

SLOW SAND FILTRATION

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CONTENTS

	Page
Preface	7
1. INTRODUCTION	9
Water quality criteria	10
Choice of raw water source	11
Choice of treatment processes	12
2. FILTRATION OF WATER SUPPLIES	15
History	15
Comparison of filter types	16
Elements of a slow sand filter	18
Purification in a slow sand filter	20
Application of slow sand filtration	22
Limitations of slow sand filters	23
Advantages of slow sand filters	25
3 THEORY OF BIOLOGICAL FILTRATION	27
Mechanisms of filtration	27
Effects of algae on filters	34
Hydraulics of filtration	38
Effects of filtration on delivered water quality	43
4. FILTER DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION	47
Supernatant water reservoir	51
Filter-bed	52
Under-drainage system	54
Filter box	59
Filter controls	64
Covering of filters	70
5. OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE	73
Initial commissioning of a filter	76
Filter cleaning	78
Resanding	80
Mechanical cleaning of filters	84
Choice of cleaning methods	94
Management	95

6. SLOW SAND FILTRATION AND ARTIFICIAL RECHARGE	99
Methods of artificial replenishment	100
Slow sand filtration in artificial recharge	105
Artificial recharge in the Ruhr	106
Reduction of salt content	108
Annex 1. Maximum variation in piezometric level in a typical under- drainage system	111
Annex 2. Piezometric level in an under-drainage system constructed with standard bricks	115
Selected bibliography	116
List of reviewers	117
Index	119

Preface

In recent years there has been a tendency to assume that slow sand filtration is an old-fashioned method of water treatment that has been completely superseded by rapid-gravity and other high-rate filtration techniques.

This idea is definitely mistaken. Under suitable circumstances, slow sand filtration may be not only the cheapest and simplest but also the most efficient method of water treatment. Its advantages have been proved in practice over a long period, and it is still the chosen method of water purification in certain highly industrialized cities as well as in rural areas and small communities. It has the great advantage over other methods that it makes better use of the local skills and materials available in developing countries, and it is far more efficient than rapid filtration in removing bacterial contamination.

Because of the evidence that water treatment designers tend to neglect consideration of slow sand filters when planning new works, the World Health Organization commissioned Professor L. Huisman, an internationally known specialist in water treatment, to visit and report on installations using slow sand filtration in various parts of Europe and to compare costs and performance, particularly with regard to the quality of the treated water. From his original study, Professor Huisman, in collaboration with Mr W.E. Wood, formerly Chief, Community Water Supply, WHO, developed the present book, which describes the construction and operation of modern slow sand filters, the latest developments in operating techniques, the theory of biological filtration, and the application of the principle of slow sand filtration to the artificial recharging of groundwater sources—a technique practised extensively in the Netherlands.

It is hoped that the book will encourage the greater use of the excellent and reliable method of slow sand filtration, especially in developing countries.

