where it evaporates. This is a slower process than open weeps, and nylon or hemp rope will not perform well. The cotton will be wet throughout its service life, and eventually will rot, leaving an open drainage hole. Using cotton wicks, however, assures that drainage is not inadvertently blocked by mortar. Wicks are also inconspicuous in the wall.

Another alternative is oiled rods or ropes which are mortared into the joints at 16 in. on center and then removed when the mortar has set. The rods function much the same as plastic tubes, and share some of the same disadvantages. The ⅜-in.-diameter rods used are generally 3½ to 4 in. long, oiled slightly to prevent mortar bond, and extended through the veneer thickness to the core or cavity. The opening left after removal is a full ⅜ in., since the thickness of the tube shell is eliminated, but the hole is still small and easily blocked by mortar droppings. To avoid this, the rods can be left in place until the full story or panel height of the wall above is completed. The oiled rope technique is similar to that of the wick system, in that an unobstructed drainage path is provided. After the wall is completed to story height, the rope can be removed. The rope should be 10 to 12 in. long to allow adequate height in the cavity and to provide a handle for removal. By removing the rope instead of using it as a wick, the hole provides more rapid evaporation at the outset of construction, and its size is less noticeable than open-head joint weeps.

7.8 DRAINAGE ACCESSORIES

Weep holes are not effective if the flow of moisture in the wall cavity is obstructed by mortar droppings. Some contractors put a shallow layer of gravel in the bottom of the cavity to promote drainage and keep mortar droppings away from the weeps. There are a number of proprietary products on the market which are more effective in breaking up mortar droppings than pea gravel in the bottom of the cavity (*see Fig. 7-29*). These products are intended to maintain a moisture flow path to the weeps, but should be used in conjunction with the techniques described in Chapter 15 for minimizing the amount of mortar in the wall cavity.