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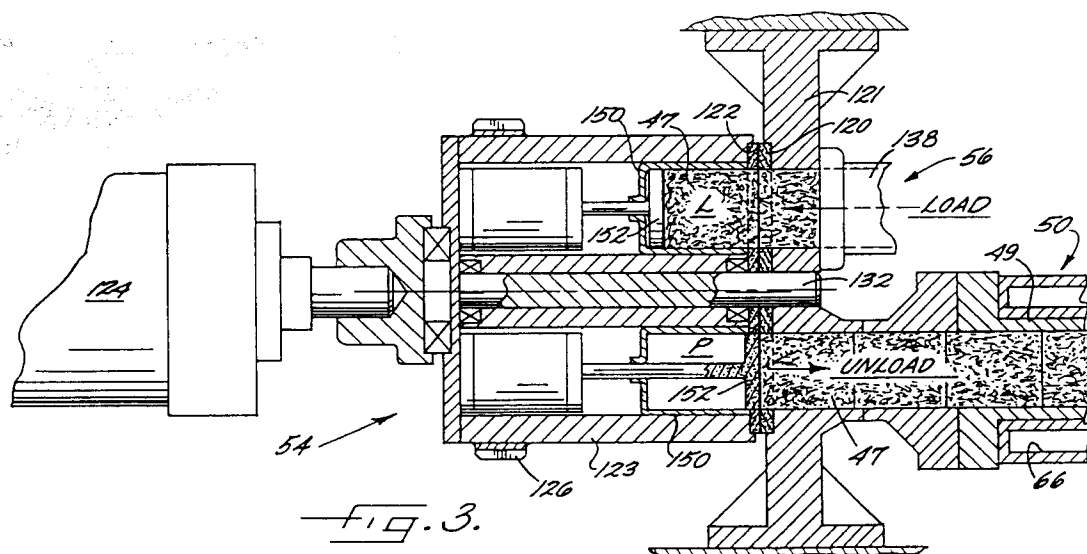
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(54) **Process and apparatus for the treatment of material such as tobacco.**

(57) Process and apparatus for the treatment of tobacco material and other biological materials includes a mechanism comprising a dynamic seal having components (120,122) having cooperating movable surfaces for sealing a treatment chamber (50) that substantially prevents the passage of fluid at the treatment chamber pressure during movement

of the components for introducing material into and removing material from the chamber. The seal components preferably comprise advanced structural ceramic components having a hardness of at least 900 kg/mm² and a flatness of at least 70 microinches (1.8 micrometres). The process is preferably conducted at supercritical gaseous conditions.





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DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT			
Category	Citation of document with indication, where appropriate, of relevant passages	Relevant to claim	CLASSIFICATION OF THE APPLICATION (Int. Cl.5)
X	EP-A-0 121 058 (REYNOLDS TOBACCO)	1,7, 10-14,17	A24B15/18 A24B15/24
A	* the whole document *	2-4,8,9, 15,22, 28-31	

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D,X	GB-A-2 193 076 (AMERICAN TOBACCO)	1,7,12, 14,17, 18,22,28	
A	* the whole document *	2,3,8,9, 15,29-31	

X	WO-A-8 707 478 (NEVILLE R.)	1,4-6, 12,13, 17,18, 22,27,28	TECHNICAL FIELDS SEARCHED (Int. Cl.5)
A	* the whole document *	2,3,16	

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The present search report has been drawn up for all claims			
Place of search THE HAGUE		Date of completion of the search 28 DECEMBER 1992	Examiner REBIERE J.L.
CATEGORY OF CITED DOCUMENTS X : particularly relevant if taken alone Y : particularly relevant if combined with another document of the same category A : technological background O : non-written disclosure P : intermediate document T : theory or principle underlying the invention E : earlier patent document, but published on, or after the filing date D : document cited in the application L : document cited for other reasons & : member of the same patent family, corresponding document			



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X A	DE-A-3 722 913 (WAESCHLE) * claim 2 *	18-21 2,3,8,9, 16, 23-26, 30,31	
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A	CH-A-658 108 (KARRER, WEBER & CIE) * page 2, right column, line 38 - line 45; figures *	2,3,8,9, 16, 18-21, 23-26, 30,31	
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