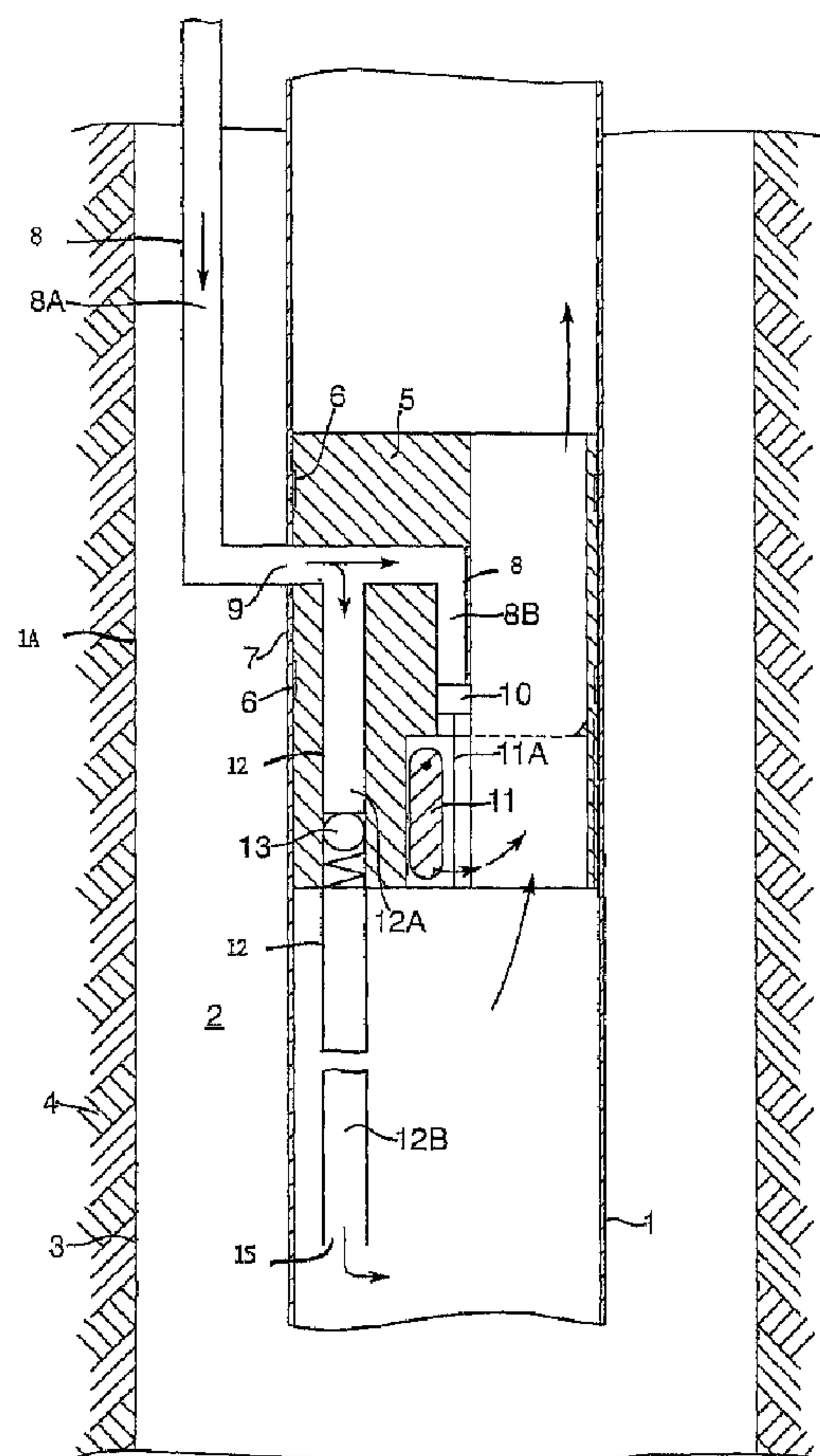




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(71) Demandeur/Applicant:
SHELL CANADA LIMITED, CA
(72) Inventeurs/Inventors:
VAN EIJDEN, GERBRAND JOZEF MARIA, NL;
LUGTMEIER, LUBBERTUS, NL
(74) Agent: SMART & BIGGAR

(54) Titre : PROCEDE ET SYSTEME DESTINES A INJECTER UN FLUIDE DE TRAITEMENT DANS UN Puits
(54) Title: METHOD AND SYSTEM FOR INJECTING A TREATMENT FLUID INTO A WELL



(57) **Abrégé/Abstract:**

A method and system for injecting a treatment fluid into a well comprising a surface controlled subsurface safety valve (5), which is controlled by varying fluid pressure in a valve control conduit (8) which extends from the safety valve to a wellhead of the well,



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

wherein treatment fluid is injected into the well via the valve control conduit (8) to a fluid injection opening for discharging treatment fluid into the well; and wherein a treatment fluid injection conduit (12) is arranged which is connected to the valve control conduit (8), and which comprises the at least one treatment fluid injection opening and a one way check valve (13) which prevents fluid flow from each treatment fluid injection opening via the treatment fluid injection conduit into the valve control conduit, which treatment fluid injection conduit is arranged into a section of the well which is located below the safety valve (5) such that at least one treatment fluid injection opening is located below the safety valve.

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(71) Applicant (for AE, AG, AL, AM, AT, AU, AZ, BA, BB, BE, BG, BR, BW, BY, BZ, CH, CN, CO, CR, CU, CY, CZ, DE, DK, DM, DZ, EC, EE, EG, ES, FI, GB, GD, GE, GH, GM, HR, HU, ID, IL, IN, IS, JP, KE, KG, KP, KR, KZ, LC, LK, LR, LS, LT, LU, LV, MA, MD, MG, MK, MN, MW,

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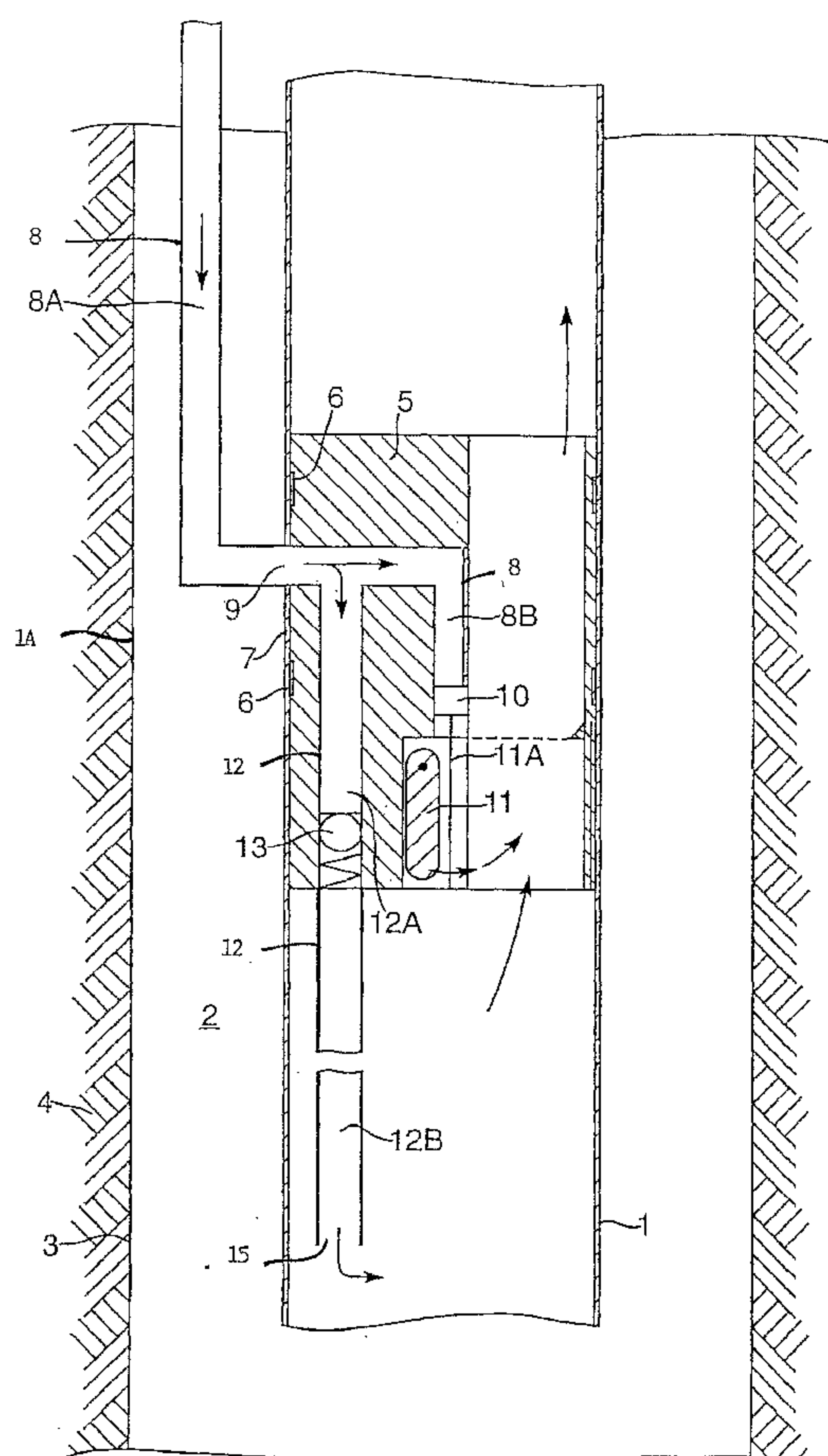
(71) Applicant (for CA only): **SHELL CANADA LIMITED** [CA/CA]; 400 - 4th Avenue S.W., Calgary, Alberta T2P 2H5 (CA).

(72) Inventors; and
(75) Inventors/Applicants (for US only): **VAN EIJDEN, Gerbrand, Jozef, Maria** [NL/NL]; Volmerlaan 8, NL-2288 GD Rijswijk (NL). **LUGTMEIER, Lubbertus** [NL/NL]; Schepersmaat 2, NL-9405 TA Assen (NL).

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[Continued on next page]

(54) Title: METHOD AND SYSTEM FOR INJECTING A TREATMENT FLUID INTO A WELL



(57) Abstract: A method and system for injecting a treatment fluid into a well comprising a surface controlled subsurface safety valve (5), which is controlled by varying fluid pressure in a valve control conduit (8) which extends from the safety valve to a wellhead of the well, wherein treatment fluid is injected into the well via the valve control conduit (8) to a fluid injection opening for discharging treatment fluid into the well; and wherein a treatment fluid injection conduit (12) is arranged which is connected to the valve control conduit (8), and which comprises the at least one treatment fluid injection opening and a one way check valve (13) which prevents fluid flow from each treatment fluid injection opening via the treatment fluid injection conduit into the valve control conduit, which treatment fluid injection conduit is arranged into a section of the well which is located below the safety valve (5) such that at least one treatment fluid injection opening is located below the safety valve.

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METHOD AND SYSTEM FOR INJECTING A TREATMENT FLUID INTO A
WELL

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

The invention relates to a method and system for injecting a treatment fluid into a well.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

5 It is often desirable to inject a treatment fluid into a crude oil and/or natural gas production well. The treatment fluid may contain a corrosion or hydrate inhibitor, a viscosity reducing agent, a chemical agent to prevent deposition of sulphur, asphaltenes or waxes,
10 or a foam generating agent which inhibits accumulation of condensed water and/or condensates downhole in the well.

 Many oil and/or natural gas production wells are equipped with a Surface Controlled Subsurface Safety Valve (known as a SCSSV) which may be suspended at about
15 100 m depth in the production tubing. A SCSSV automatically closes if the hydraulic pressure in the SCSSV hydraulic control conduit falls away, for example as a result of a power supply interruption at the oil and/or gas production facilities at the earth surface,
20 impact on the wellhead from outside or an emergency shut-down action.

 It is known from US patent 4,042,033 to inject a chemical fluid into the production tubing above a SCSSV via the hydraulic control conduit of the SCSSV, which is
25 equipped with a chemical injection opening just above the SCSSV. The injected chemical is used to provide hydraulic pressure to keep the SCSSV open, and is bled off into the production tubing above the SCSSV via a one-way check

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valve that is mounted in the upper part of SCSSV assembly.

A problem associated with the known SCSSV assembly is that it does not allow to inject chemicals into sections of the well below the SCSSV. The SCSSV assembly blocks the possibility of suspending a chemical injection conduit from the wellhead into the production tubing below the SCSSV, as the chemical injection conduit would form an obstruction to closure of the SCSSV in an emergency situation.

It is an object of the present invention to provide a method and system for injecting a treatment fluid into a well which is equipped with a SCSSV to downhole regions of the well that are located below the SCSSV.

It is a further object of the present invention to provide a method and system for injecting a treatment fluid into a well, which is equipped with a SCSSV, such that only a minimal amount of hydraulic control and chemical injection conduits are present in the well, and such that they only provide minimal obstruction in the wellbore.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

In accordance with the invention there is provided a method of injecting a treatment fluid into a well comprising a surface controlled subsurface safety valve, which is controlled by varying fluid pressure in a valve control conduit which extends from the safety valve to a wellhead of the well, the method comprising:

- injecting treatment fluid into the well via the valve control conduit to a fluid injection opening for discharging treatment fluid into the well;

wherein a treatment fluid injection conduit is arranged which is connected to the valve control conduit,

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and which comprises the at least one treatment fluid injection opening and a one way check valve which prevents fluid flow from each treatment fluid injection opening via the treatment fluid injection conduit into the valve control conduit, which treatment fluid injection conduit is arranged into a section of the well which is located below the safety valve such that at least one treatment fluid injection opening is located below the safety valve.

The invention also provides a system for injecting a treatment fluid into a well comprising a surface controlled subsurface safety valve, which is controlled by varying fluid pressure in a valve control conduit which extends from the safety valve to a wellhead of the well, the system comprising a valve control conduit which comprises at least one treatment fluid injection opening for discharging treatment fluid into the well; and which system further comprises

- a treatment fluid injection conduit for injecting treatment fluid into the well, which treatment fluid injection conduit is connected to the valve control conduit, and which treatment fluid injection conduit comprises the at least one treatment fluid injection opening and a one way check valve which prevents fluid flow from each treatment fluid injection opening via the treatment fluid injection conduit into the valve control conduit, and wherein the treatment fluid injection conduit is arranged to extend into a section of the well which is located below the safety valve such that at least one treatment fluid injection opening is located below the safety valve.

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At least one treatment fluid injection opening is suitably located at a substantial distance below the safety valve.

5 Suitably, all treatment fluid injection openings are located below the safety valve, in particular a substantial distance below the safety valve.

10 In a preferred embodiment of the method and system according to the invention the safety valve (SCSSV) is mounted in a production tubing, in particular in a production tubing of a gas well. Suitably then, the treatment fluid injection conduit is suspended from the safety valve into the production tubing below the safety valve such that at least one treatment fluid injection opening is located at a substantial distance below the safety valve. The distance can for example be 100 m or more. The treatment fluid can in particular comprise a foaming agent.

20 In such case the treatment fluid injection conduit may extend along a length of several kilometres through the production tubing, optionally into an inflow region near the bottom of the wellbore, below the safety valve. The foaming agent may comprise a surface active agent which is injected in a liquid phase through the valve control and treatment fluid injection conduit and which generates a foam if it is blended in the well with aqueous components of the produced natural gas.

25 The treatment fluid can also comprise a chemical, preferably a metal alkyl, that is reactive with a liquid present in the well to form a reaction product comprising a solid.

30 Preferably, the valve control conduit comprises an elongate upper valve control conduit section which extends through an annular space between the production

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tubing and a well casing between the wellhead and an opening in the production tubing, and a short lower valve control conduit section which extends through the housing of the safety valve and which is connected to a hydraulic safety valve control mechanism which is configured to maintain the safety valve in an open position if the pressure of the treatment fluid in the lower valve control conduit section is above a predetermined threshold pressure and to close the safety valve if said fluid pressure is below said predetermined threshold pressure.

In such case the safety valve may be retrievably mounted within the production tubing and the treatment fluid injection conduit has an upper section which passes through the housing of the safety valve, which is connected to the lower safety valve control conduit section and which comprises the one way check valve and an elongate flexible lower section which is suspended from a lower end of the safety valve housing into the production tubing below the safety valve.

Preferably, the one way check valve is configured to open if the pressure difference across the one way check valve is above a trigger pressure which is significantly higher than the threshold pressure, such that:

- if a moderate fluid pressure is maintained in the valve control conduit such that the threshold pressure is exceeded, but the trigger pressure is not exceeded, the safety valve is open, but the check valve is closed, so that gas is produced via the well, but no treatment fluid is injected into the well via the treatment fluid injection conduit; and
- if a high fluid pressure is maintained in the valve control conduit, the trigger and threshold pressure are

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both exceeded such that the safety valve and check valves are both open, and gas is produced to surface and treatment fluid is injected into the produced gas stream via the treatment fluid injection conduit.

5 The safety valve (SCSSV) may be a flapper type valve, or alternatively a ball valve, and may be equipped with a spring mechanism, which is configured to close the valve if the pressure of the treatment fluid in the lower section of the safety valve control conduit is lower than
10 the threshold pressure.

 These and other features, advantages and embodiments of the method and system according to the invention are described in the accompanying claims, abstract and detailed description with reference to the accompanying
15 drawing.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWING

 Fig. 1 is a schematic longitudinal sectional view of a production tubing in which a SCSSV is mounted and wherein a treatment fluid is injected into the production
20 tubing below the SCSSV via the SCSSV control conduit and a treatment fluid injection conduit which is suspended from the SCSSV.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

 Fig. 1 shows schematically an embodiment of the
25 invention. A production tubing 1 is suspended in a natural gas production well 1a, such that an annular space 2 is present between the production tubing 1 and a well casing 3. The well casing 3 is cemented or otherwise secured within a subsurface earth formation 4.

30 A Surface Controlled Subsurface Safety Valve (SCSSV) 5 is secured within the production tubing 1. The SCSSV 5 can be secured to the production tubing so that it is retrievable e.g. by wireline, and rests on a

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landing shoulder. It can also be mounted in a retrievable tubing, and then there is preferably provided a separate landing shoulder for another surface retrievable SCSSV as a back-up option in case of a failure. An assembly of sealing rings 6 form a sealed annular chamber 7 around the tubular housing of the SCSSV 5. The chamber 7 provides fluid communication between an upper section 8A of a safety valve control conduit 8, which extends through the annular space 2 from a wellhead (not shown) to an opening 9 in the production tubing 1, and a lower section 8B of the safety valve control conduit 8. The lower section 8B extends through the housing of the SCSSV 5 towards a hydraulic piston and cylinder assembly 10 which actuates a bushing 11A to release the flapper valve body 11 of the SCSSCV 5.

The flapper valve body is equipped with a spring (not shown), which pushes the flapper valve body up into a transversal position (indicated by a dashed line) in the production tubing 1 such that the SCSSV is closed if the pressure in said lower section 8B is below a predetermined threshold pressure, and such that if said pressure exceeds the predetermined threshold pressure the valve body 11 is pressed by the piston 10 and bushing 11A into a position as illustrated in Fig. 1, parallel to the longitudinal axis of the production tubing 1, such that the SCSSV 5 is open and permits a stream of natural gas to flow through the production tubing 1 to surface.

The lower section 8B of the SCSSV control conduit is connected to a treatment fluid injection conduit 12. The upper section 12A of the treatment fluid injection conduit 12 extends through the housing of the SCSSV 5 and in this upper section a one way check valve 13 is arranged which prevents fluids to flow up from the

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treatment fluid injection conduit into the lower section 8B of the SCSSV control conduit.

The treatment fluid injection conduit furthermore comprises a fluid discharge opening 15. In this embodiment the fluid discharge opening forms the lower end of an elongate flexible lower section 12B of the treatment fluid injection conduit, which is suspended from the bottom of the housing of the SCSSV 5 into the section of the production tubing 1 below the SCSSV 5.

The one way check valve 13 is provided with a spring, which is configured such that the spring closes the check valve 13 if the pressure difference across the check valve is below a certain switch value, which is generally reached if the pressure difference across the one way check valve 13 has reached a predetermined trigger value.

Said trigger value is selected well above the threshold value at which the SCSSV 5 closes, such that if a low fluid pressure is maintained in the lower section 8B (and therefore also in the uppermost section of the fluid injection conduit 12A) of the SCSSV control conduit both the SCSSV 5 and one way check valve 13 are closed, whereas if a moderate fluid pressure is maintained in said lower section 8B the threshold is exceeded, but the trigger pressure is not exceeded such that the SCSSV 5 is open, but the one way check valve 13 is closed, and when a high fluid pressure is maintained in said lower section 8B both the threshold and trigger pressure differences are exceeded and both the SCSSV 5 and the one way check valve 13 are open. In this case treatment fluid, which is pumped at the wellhead into the SCSSV control conduit is permitted to flow via said SCSSV control conduit and the treatment fluid injection conduit

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and one or more treatment fluid discharge openings 15 into the production tubing 1 below the SCSSV 5.

5 Treatment fluid discharge openings 15 may be arranged at selected intervals along the length of the lower section 12B of the treatment fluid injection conduit such that treatment fluid is injected at different depth intervals along the length of the production tubing 1 below the SCSSV 5.

10 The treatment fluid may comprise a foaming agent, such as a soap or similar surface active agent, which generates a foam if it is blended with a condensed water or other condensate, which may accumulate near the bottom of the well, and which foam has a lower density and larger surface area than the condensed water or other
15 condensates, and is commingled with the natural gas stream and produced to surface. Suitable foaming agents for use in gas wells may comprise polyoxylakylene sulfates, alkyl quarternary ammonium salts, betines or
20 alyalkylated alkylphenols that are contained in a solvent package comprising glycols and alcohols.

The treatment fluid may also comprise a viscosity reducing agent and/or a hydrate or corrosion inhibitor and/or a wax, asphaltene, scale and/or other antifouling agent or a combination of these. The treatment fluid may
25 also comprise a blend of various chemical compounds.

The present invention also provides a method for treating a well wherein a treatment fluid is injected into the wellbore that comprises a chemical treatment compound for reducing the height of a liquid column in a
30 well. The treatment fluid can in particular be injected via the valve control conduit and the treatment fluid injection conduit.

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Many gas wells suffer from liquid loading particularly near the end of their production life. At this stage the pressure in the surrounding formation has dropped considerably, and flow rates of gas have dropped accordingly. Below a certain critical flow rate, liquids start dropping out of the produced gas mixture, and this process is known as liquid loading. Gas well load-up is frequently the cause of abandonment of the well in pressure depleted reservoirs.

Liquids can be formed by condensation in the wellbore, or come from water influx. If the liquid starts accumulating, it will impose a backpressure on the formation that can affect the production capacity of the well. In a low pressure well the liquids may complete kill the well; in wells with higher flowing pressure, slugging or intermittent production of gas/liquid can occur.

A new solution to this problem is it to inject a treatment chemical into the well that reacts with the liquid to form a solid which sinks to the bottom of the well, and optionally a gas. The solid has a substantially higher density than the liquid, so that the loading in the well is reduced.

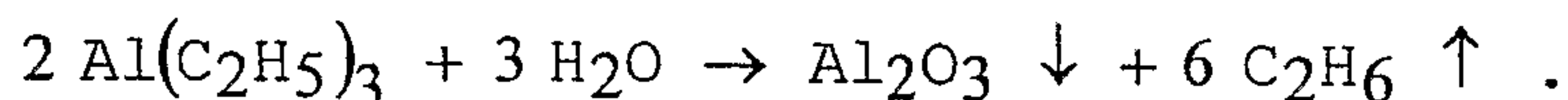
A suitable treatment fluid to this end comprises a metal alkyl, e.g. AlR_3 , BR_3 , MgR_2 , ZnR_2 or a similar compound, wherein R is an alkyl group, e.g. Methyl, Ethyl, Propyl, etc. Al-alkyls in particular are commodity chemicals, cheap and readily available, pure or in solution.

Metal alkyls react instantaneously with water, to form metal oxides and alkanes. The metal oxide will sink to the bottom of the well. The overall reaction gives a

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volume reduction of typically 95%, thereby extending the life time of a well that suffers from liquid loading.

A typical reaction is the following



5 The aluminium oxide will precipitate at the well bottom, and the ethane gas will be produced to surface. In order to control the reactivity the metal alkyl can be diluted in a hydrocarbon fluid. Also the choice of the various R groups can influence the reactivity towards
10 water.

Table 1 summarizes the results of the reaction of trimethylaluminium and triethylaluminium with water, and the associated volume reduction.

Table 1

H ₂ O	AlR ₃	AlR ₃	Gas	Gas	Al ₂ O ₃	volume reduction
m ³		m ³		m ³ (80°C, 50 bar)	m ³	%
1	all R = methyl	3.6	Methane	54	0.048	95
1	all R = ethyl	5.1	Ethane	54	0.048	95

15 The treatment fluid preferably is injected in a liquid phase through the SCSSV control and treatment fluid injection conduits 8 and 12, but may also be injected in a gaseous phase through said conduits. In such case the injected treatment fluid may be injected as a lift gas into the production tubing 1 below the
20 SCSSV 5, to reduce the density of a produced viscous crude oil stream and enhance crude oil production.

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If desired, the lower part 12B of the treatment fluid injection conduit may be retrievable secured to the upper part of 12A of the treatment fluid injection conduit by means of landing nipple (not shown) within the lower part of the SCSSV housing. In such a case the lower part 12B of the treatment fluid injection conduit is lowered through the open SCSSV 5 by a wireline tool or well robot and coupled to the landing nipple.

The lower part 12B of the treatment fluid injection conduit may be a steel conduit, which may be several kilometers long and have an outer diameter, which is less than a centimeter, preferably less than a 0.5 centimeter. Such an elongate small diameter conduit contains only a relatively small amount of treatment fluid. This prevents chemical degradation and possible blockage within the treatment injection conduit 12. In case the lower section 12B of the small diameter treatment fluid injection conduit is damaged only a small amount of treatment fluid is released instantly into the wellbore, which does not result in formation damage or blocking production.

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C L A I M S

1. A method of injecting a treatment fluid into a well comprising a surface controlled subsurface safety valve, which is controlled by varying fluid pressure in a valve control conduit which extends from the safety valve to a wellhead of the well, the method comprising injecting treatment fluid into the well via the valve control conduit to a fluid injection opening for discharging treatment fluid into the well;

wherein a treatment fluid injection conduit is arranged which is connected to the valve control conduit, and which comprises the at least one treatment fluid injection opening and a one way check valve which prevents fluid flow from each treatment fluid injection opening via the treatment fluid injection conduit into the valve control conduit, which treatment fluid injection conduit is arranged into a section of the well which is located below the safety valve such that at least one treatment fluid injection opening is located below the safety valve.

2. The method of claim 1, wherein at least one treatment fluid injection opening is located at a substantial distance below the safety valve.

3. The method according to claim 1 or 2, wherein the treatment fluid injection conduit is suspended downwardly from the safety valve such that at least one treatment fluid injection opening is located at least 100 m below the safety valve.

4. The method according to any one of claims 1-3, wherein the safety valve is mounted in a production

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tubing of the well, in particular a gas well, and wherein the treatment fluid injection conduit is suspended into the production tubing, optionally through the production tubing into an inflow region of the well.

5 5. The method of any one of claims 1 to 4, wherein the treatment fluid comprises a foaming agent.

10 6. The method of claim 5, wherein the treatment fluid injection conduit extends through production tubing below the safety valve-, optionally into an inflow region of the well, and the foaming agent comprises a surface active agent which is injected in a liquid phase through the valve control and treatment fluid injection conduit, and which generates a foam if it is blended in the production tubing with aqueous components of the produced
15 natural gas.

20 7. The method of any one of claims 1-6, wherein the valve control conduit comprises an elongate upper valve control conduit section which extends through an annular space between the production tubing and a well casing between the wellhead and an opening in the production tubing, and a short lower valve control conduit section which extends through the housing of the safety valve and which is connected to a hydraulic safety valve control mechanism which is configured to maintain the safety
25 valve in an open position if a pressure difference between the treatment fluid in the lower valve control conduit and well fluids in flowing through the safety valve is above a predetermined threshold pressure difference and to close the safety valve if the said
30 pressure difference is below said predetermined threshold pressure difference.

8. The method of claim 7, wherein the safety valve is retrievably mounted within the production tubing and the

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treatment fluid injection conduit has an upper section which passes through the housing of the safety valve, which is connected to the lower safety valve control conduit section and which comprises the one way check valve and an elongate flexible lower section which is suspended from a lower end of the safety valve housing into the production tubing below the safety valve.

9. The method of claim 6 or 7, wherein the one way check valve is configured to open if the pressure difference across the one way check valve is above a trigger pressure which is significantly higher than the threshold pressure, such that:

- if a moderate pressure is maintained in the lower section of the safety valve control conduit the pressure across the one way check valve is below the threshold pressure, but the pressure difference between the treatment fluid in said lower section is above the trigger pressure below, such that the safety valve is open, but the check valve is closed, and gas and/or crude oil is produced via the well, but no treatment fluid is injected into the well via the treatment fluid injection conduit; and

- if a high pressure is maintained in the lower section of the safety valve control conduit the fluid pressure difference across the one way check valve is above the trigger pressure, and the safety valve and check valve are both open, and gas is produced to surface and treatment fluid is simultaneously injected into the produced gas stream via the treatment fluid injection conduit.

10. The method of any one of claims 1 to 9, wherein the treatment fluid comprises a chemical, preferably a metal

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alkyl, that is reactive with a liquid present in the well to form a reaction product comprising a solid.

11. A system for injecting a treatment fluid into a well comprising a surface controlled subsurface safety valve, which is controlled by varying fluid pressure in a valve control conduit which extends from the safety valve to a wellhead of the well, the system comprising a valve control conduit and at least one treatment fluid injection opening for discharging treatment fluid into the well; and which system further comprises

- a treatment fluid injection conduit for injecting treatment fluid into the well, which treatment fluid injection conduit is connected to the valve control conduit, and which treatment fluid injection conduit comprises the at least one treatment fluid injection opening and a one way check valve which prevents fluid flow from each treatment fluid injection opening via the treatment fluid injection conduit into the valve control conduit, and wherein the treatment fluid injection conduit is arranged to extend into a section of the well which is located below the safety valve such that at least one treatment fluid injection opening is located below the safety valve.

12. The system of claim 11, wherein the at least one treatment fluid injection opening is located at a substantial distance below the safety valve.

13. The system of claim 11 or 12, wherein the treatment fluid injection conduit is suspended downwardly from the safety valve such that at least one treatment fluid injection opening is located at least 100 m below the safety valve.

14. The system according to any one of claims 11-13, wherein the safety valve is mounted in a production

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tubing of the well, in particular a gas well, and the treatment fluid injection conduit is suspended into the production tubing, optionally through the production tubing into an inflow region of the well.

5 15. The system of any one of claims 11 to 14, wherein the treatment fluid injection conduit extend along a length of at least 1000 m through the production tubing below the safety valve.

10 16. The system of claim any one of claims 11 to 15, wherein the valve control conduit comprises an elongate upper valve control conduit section which extends through an annular space between the production tubing and a well casing between the wellhead and an opening in the production tubing, and a short lower valve control
15 conduit section which extends through the housing of the safety valve and which is connected to a hydraulic safety valve control mechanism which is configured to maintain the safety valve in an open position if the pressure difference between the treatment fluid in the lower valve
20 control conduit section and the well fluid in the region of the safety valve is above a predetermined threshold pressure difference and to close the safety valve if said pressure difference is below said predetermined threshold pressure difference.

25 17. The system of any one of claims 11-16, wherein the safety valve is retrievably mounted within the production tubing and the treatment fluid injection conduit has an upper section which passes through the housing of the safety valve, which is connected to the lower safety
30 valve control conduit section and which comprises the one way check valve and an elongate flexible lower section which is suspended from a lower end of the safety valve

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housing into the production tubing below the safety valve.

- 5 18. The system of claim 17 when dependent on claim 16, wherein the elongate flexible lower section of the treatment fluid injection conduit comprises treatment fluid injection openings which are distributed at selected intervals along the length of said flexible lower section and is provided with ballast and expandable gripping means that are configured to expand against the inner surface of the production tubing and to maintain the flexible lower section of the treatment fluid injection conduit in a substantially stretched position in the section of the production tubing below the safety valve.
- 10
- 15 19. The system of any one of claims 11-18, wherein the safety valve is a flapper type valve.

