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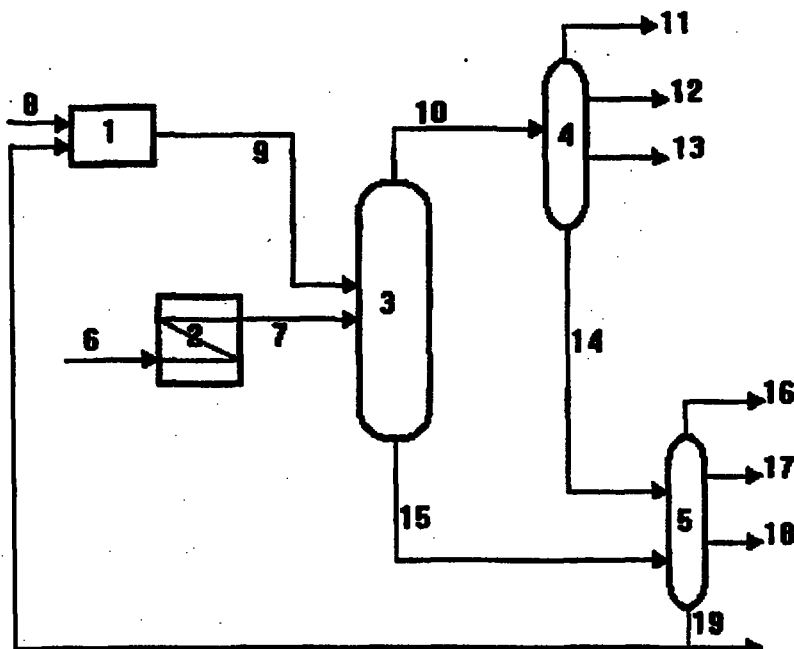
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(54) Title: **PROCESS FOR THE THERMAL CRACKING OF A RESIDUAL HYDROCARBON OIL**

(57) Abstract

Process for the thermal cracking of a residual hydrocarbon oil wherein a final 520 °C+ conversion of at least 35 % by weight is attained, which process comprises the steps of: (a) heating the residual hydrocarbon oil feed in a furnace to a temperature in the range of from 400 to 510 °C for sufficient time to achieve 30 to 45 % of the final 520 °C+ conversion; (b) feeding the partially converted, hot hydrocarbon oil produced in step (a) and a hot hydrogen-containing gas into a soaker, said hydrogen-containing gas having a sufficiently high temperature to maintain the temperature of the hydrocarbon oil in the soaker by means of direct heat exchange at a value in the range of from 420 to 650 °C, in which soaker the remainder up to 100 % of the final 520 °C+ conversion takes place; and (c) recovering a gaseous fraction containing the hydrogen-containing gas and a cracked residue from the soaker.



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