

ARGUMENTS

After the foregoing Amendment, claims 1-15 are currently pending in this application. Claims 1-10 and 12 are amended. New dependent claims 13-15 are added.

Allowable Subject Matter

Applicants thank the Examiner for indicating that claims 9-10 contain allowable subject matter.

Objections to the Specification

The Examiner objected to the abstract of disclosure because it is a single run-on sentence. The abstract has been amended to address this issue. Withdrawal of the objection to the specification is therefore respectfully requested.

Claim Objections

The Examiner objected to claims 1 and 6 because the phrase “capable of” is not a positive limitation and does not constitute in any patentable sense. The claim amendments address this objection. Withdrawal of the objection is respectfully requested.

Claim Rejections - 35 U.S.C. § 112

Claims 1, 7, 3, and 4 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112(b) as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter. The claim amendments substantially address the issues raised in the rejection. With reference to the preamble of claim 1, the term “wellhead” in claim 1 is to clarify the type of “conductor housing.” Such conductor housings for wellheads as well as conventional seal adapters, for example prior art Figure 3, are well known in the art. Thus it is respectfully submitted that it not necessary to address the wellhead in the body of claim 1. Further, the preamble of claim 7 has been amended to define a method of completing a well for clarity. Thus, it is respectfully submitted that the preambles are clear to a person skilled in the relevant art. Withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested.

Claim Rejections - 35 U.S.C. § 102

Claims 1-8 and 11-12 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Pat. Publ. No. 2008/0271924 (“Lurie”). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Lurie discusses remotely operating a drilling device and pumping water to transfer drill cuttings and cool the cutting surfaces. The presence or absence of the packer 7 is only mentioned briefly in paragraphs [0067], [0074] and [0075]. The packer 7 is provided at the lower end of the casing 4 to seal the annulus 22 formed

between the conduit 6 and casing 4 (Lurie, paragraph [0067]). Lurie shows an arrangement in which the packer 7 comprises a body with the size of the wellbore 1, and a bore with the size of the conduit 6 (Lurie, Figures 1 and 3). Thus, it is clear that Lurie teaches a packer which is provided in the well and comprising a single bore, rather than a seal adapter having a first and second circular bores and configured to be installed in a wellhead conductor housing, as defined in claim 1. The packer disclosed by Lurie is structurally different from the adapter defined in claim 1.

Claim 1 has been amended to clarify that first circular bore has a circular perimeter extending beyond a centerline of the unitary body. Lurie clearly fails to disclose such a feature.

By using the seal adapter as claimed in amended claim 1, a riser with a thicker wall may be used during the drilling process. This may advantageously allow the operation pressure in the riser to be increased (see paragraph [0052] of the present application). There is no suggestion in Lurie of increasing the wall thickness of the riser and operation pressure during the drilling process, let alone a seal adapter or packer with a circular bore extends beyond a centreline of the seal adapter for achieving those results. Whilst the packer 7 in Lurie functions as a seal for the annulus 22, there is no suggestion on how the packer 7 may assist in the drilling operation and increase the drilling pressure.

For at least the above reasons, it is respectfully submitted that independent claim 1, is patentable over the cited prior art and request withdrawal of the 35 USC § 102 rejection. Claim 7 is similarly patentable over the cited prior art for at least the same reasons as presented above with respect to claim 1, since it includes features corresponding to features of claim 1.

Each of the dependent claims is patentable at least on the basis of its dependence on the respective main claim, or its own patentable features.

With reference to new claims 14 and 15, the circular flange helps to ensure that the effective sizes of the first and second circular bores are equal while allowing the first circular bore to receive a riser with a thicker wall. Furthermore, the downward taper help to prevent accumulation of debris and to guide tools going into the first circular bore. These additional features are not disclosed or suggested in the cited art as well.

Conclusion

If the Examiner believes that any additional minor formal matters need to be addressed in order to place this application in condition for allowance, or that a telephonic interview will help to materially advance the prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned by telephone at the Examiner's convenience.

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In view of the foregoing, Applicants respectfully submit that the present application, including claims 1-15, is in condition for allowance and a notice to that effect is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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