

AIR POLLUTION IN THE RIMAC VALLEY, PERU**M.A. Vizcarra Andreu***Peruvian Society for Clean Air And Environmental Protection, Lima, Peru*

The receipt of complaints, informal and formal, can indicate that pollution exceeds the level the public will tolerate. Air pollution in Lima has been recorded since the 1960s but, with the development of the fisheries industry and associated odour problems, was viewed as a symbol of prosperity. Complaints then averaged one per week but a recent report from the Directorate of Environmental Health says that figure has increased twelve times. A main cause in the deterioration of air quality is the shift from rural to urban areas, and the associated transfer of labour - Lima's population is now 8 million, compared with 5 million in the 1960s. The multiplicity of agencies with responsibilities for pollution and health does not help. The morphology and meteorology of the valley, which rises from the Pacific Ocean to almost 5km, and the River Rimac which descends 132 km east-west, also affect air quality. A survey of air pollution in the valley differentiated between high, middle and low altitudes, with the aim of gaining a broader understanding of the structure and movement of pollutants in the valley. A further purpose was to make subjective and empirical observations of the distinctive marks of pollution - dust, noise, odour, less visibility etc - which could be transformed into objective data and thus help to inform future decisions. This paper will present this pilot study, showing how its varying complicating aspects can be of relevance to the application of specialised science and technology in the Third World.