

The long lunch



A Spanish civil servant didn't show up for his job at the Cadiz water board for years and nobody noticed.

Joaquín García, a water engineer in the **Spanish city of Cádiz**, was due to collect a medal for 20 years' loyal service, but nobody could find him. The mayor, **Jorge Blas Fernández**, asked where he was. He wondered if he was still on the payroll, or whether he had retired or died.

Fernández went to the manager of the water board. The manager told him that he didn't know where Garcia was, and he added that he had not seen him for several years. The mayor was amazed, so he contacted the missing engineer. He asked him what he had been doing for so many years. García refused to answer.

The case went to court. The court asked García to explain his absence. They wanted to know why he had taken his pay despite doing no work. García admitted that he had not kept regular business hours, but said that was because he had been bullied at work and had become depressed. He added that he was making good use of his time at home – he had been studying philosophy, especially the works of Spinoza, the Dutch philosopher.

The court ordered García to pay a fine of €27,000. The mayor told him that he would definitely not receive a medal.