

REST PERIOD FOR SEAFARERS

622. SHRI M. VALIULLA: Will the Minister for TRANSPORT be pleased to state:

(a) what is the period of rest allowed to a seafarer after his return from a voyage and before his selection for a fresh voyage; and

(b) what are the emoluments paid to him during such a period of rest?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS AND TRANSPORT (SHRI O. V. ALAGESAN) : (a) Each seaman is recruited generally for a single voyage at the end of which he is discharged. He has, as a rule, to wait for some time before he is able to secure a fresh engagement. The period of waiting for each category of seamen varies as it depends upon a number of factors, *e.g.*, supply and demand, the nature and duration of round voyages, etc. However, working on the law of averages, it can be said that the seafarers remain unemployed ashore for a period ranging between 3 to 5 months.

(b) No arrangements exist at present for any payments to seafarers during waiting periods.

MUTUAL BENEFIT FUND SCHEME

623. SHRI M. VALIULLA: Will the Minister for RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether all classes of employees on the Railways are given the benefits under the Mutual Benefit Fund Scheme;

(b) if not, the classes of workers which are not entitled to such benefits and the reasons for which they are excluded; and

(c) whether the scheme will be extended to those workers who are now excluded; if so, when?

THE PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY
TO THE MINISTER FOR RAIL-

WAYS AND TRANSPORT (SHRI SHAH NAWAZ KHAN): (a) The Railways do not run any Mutual Benefit Fund Schemes. Prior to the Government taking over the Nizam State Railway, there were two Mutual Benefit Funds run by the employees themselves and these are continuing to function.

(b) The question of what classes of workers are entitled to join the Funds is a matter for the Funds to decide. It is understood that the rules framed by the Funds exclude a few categories, the reasons for which are not known to the Railways.

(c) It is a matter for the employees to decide and not for the Railways.

TRANSPORT BOTTLENECKS

624. SHRI M. VALIULLA: Will the Minister for RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) the number of stations on the Indian Railways where transhipment bottlenecks exist at present; and

(b) how long it is likely to take to remove the bottlenecks?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS AND TRANSPORT (SHRI O. V. ALAGESAN) : (a) A list showing the important break-of-gauge transhipment points through which the movement of traffic is at present limited is placed on the Table of the House.

(b) The limitation on the movement is not necessarily the result of the limited capacity for transhipment itself but also that for movement over the adjoining sections in a number of cases. Vigorous steps continue to be taken to augment the capacity but it will take some time before it reaches a level generally to meet all the requirements which are also on the increase.