

THE SUNDAY STATESMAN, 29 October 1972 (Calcutta)

HIMALAYAN WONDERLAND, by M S Gill (Vikas, Rs 25)

IT is good to see a member of the Indian Administrative Service write a book rather in the style of the old and dying ICS. Mr Gill is a civilian, IAS style, but also has civilized interests in mountains and peoples who are different from himself. There is no doubt at all that Mrs Indira Gandhi loves the mountains; but a foreward from her was hardly necessary to commend the book. Mr Gill has travelled widely in the Lahaul-Spiti area, one of the most beautiful parts of Himalayan India, and not merely as an official but as a lover of heights and hills people. The narrative is the better for being simple; and the quotation from Kipling's "Kim" is reassuring. The reader is never quite lost in the mist, although Mr Gill has not a few fantasies to retail. There is some down-to-earth social anthropology; but the basic approach is human rather than scientific or bureaucratic. An admirable book, pleasant and highly readable. Mr Gill's joy amid snow will be widely shared in the plains.