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LEAKAGE FROM SIGALDA RESERVOIR

OS81018/VOD07 Reykjavík, September 1981 Prepared for Landsvirkjun

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ABSTRACT

The Króksvatn Reservoir is a part of the Sigalda Hydropower Plant and is created by building a dam across Sigalda Canyon. The dam is located at the upstream end of the canyon, the foundation and left abutment being built on postglacial lava. The southern bank of the reservoir basin is also formed of postglacial lava. The right abutment rests on a hyaloclastite (moberg) ridge covered with tillite, which is considered to be almost watertight.

The leakage from the reservoir proved to be somewhat larger than a priori estimates had expected. The leakage has been kept under close observation since 1976 by flow measurements in Sigalda Canyon and waterlevel observations in piezometer holes on the south bank area. The results of these measurements proved, rather surprisingly, to be a parabolic function of the reservoir level instead of a linear one, in contrast to classical groundwater theories. During impoundings of the reservoir, the formation of swallow holes, or sinks, was discovered in the submerged lava front of the south bank of the reservoir. Several sealing projects have been performed involving the placing of carpet seals over these swallow holes.

In analysing the problem, it proved necessary to separate the flow into two components, one component depending on the square of the reservoir level, and another linear one. Comparison with geologial data succeeded in identifying the two components as largely separated flows in two contact scoria zones in the postglacial lava formation. It was also discovered, that the square component behavior of the associated flow was not due to large velocity values of the flow, but rather that during impoundings more and more swallow holes became active at the same time as the flow through them increased.

Final analysis of the flow was done in two finite element computer models, one for each component of the flow. The model predicts the flow in Sigalda Canyon and piezometer levels in the south bank area, as a function of the reservoir level. It also predicts a catchment loss, i.e. flow that does not appear again in the Sigalda Canyon but flows underground, out of the catchment area and is lost for power generation further down the

Tungnaá river. The total seepage loss at reservoir level 493 m a.s.l. is calculated to be 21 m 3 /s whereof the catchment loss is 7 m 3 /s but 14 m 3 /s reappear in Sigalda Canyon.

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1 INTRODUCTION

In the beginning of the year 1979 Landsvirkjun (National Power Company) requested Orkustofnun (National Energy Authority) to carry out model calculations of the leakage from the Sigalda Reservoir on the basis of the extensive data that had been gathered (see P. Jóhannesson et al.1978). In a letter to Landsvirkjun dated May 29th 1979 the main results of the Sigalda model calculations were presented.

These results indicated considerably higher leakage than earlier anticipated. In our letter of July 6th 1979 some explanations were given as well as recommendations for further investigations in the lava fields south-east of the reservoir (the long path leakage area). The hypothesis was put forward, that the Sigalda Ridge and an oval hill of moberg, 2 km to the southeast, were connected by a ridge of moberg at rather shallow depth below the lava surface. The existance of such an underground ridge of moberg, far less permeable than the lavas, lengthens the long leakage path which again diminishes the gradients and lessens the long path leakage discharge. It was decided to check this hypothesis by drillings. The drillhole data supported the hypothesis of a moberg ridge under the uppermost lava. The model calculations were repeated with new boundary conditions taking this moberg ridge into account. The results are given in this report.

In our letter of July 6th 1979 we pointed out the necessity of drilling piezometer holes along the long leakage path, in order to check the calculations. Two observation piezometer holes were therefore drilled together with the above mentioned drillings. Observations have however been insufficient to verify the calculations. It is therefore important to maintain continuous measurements in one of the piezometers.

The results have been discussed with Landsvirkjun representatives.

2 AVAILABLE DATA

The calculations are based on the large amount of data collected during the eight impoundings of the reservoir. The impounding history of the reservoir is shown in figs. 2 and 3. The measurements used are a) water level recordings in piezometer holes and b) flow measurements, at measuring weirs near the dam and discharge measurements in the almost dry Tungnaá River Canyon upstream of the Sigalda waterfall. These measurements are presented in a report by P. Jóhannesson et al. (1977) and several EWI/Virkir reports. All our calculations are based upon stationary values, that is to say flow and water level values, when the reservoir has been stationary at the same level for a long time compared with the response time of the piezometers. The following measurements have been plotted vs. reservoir level:

A. Flow measurements

1. MW-1 (canal-measuring weir)

2. MW-2 (canal-measuring weir)

3. MW-3+MW-4 (canal-measuring weir)

4. Increased springflow, i.e. springflow measured in the Tungnaá Canyon minus flow in the canals and initial springflow.

B. Water level measurements for model calibration

- 1. PZ-15
- 2. PZ-16
- 3. PZ-17
- 4. PZ-18
- 5. PZ-19
- 6. PZ-20
- 7. E 8
- 8. TK- 2
- 9. E -28

C. Water level measurements for model verification

- 1. SA- 2
- 2. SA- 3
- 3. VII
- 4. TK-12
- 5. VI
- 6. V
- 7. IX
- 8. PJ-11
- 9. PJ-12

The location of piezometers and flow measurement sites is shown in figs. 4 and 9. The piezometers mentioned under item B are used to calibrate the model, while the piezometers mentioned under item C are used for verification purposes in order to check the model calculations.

3 GEOLOGICAL FACTORS

A geological map of the model area is shown in fig. 1, which also indicates the probable extension of the Sigalda moberg at shallow depth. The southern banks of the reservoir are made of the socalled ${\rm Th}_h$ -lava layer, overlaying the ${\rm Th}_f$ -lava which covers most of the reservoir bottom. The ${\rm Th}_h$ -Th contact is at approx. 478 m a.s.l. and is rather scoriaceous, especially the lower part of the ${\rm Th}_h$ -lava. In the vicinity of the dam ${\rm Th}_c$ is overlain by the ${\rm Th}_f$ -lava, and the ${\rm Th}_f$ -Th contact has shown itself to be an effective aquifer.

The reservoir area is a former lake basin, with maximum water level at app. 500 m a.s.l. Clayish deposits of varying thickness have therefore covered the lavas and been deposited in the Th_h-Th_f contact, obviously because of leakage from the lake. A narrow strip along the Th_h-front is therefore tighter than the contact elsewhere, except perhaps in the Hnubba-fossar area where the lavas are heavily eroded. Another erosion feature, the Sigalda canyon, later drained the old lake, and created numerous springs. There is no doubt that the disappearance of the old lake has caused a regional lowering of the groundwater table. This has the immedi-

ate effect, now the dam is built, and the lake restored without raising the groundwater table to its old level, that the clay deposits are subjected to greater differential pressures than before. This causes piping in the clay seal into cracks and cavities in the lava and the formation of swallow holes that increase in number when the water level is raised. Another effect of the emptying of the former reservoir lake has been surface water erosion in the reservoir bottom, particularly in the riverbed and on steep slopes like Th_h -lava front, creating conditions for infiltration and formation of swallow holes.

4 CANAL FLOW DATA

The flow in MW-1, the old diversion canal, is shown in fig. 5 vs. reservoir level. The relationship is seen to be linear. This flow comes from the ${\rm Th}_{\rm f}$ -lava.

The flow in MW-2 is shown in fig. 6 vs. reservoir level. Before the 6th impounding there seems to be some square component in the flow, curving the data points to the right. At the 6th impounding the relationship is clearly linear again. Before the 6th impounding MW-2 had inflow from both the ${\rm Th}_{\rm f}$ -lava and the ${\rm Th}_{\rm h}$ -Th contact scoria. After the 5th impounding the inflow from the ${\rm Th}_{\rm h}$ -Th contact scoria was diverted into MW-3 and MW-4 and thus just the ${\rm Th}_{\rm f}$ -lava contributed to the flow in MW-2.

The flow in MW-3 and MW-4 is shown in fig. 7. Clearly both a linear and a square component are present in the flow, and field observations indicate clearly, that both of the canals have inflow from the ${\rm Th}_{\rm f}$ -lava and the ${\rm Th}_{\rm h}$ -Th contact scoria.

It can therefore be concluded that the canals have a linear flow component from the ${\rm Th}_f{\rm -Th}_c$ contact scoria and a square flow component from the ${\rm Th}_h{\rm -Th}_c$ contact scoria. Clearly the sealing work performed after the third impounding resulted in insignificant reduction of the canal flow.

5 SPRINGFLOW DATA

Increased springflow is shown in fig. 8. It can be shown that the increased springflow varies with the square of the reservoir water level height above 478 m a.s.l. This result is in agreement with the canal analysis indicating that the square component originates from the Th_h - Th_f contact scoria. According to the flow measurements the sealing work has significantly reduced this flow. This result is incompatible with the piezometer level data as discussed in ch. 8.

6 PIEZOMETER LEVEL DATA

Location map for the piezometers used in the analysis is shown in fig. 9. Stationary values for the piezometer level vs. reservoir level is shown in figs. 10-18. The piezometer level is the potential head of the Th, Th and Th lavas. The relationship between the reservoir level and the piezometers seems to include the same square and linear components found in the relationship between the reservoir level and the flow measurements. There seems to be some evidence that the sealing work has actually reduced the rise in the piezometer levels, but this indication is considerably less than might be expected from the increased springflow measurements, see fig. 8.

In the following we write the piezometer level of the form:

$$h-h_0 = k_2 (H-478)^2 + k_1 (H-476.5)$$

The zero level, h_0 , is shown in fig. 9 and the constants k_2 and k_1 are shown in figs. 45-48.

To establish a relationship between the flow data and the piezometer level data that is compatible with the geological factors, it is necessary to separate and explain separately the linear and square components. Although the permeability is great in the area the gradients are very small; thus a turbulent flow model explaining the square component in the piezometer level is not possible. Fig. 19 shows stationary values for the piezometer level in E-28 vs. flow in the canyon. The relationship is seen to be linear in the form

$$Q = 2.196 h-1046.829$$

with a correlation coefficient of 0.995. The regional groundwaterflow is therefore likely to follow Darcy's law, and turbulent flow model is thus not possible. It can be seen from the above equation that one meter difference in piezometer level gives 2.2 m $^3/\text{s}$ difference in flow values. The inflow from the reservoir into the Th $_{h}$ -Th $_{f}$ contact scoria is mostly due to swallow holes formed by the differential pressure on the clayish bottom deposits. Therefore both linear and square flow components exist as the following analysis explains. The water level in the piezometers is proportional to nQ, where n is the number of swallow holes and Q is the inflow into each one. Q is again proportional to H-h, where H is the reservoir height and h the piezometer height above the Th $_{h}$ -Th $_{f}$ contact level. The simplest relationship for n is n $^{\circ}$ H. We therefore have h $^{\circ}$ H-h), that is:

$$h = \frac{\delta}{1 + \delta H} \cdot H^2,$$

which can be approximated by $h = k_2 \cdot H^2$. The formulas of the straight lines and parabolas fitted to the measured flow values and shown in figs. 5-8 are listed in <u>table 1</u>. The respective coefficients for the piezometer parabolas are shown in figure 9 and figures 45 to 48. The reference level 478 m a.s.l., used in the formula, is the level of the Th_h - Th_f contact scoria, see ch. 2. The reference level 476.5 m a.s.l. is the lake level when the groundwater gradients from the reservoir to the aquifer are reversed.

TABLE 1 Measured flow values (m^3/s)

BEFORE	SEALING	WORK
--------	---------	------

Initial springflow : 4.5

Increased springflow : 0.04869(H-478)

MW-3+MW-4 : $0.01044(H-478)^2+0.1639(H-476.5)$

MW-2 : 0.12166 (H-476.5) MW-1 : 0.0845 (H-476.5)

Total square : 0.05913(H-478)²

Total linear : 0.3701(H-476.5)

AFTER SEALING WORK

Initial springflow : 4.5

Increased springflow : 0.02486(H-478)²

MW-3+MW-4 : $0.01044(H-478)^2+0.1639(H-476.5)$

MW-2 : 0.12166 (H-476.5) MW-1 : 0.0845 (H-476.5)

Total square : 0.0353(H-478)²

Total linear : 0.3701(H-476.5)

8 NUMERICAL MODELING

It has been seen that the inflow/outflow is written in the form

$$Q-Q_0 = C_2(H-478)^2 + C_1(H-476.5)$$

and the piezometerlevel in the form

$$h-h_0 = k_2(H-478)^2 + k_1(H-476.5)$$
.

The only mathematical solution to this problem is that \mathbf{k}_1 and \mathbf{k}_2 correspond to \mathbf{C}_1 and \mathbf{C}_2 respectively. We have therefore determined the necessary distribution of the inflow/outflow from the area to match the linear

H: reservoir water level in m a.s.l.

and square components in the piezometer level. For this purpose Laplace's equation is solved with the appropriate boundary conditions in a finite element grid numerical computer model. For the sake of simplicity the permeability of the area is assumed constant. The Laplace equation is solved twice, once for the linear and square flow components respectively. The finite element grid is shown in fig. 20 and 21 with the appropriate boundary conditions. The boundary condition in Sigalda Canyon is the so called spillway boundary condition given by:

$$T \frac{\delta h}{\delta h} = \alpha h$$

where T is the transmissivity, $\frac{\delta h}{\delta h}$ the gradient, h the piezometric level and α a proportionality constant. Fig. 19 confirms this boundary condition. In order to establish the remaining boundary conditions the boundary piezometers are analysed. The time variations of the boundary piezometers for eight impoundings of the reservoir are shown in figs. 22-33. Comparing these figures with the impounding history, figs. 2 and 3, reveals the following:

- a) The boundary piezometers in the west, II, III and IV are seen to depend on the reservoir level. The boundary conditions in the two lava passes in the west are thus considered two unknown boundary outflow values.
- b) The two boundary piezometers in the south, TH-10, TH-11, are seen to be independent of the reservoir level. The piezometric level in TH-10 is more dependent on natural groundwater inflow than reservoir level. The boundary condition in the southern lavapass is thus considered a no flow boundary.
- c) The boundary condition at the lake is considered an unknown inflow boundary. The moberg formations are considered to be watertight.

From the boundary piezometric level data the constants k_1 and k_2 for II, III and IV are determined and given in the following table.

TABLE 2 Piezometer constants for boundary piezometers

Piezomete Piezometer constants	rs	II	III	IV
k ₁		0	3.39•10 ⁻²	1.53.10-2
k ₂	:	1.00.10-2	5.48•10 ⁻³	5.42.10

If there is a 10 m rise in reservoir level the piezometric level rises $10~\rm k_1$ meters according to the linear flow and $100~\rm k_2$ meters according to the square flow. Estimation of the constants from the available boundary piezometric data was very difficult owing to paucity of measurements and lack of information as to the natural flow variations. In the following we therefore use the constants between limits defined by

where β is some constant.

In the case of the linear flow component we take the reservoir inflow to consist of two unknown inflow values, see fig. 45 and 46. According to former geological investigations the Th_f -lava was not found in boundary piezometer II. Therefore it is assumed that the extension of the Sigalda moberg closes this lavapass off completely. The outflow values in the two passes in the west therefore consist of two unknown outflow values for the square flow, but only one unknown for the linear flow. We therefore have three (four) unknown flow values. These unknown flow values are determined by matching the measured and calculated piezometric levels in such a way that the following norm is minimized.

$$L = \sum (k_1^{\text{measured}} - k_1^{\text{calculated}})^2$$

where L is the norm to be minimized, the summation is taken over the number

of boreholes and k_1^{measured} and $k_1^{\text{calculated}}$ is the linear constant from measurements and calculations respectively.

The minimum value of L is known as the residual norm. The unknown boundary outflow parameter, α , in the Sigalda Canyon is now determined by minimizing the residual norm. The result is now shown in figs. 34, 40, 41, 45 and 46. As mentioned above the k values for the boundary piezometers II, III and IV are very uncertain. The sensitivity of the results is now investigated with respect to the parameter β defined above. The result is given in fig. 35, which shows the residual norm increasing rapidly for β greater than one.

We then select the most probable β interval to be $0 \le \beta \le 1$. Fig. 36 shows catchment loss divided by measured loss against β , since β lies between zero and one we have

1.7≤ Catchment loss/Measured loss≤1.8

where catchment loss is the outflow in the lava passes in the west, and measured loss is the measured flow in Sigalda Canyon minus the initial springflow and the flow in MW-1 and MW-2.

The same procedure is now repeated for the square flow component. The minimum α -value is shown in fig. 37 and the piezometric level in figs. 42, 43, 47 and 48. The β interval is determined from fig. 38 to be $0 \le \beta \le 1$. Fig. 39 then gives for the catchment square flow loss.

The result for the combined effect of linear flow and square flow components at lake level 493 m a.s.l. is shown in figs. 44 and 49.

The flow under the dam is not included in the calculations, but taken to correspond to the flow in MW-1 and MW-2.

In order to check the results the water level measurements mentioned in ch. 1C are used for model verification. The comparison between measured and calculated piezometric level is shown in figs. 50-56.

These water level measurements were not used for model calibration but for verification of the model. The figures show good correlation between the two sets.

9 RESULTS

The reservoir inflow can be separated into a linear component and a square component. The linear component is believed to be flow in the ${\rm Th}_{\rm f}$ -lava at the dam and leakage in the ${\rm Th}_{\rm h}$ -Th contact scoria at Hnubba-fossar.

Heavy drainage of groundwater towards the canyon keeps the groundwater level low in the lavas while the reservoir level rises thus causing increased differential pressure on the clay deposits on the submerged lava fronts. The square component is most likely swallow hole leakage in the ${\rm Th}_h$ -lava, when the reservoir clay succumbs to differential water pressure. Bearing this in mind the main conclusion to be drawn from the calculations are:

The spring flow in the Tungnaá River Canyon is mainly governed by the 1) regional ground water level. Seasonal variations of the groundwater level are therefore crucial when comparing reservoir leakage before and after each impounding. The sealing work in 1977, aimed at stopping the swallow-hole leakage (the square component), did not succeed This can be seen from fig. 57. Here we also have the greatest discrepancy between the model and the flow measurements. According to the model the sealing work would have decreased the swallowhole leakage by about 10%, but springflow measured in the Tungnaá River Canyon after the operation indicates a decrease of about 50%. Since the model is based on the piezometric measurements, there is a discrepancy in the relationship between the piezometric measurements and the above mentioned reduction of the springflow. It can also be seen from fig. 8 that early summer impoundings always give more increased springflow than late summer impoundings. In our opinion the reason for this discrepancy is the seasonal variation in the undisturbed natural groundwater level.

In early summer impoundings the natural groundwater level is higher than during autumn impoundings. Different natural groundwater levels cause different springflow, which is estimated to be a constant equal to 4.5 m³/s; although it is of course higher when natural groundwater level is high and lower when natural groundwater level is low. The difference between the increased springflow measurements in the third and fourth impounding at reservoir level 490 is 3 m³/s, (fig. 8). According to fig. 19 this corresponds to a difference in piezometer level in E-28 of 1.4 m. The actual difference in natural groundwater levels between impoundings 3 and 4 may have been in the region of one meter.

It is therefore not possible to estimate the effect of the sealing work by comparing early summer and autumn flow measurements or even by comparing different years, without knowing the undisturbed regional natural groundwater level. It should also be pointed out that the square component inflow of the area now covered by the sealing carpet was about one order of magnitude larger than the rest of the inflow (see fig. 47). Therefore the location of the sealing carpet was correctly chosen.

2) The model predicts leakage figures. The following notations have been used for the different leakage values.

Measured loss: Measured flow in Sigalda Canyon. Fig. 58.

Catchment loss: Calculated flow out of the catchment area through the two lava passes in the southwest. Fig. 59.

Total loss: Sum of the measured loss and the catchment loss. Fig. 60.

The model predicts significant loss figures, as shown in fig. 60, which gives both the total loss and the measured loss. It can be seen that the measured loss is about 2/3 of the total loss, and the catchment loss is about 1/3 of the total loss. The loss figures are given between two limits according to the above mentioned limits in the calculations. The catchment loss is greatly influenced by the behaviour of the piezometric level in the southern part of the area, where information is very scarce. SA-2 and SA-3 were drilled in

order to improve the situation, but owing to the paucity of measurements they have not been as useful as expected. It is therefore very important to maintain continuous registration of the water level in either SA-2 or SA-3 in order to be able to check the calculations better.

- 3) The model determines the regional permeability in the area to be of the order of 40-60 cm/sec. This is in fair agreement with the previously determined permeabilities. In P. Jóhannesson et al. 1978 the permeability is estimated from temperature measurements to be in the interval of 10-70 cm/s. By using the results of the tracing tests performed in the summer of 1980 (see EWI/Virkir 1980) the corresponding permeability can be approximated to be at least in the order of 10 cm/s.
- 4) The optimum energy reservoir level vs. reservoir inflow is calculated from the model results and given in fig. 61. Three curves are shown in fig. 61. The first gives the optimum energy reservoir level if the leakage consisted only of the measured loss, while the other two give the limits of optimum energy reservoir level for total leakage figures. The limits correspond to the above defined limits for flow values. The calculations are based upon constant efficiency and take only the power output from Sigalda into account. Calculations are now in progress which will take Hrauneyjafoss and Búrfell into consideration with the assumption that the catchment loss is irretrievable for power generation at Hrauneyjafoss and Búrfell.

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AGRIP (abstract in Icelandic)

Reiknaður er leki úr lóni Sigölduvirkjunar. Frá árinu 1976 hefur verið fylgst mjög vel með lekanum með rennslismælingum í Sigöldugljúfri og vatnshæðarmælingum í borholum á svæðinu. Við athugun á þessum mælingum kom í ljós að bæði rennslið og vatnshæðin í borholum eru háð lónhæðinni í öðru veldi. Það reyndist því nauðsynlegt að skipta rennslinu í tvo þætti, einn sem væri línulega háður lónhæðinni og annan sem væri háður lónhæðinni í öðru veldi. Með aðstoð jarðfræðinnar var hægt að tengja þessa tvo rennslisþætti tveimur vatnsleiðurum í hraununum. Það kom ennfremur í ljós að rennslisþátturinn, sem var háður lónhæðinni í öðru veldi er ekki tilkominn vegna iðustreymis, heldur vegna svelgjamyndunar á hraunkantinum, þegar svelgjum fjölgar við hækkandi lónstöðu.

Við reikninga á lekanum var notuð bútaaðferð Galerkins og stillt upp líkani fyrir hvorn rennslisþátt fyrir sig. Líkanið reiknar síðan rennsli í Sigöldugljúfri og vatnshæð í borholum á svæðinu. Ennfremur er reiknað tap út af vatnasviði og er það leki, sem ekki kemur fram í Sigöldugljúfri, og nýtist sennilega ekki til orkuframleiðslu á Landsvirkjunarsvæðinu. Lekinn er fall af lónhæð og er því meiri sem hærra er í lóninu. Leki við lónhæð 493 m y.s. reiknaðist 21 m³/s. Þar af tapast 7 m³/s út af vatnasviðinu, en 14 m³/s renna út í Sigöldugljúfur.

FIGURES



























































































































