(catalyst fines content or "cat fines content" in the heavy oil for processing according to the defined limit) and to the current mode of engine operation.

A reduction in the throughput increases the separation efficiency. In addition, the electrical energy consumption is also reduced when the feed pump speed is reduced.

It is therefore advantageous to assign a control device, especially a frequency converter, to the pump 4, in order to be able to alter the feed pump speed in a simple manner, preferably under closed-loop control.

In this way, in a simple manner, the throughput in the processing method can be used for closed-loop control as a function of one or more of the following measurement parameters or process variables:

~~b~~a) of the current fuel consumption of the engines

~~e~~b) of the current fuel level in a clean oil tank

~~d~~c) of the present catalyst fines content ("cat fines content" in the clean oil outlet).

The - at least intermittent - increase in the separation temperature to more than 98°C described improves the separation efficiency and enables the attainment of very low catalyst fines contents. The proportion of abrasive catalyst fines can be lowered in a simple manner below limits defined by engine manufacturers, which may also be well below 20 ppm or even below 15 ppm or 10 ppm or lower. With a further increase in temperature, the result of the separating operation is improved further, although the apparatus demands are lower at temperatures up to 115°C than for even higher temperatures.

It is particularly advantageous to heat the heavy oil, preferably in two or more stages, to the separation