between two casting dies **16**, **17**, which have been suitably machined (FIG. **4**).

In conventional manner, a sealing element **19** is inserted between the casting dies, this sealing element **19** comprising a cylindrical skirt **20**, adapted to surround the periphery of the casting dies, and, located at the central zone of the internal surface of this skirt, a lip **21** which projects radially inwardly from the inner surface of the skirt, the side faces of lip **21** being adapted to come into abutting contact with the cooperating edges of the casting dies **16**, **17**.

Insofar as the casting die **17** (corresponding to the semi-finished concave face **12** of disc **10**) is concerned, the casting surface of this die **17** usually has the shape of a body of revolution (for example a circle), and it is a simple matter to give a complementary shape to the corresponding transverse face **23** of lip **21** of the sealing element **19**.

By way of contrast, insofar as the casting die **16** (corresponding to the progressive convex face **13**) is concerned, it would be difficult, due to the progressivity of this surface, to give a complementary shape to the corresponding transverse face of the lip **21**.

For this reason provision is made, in a conventional manner, to provide, at the periphery of this casting die **16**, a plane facet **25** which circularly surrounds the zone of the casting surface of this die **16** corresponding to the active zone **13** of the disc which it is intended to obtain; the corresponding transverse face **24** of lip **21** of sealing element **19** can then, conveniently, be plane itself.

However, according to the invention, this facet **25** of die **16** has a sufficiently large radial dimension to ensure that — at all points of the sealing element **19**, and more particularly at all points of the lip **21** of sealing element **19** — this facet **25** will extend radially inwardly beyond sealing element **19**, as will be apparent from FIG. **4**.

Thus, this facet **25** is, considered as a whole, adapted to engage lip **21** of sealing element **19** and, beyond lip **21**, is adapted to form the edge facet **15** provided, according to the invention, on the blank **10** which is to be formed.

This blank can — in instances where the patients, whose sight requires the corresponding progressivity of focal power, do not suffer from other anomalies of vision — be directly used for obtaining an ophthalmic lens which is suitable for such patients, simply by trimming and machining the shape of the blank.

However, as has been stated above, the concave neutral face **12** has to be subjected to a second operation when these patients have other defects of vision which have to be corrected.

It is usual, for machining this face **12**, to mount a gripper block **30** onto the progressive convex face **11** by casting a material having a low melting point, between this face **12** and a bell-shaped mould **31**, which is applied by its edge to the periphery of the face **12** (FIGS. **5** and **6**).

As these expedients are well known per se, they will not be described in detail now.

It suffices to point out that, by virtue of the provision of the edge facet **15** which, according to the invention, the blank **10** includes around its active zone **13**, the bell-shaped mould **31** (which is usually a body of revolution) can be directly applied to the face **11** of the blank without the interposition of any fitting ring.

Indeed, it suffices if the free edge of the mould **31** simply has a plane shape, as will be the face for the embodiment of FIGS. **1** to **3**.

As mentioned above, the radial dimension of the edge facet **15** is preferably at least 1 mm; this is to ensure that the free edge of mould **31** will be supported, reliably and effectively against the edge facet **15** over the whole length of the facet.

According to the modifications illustrated in FIGS. **7** and **8**, the edge facet **15** of blank **10** has, according to the invention, the shape of a body or revolution, for example a conical shape (FIG. **7**) or a spherical shape (FIG. **8**).

At the same time, the free edge of the bell-shaped mould **31** has complementary configuration (not shown).

FIG. **9** illustrates a further advantage of the invention. In FIG. **9** a semi-finished blank of known kind is shown in a continuous line, for an ophthalmic lens of progressively variable power, while the corresponding semi-finished blank **10** according to the invention is shown in broken lines.

Insofar as the semi-finished blank of the prior art is concerned, it is usual — for the convenience of machining of the moulds used for casting such a blank — to arrange for the progressive surface of such a blank to extend over the whole of the convex face of the disc. It is necessary to avoid a dangerous thinning of such a blank opposite the portion of this progressive surface whose radius of curvature is the smallest — to give the whole of the blank an excess thickness J, which increases, without advantage, the amount of raw material used, and also increases, to a corresponding degree, the time subsequently needed to machine the concave face of the concave face of the disc.

By automatically limiting the zone over which this progressive surface extends, the edge facet **11** according to the invention enables this excess J to be dispensed with so that, other things being equal, a semi-finished blank according to the invention will be lightened with respect to a comparable semi-finished blank of the prior art.

Of course, the present invention is not restricted to the embodiment described, nor to the forms of implementation of the invention described above, but comprehends all modifications thereof within the scope of the appended claims.

In particular, the concave face of the blank could comprise an active zone of progressively variable radius of curvature, so as to complement the active zone of the convex face of this blank and/or so as to replace the active zone of the convex face.

I claim:

1. A method of producing an ophthalmic lens of progressively variable focal power, in which a semi-finished blank is first obtained by casting an organic material between two casting dies, at least one of the faces of the blank having an active zone of progressively variable radius of curvature on at least one side of at least one central line, a gripper block for holding the blank is mounted on the said face of the blank by casting a material of low melting point between the said face and a bell-shaped mold which is open towards the said face, and the face of the blank lying opposite to that on which said gripper block is mounted is machined to the desired profile, the gripper block being subsequently removed by melting, wherein the improvement resides in forming at the periphery of the active zone of the said face of the blank, when the blank is cast an edge facet which extends continuously and circularly around the whole of the active zone to form a supporting face, providing