

A STUDY OF PORE PRESSURES BENEATH  
AN OIL STORAGE TANK

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Master of Science

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Rupert Kit-Yee Hon  
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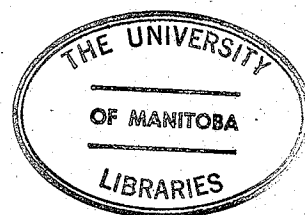
A dissertation submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies of  
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of the degree of

MASTER OF SCIENCE

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS .....	ii
LIST OF TABLES .....	v
LIST OF FIGURES .....	viii
NOTATIONS .....	xv
SUMMARY .....	xvii
CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION .....	1
CHAPTER II METHODS AND ASSOCIATED EQUATIONS FOR COMPUTING PORE PRESSURE IN SOIL .....	3
Skempton's Method	
Henkel's Method	
Domaschuk's Method	
Lo's Method	
CHAPTER III METHODS OF FIELD MEASUREMENT OF PORE PRESSURE .....	16
Open Standpipe Piezometers	
Twin-tube Closed System Hydraulic Piezometer	
Air-actuated Piezometer	
Electricity Indicating Piezometers	
Factors to be considered in choosing Piezometers	
CHAPTER IV SITE CONDITIONS, PIEZOMETERS AND THEIR INSTALLATIONS .....	31
Description of the Tank, Soil Profile, and Soil Properties	
Piezometers and their installations	
CHAPTER V DATA ANALYSES .....	37
Pore Pressure Data	
Pore Pressure Analyses	
CHAPTER VI CONCLUSIONS .....	130
BIBLIOGRAPHY .....	132
APPENDIX A OBSERVED PORE PRESSURE DATA .....	137

	Page
APPENDIX B THEORETICAL STRESSES AND DEFLECTIONS AT THE PIEZOMETER LOCATIONS .....	147
APPENDIX C STRESS - STRAIN CURVES .....	173

LIST OF TABLES

Table		Page
1	Piezometer Readings for the first three Periods ..	37
2	The Ratios of change in Pore Pressure to change in Stress .....	61
3	The Ratios of change in Pore Pressure to change in Stress .....	62
4	Skempton's Pore Pressure Parameter A .....	80
5	Henkel's Pore Pressure Parameter 'a' .....	85
6	Relationships depicted in Figures 42 through 45 ..	85
7	The Ratios of change in Pore Pressure to the Henkel's Deviator Stress and Henkel's Pore Pressure Parameter 'a <sub>i</sub> ' .....	90
8	Domaschuk's Pore Pressure Parameter $\alpha$ .....	95
9	The Ratios of change in Pore Pressure to the Resultant Deviatoric Stress and Domaschuk's Pore Pressure Parameter $\alpha_i$ .....	100
10	Relationships depicted in Figures 56 through 67 ..	105
11	Relationships depicted in Figures 68 through 71 ..	106
12	Piezometer Pressure Heads and Elevations .....	138
13	Applied Load and corresponding Pore Pressure at Piezometer P1 .....	145
14	Applied Load and corresponding Pore Pressure at Piezometer P2 .....	146
15	Applied Load and corresponding Vertical Stress computed by Burmister Method .....	148
16	Applied Load and corresponding Stresses at Piezometer P1 computed by Boussinesq Theory .....	149

Table	Page
17 Applied Load and corresponding Stresses at Piezometer P2 computed by Boussinesq Theory .....	150
18 Pore Pressure and corresponding Stresses at Piezometer P1 computed by Boussinesq Theory .....	151
19 Pore Pressure and corresponding Stresses at Piezometer P2 computed by Boussinesq Theory .....	152
20 Applied Load and corresponding Stresses at Piezometer P1 computed by Finite Element Method .	153
21 Applied Load and corresponding Stresses at Piezometer P2 computed by Finite Element Method .	154
22 Pore Pressure and corresponding Stresses at Piezometer P1 computed by Finite Element Method .	155
23 Pore Pressure and corresponding Stresses at Piezometer P2 computed by Finite Element Method .	156
24 Selected Data using in computations of Incremental changes in Applied Load and Stresses (Boussinesq Theory); Piezometer P1 .....	157
25 Selected Data using in Computations of Incremental change in Applied Load and Stresses. (Boussinesq Theory); Piezometer P2 .....	158
26 Incremental changes in Applied Load and Stresses computed by Boussinesq Theory; Piezometer P1 ....	159
27 Incremental changes in Applied Load and Stresses computed by Boussinesq Theory; Piezometer P2 ....	160
28 Incremental changes in Pore Pressure and Stresses computed by Boussinesq Theory; Piezometer P1 ....	161
29 Incremental changes in Pore Pressure and Stresses computed by Boussinesq Theory; Piezometer P2 ....	162
30 Selected Data using in computations of Incremental changes in Applied Load and Stresses (Finite Element Method); Piezometer P1 .....	163

Table	Page
31 Selected Data using in computations of Incremental changes in Applied Load and Stresses (Finite Element Method); Piezometer P2 .....	164
32 Incremental changes in Applied Load and Stresses computed by Finite Element Method; Piezometer P1.	165
33 Incremental changes in Applied Load and Stresses computed by Finite Element Method; Piezometer P2.	166
34 Incremental changes in Pore Pressure and Stresses computed by Finite Element Method; Piezometer P1.	167
35 Incremental changes in Pore Pressure and Stresses computed by Finite Element Method; Piezometer P2.	168
36 Applied Load and corresponding Deflections computed by Boussinesq Theory and using different Elastic Moduli; Piezometer P1 .....	169
37 Applied Load and corresponding Deflections computed by Boussinesq Theory and using different Elastic Moduli; Piezometer P2 .....	170
38 Applied Load and corresponding Deflections computed by Finite Element Method; Piezometers P1 and P2 .....	171
39 The Measured and Computed Pore Pressure; Piezometers P1 and P2 .....	172



LIST OF FIGURES

Figure		Page
1	Simple Standpipe Piezometers .....	18
2	Contact point Assembly and Water level Detector .	19
3	Electrically Operated Pore Pressure Gauge vibrating-type Piezometer and Layout of Inductance Coil System Piezometer .....	26
4	Approximate Response Times for various types of Piezometers .....	29
5	Soil Profile and Locations of Piezometers .....	32
6	Piezometer tip and its special device .....	36
7	Plot of Water level in Tank and Piezometers versus Time .....	40
8	Change in Vertical Normal Stress at location of Piezometer P1 .....	45
9	Change in Vertical Normal Stress at location of Piezometer P2 .....	46
10	Change in Mean Normal Stress at locations of Piezometers P1 and P2 .....	47
11	Relationship between Applied Load and change in Major Principal Stress at Piezometers P1 and P2 .	49
12	Relationship between Applied Load and $(\Delta\sigma_1 - \Delta\sigma_3)$ .	50
13	Relationship between change in Applied Load and Henkel's Deviator Stress at locations of Piezometers P1 and P2 .....	51
14	Relationship between change in Applied Load and Domaschuk's Resultant Deviatoric Stress at locations of Piezometers P1 and P2 .....	52

Figure		Page
15	Relationship between change in Pore Pressure and change in Vertical Stress (after Boussinesq) ....	53
16	Relationship between change in Pore Pressure and change in Vertical Stress (by Finite Element Method) .....	54
17	Relationship between change in Pore Pressure and change in Major Principal Stress (after Boussinesq)	55
18	Relationship between change in Pore Pressure and change in Major Principal stress (by Finite Element Method) .....	56
19	Relationship between change in Pore Pressure and change in Mean Normal Stress (after Boussinesq) .	57
20	Relationship between change in Pore Pressure and change in Mean Normal Stress (by Finite Element Method) .....	58
21	Relationship between change in Pore Pressure and ( $\Delta\sigma_1 - \Delta\sigma_3$ ) (after Boussinesq) .....	59
22	Relationship between change in Pore Pressure and ( $\Delta\sigma_1 - \Delta\sigma_3$ ) (by Finite Element Method) .....	60
23	Relationship between Incremental change in Pore Pressure and Incremental change in Applied Load (after Boussinesq) .....	63
24	Relationship between Incremental change in Pore Pressure and Incremental change in Vertical Normal Stress (after Boussinesq) .....	64
25	Relationship between Incremental change in Pore Pressure and Incremental change in Vertical Normal Stress (by Finite Element Method) .....	65
26	Relationship between Incremental change in Pore Pressure and Incremental change in Major Principal Stress (after Boussinesq) .....	66

Figure		Page
27	Relationship between Incremental change in Pore Pressure and Incremental change in Major Principal Stress (by Finite Element Method) .....	67
28	Relationship between Incremental change in Pore Pressure and Incremental change in Mean Normal Stress (after Boussinesq) .....	68
29	Relationship between Incremental change in Pore Pressure and Incremental change in Mean Normal Stress (by Finite Element Method) .....	69
30	Relationship between Incremental change in Pore Pressure and Incremental change in $(\Delta\sigma_1 - \Delta\sigma_3)$ (after Boussinesq) .....	70
31	Relationship between Incremental change in Pore Pressure and Incremental change in $(\Delta\sigma_1 - \Delta\sigma_3)$ (by Finite Element Method) .....	71
32	Relationship between $(\Delta u - \Delta\sigma_3)$ and $(\Delta\sigma_1 - \Delta\sigma_3)$ (after Boussinesq) .....	74
33	Relationship between $(\Delta u - \Delta\sigma_3)$ and $(\Delta\sigma_1 - \Delta\sigma_3)$ (by Finite Element Method) .....	75
34	Relationship between $(\Delta u - \frac{1}{2}\Delta\sigma_3)$ and $\frac{1}{2}(\Delta\sigma_1 - \Delta\sigma_3)$ (after Boussinesq) .....	76
35	Relationship between $(\Delta u - \frac{1}{2}\Delta\sigma_3)$ and $\frac{1}{2}(\Delta\sigma_1 - \Delta\sigma_3)$ (by Finite Element Method) .....	77
36	Relationship between Incremental change in $(\Delta u - \Delta\sigma_3)$ and Incremental change in $(\Delta\sigma_1 - \Delta\sigma_3)$ (after Boussinesq) .....	78
37	Relationship between Incremental change in $(\Delta u - \Delta\sigma_3)$ and Incremental change in $(\Delta\sigma_1 - \Delta\sigma_3)$ (by Finite Element Method) .....	79
38	Relationship between $(\Delta u - \Delta\sigma_m)$ and Henkel's Deviator Stress (after Boussinesq) .....	81

Figure		Page
39	Relationship between ( $\Delta U - \Delta \sigma_m$ ) and Henkel's Deviator Stress (by Finite Element Method) .....	82
40	Relationship between ( $\Delta U - \frac{1}{2}\Delta \sigma_m$ ) and Henkel's Deviator Stress (after Boussinesq) .....	83
41	Relationship between ( $\Delta U - \frac{1}{2}\Delta \sigma_m$ ) and Henkel's Deviator Stress (by Finite Element Method) .....	84
42	Relationship between Incremental change in Pore Pressure and Henkel's Deviator Stress (after Boussinesq) .....	86
43	Relationship between Incremental change in Pore Pressure and Henkel's Deviator Stress (by Finite Element Method) .....	87
44	Relationship between Incremental change in ( $\Delta U - \Delta \sigma_3$ ) and Henkel's Deviator Stress (after Boussinesq) .....	88
45	Relationship between Incremental change in ( $\Delta U - \Delta \sigma_m$ ) and Henkel's Deviator Stress (by Finite Element Method) .....	89
46	Relationship between ( $\Delta U - \Delta \sigma_m$ ) and Domaschuk's Resultant Deviatoric Stress (after Boussinesq) ..	91
47	Relationship between ( $\Delta U - \Delta \sigma_m$ ) and Domaschuk's Resultant Deviatoric Stress (by Finite Element Method) .....	92
48	Relationship between ( $\Delta U - \frac{1}{2}\Delta \sigma_m$ ) and Domaschuk's Resultant Deviatoric Stress (after Boussinesq) ....	93
49	Relationship between ( $\Delta U - \frac{1}{2}\Delta \sigma_m$ ) and Domaschuk's Resultant Deviatoric Stress (by Finite Element Method) .....	94
50	Relationship between Incremental change in Pore Pressure and Domaschuk's Resultant Deviatoric Stress (after Boussinesq) .....	96

Figure		Page
51	Relationship between Incremental change in Pore Pressure and Domaschuk's Resultant Deviatoric Stress (by Finite Element Method) .....	97
52	Relationship between Incremental change in $(\Delta U - \Delta \sigma_m)$ and Domaschuk's Resultant Deviatoric Stress (after Boussinesq) .....	98
53	Relationship between Incremental change in $(\Delta U - \Delta \sigma_m)$ and Domaschuk's Resultant Deviatoric Stress (by Finite Element Method) .....	99
54	Relationship between Vertical Normal Deflection and $(\Delta U - \Delta \sigma_m) / P_o$ .....	103
55	Relationship between Vertical Normal Deflection and $(\Delta U - \Delta \sigma_m) / P_o$ .....	104
56	Relationship between Vertical Normal Deflection and $(\Delta U - \Delta \sigma_m)$ .....	108
57	Relationship between Vertical Normal Deflection and $(\Delta U - \Delta \sigma_m)$ .....	109
58	Relationship between Vertical Normal Deflection and $(\Delta U - \Delta \sigma_m)$ .....	110
59	Relationship between Vertical Normal Deflection and $(\Delta U - \Delta \sigma_m)$ .....	111
60	Relationship between Vertical Normal Deflection and $(\Delta U - \Delta \sigma_m)$ .....	112
61	Relationship between Vertical Normal Deflection and $(\Delta U - \Delta \sigma_m)$ .....	113
62	Relationship between Vertical Normal Deflection and $(\Delta U - \Delta \sigma_3)$ .....	114
63	Relationship between Vertical Normal Deflection and $(\Delta U - \Delta \sigma_3)$ .....	115

Figure		Page
64	Relationship between Vertical Normal Deflection and $(\Delta U - \Delta \sigma_3)$ .....	116
65	Relationship between Vertical Normal Deflection and $(\Delta U - \Delta \sigma_3)$ .....	117
66	Relationship between Vertical Normal Deflection and $(\Delta U - \Delta \sigma_3)$ .....	118
67	Relationship between Vertical Normal Deflection and $(\Delta U - \Delta \sigma_3)$ .....	119
68	Relationship between Vertical Normal Deflection and $(\Delta U - \Delta \sigma_m)$ .....	121
69	Relationship between Vertical Normal Deflection and $(\Delta U - \Delta \sigma_m)$ .....	122
70	Relationship between Vertical Normal Deflection and $(\Delta U - \Delta \sigma_3)$ .....	123
71	Relationship between Vertical Normal Deflection and $(\Delta U - \Delta \sigma_3)$ .....	124
72	Comparison between Theoretical Computed and Measured Pore Pressure at Piezometer P1 .....	127
73	Comparison between Theoretical Computed and Measured Pore Pressure at Piezometer P1 .....	128
74	Comparison between Theoretical Computed and Measured Pore Pressure at Piezometer P2 .....	129
75	Stress-strain Relationship for constant $\sigma_c=40$ psi.	174
76	Stress-strain Relationship for constant $\sigma_c=40$ psi.	175
77	Stress-strain Relationship for constant $\sigma_c=40$ psi.	176
78	Stress-strain Relationship for constant $\sigma_c=40$ psi.	177
79	Stress=strain Relationship for constant $\sigma_c=40$ psi.	178

Figure		Page
80	Stress-strain Relationship for constant $\sigma_c = 40\text{psi}$ .	179
81	Relationship between Mean Normal Stress and Modulus of Elasticity of Brown Clay at a depth of 16 feet. ....	180
82	Stress-strain Relationship for constant $\sigma_c = 30\text{psi}$ .	181
83	Stress-strain Relationship for constant $\sigma_c = 30\text{psi}$ .	182
84	Stress-strain Relationship for constant $\sigma_c = 30\text{psi}$ .	183
85	Stress-strain Relationship for constant $\sigma_c = 30\text{psi}$ .	184
86	Relationship between Mean Normal Stress and Modulus of Elasticity of Block A at a depth of 30 feet. ....	185
87	Stress-strain Relationship for constant $\sigma_c = 35\text{psi}$ .	186
88	Stress-strain Relationship for constant $\sigma_c = 35\text{psi}$ .	187
89	Stress-strain Relationship for constant $\sigma_c = 35\text{psi}$ .	188
90	Stress-strain Relationship for constant $\sigma_c = 35\text{psi}$ .	189
91	Stress-strain Relationship for constant $\sigma_c = 35\text{psi}$ .	190
92	Relationship between Mean Normal Stress and Modulus of Elasticity of Block C at a depth of 30 feet. ....	191

## NOTATIONS

- A = Skempton's pore pressure parameter.
- $A_i$  = Skempton's pore pressure parameter considering incremental change in pore pressure.
- B = Skempton's pore pressure parameter.
- $B_i$  = Skempton's pore pressure parameter considering incremental change in pore pressure.
- a = Henkel's pore pressure parameter.
- $a_i$  = Henkel's pore pressure parameter considering incremental change in pore pressure.
- b = Henkel's pore pressure parameter.
- $b_i$  = Henkel's pore pressure parameter considering incremental change in pore pressure.
- $\alpha$  = Domaschuk's pore pressure parameter.
- $\alpha_i$  = Domaschuk's pore pressure parameter considering incremental change in pore pressure.
- $\beta$  = Domaschuk's pore pressure parameter.
- $\beta_i$  = Domaschuk's pore pressure parameter considering incremental change in pore pressure.
- p = Applied pressure.
- $P_o$  = Overburden pressure.
- $\Delta P$  = Change in applied pressure.
- $E_t$  = Initial tangent modulus of elasticity.
- $E_s$  = Secant modulus of elasticity.
- $\Delta s$  = Vertical normal deflection.
- $\Delta u$  = Change in pore pressure.



- $\Delta u_a$  = Change in pore pressure caused by ambient stresses.  
 $\Delta u_s$  = Change in pore pressure due to deflection of the soil.  
 $e_1$  = Major principal strain.  
 $e_3$  = Minor principal strain.  
 $\Delta \sigma_1$  = Change in major principal stress.  
 $\Delta \sigma_2$  = Change in intermediate principal stress.  
 $\Delta \sigma_3$  = Change in minor principal stress.  
 $\Delta \sigma_z$  = Change in vertical normal stress.  
 $\Delta \sigma_r$  = Change in radial stress.  
 $\Delta \sigma_t$  = Change in tangential stress.  
 $\Delta \sigma_m$  = Change in mean normal stress.  
 $s_d = \sqrt{(\Delta \sigma_1 - \Delta \sigma_m)^2 + (\Delta \sigma_2 - \Delta \sigma_m)^2 + (\Delta \sigma_3 - \Delta \sigma_m)^2}$   
 $s_{hd} = \sqrt{(\Delta \sigma_1 - \Delta \sigma_2)^2 + (\Delta \sigma_2 - \Delta \sigma_3)^2 + (\Delta \sigma_1 - \Delta \sigma_3)^2}$   
 $\Delta \sigma_x, \Delta \sigma_y, \Delta \sigma_z$  = Change in normal stress on x, y, z, planes  
with reference to the x, y, z, co-ordinates.  
 $\Delta \tau_{xy}, \Delta \tau_{yz}, \Delta \tau_{xz}$  = Change in shear stress on x, y, z, planes  
with reference to the x, y, z, co-ordinates.

## SUMMARY

A study of pore pressures generated in a clay soil by boundary loads, was carried out by installing piezometers beneath an oil-storage tank. Pore pressure data were collected from March of 1971 to January of 1972 which was divided into five periods as follows;

1) From the time of the piezometer installation to the start of tank construction.

2) Tank construction, which was a period of 7 days.

3) Post tank construction, a period in which the tank was left empty for 14 days.

4) Tank testing period, during which the tank was filled with water in 7 days and was left full for 5 days, then was drained in 23 days and was left empty for another 12 days.

5) In service period, during which petroleum was added and removed daily, but with the amount removed less than the amount added, so that the tank was filled in 4 months.

The pore pressure data were analysed using Skempton's, Henkel's, Domaschuk's, and Lo's methods. The first three methods related the change in pore pressure to the change in ambient stresses, whereas in Lo's method, the change in pore pressure was related to the stresses and to the deflections of the soil. The analysis was carried out following two approaches. One approach was to assume that no consolidation occurred and all pore pressure changes were computed relative

to the initial values. In the other approach, pore pressure changes were taken over time intervals in which there was a significant change in load, and it was thus assumed that no consolidation took place over the short interval, but that consolidation may have taken place prior to the load change. The stresses and deflections at the piezometer locations induced by the loads from the tank, were computed using the Boussinesq theory and the finite element method.

Average pore pressure parameters for Skempton's, Henkel's and Domaschuk's methods were obtained and are summarized in the table below;

Piezometers Methods		Assuming no consolidation		Assuming consolidation occurred	
		Parameters $A, a, & \alpha$		Parameters $A_i, a_i & \alpha_i$	
		P1	P2	P1	P2
Skempton (A)	B=1.0	0.66	0.65	0.70	0.51
	B=0.5	1.87	1.71	-	-
Henkel (a)	b=1.0	0.44	0.32	0.33	0.23
	b=0.5	0.53	0.50	-	-
Domaschuk ( $\alpha$ )	$\beta=1.0$	0.64	0.61	0.28	0.25
	$\beta=0.5$	0.85	0.79	-	-

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

In foundation engineering, the problems of primary concern are the bearing capacity of the soil and the settlement of the foundations. In cohesive soils, these two important factors are influenced by the pore-water pressure in the soil.

The importance of the existence of pore pressure in soil was realized by engineers as early as at the beginning of the 19th century. In 1809, Telford (27) was the first one to apply the method of preloading to consolidate a 55-foot layer of soft clay to increase the soil strength. Most engineers did not fully understand the true mechanisms of the effective stress, until the effective stress principle was put forward by Karl Terzaghi in 1923 (39). At the same time, the consolidation theory was developed which made it possible to compute the transfer of load from water to the soil skeleton as drainage of the pore-water occurred.

Pore-water pressure in soils varies with the change of the stress system which accompanies the application of loads. In order to prevent failure of foundations, the magnitude of pore pressure in field problems has been monitored by engineers during and after construction and necessary remedial measures were made, when the pore pressures were high.

In this thesis, several conventional methods used to predict the change in pore-water pressure associated with changes in stress are presented and the pore-water pressure developed under an oil storage tank in Winnipeg clay are analysed by these methods. The objective of the study is to establish the

relationships between the change in pore pressure and the changes in stress and deflection, such that the pore pressure parameters for those conventional methods were obtained and they can readily be applied in pore pressure computations in Winnipeg clay.

## CHAPTER II

### METHODS AND ASSOCIATED EQUATIONS FOR COMPUTED PORE PRESSURE IN SOIL

#### SKEMPTON'S METHOD

The earliest equation relating the changes in pore pressure to the changes in principal stresses was suggested by Skempton in 1948 (38) for saturated soils. The relationship is given by equation (1).

$$\Delta u = \Delta \sigma_3 + A (\Delta \sigma_1 - \Delta \sigma_3) \dots\dots\dots (1)$$

in which A = pore pressure parameter

$\Delta u$  = change in pore pressure

$\Delta \sigma_1$  = change in major principal stress

$\Delta \sigma_3$  = change in minor principal stress.

In 1954 (39), the equation was further developed for the case of partially saturated soils by introducing another pore pressure parameter B and the equation became

$$\Delta u = B (\Delta \sigma_3 + A (\Delta \sigma_1 - \Delta \sigma_3)) \dots\dots\dots (2)$$

$$= B \Delta \sigma_3 + \bar{A} (\Delta \sigma_1 - \Delta \sigma_3) \dots\dots\dots (3)$$

in which B = pore pressure parameter

$$\bar{A} = AB$$

The above proposed equation was based on several assumptions. These assumptions were: the elastic theory is valid for soils, the law of superposition is applicable, the change of intermediate principal stress has no effect on the pore-water pressure, and the solid particles in the soil are incompressible.

In applying Skempton's equation to a field problem, the pore pressure parameters A and B must first be determined in the laboratory.

Two methods can be adopted in the evaluation of the parameter B. They are as follows:

Method 1. By consolidation test.

When a soil element is subjected to loading, the change in volume of the soil skeleton must be equal to the change in volume of pore fluid and from this we get

$$B = \frac{1}{1 + n \frac{C_w}{C_c}} \dots\dots\dots (4)$$

where  $n$  = porosity of soil

$C_w$  = the compressibility of water

$C_c$  = the compressibility of soil skeleton

In order to obtain the value B of soil, it is necessary to determine  $n$ ,  $C_w$ , and  $C_c$ .

The compressibility of the soil skeleton can be determined from an isotropic, consolidation test. The soil is assumed to be isotropic, so that the compressibility is the same in all directions and may be determined from the change in volume,  $\Delta V$ , which accompanies a change in effective stress,  $\Delta \bar{\sigma}$  according to the equation

$$C_c = \frac{\Delta V}{V_o} \frac{1}{\Delta \bar{\sigma}} \dots\dots\dots (5)$$

where  $V_o$  = original volume.

For anisotropic soils, the compressibility in a specific direction can be found by applying uniaxial loading in that direction in an oedometer drained test. The pore-water pressure in the specimen should always be kept zero. The change in volume is measured by the volume of water squeezed out when load is applied. With this data, the curve of unit volume versus effective stress is plotted. The compressibility is the slope of this curve. The same procedure can be applied

to the other two directions.

As for the compressibility of water  $C_w$ , it is determined by an undrained isotropic compression test. The sample is assumed to be isotropic so that the strain is the same in any direction. The cell pressure is increased in steps, for every increment of the cell pressure, the vertical shortening of the sample is measured and the strain is obtained. With this strain, the decrease in the diameter of the sample is found. Then, the change in volume of the sample is computed. The change in water pressure is equal to the change in stresses. A curve of  $\Delta V/V_0$  versus  $\Delta u$ , is plotted and the slope of this curve is  $C_w$ .

The porosity of soil is obtained by direct measurement of the weight and volume of the soil and determining the specific gravity of the soil solids.

Having determined  $C_w$ ,  $C_c$ , and  $n$ , the B value can be calculated by applying equation (4). From experience in practice, most soils encountered in field are highly saturated. When the soil is 100% saturated, the value of B is unity.

Method 2. By triaxial compression test.

This method is simpler than the previous one and therefore it is currently used. An isotropic compression test is carried out. The cell pressure is raised in increments. For each increment of the cell pressure, the pore-water pressure is recorded. A curve of pore-water pressure versus the cell pressure is plotted. The slope of this curve is the B value.



Two methods can be used to determine the pore pressure parameter A.

Method 1. By triaxial undrained compression test with pore pressure measurement.

The usual way to determine the parameter A is to carry out a consolidated undrained triaxial test with pore pressure measurements. The selection of the consolidation pressure is important. It must be made similar to the actual field stress conditions. In a standard triaxial test, the pore-water pressure at start is usually zero and the cell pressure is kept constant, therefore, for a saturated soil equation (2) is written

$$A = \frac{\Delta u}{\Delta\sigma_1 - \Delta\sigma_3} \dots\dots\dots (6)$$

which permits the direct determination of the A parameter.

Method 2. By triaxial drained test.

If the change of volume in soil skeleton is equal to the change of volume of the pores in the soil element under consideration and the pore-fluid is incompressible, then we get,

$$A = \frac{1}{1 + \frac{C_{s2}}{C_{c1}}} \dots\dots\dots (7)$$

in which  $C_{s2}$  = swellability in horizontal direction  
 $C_{c1}$  = compressibility in vertical direction

The swellability,  $C_{s2}$ , is obtained from the triaxial drained test, in which  $\sigma_1$  is held constant and the cell pressure ( $\sigma_2 = \sigma_3$ ) is reduced in steps. A period of time is allowed to elapse to make sure that the pore-water pressure is completely dissipated. The volume change is measured. This same