper end of the housing and a lower of the discs having its strong side facing a lower end of the housing and means for inducing failure of one of the discs at a time when the other disc is intact by creating a differential pressure across the one disc acting in the second opposite axial direction.

12. The downhole well isolation tool of claim 11 wherein the failure inducing means comprises a passageway having one opening into the housing between the discs and another end opening into the tool at a location above the first disc whereby pressure applied to the tool from above the discs creates a high pressure region between the discs.

13. The downhole well isolation tool of claim 12 wherein the passageway comprises a tube on an exterior of the tool.

14. The downhole well isolation tool of claim 11 wherein the failure inducing means comprises a passageway open at one end to an exterior of the housing and open at an opposite end to a chamber inside the housing between the discs and a check valve in the passageway allowing fluid entry to the chamber.

15. The downhole well isolation tool of claim 11 wherein the failure inducing means comprises a continuously open passageway open at one end to an exterior of the housing and open at an opposite end to a chamber inside the housing between the discs allowing fluid entry to the chamber.

16. A downhole well isolation tool comprising a housing having a passage therethrough and a pair of pressure resistant rupturable discs temporarily blocking flow through the passage, each disc being concave on one side resistant to a first pressure and convex on an opposite side resistant to a second pressure greater than the first pressure, the discs being disposed in the housing with the concave sides facing each other, the housing providing a passageway opening between the discs for admitting a fluid to create a pressure differential to rupture a first of the discs upon creation of a pressure differential across the first disc.

17. The downhole well isolation tool of claim 16 wherein the discs are ceramic.

18. A method of opening a down hole well isolation tool of the type temporarily blocking flow through a passage provided by the

tool, the tool comprising a housing having a closed wall, an upper end and a lower end; a first disc having a concave side and a convex side; a second disc having a concave side and a convex side, the concave sides of the discs facing each other; and a passageway through the closed housing wall at a location between intact first and second discs, the method comprising rupturing one of the discs by applying a pressure between the first and second discs.

19. The method of claim 18 wherein the step of applying pressure between the first and second discs comprises admitting well fluid from an exterior of the tool into a chamber between the discs and reducing pressure above the first disc to create a pressure differential across the first disc acting against the concave side of the first disc.

20. The method of claim 19 wherein the step of admitting well fluid into the chamber comprises admitting well fluid through a check valve.

21. The method of claim 19 wherein the step of admitting well fluid into the chamber comprises admitting well fluid through a continuously open passageway.

22. The method of claim 19 further comprising rupturing the second disc after the first disc is ruptured by applying pressure against the concave side of the second disc.

23. The method of claim 18 wherein the step of applying pressure between the first and second discs comprises admitting well fluid from an interior of the housing above the first disc to a chamber between the first and second discs to create a pressure differential across the second disc acting against the concave side of the second disc and thereby rupturing the second disc.

24. The method of claim 18 further comprising rupturing the first disc after the second disc is ruptured by applying formation pressure from below the tool against the concave side of the second disc.

24. A method of communicating opposite ends of a down hole isolation tool having a passage therethrough and comprising first and second rupturable discs temporarily blocking flow through the passage, the first disc having a convex side and a concave side and the second disc having a convex side and a concave side, the concave sides facing each other, comprising rupturing one of the discs by applying pressure between the

discs and then rupturing the other disc by applying pressure to its concave side.

25. The method of claim 24 wherein the step of rupturing the one disc comprises rupturing the first disc by providing a pressure source between the discs and reducing pressure on the convex side of the first disc and the step of rupturing the other disc comprises rupturing the second disc by applying pressure through a location of the first disc against the concave side of the second disc.

26. The method of claim 24 wherein the step of rupturing the one disc comprises rupturing the second disc by providing a pressure to the convex side of the first disc and between the discs and the step of rupturing the other disc comprises rupturing the first disc by delivering formation pressure against the concave side of the first disc.

27. A tool comprising a housing, a frangible pressure disk made of a material selected from the group consisting of ceramic, porcelain and glass and comprising a central arcuate section having a circular edge, an outwardly facing convex side, an inwardly facing concave side and a skirt depending from the

circular edge to provide an outer cylindrical wall and at least two seals sealing between the outer cylindrical wall and the housing.

28. The pressure disk of claim 27 wherein the skirt has an inner cylindrical wall parallel to the outer cylindrical wall.

29. The pressure disk of claim 27 wherein the outer cylindrical wall has an O-ring seal finish.

30. The pressure disk of claim 27 wherein the skirt is at least about 1" long.

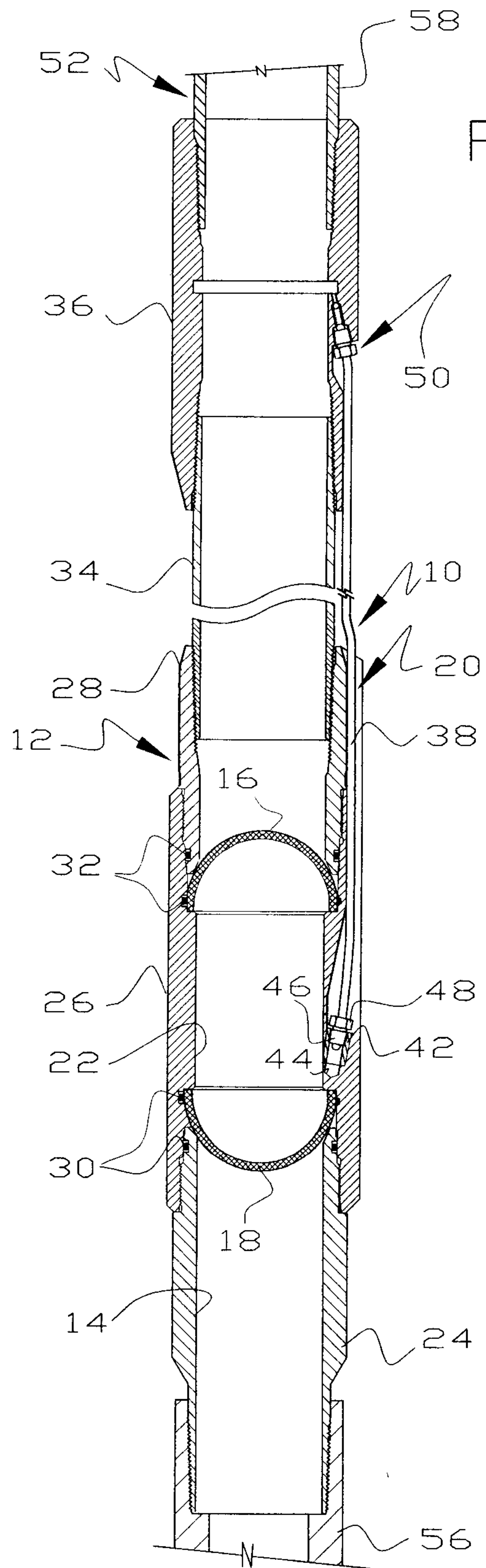


Fig.1

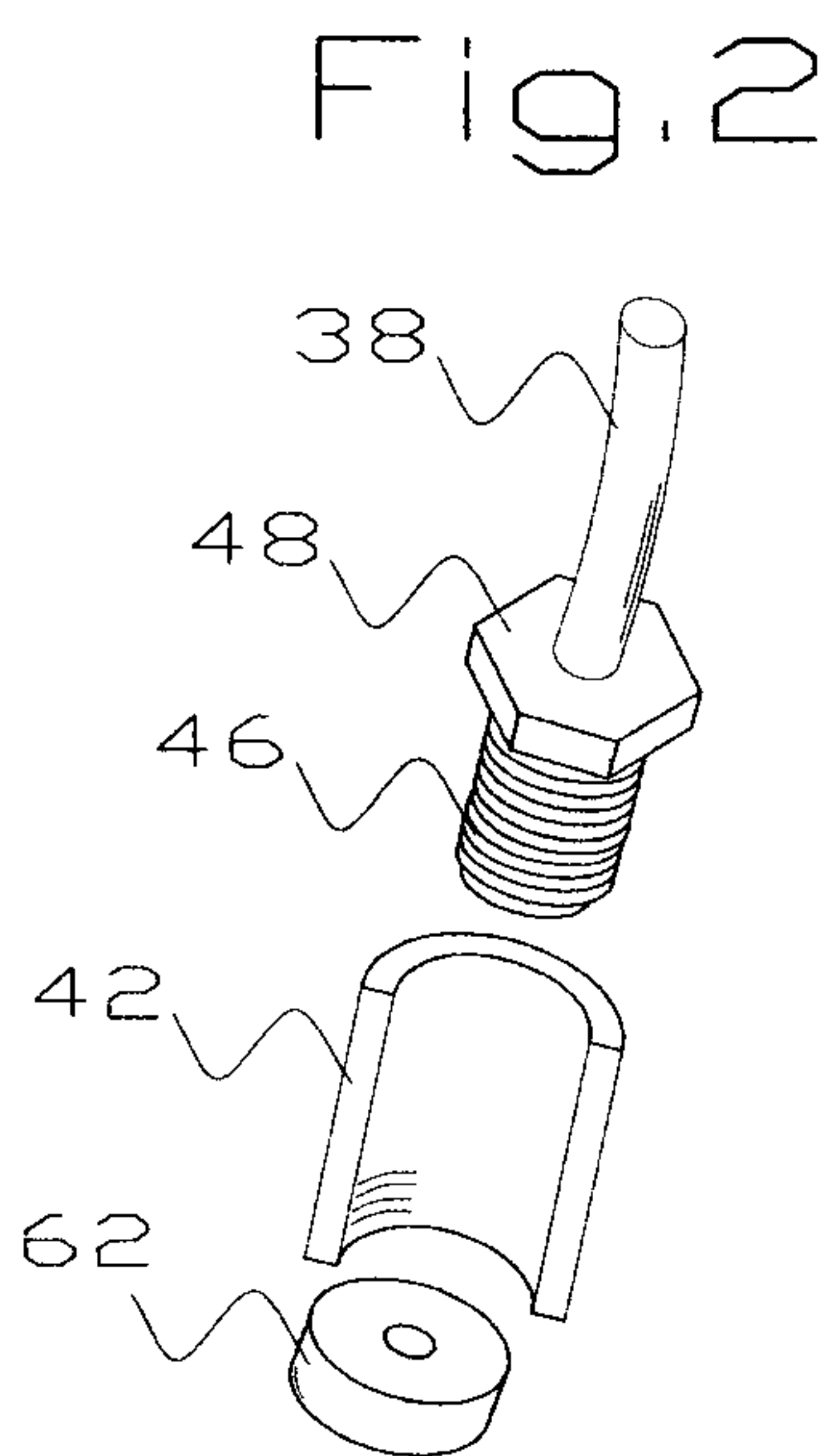


Fig.2

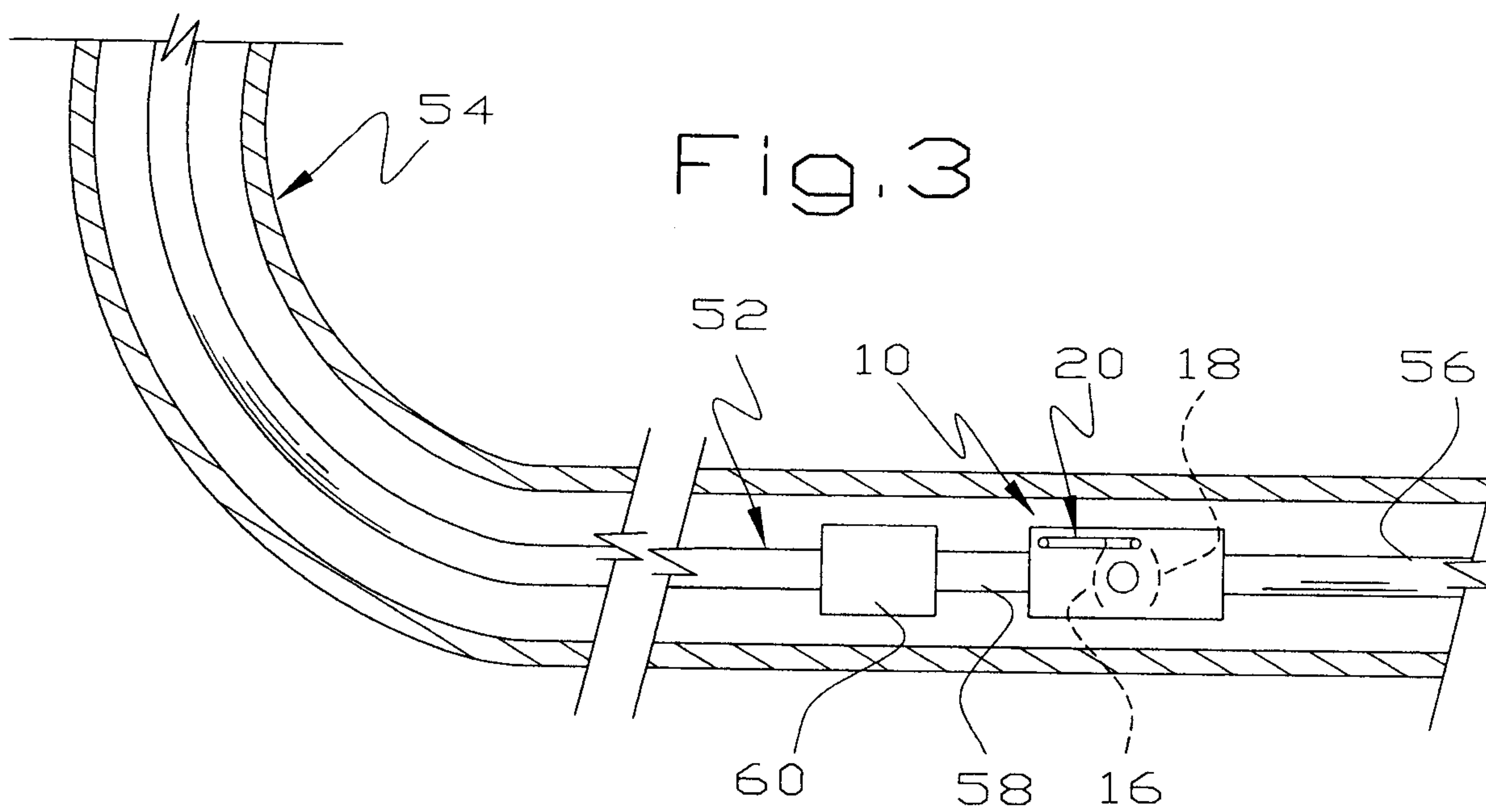
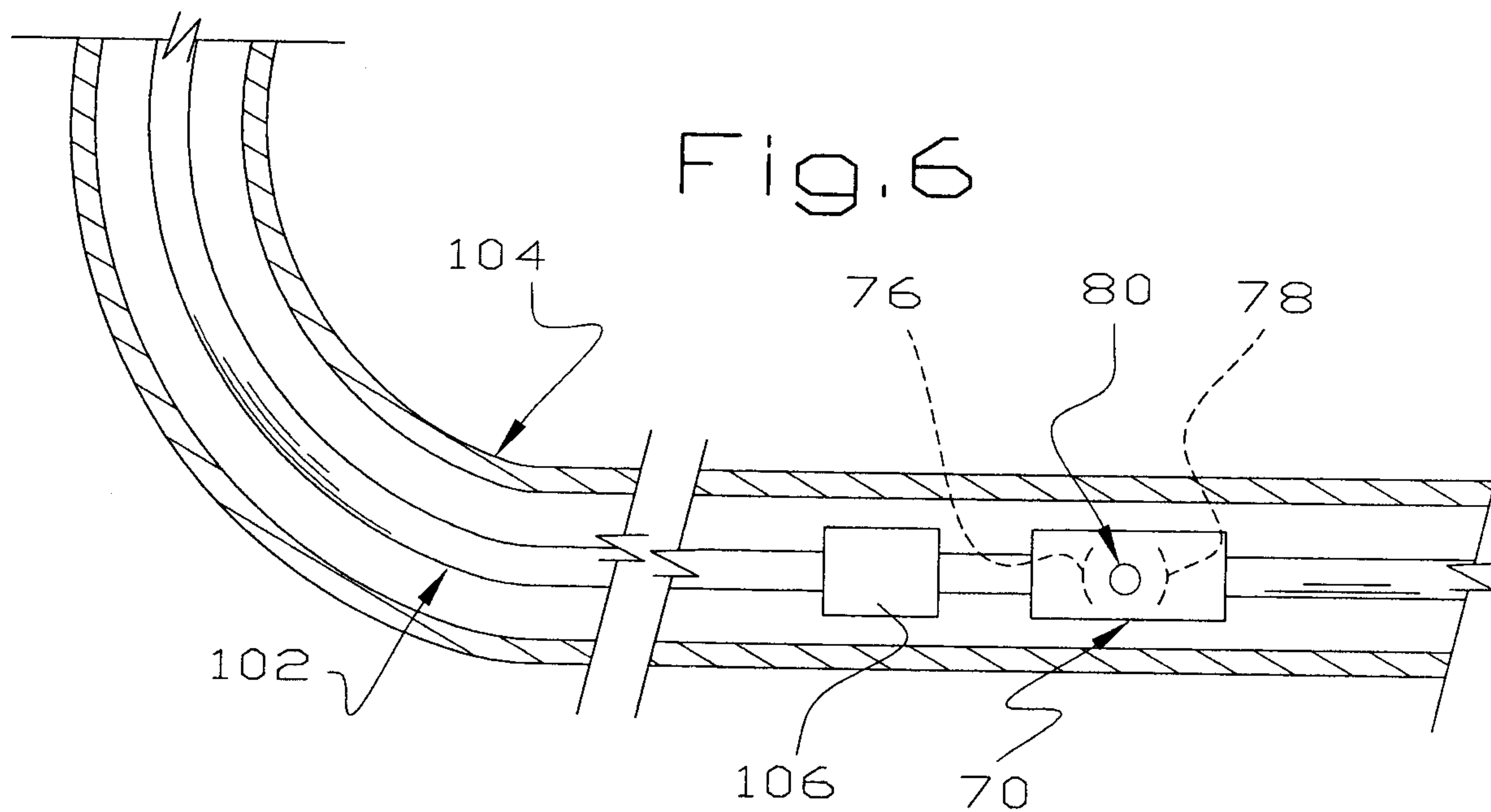


Fig.4

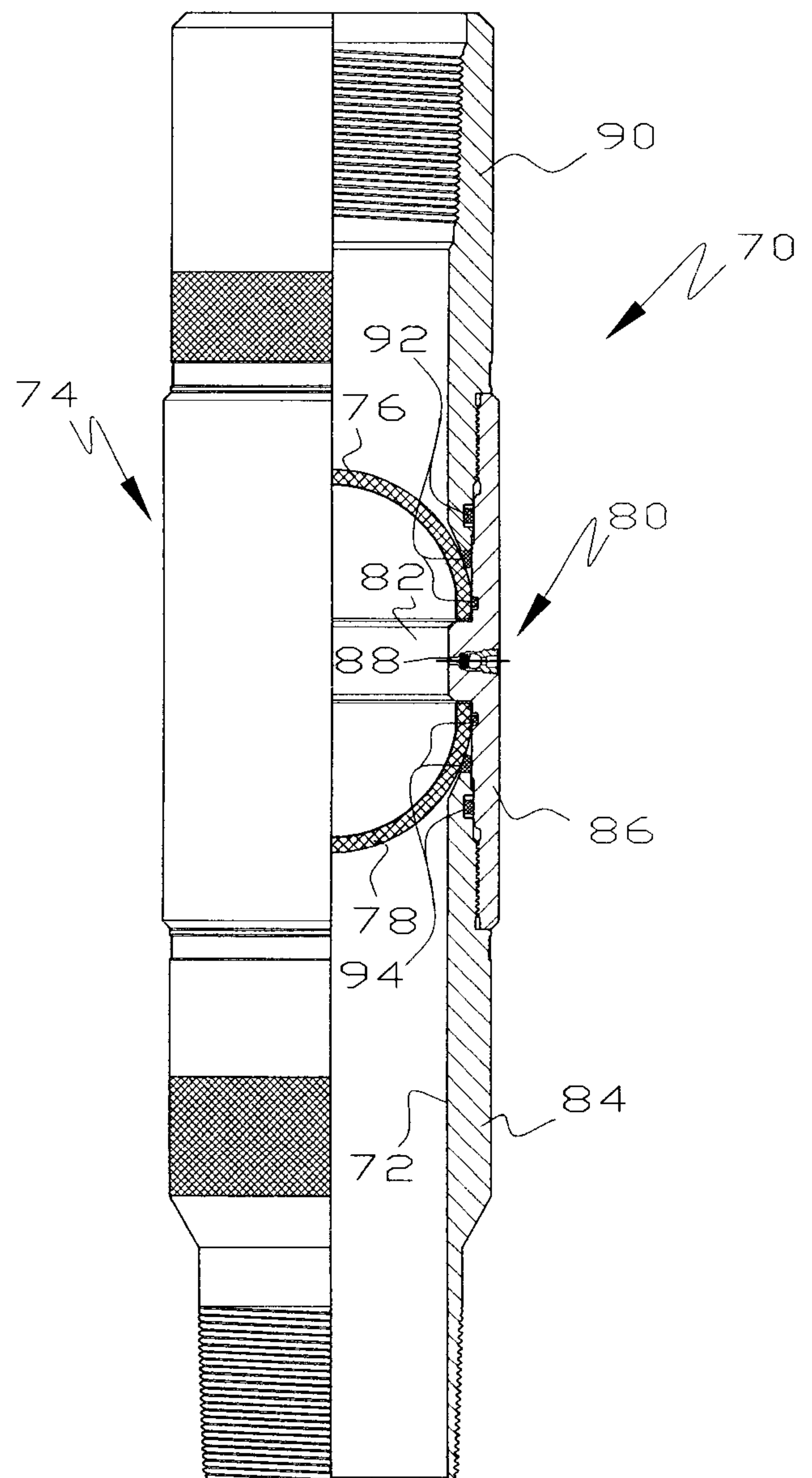


Fig.5

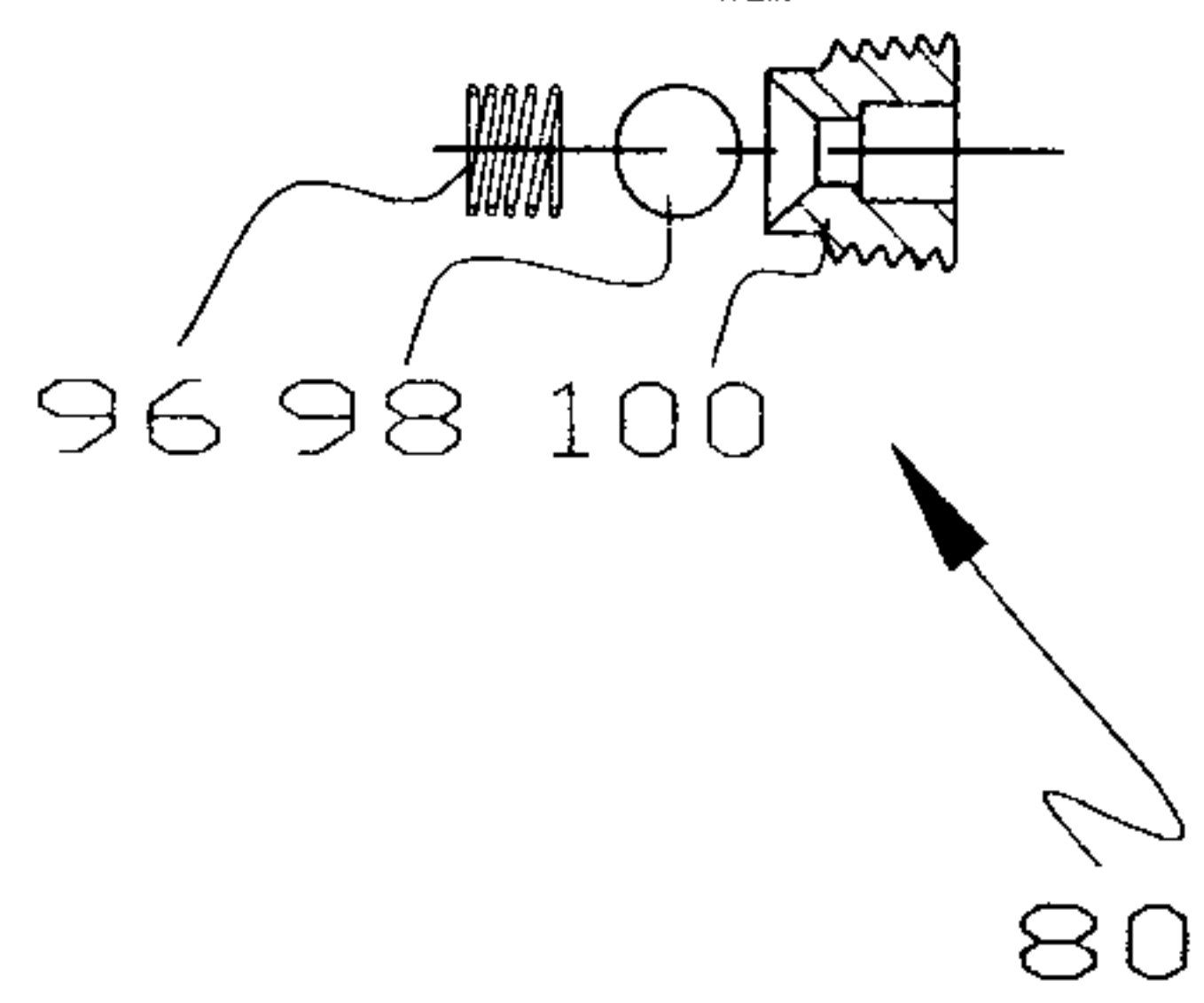


Fig. 8

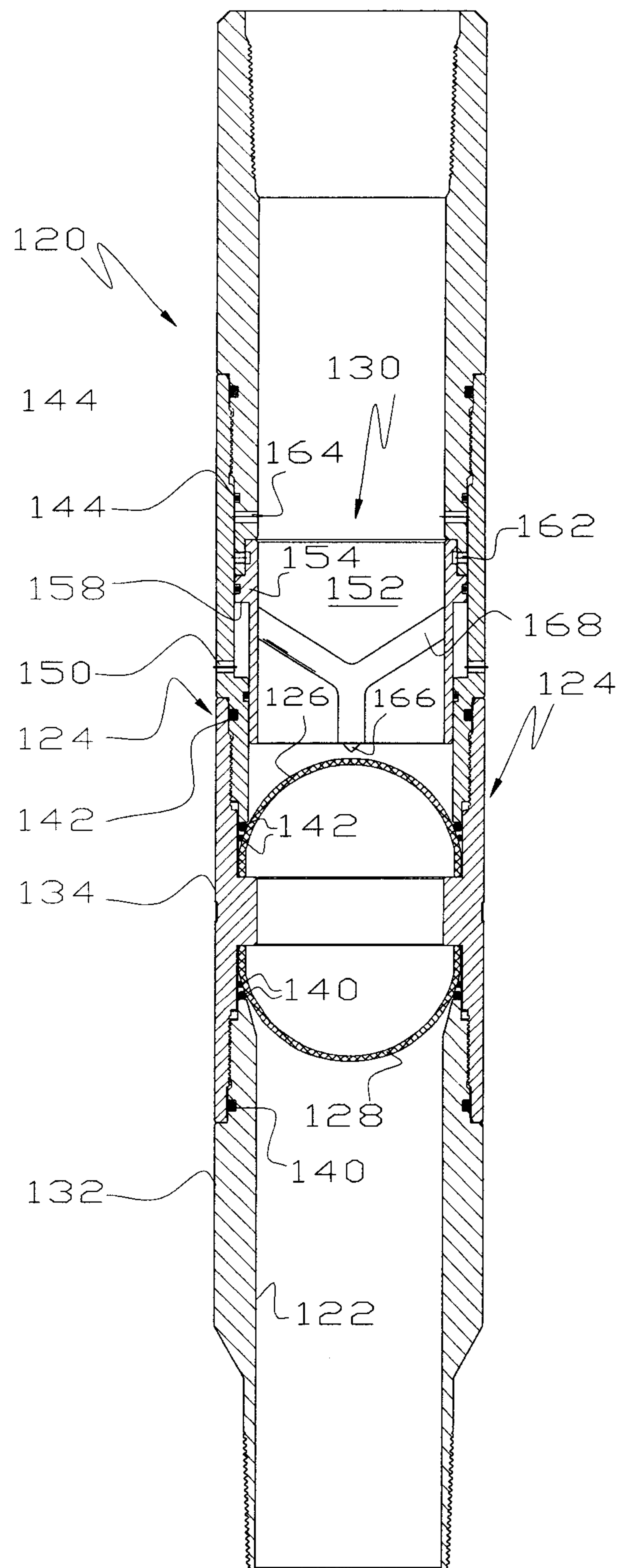


Fig. 9

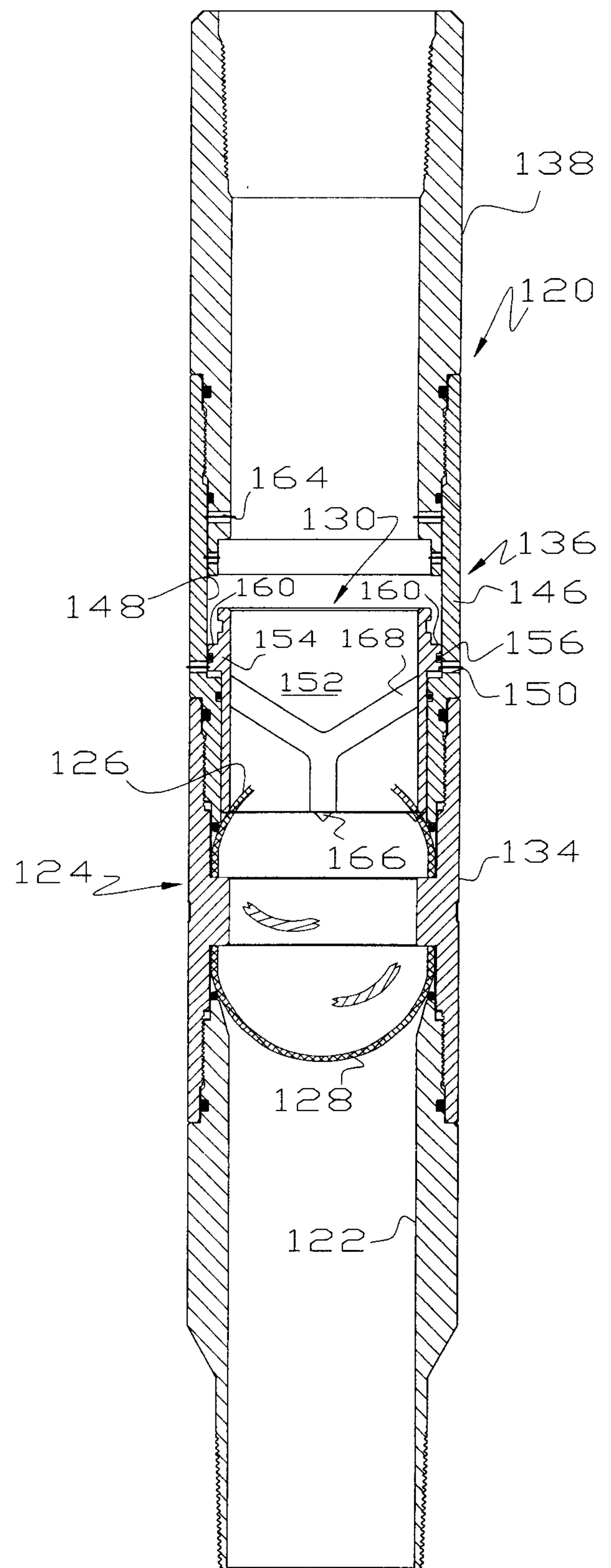


Fig.11

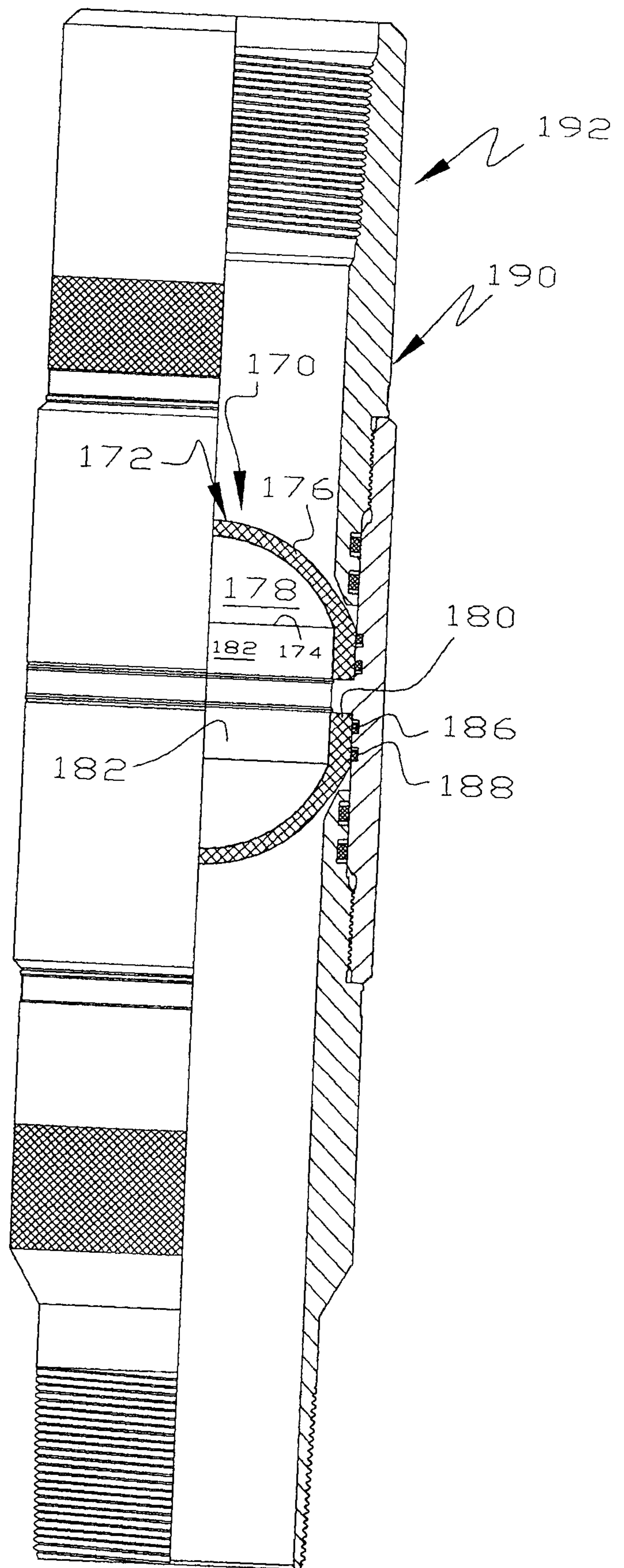


Fig.10

