

STRAIGHT TALK

More Production More Profits

Last week I attended the annual Conference of the Trades Union Council and listened to the guest speaker, Mr. L.F.S. Burnham. Aside from irrelevancies and glib phrases he dealt with two main questions — productivity, and trade unionism and politics.

Burnham has now apparently forgotten all he learned about Marxism and socialism and the extraction of surplus value from the working class. Instead of preparing the workers for battle against the citadel of capital, he now advises them to work harder and produce more. Increased productivity is the way out, he urged.

Every school boy knows however, that all this talk about productivity is only to strengthen the hand of the imperialists. Increased productivity can only mean

greater profits for the imperialists who dominate our economy with their company dominated unions. Their puppet government refuses to allow polls to determine the question of union recognition for the purpose of collective bargaining it also refuses to enact minimum wages to protect the weak and poorly organised trade unions. When the TUC demanded the enactment of a minimum wage, it was told that the trade unions must not expect the government to fight their battle they must do so themselves.

On the question of trade unionism and politics, the line of the imperialists is clear — trade unions must stay aloof from politics. Burnham, however, gives the impression that he does not agree with this line. But when he talks about

politics what he means really is political affiliation. What he would like is for the trade union movement to become part and parcel of the PNC.

Is for the trade union movement. When we speak of politics, we mean political economy. The foreigners obviously do not like to hear talk about ideology and imperialism.

They would like to see the workers struggle within the narrow range of wages and working conditions at the workplace while they control the citadel of government through their puppets, while they muzzle the workers through their company dominated unions, and while they control the coercive state apparatus — police, security forces, magistracy and judiciary — to keep the workers in check, to go and detain them and if necessary, to shoot them later.

The objective of the imperialists is to keep the economic order intact while the workers remain forever the drawers of water and the hewers of wood. Surely, this cannot be enough for the Guianese working class people. Today in Guiana and throughout the underdeveloped world, the gap between the rich and the poor is growing wider. And in the meantime, our country is being sold down the river to the foreigners and their local lackeys. Their grip on our economy is being further strengthened by the puppet government while Burnham talks glibly in anti-imperialist language.

Note these events over the past six months:

nese, banking insurance, shipping and foreign trade — is bleeding our country white.

With an investment of about \$175 million in the 16 year period (1948—1964) the imperialists have made in clear profits about \$260 million while their assets are still worth about \$200 million. Rate of profit is today around \$50 million per year.

Guianese must recognise that these are the root causes of our backwardness. So long as the trade unionists do not recognise this "citadel" of robbery and exploitation but only use pin pricks at the periphery, our country will remain like a sick man — a man whose blood is infected but who continues to receive treatment only for the sores.

The time has come for the Trade Union movement to



enter into a serious dialogue about the root causes of our backwardness. Merely to parrot phrases of their corrupt and opportunistic leaders is not enough. That way standards of living will not improve; indeed, they will worsen. Increased productivity in today's context is an imperialist slogan. No wonder we now see the puppets of imperialism being allowed to fatten themselves with large salaries and allowances, with unnecessary posts, with joy-rides abroad, while our country is being sold out and committed to a development programme based on aid with strings. This can only mean in the end further exploitation of the workers, drain of super profits abroad and crushing debt charges and greater burdens on the heads of the Guianese people.

- Tie up of our bauxite lands by Reynolds for 75 years.
 - Oil resources handed over to three foreign oil sharks.
 - Electricity Corporation to be denationalised.
 - Banana cultivation to be put under control of Elders and Fyffes, subsidiary of United Fruit Company, the 'Bookers' of the banana Republics in Central America.
 - Tobacco under the control of the Demerara Tobacco Company, subsidiary of the octopus British-American Tobacco Company.
 - Abolition of compulsory savings levy at 4% interest for voluntary scheme at 7% tax free, thus giving companies over 10% profits and double their money in nine years.
 - Removal or drastic modification of capital taxes — net wealth tax, capital gains, gift and turn-over, etc.
- Our country is definitely being sold out. And the foreign stranglehold of our economy — sugar, bauxite, manga-

The Trade Union movement must demand not only political independence, but economic emancipation and social justice. This cannot come about under U.S. imperialist overlordship.