

# Scientist emeritus

by MANOHAR SINGH GILL

I knew Mr Lal Singh Kang many years ago as my Sub Divisional Magistrate in Julundur. A tall, grave-faced and mild-mannered man, he attended diligently to his duties as a revenue officer. He was always a picture of dignity.

I was, therefore, surprised to see in a recent issue of The Tribune a report under the heading "Muscle massage—a new therapy", with a photograph of my old friend, spreadeagled across a wooden bench. It would have been funny were it not so serious.

I little knew that Mr Kang had the makings of a research scientist in him, and that he was demonstrating his new-found cure for rheumatism and arthritis. As happens with all great scientists, it was part inspiration and part chance and destiny.

As he reported it, Mr Kang was once sitting with his back pressed to a brick wall. He accidentally rubbed it against a protruding edge. One thing led to another, and he ended up with the deduction that hard rubbing of the body, whether with bricks, sticks or a roller bed,

cures rheumatism. Even Parkinson's disease!

I do not know the reasons yet, but I have observed the fact that civil servants make good research scientists. While in the general world of science a man tends to put in his best effort in his early years, in the case of civil servant-scientists their best work is done at a much later date. In fact, their output after retirement is really the most fruitful.

## ODD REMEDY

Mr Kang is not the only example I can think of. Chandigarh citizens are probably acquainted with a distinguished retired Director of Health Services who discovered a cure for blood pressure, heart disease and the like which was equally unconventional. The patient was strapped to a wooden platform, which was spun at varying speeds and varying angles.

Those who managed to stand erect after the terrifying experience vouchsafed to its health-restoring and vigour-reviving effect. (The churlish claimed that they said so only in order to get

away from the frightful spin, but I do not believe them).

I must confess that I too have been devoting the little spare time that I get to doing some research on diseases to which civil servants are prone. It is a well observed fact that after retirement civil servants tend to acquire a hang-dog expression and often fade away quickly into oblivion. My studies show that like gold fish they tend to miss their bowl of water, which is the Secretariat.

I carried out an experiment wherein I created the physical environments of the Secretariat. The patient, instead of being made to lie on a hospital bed, was seated at a desk. The decor of the room was, like that of an office, complete with musty files, broken furniture and a rat or two scurrying about behind the torn sofa. Instead of pills, tea was sent in at regular intervals.

## FILES FERRIED

To maintain the atmosphere, files were also ferried regularly in and out of the room. My experiment showed a unique and rapid improvement in the patient's health. The colour invari-

ably returned to his cheek, and he was once again able to shout at the chaprasi and his children.

I am sure I have found a remarkable cure for the ailments of retired civil servants, and my discovery should bring cheer to such souls all over the world. I shall need, however, to extend my research further, and have applied to the Chief Commissioner for a 50-acre plot where I intend to create a complete therapy centre for babus provided with all that they can possibly need—Secretariat rooms, peons, superintendents, loving colleagues and tea.

The moment I get a plot I intend to retire and devote the rest of my life to the service of this precious sector of mankind.

But one thing seems fairly obvious from the experiences of Mr Kang and myself. Professional scientists do not necessarily make the best or, for that matter, any discoveries. In fact the national laboratories are a bit of a waste. It would be much more sensible to pick up suitable civil servants at their retirement and fund them to seek remedies to the world's ills.