

National Assembly Debates

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY OF
THE SECOND SESSION (2002-2005) OF THE EIGHTH PARLIAMENT
OF GUYANA UNDER THE CONSTITUTION OF THE CO-OPERATIVE
REPUBLIC OF GUYANA HELD IN THE PARLIAMENT CHAMBER
PUBLIC BUILDINGS, BRICKDAM, GEORGETOWN

74TH SITTING

2.10 PM

Wednesday, 30 November 2005

MEMBERS OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY (69)

Speaker (1)

The Hon. Hari N. Ramkarran, S. C., M. P. - *Speaker of the National Assembly*

Members of the Government (38)

(i) People's Progressive Party/Civic (34)

(ii) Non-elected Ministers (3)

(iii) The United Force (1)

The Hon. Samuel A.A. Hinds, M.P.	- <i>Prime Minister and Minister of Public Works and Communications (Absent - performing the functions of Office of the President)</i>
The Hon. Reepu Daman Persaud, O.R., J.P., M.P.	- <i>Minister of Parliamentary Affairs</i>
The Hon. Clement J. Roheo, M.P.	- <i>Minister of Foreign Trade and International Co-operation</i>
The Hon. Harripersaud Nokta, M.P.	- <i>Minister of Local Government and Regional Development</i>
The Hon. Gail Teixeira, M.P.	- <i>Minister of Home Affairs</i>
The Hon. Dr. Henry B. Jeffrey, M.P.	- <i>Minister of Education</i>
The Hon. Saisnarine Kowlessar, M.P.	- <i>Minister of Finance</i>
The Hon. Shaik K.Z. Baksh, M.P.	- <i>Minister of Housing and Water</i>
The Hon. Rev. Dr. Ramnauth D.A. Bisnauth, M.P.	- <i>Minister of Labour, Human Services and Social Security</i>
The Hon. Clinton C. Collymore, M.P.	- <i>Minister in the Ministry of Local Government and Regional Development</i>
The Hon. Satyadeow Sawh, M.P.	- <i>Minister of Fisheries, Other Crops and Livestock (Region No. 5 - Mahaica/Berbice)</i>

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*The Hon.S.Rudolph Insanally, O.R, C.C.H, M.P.	-Minister in the Office of the President with responsibility for Foreign Affairs (AOL)
*The Hon. Doodnauth Singh, S.C., M.P.	- Attorney General and Minister of Legal Affairs
The Hon.Dr.Jennifer R.A. Westford, M.P.	-Minister of the Public Service
The Hon. C. Anthony Xavier, M.P.	- Minister of Culture, Youth and Sport
The Hon. Bibi S. Shadick, M.P.	-Minister in the Ministry of Labour, Human Services and Social Security (Region No.3 -Essequibo Islands/ West Demerara)
**The Hon. Manzoor Nadir, M.P.	- Minister of Tourism, Industry and Commerce
The Hon. Carolyn Rodrigues, M.P.	- Minister of Amerindian Affairs
*The Hon. Harry Narine Nawbatt, M.P.	- Minister of Transport and Hydraulics
The Hon. Dr Leslie S. Ramsammy, M.P.	- Minister of Health
Mr S. Feroze Mohamed, M.P.	- Chief Whip
Mr Cyril C. Belgrave, C.C.H., J.P., M.P.	-(Region No. 4-Demerara/Mahaica)
Mr. Donald R. Ramotar, M.P.	
Mr Husman Alli, M.P.	-(Region No. 7-Cuyuni/Mazaruni)
Mr. Komal Chand, C.C.H., J.P., M.P.	- (Absent)
Mrs Indranie Chandarpal, M.P.	
Mr Bernard C. DeSantos, S.C., M.P.	-(Region No.4-Demerara/Mahaica)
Mrs Shirley V. Edwards, J.P. M.P.	
Mr Odinga N. Lumumba, M.P.	- (Absent on Leave)
Mr Heeralall Mohan, J.P., M.P.	-(Region No.2-Pomeroon/Supenaam)
Mr Ramesh C. Rajkumar, M.P.	-(Region No.6-East Berbice/Corentyne)
Dr Bheri S. Ramsaran, M.D., M.P.	
Mrs Philomena Sahoye-Shury, C.C.H, J.P, M.P.	- Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Housing and Water (Region No. 1 - Barima/Waini)
Mrs Pauline R. Sukhai, M.P.	
Dr. Moti Lall, C.C.H., M.P.	
Mr Zulfikar Mustapha, M.P.	
Mr Ncendkumar, M.P.	-(Region No. 4-Demerara/Mahaica)
Mr Khemraj Ramjattan, M.P.	-(Region No. 6-East Berbice/Corentyne) (Absent)

***Non-Elected Minister**

****Elected Member from The United Force**

Members of the Opposition (30)

(i) People's National Congress/Reform (27)

Mr. Robert H. O. Corbin, M.P.	- <i>Leader of the Opposition (AOL)</i>
Mr. Winston S. Murray, C.C.H., M.P.	
Mrs. Clarissa S. Riehl, M.P.	- <i>Deputy Speaker of the N.A</i>
Mr. E. Lance Carberry, M.P.	- <i>Chief Whip</i>
Mr. Ivor Allen, M.P.	- <i>(Region No.2-Pomeroon/Supenaam) (AOL)</i>
Mrs. Deborah J. Backer, M.P.	
Mr. Deryck M.A. Bernard, M.P.	
Mr. C. Stanley Ming, M.P.	- <i>(AOL)</i>
Mr. Vincent L. Alexander, M.P.	- <i>(Region No.4-Demerara/Mahaica) (AOL)</i>
Mr. Basil Williams, M.P.	
Mrs. Volda A. Lawrence, M.P.	
Dr Dalglish Joseph, M.D., M.P.	
Miss Amna Ally, M.P.	- <i>(Region No.5-Mahaica/Berbice)</i>
Miss Sandra M. Adams, M.P.	- <i>(Region No.10-Upper Demerara Berbice)</i>
Mr. Jerome Khan, M.P.	
Dr George A. Norton, M.P.	
Miss Myrna E. N. Peterkin, M.P.	- <i>(Region No.4-Demerara/Mahaica) (AOL)</i>
Mr. James K. McAllister, M.P.	- <i>(Region No.3-Essequibo Islands West Demerara)</i>
Dr Carl Max Hanoman, M.P.	- <i>(Absent on Leave)</i>
Miss Lurlene A. Nestor, M.P.	- <i>(Region No.4-Demerara/Mahaica) (Absent)</i>
Mr Abdul Kadir, J.P., M.P.	- <i>(Region No.10-Upper Demerara/Berbice)</i>
Mr Ricky Khan, M.P.	- <i>(Region No.1-Barima/Waini) (Absent)</i>
Mr Raphael G.C. Trotman, M.P.	- <i>(Absent on Leave)</i>
Mrs. Rajcoomarie Bancroft, M.P.	- <i>(Region No.8-Potaro/Siparuni)</i>
Mr Nasir Ally, J.P., M.P.	- <i>(Region No.6-Easi/Berbice/Corentyne)</i>
Miss Judith David, M.P.	- <i>(Region No.7-Cuyuni/Mazaruni)</i>
Miss Genevieve Allen, M.P.	- <i>(Region No.4-Demerara/Mahaica)</i>

(ii) Guyana Action Party/Working People's Alliance Party (2)

Mrs Sheila V.A. Holder, M.P.	- <i>(Absent on Leave)</i>
Mrs Shirley J. Melville, M.P.	- <i>(Upper Takutu/Upper Essequibo)</i>

(iii) Rise, Organise and Rebuild Party (1)

Mr Ravindra Dev, M.P.	- <i>(Absent on Leave)</i>
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OFFICERS

Mrs Lilawtie Coonjah, Deputy Clerk of the National Assembly

Mr Maurice B. Henry, Head of Committees Division

PRAYERS

The Deputy Clerk reads the Prayer

PUBLIC BUSINESS

MOTION

1. TRIBUTE TO HUBERT NATHANIEL CRITCHLOW

WHEREAS November 28, 2005 marks 100 years since the beginning of the pioneering and heroic struggle to organise workers in Guyana.

AND WHEREAS Hubert Nathaniel Critchlow played a leading role in this struggle to organise the Guyanese working class;

AND WHEREAS the outstanding efforts of Hubert Nathaniel Critchlow throughout his life contributed to the development of the Trade Union Movement in Guyana and the British Commonwealth;

AND WHEREAS Hubert Nathaniel Critchlow made a significant and lasting contribution towards the official recognition and acceptance for the rights and benefits which now accrue to workers

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in Guyana, through his efforts in the Trade Union Movement, the British Guyana Legislature and the international arena;

AND WHEREAS the significant contribution of Critchlow to the development of Trade Unionism in Guyana and the Caribbean has been internationally recognized and acknowledged,

BE IT RESOLVED:

That on this historic occasion the National Assembly of Guyana pays tribute to the outstanding contribution of Hubert Nathaniel Critchlow to the improvement of lives of workers, to the Trade Union Movement and the legislature of Guyana;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

- 1. That this National Assembly calls on the Government of Guyana to declare November 28 henceforth "Hubert Nathaniel Critchlow Day" in acknowledgement of his heroic and pioneering contribution as an exemplar Trade Unionist and the champion of the Working Class;*

- 2. That this National Assembly declares Hubert Nathaniel Critchlow a National Hero from this day November 30, 2005.*

The Speaker: The Honourable Member Mr Murray, will you move the Motion as set out in the Order Paper?

Mr Winston S Murray: Mr Speaker, given the unavoidable, but very explainable absence of the Hon Robert Corbin, Leader of the Opposi-

tion from today's sitting of the National Assembly, I rise to move the Motion of Tribute to Hubert Nathaniel Critchlow standing in Mr Corbin's name.

Mr Speaker, it is true though unfortunate that very often a person is accorded due and full recognition, especially in his/her own country only a long time after his/her demise, but better late than never may be an adage that comes to our rescue here, so it is with great pleasure that this Motion is being brought for the consideration and approval of the National Assembly today. But I cannot proceed further without making mention of the circumstances surrounding the week long celebrations to mark one hundred years since the creation of history, by then twenty-one years old Hubert Nathaniel Critchlow in the West Indians and the colonial empire, when he organised and lead Water Front workers in a strike against a 10 ½ hour working day and a system of calculating employment which was inimical to the workers interest.

Of course the idea to mark the occasion and give due recognition to the late Hubert Nathaniel Critchlow emanated from the Guyana Labour Union, which was Mr Critchlow's brainchild and ultimate creation. However, once the idea was accepted the leadership of the Guyana Labour Union under its President General Mr Robert Corbin decided that given the national role Mr Critchlow played and the central position he occupied in the birth and the development of the Trade Union Movement here in Guyana, the various activities to mark the occasion and Mr Critchlow's contribution should be as all embracing as possible.

And so it came about, that the Government was invited to be part of the Committee that was set up to plan and organise the various activities which together constitute the celebration and acknowledgment of Mr Critchlow's contribution to the Trade Union Movement and indeed to Guyana as a whole.

I am most happy to say here in the National Assembly this afternoon, that not only did the Government respond positively, but it representatives played an active and very meaningful role in the work of the Com-

mittee, to bring to fruition the celebrations in Mr Critchlow's honour.

On behalf of the People's National Congress/Reform, I therefore wish to express appreciation to the Government for associating itself with the programme of activities. *[Applause]*

The cynics, that is those who have little faith in human sincerity and goodness may conjecture that the support of Government maybe born out of political opportunism, but let me hasten to add that that is not the PNC/R's view. The People's National Congress/Reform interprets the support of the Government as indicative of the potential for co-operation, between and among the political Parliamentary parties not least between the People's Progressive Party/Civic and the People's National Congress/Reform to take Guyana forward.

It is the hope of the People's National Congress/Reform that the co-operation which has manifested itself here, would and could find its way into other areas of national life, so that all the people of Guyana could say with a sense of satisfaction and a feeling of hope that our political leaders are working together to build our great country and we can expectantly look forward to our rendezvous with prosperity.

The Motion before this Honourable House today, may be regarded by many as *the* high point of the observances to recognize and honour Critchlow. Tere in the National Assembly of the Parliament of Guyana, the Supreme Institution of our land, where the representatives of the people are gathered, I expect that we are about to record in the annals of this hallowed institution for posterity, a resolution of profound depth and meaning in relation to the role of Hubert Nathaniel Critchlow in our - at the time - emerging society, where rules of engagement, methods for resolution of conflict, relations between employers and the employed, industrial relations generally and the general direction of our society were still in an evolutionary stage.

The Motion before this Honourable House acknowledges that some 100 years ago, a twenty-one year old, of very humble origins was able

to organise and lead a strike by Water Front workers against the powers of the day, who owned and controlled the Water Front. While history may record that the strikes of 1905 and 1906 did not lead to the desired results at the time, they had so shaken the foundations of the old order that it was only a matter of time before change would come.

In the meantime, in keeping with the then colonial policy of intimidation and suppression of militancy, Mr Critchlow was twice arrested.

On the first occasion, he was released without charges being laid against him.

On the second occasion, he was charged with an assault but the charge was dismissed by the Magistrate.

On another occasion when Hubert Nathaniel Critchlow and two colleagues petitioned the Chamber of Commerce for an eight-hour working day, the Chamber's President called on the trio to withdraw the petition or face dismissal. While Critchlow's two colleagues withdrew their signatures from the petition, Critchlow did not and subsequently not only lost his job at a particular wharf, but was unable to obtain work at any other wharf.

But such was the determination and conviction of Critchlow about the cause he was prosecuting that neither would he be frightened off nor would he sacrifice principle for convenience, these were hallmarks of his entire life as a Trade Unionist.

Yet Critchlow's zealous commitment to principle and his anger at wrongful police detention did not convert into rash or irrational action. He was always thoughtful and purposeful in what he did and he fully understood that propitious timing of actions was extremely important for success. He understood that the weapon of strikes must be strategically used, thus when social and economic problems caused by the first World War led to widespread civil disturbances and the workers seem determined to solve their problems through violence against the employers he cautioned:

Do not fight, let me negotiate.

However, when the Governor and the Chamber of Commerce refused to meet with him and their delegations to discuss the workers problems, Critchlow led a mammoth demonstration against the existing hardships and due to the forcefulness of the demonstrators' protests, meetings which could not earlier be held, suddenly became possible with the workers' delegation. Among the major results obtained were:

- a 10 percent increase in wages; and
- the reduction of the working day from 10½ to 9½ hours.

During the two years 1917 and 1918, Critchlow obtained two wage increases and improved conditions of work for Water Front workers. This clearly strengthened Critchlow's determination and enlarged the opportunity to form a trade union which could effectively represent workers. On 11 January 1919 by formal resolution the British Guiana Labour Union was born. Today it is known as the Guyana Labour Union. When legislation was passed for the registration and the supervision of trade unions, the British Guiana Labour Union became the first registered trade union in the then British Guiana in 1922.

In its first year of existence this Union had among its membership apart from Waterfront workers, porters, labourers, tradesmen, sea defence workers, railway employees, miners, factories workers and domestics. There were also a large number of sugar workers in its fold.

Critchlow's interest and the involvement with the sugar workers were strong and deep. In 1905 when the Waterfront workers struck so did Sugar Workers from Diamond Estate and Demerara Sugar Estates. Their issues were also increase wages and better conditions of work. On their march to the city to meet with Critchlow, the police intervened and disturbances followed. Critchlow took up the sugar workers' problems and was of particular help to the East Indian sugar workers by representing their grievances to the Chief Immigration Officer. Because of the advice and assistance he rendered to the sugar workers, Critchlow was

called *the black Crossbie*. The real *crossbie* was an Englishman, who had rendered great services to the indentured sugar workers who were brought from India.

In 1942, in the face of widespread unemployment and rising cost of living, the Government and the Chamber of Commerce dispatched Critchlow to Great Britain, to negotiate an increase in Guyana's sugar quota at increase prices. Critchlow's mission was successful, though this visit was used against him to show that he was swinging to the employers.

Hubert Nathaniel Critchlow was a multifaceted Trade Unionist. When rents surged by 80 percent after World War I, Critchlow successfully negotiated with the administration for a rent restriction ordinance, which regulated rents from \$60 and lower, the range that affected the ordinary worker.

In 1927, Critchlow and the Labour Union campaigned for change in the country's Constitution

In 1929, they campaigned for adult suffrage and for the nomination of persons connected with the Labour Movement to sit in the Legislative Council.

In May 1943, Critchlow became a Member of the Legislative Council.

In 1944, he was appointed a member of the Executive Council.

With revolutionary vision, Critchlow and the British Guiana Labour Union campaigned for workers compensation, health insurance, old age pension, a juvenile court, land settlement schemes and technical training schools.

In 1946 the Legislative Council largely on the basis of Critchlow's representations passed the Bakeries Hours of Work Ordinance to prohibit work at nights except for Friday nights.

Hubert Nathaniel Critchlow had great respect for women, he publicly said:

When the men let you down, the women are always there.

It was not be forgotten that it was Hubert Nathaniel Critchlow who called a conference of Trade Unionists from British Guiana and the West Indies, out of which came a motion skilfully guided and successfully piloted by Mr Critchlow for the formation of a Caribbean Labour Movement which is now call the Caribbean Congress of Labour.

That is the background against which this Motion:

Calls upon the National Assembly to pay tribute to the contribution of Hubert Nathaniel Critchlow.

- (i) Calls upon the Government to declare 28 November hence forth, Hubert Nathaniel Critchlow Day.
- (ii) Calls upon the National Assembly to proclaim Hubert Nathaniel Critchlow, a National Hero from today 30 November 2005.

Perchance, there are any doubters about the soundest of the Resolved Clauses, may I with your permission, Mr Speaker, invoke some of the comments made at the time of the passing of Hubert Nathaniel Critchlow on 14 May 1958. The then Daily Chronicle headline read:

*SKIBBY CRITCHLOW GRANDFATHER OF THE EMPIRE
TRADE UNION MOVEMENT IS DEAD*

It went on:

The British Guiana Trade Union Council has lost the jewel that decorated its history of pride and achievement, being the first territory in the colonial empire in which workers were organised into Trade Union.

Andrew Jackson the President of FUGI wrote:

The father of the Trade Union Movement in the British Colonial territories had built better than he knew. He bent not to another's will, but remained forever to the cause for which he struggled.

And Sir Grantley Adams, the Head of the first and only West Indian Federation remembered:

Comrade Critchlow, being the first West Indian of working class birth to have the courage, persistence and gumption to start and continue to press forward for a Trade Union Movement in these parts. His name will go down to posterity with the greatest names of the British Labour Movement.

And finally JI Rampaul then Commissioner of Labour said:

To the very end he was the embodiment of sincerity, perseverance, tolerance, compromise and understanding, he knew no race and carried no bitterness. He was a fighter, but a gentleman when the battle raged most fiercely his commonsense and good humour won the day.

Surely, Mr Speaker, in the face of those encomiums, this National Assembly ought to have no hesitation whatever, in unanimously supporting the Motion in the name of Mr Robert Corbin Leader of the Opposition. I thank you sir. *[Applause]*

The Speaker: The Honourable Minister of Labour, Human Services and Social Security

Hon Rev Dr Ramnauth D A Bisnauth: Mr Speaker, we are admonished by Holy Writ, albeit in the apocryphal Ecclesiasticus of the Greek Canon of Chapter 41:

Let us praise illustrious men, our ancestors in the successive

generations ...

All these were honoured by their contemporaries and were the glory of their day. Some of them left a name behind them so that their praises are still sung while others have left no memory and disappeared as though they have not existed..

Ben Sirach goes on to provide a list of illustrious men. Had we been writing up this list today - a list of illustrious Guyanese, we would have wanted to add women. Prominent on this list and occupying a pride of place would have the name of Hubert Nathaniel Critchlow.

Until Critchlow came along, outbreaks of labour unrest were like spontaneous outbursts of sporadic bush fires. They flared for a brief while, accomplished nothing, died down on their own or easily put out.

From the standpoint of the planter Oligarcley, the colonial office and the local representatives of the imperial government they were but minor irritants on the charred landscapes, nothing wrong.

After 1905/1906 through 1916, these things changed. By 1952, the time of his resignation as the General Secretary of the British Guiana Labour Union, labour unionism in this country sired and nurtured by Critchlow had developed into a movement so militant and influential that colonial administration could not ignore that movement. It sought to accommodate it and probably domesticate it within the then structures of governance. That would explain the nomination of Hubert Nathaniel Critchlow and Ayube Edun as nominated members of the Legislative Council, the former of the BGLU and the latter of the MPCA.

Kimani Nehusi reminds us that the social and political condition of the British Guiana masses was as bleak as their economic existence following the decline in the world sugar industry of that period. The condition of the urban poor in the slums of Georgetown was depressing to put it mildly. Many of the inhabitants of the city resided in dilapidated old shanties in environments that earned them the sobriquet of *nigger-yard*.

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Hubert Nathaniel Critchlow was a child of the *nigger yard*. Well may the sentiments of a national poet Martin Carter be appropriated for him:

In the nigger yard I was naked like the new born

It was an aching floor on which I crept

on my hands and knees

*searching for dust for the trace of a root or the mark of a leaf
or the shape of a flower*

*I take again my nigger life, my scorn and fling it in the face of
those who hate me*

*It is me the nigger boy turning to manhood linking my fin
gers, welding my flesh to freedom*

I turn to the histories of men and the lives of the peoples

I examine the shower of sparks, the wealth of dreams

From the nigger yard of yesterday I come with my burden

To the world of tomorrow, I turn with my strength.

Before the birth of Hubert Nathaniel Critchlow on 15 December 1884—and well into several decades after that, the poverty and disease of the Georgetown lower class spawned a self-styled centipede boys and girls and young school drop-outs and school leavers, not all were drop-outs some left voluntarily, because their parents were not able to send them anymore.

Centipedism was in the words of Nehusi:

An entire reaction syndrome to the lower class reality

Into that milieu Hubert Nathaniel Critchlow was born. He was baptised

as a seventeen-day old baby at the Bedford Wesleyan Methodist Chapel on 4 January 1885 by the Rev Henry Adams.

That Chapel was noted for a few things:

- (i) It was the spot where the seeds of Methodism were sown by ex-slaves William Claxton and William Powell of Nevis way back in the days of slavery.
- (ii) Like Chapels (as opposed to Churches) everywhere in cluding Britain, Bedford Chapel was a *hot bed of dissent* where overtly and openly the Christian Gospel was preached and covertly the Christian Socialist activism of FD Maurice and Charles Kingsley was discussed in class meetings.
- (iii) It was in this Chapel where Primitive Methodists discussed such publications as *Methodism and Politics* by ER Taylor and the views that would later be expressed in *Methodism and the Working Class Movements of England* and the numerous tracks and pamphlets put out by the Christian Socialist Movement of Britain and by the Fabian Society which emerged in Britain in the same year. Hubert Nathaniel Critchlow was born in Fabian socialism which was a strand of utopian socialism.

Founded by Sidney J Webb and Beatrice Potter Webb ... Fabian Socialism eschewed the revolutionary tactics of Marxist Socialism and members of their bureau became directly involved with politics through trade unions and the cooperative movement. In their own words Fabian Socialist combined and I quote:

an ounce of theory with a ton of practice

It is a well established fact that both Hubert Nathaniel Critchlow and Grantley Adams of Barbados had good connections with a Fabian Colonial Bureau. So while the fulsome praise of Grantley Adams, of Nathaniel Critchlow in the GLU document that celebrate these days is certainly

merited, it must be remembered that it was also the praise of one Fabian Socialist of another.

Yesterday, we were told twice at the seminar to celebrate Hubert Nathaniel Critchlow that the trade unionist was first and I quote, *instinctively a socialist* and then later on and I quote, *intellectually so*. I have my doubts. Critchlow's instincts for socialism were due to his rootage in the Christian Socialism of Primitive Methodism and in the Fabian Socialism of those times. Fabian Socialism:

- (i) eschewed revolution as the means of change and worse that it smacked of Chartism;
- (ii) accepted that change must take place within the structures of governing institutions and through trade unions and co operative movements;
- (iii) emphasized practical actions to effect changes and looked askance at scientific analysis and intellectual engagements.

True, Critchlow's BGLU in the preface to its rules (drawn up around 1922) stated that the objective of the Union:

- (i) To act consciously as the focal point for organising the working class in the greater interest of its complete emancipation.
- (ii) To combine the struggle for the immediate objectives with the struggle for proletarian dictatorship.

Marxists, Socialists read into these a militant and revolutionary mandate so do many trade unionists.

But I wish to suggest that this interpretation is not necessarily correct, at least not of Mr Critchlow and the BGLU up to 1930 or thereabout.

A decade or so before that Critchlow was singing in the St George's

Church where the congregation was the local representatives of the Empire at prayer. Sir William Collet, Governor, was a member of that congregation. Collet was Critchlow's friend and it was Collet who advised him on the formation of a trade union movement and how to set about it. It was Collet's intervention in 1919, when Critchlow was arrested and charged with sedition that that charged dropped. Much as it was, Bedford Methodist's representation of Critchlow as a decent young man in 1906 that got him a reprieve. Collet wrote the Colonial Office in July 1920 that:

Critchlow himself seems to be not an unreasonable man, but the members of the union are not always willing to take his advice and in order to retain his position, he is occasionally compelled to do what I think his better judgement would disprove.

Little wonder that just around the time that is in 1922, Critchlow and other unionists of African descent were campaigning for Governor Collet's retention for a second term on a premise described by the Daily Argosy of 30 June 1922 as absurd and premised on the notion that Collet's experience of the Colony equipped him best to undertake drainage and irrigation.

That same year, the Rev ERO Robertson, the first black Methodist Minister in British Guiana was advocating that Collet should leave. He said:

We must drive the Governor to contemplate in his retirement his mistake in driving a people to desperation and ruin in the country.

Here, was an interesting development. On the one hand, the ERO Robertson in the manner of the early Primitive Methodists advocating justice for the rural peoples of Berbice and on the other hand, Hubert Nathaniel Critchlow, trade unionist and urban metamorphosed into a Wesleyan Methodist, at least for a while, campaigning for the retention of Collet.

The Wesleyan Church now consciously repudiating the designation of chapels in British Guiana, sought and obtained the transfer of Robertson to the Leeward Islands, but not before he wrote this Epilogue to his work for African and Indian farmers and I quote from the Argosy:

I have been a Minister for over fifteen years and I frankly confessed that the social conditions of my people (African and Indian) had a powerful effect upon my conception of the Ministry... I cannot conceive why I should close my eyes to the distressing social conditions of my people or consider them of no account. If ever a man had a call to ministry, I had ... my call was to preach a social gospel.

While it could not be said that on the Collet question, Robertson *out-Critchlowed* Critchlow, I wonder if Hubert Nathaniel Critchlow would have repudiated Wesleyanism if the Church had more Robertsons than the likes of such missionaries as the Reverends Robert M Young, Harold Yates, Stanley Watson and Malcolm Womack.

But if Critchlow repudiated the Church whether he would have acknowledged it or not that Church:

- (i) saved him from centepedism;
- (ii) provided him with an education such as it was;
- (iii) shaped his social consciousness;
- (iv) provided him with a “socialist” orientation;
- (v) informed his public speaking both in style and content, with hymn-singing at public rallies after the singing of the National Anthem and the evangelistical passion of his utterances;
- (vi) provided him with the organisational skill that he learnt at the class meetings that he brought to trade unionism;

- (vii) provided him through the tracks and the pamphlets of that movement which he read diligently the projects and programmes that were durable

Mr Speaker, on this account, I wish to say almost everything that engaged the attention of Critchlow in British Guiana in labour movement, almost everyone had its precedent in similar trade union activities in the United Kingdom. I wish to say as well that as late as 1942 our own Hansard would indicate that in the debate on Labour Amendment the point of reference was always in the United Kingdom. I wish to say that it was the Church that imbued him with a sense of honesty in his financial accounting as a unionist. Maybe can say the Church and his mother and earlier his Methodist Barbadian father.

I doubt myself whether he knew this or would acknowledge this or if the Church does, I noticed that no single Methodist Minister has been at these celebrations. I would suggest that next year maybe Deryck Bernard can take himself as a Methodist that when you go on celebrations, the first meeting should be at the Bedford Methodist Church and then should go on procession then only to the waterfront and come back to these grounds. Deryck, you can take that up as a mission for next year.

Oftentimes the work of Hubert Nathaniel Critchlow has been described as a *struggle*, a concept dear to trade unionists - and given the context in which that work was wrought, and the formidable and entrenched nature of privileged opposition against which Critchlow and his colleagues had to contend, maybe *struggle* has *its use*. But the concept does evoke the image of a stressed-out David slinging away at a Goliath doggedly. I would like to suggest that so-self-possessed was Critchlow in his conviction that what he contended for was right and just, and that the battle-lines were clear and unambiguous and he knew on which side he was, and that history was on his side. Even as he was making it, he was spared the sense of burden and the belligerence which can so often deteriorate into peevish petulance. But Critchlow rarely lost his wit, his sense of humour or his composure.

Above all, as the Hon Winston Murray said that he knew almost by instinct, maybe he learnt this in his early years while he was hustling in the waterfront, what strategy was best in this issue or that militancy or compromise, strike or negotiation, guided as he was, by a clear-sighted vision of what was right for the people whose welfare he always represented. As Rabindranath Tagore said, *anything appropriate is for Critchlow. Yours is the common dust and you are there for me and you are there for all.*

Between 1924 and 1940 or thereabouts, Nathaniel Critchlow travelled widely to the Caribbean, the United Kingdom, Germany and the USSR as the representative of the BGLU to Labour and Workers' Conferences. Those activities offered him opportunities to develop progressive and even radical ideas which enriched his understanding of the role of the Trade Union Movement in national political development. Small wonder that around 1929, (I shall come back to that date in a while) the BGLU inspired him, pioneered representation to the British Colonial Secretary for the introduction of universal adult suffrage for British Guiana and by 1930, the BGLU was calling for the *overthrow of capitalism and the introduction of socialism*. By this time, internationally Fabian Socialism was yielding place to Marxism Socialism.

Not least among Critchlow's efforts during this period was his Motion for the formation of a British Guiana and the West Indian Labour Federation, the grand-sire of the present CARIBBEAN LABOUR CONGRESS which was launched in 1945 - a mere four years after the formation of the BG Trades Union Council and of which Critchlow was General Secretary.

It was around that time that Dr Cheddi Jagan noted that among the *Gods* (and he actually used that word) of which he was a votary was the man Hubert Nathaniel Critchlow. This was a great tribute coming from a man destined to be great himself. To share on Jagan's list of illustrious luminaries of that period, like Grantley Adams of Barbados, Norman Manley and Richard Hart of Jamaica and Albert Gomes of Trinidad and Tobago, was even more complimentary.

But that was not surprising in the least, Critchlow knew those men on a one-and-one basis. With them, he was discussing the political future of the West Indies and designing its shape.

And he was beginning to appreciate that the growing consciousness and solidarity of the workers' movement which he fostered notwithstanding, nationally and regionally, that any engagement with the powers-that-be had to go beyond the industrial level. This led him to the Legislative Council in 1943 and to the Executive Council in 1944 as a representative of labour along with Ayube Edun.

In 1947, he won his seat to the Legislative Council, but lost it in an election petition, an episode that lost him his old fiery self and had the most distressing effect on him, which the OBE which was awarded to him on the advice of the government as one of His Majesty's loyal subjects. This happened in 1951, did little to relieve his gloom. Yet his work on behalf of workers never ceased until his demise in 1958.

But I wish to return to an interesting episode of the life of Hubert Nathaniel Critchlow and the BGLU. This relates to his contribution to the BG Franchise Commission of 1941 and it was eventually debated in the Legislative Council in 1944 and you can read that debate in the Hansard.

As head of both the local TUC and the BGLU in the capacity of Secretary for both organisations, he submitted two memoranda to the Commission, both calling for a reduction in the property qualifications for the franchise and universal suffrage. However, as a Member of the Legislative Council his comments were less than inspiring. While he argued that the BGLU had been advocating universal suffrage since 1925, he was now not willing to press the case. In his view, and I quote verbatim from him:

If the Commission recommends that we should reach universal suffrage by stages and that at present, we should have a reduction of the franchise, I certainly agree with that because we cannot get all we ask for at once. We must accept what

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we are given and come back again. I see now that it is really a dangerous thing to allow certain people to exercise the franchise and permit other people to tell them any kind of thing and fool them.

Mr Speaker, the Chamber of the Commission Eustace G Woolford, then the Mayor of New Amsterdam - universal suffrage was simply asking too much. According to him, in universal suffrage lay the spectre of the coolie menace. And in characteristic style, he delivered the ultimate orient view and I quote from him:

No one has referred to the fact that assuming that the East Indian population, both males and females took advantage of the extended franchise under universal suffrage, we should have the position that East Indian women would be entitled to be registered as voters. Let us be fair to ourselves. Is there any Indian member of this community who would deny the fact that the wives of illiterate East Indian or women with whom they live in familiar relationship, are not entirely under the dominion of their husbands? Aren't they people, who are largely in bondage? Are they free people? You have a large number illiterate people who have no idea why their names are on the register and who may, if coerced into doing so, be made to vote for the candidate suggested to them by the male occupant of the house. That would be equivalent to plural voting. I know of no women in the world, whether the reasons are due to religion or custom, who have been subject to such indignity and it is amazing to me how they have stood it. Their docility of character and fine sense of duty have allowed such a state of things to continue. Some of them are improving as a result of contact with other races.

When Critchlow made his statement to the Franchise Commission, the Chamber responded with a hearty here, here. In the end, all that Critchlow could muster was a faint and hollow heckle of his former self with a tame and supplicant appeal to the governor and I quote:

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I still feel that we should have universal adult suffrage, but if the Commission say that we cannot get it now, we must take what we can get. In conclusion, I hope that Your Excellency will do your best for this Colony on your visit to England.

What is of import here, Mr Speaker, is that the labour movement was perceived at that time to have officially abandoned the East Indian cause and by implication had thrown in its lot with Anglo-Christian hegemony.

Yet in another instance, another trade unionist Jocelyn Hubbard of the Clerks Association, Socialist par excellence went even further. In his testimony to the Commission Hubbard insisted and I quote from him, *voters must be literate in the English language*. When asked if he knew whether there were voters who are literate in a language other than English in the present electoral roll, he answered in the affirmative. The conclusion of his testimony is instructive.

Lee: Are you then going to disenfranchise those people?

Hubbard: Yes, if they cannot read and write English.

Hubbard did not only press the case for a literacy test in English, but also took the extraordinary step of demanding the removal of those on the electoral roll since 1928, who could not read and write English. Hubbard was a founding member of the PAC and a forerunner to the PPP. The result was, of course that universal adult suffrage was postponed to 1953.

Mr Speaker, I say these things because they are true. I do not do so to discredit anyone least of all Hubbard or Critchlow and I have spoken at length on the influence of the Church. I simply want to fill in some gaps on what has been said so far in these celebrations so far. *[Interruption]*

The Speaker: You will need an extension of time to do so, Honourable Minister.

Mr Winston S Murray: Mr Speaker, I ask that the Honourable Min-

ister be given a further fifteen Minutes to continue his presentation.

Question put and agreed to.

Hon Rev Dr Ramnauth DA Bisnauth: I agree that Hubert Nathaniel Critchlow was a dedicated and celebrated icon of the Labour Movement in this country, but he was shaped in the crucibles of the British Guyanese reality and part of that reality was its politics that was beginning to include a racial dimension. A racial dimension that is the bane of Marxist Socialist analysis and interpretation and it will not go away.

Mr Speaker, I wish to remind you by way of a postscript:

- that in 1953, the TUC and the BGLU supported the Labour Relations Bill that could not be enacted into law because of the suspension of the Constitution;
- that in 1962, the TUC and BGLU did a volte-face on that same Bill. Thankfully Critchlow was dead by that time. He did not live to see that turn around;
- that in 1958, the Legislative Council paid handsome tributes to Hubert Nathaniel Critchlow at the time of his death, but among those other things the mover of the motion for recognition of Critchlow's work was one Dr Cheddi Jagan, who among other things indicated that the media was calling for an erection of a statue in Critchlow's honour;
- that in 1964, when the statue was unveiled the TUC and the BGLU boycotted the event. Mr Burnham then indicated that erection of the statue was a cheap political gimmick to garner votes and bolster the PPP's flagging elections campaign in that year of elections;
- that in January 1965, the Minister of Labour of the PNC/UF coalition indicated that it would move the statue to Bourda Green and that the statue itself would be replaced by one whose realism would

replace the impressionistic work of ER Burrowes. It did not happen.

Mr Speaker, in death as in life, the old warrior has been a centre of controversy and conflict, but he fought on and on and won.

That we should pay tribute to him in the manner indicated to him in the Motion, I have no problem, none at all, but least of all because it was Critchlow who campaigned successfully in the Legislative Council for the payment of legislators. Thank you. *[Applause]*

The Speaker: Honourable Member Dr Bisnauth, I take it that you were seconding the Motion. You need to second the Motion.

Hon Rev Dr Ramnauth D A Bisnauth: I am very pleased to do so.

The Speaker: Honourable Member Mr Basil Williams.

Mr Basil Williams: May it please you, Mr Speaker, I was privileged to be my party's representative on the National Committee which was preparing and organising for the Centenary Celebrations for Critchlow. *[Interruption]*

The Speaker: Having said that Honourable Member, I am compelled to interrupt you for just one moment. You were present with me this morning at another place and a younger person stood up and said, your Honour, I was unaware that Avenue of the Republic was once named High Street, and I commend you as a Junior Member of the Parliament who would not have known Critchlow or present at his work to make this presentation. Proceed. *[Laughter]*

Mr Basil Williams: Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. With your leave I will continue.

The National Committee really was constituted by persons from a wide cross section of the society, including most political parties and the work of that Committee proceeded in very amicable fashion and so the events,

as you see, unfolding here during this month eventuated.

I will also like to join with my colleague Mr Murray, in recognizing that it is a good augury for inter-party relations and also because of the very fact of the adversarial nature of our politics. The very Chamber, which we now sit, is organised in an adversarial manner, because there are the government the benches and the opposition. So it oftentimes surprises me to hear the neophytic political aspirants suggesting that these two major parties cannot get along and they are always disagreeing, but it is the very nature of our system that you have to cut and trust when we recognise unimportant matters and when it really matters that we should practice the art of compromise and so I am very happy that we have been able to compromise and we have had leading members of the People's Progressive Party/Civic on this National Committee and they were very, very favourable with respect to the outcome of our work.

Mr Speaker, I have listened to a certified historian in the form of the Honourable Member Dr Bisnauth, and also the full presentation of the Honourable Member Mr Winston Murray. I do not propose to bore members and to regale them with what is already been traversed. What I propose to do is to address specific issues in the life of Critchlow. And because we are in Parliament and for the purposes of the Hansard, I will first treat with Critchlow and his indomitable print on education in this country. As it was said, Sir, Critchlow was born in Georgetown 1884. His father was a Barbadian national. He was a wharf foreman with Bookers. His mother was a Guyanese hailing from the Essequibo Coast.

When Critchlow was fourteen years old and was attending Bedford Wesleyan Primary School. At the age of fourteen his father died. He felt then that he should leave school so that he can carry the family despite the wishes of his mother. He was first an apprentice at the Demerara Foundry and it is said that there he made a toy canon for his enjoyment.

He was also a popular sportsman. He was the colony's middle-distance champion. He represented Maltenoes Sports Club both at cricket and football. In 1930 he bowled so impressively in the nets against England

that he was offered a cricket assignment in Australia which he declined

Now, because of his being self-taught, not having a formal education, it is recorded that he encountered much snobbery. He and his Union were treated with great disdain and hostility by the establishment and the Press. He had one desire which was to gain respect to his union and even if he had to buck the system, he had intended to do that. He stated at the Inter Colonial Labour Conference that he did not believe in getting things done by bullying tactics, but by constitutional means.

An Editorial in the Daily Chronicle of the 11 February 1932, entitled *Dangerous Statements*, mocked his knowledge of socialism suggesting that Critchlow was one of the few persons in this colony that understands the principles of socialism, but his knowledge is so profound, that much of what he said passes over our heads. For example, when Critchlow uses such phrases as:

- exploiters;
- fear of demonstrations;
- organised power of the workers;
- capitalist; and
- the Government will never voluntarily grant any demands of working class unless forced by the organised power and might of the worker.

We are fully aware the non-industrial centres such as undeveloped colonies that the Labour Union is of limited usefulness which besides doing nothing to encourage production or a high grade in labour, attempted to obtain socialist legislation by subversive propaganda.

Also armed with the knowledge of Critchlow's lack of formal education, the Commissioners of the 1941 Franchise Commission had hoped to make some mileage of this. This Commission was setup to inquire into

labour disputes in Demerara and Berbice during the months of September and October 1935. On appearing before the Franchise Commission in 1941, Critchlow contented, inter alia, that the union did not agree that candidates must have a literacy test before they voted. He recommended a person who could not read or write should be allowed to vote by colour.

The Chairman of the 1941 Franchise Commission, Mr Eustace Woolford said of Critchlow:

He is not an ordinary man, he understands public affairs, level headed, I should think, and capable of expressing his own opinion. He has submitted a memorandum that given a definite statement representative of the view. You want to him to amplify those views by putting questions to him in such a way as to render our respect for his opinions valueless.

We do not want to put Mr Critchlow or his Union in that position. So, Mr Speaker, Mr Woolford was adamant in defending Critchlow and not allowed him to be ridicule for lack of his formal education, but he appreciated the depth of his knowledge.

Critchlow faced many problems in the first years of his Union. Mr Ashton Chase wrote that rumours began to circulate that Critchlow was an uneducated man and money ordained and that the money obtained was too much for him to handle. At a meeting held, Critchlow was told to hand over all the funds on or before 20 January 1920 and that would have been to a doctor, not like my friend the Honourable Member, but a Dr Nickelson. The motion was overruled and the vote of confidence passed. The fact was that the Union was not registered and all the banks refused to take the deposit to the Union's name, the money was therefore in Critchlow name.

Many bitter years followed with the advent of the People's Progressive Party and other professionals who were bent on invading Critchlow's movement. They started at the present deliberate campaigns against

Critchlow, saying that he was unintelligent and incapable of representing workers' interest.

Critchlow's spontaneous successes and influence among the working classes, though admired by large cross sections of the Guyana Society, was envied by a small group of intellectuals and political aspirants, who saw his organisation of the workers as a solid base for the way to launch the agitations for trade union and finally political power. This professional class included doctors and regrettably lawyers who urged the workers to fire Critchlow and his uneducated bunch of colleagues for qualified persons who could better represent their cases.

The situation was aggravated by mid 1924, when unemployment and high cost of living prevented the workers from honouring their union dues and the intellectuals worked out a plan of registering persons, who were terribly ill at an entry fee of eight cents so that on their deaths the union will have to bury them from the Benevolent Fund. Critchlow is reported to have offered told his close friends that that system of fraud was the simplest but most effective measure which was used to reduce the union's treasury to near bankruptcy.

Mr Speaker, Critchlow fought for access to universal primary education and technical vocational education in Guyana - the then British Guiana. Critchlow was the first religious leader to hold public meetings at the street corner with his boys. The brass band was always in attendance and played the *Internationale*.

On the 11 May 1933, the British Guiana Labour Union held such a meeting with about 1500 persons in an attendance and they resolve amongst other things, the raising of the primary school leaving age sixteen years.

In 1930 Critchlow had presented Labour Unions in Guyana at the British Commonwealth Conference in the United Kingdom. Critchlow and Captain Arthur Cipriani of Trinidad and Tobago called for free meals and books for school children including kindergardens and the estab-

lishment of the teachers training colleges.

In 1931, Critchlow established two kitchens for the school children and unemployed adults.

Mr Speaker, not only for himself, but Critchlow fought his proteges to gain formal training and workers education and trade unionism. Critchlow initiated the trade union education when he arranged correspondence courses with Ruskin College in Oxford, England. Critchlow attended and hosted numerous labour conferences.

In 1924, Critchlow became the first Trade Unionist to represent the local Labour Movement overseas and with the aid of labour Unions and subscriptions from well wishers, he attended an International Workers Education Conference held at Ruskin College at Oxford, England.

Critchlow returned to London in 1925 to attend a first British Commonwealth Labour Conference, which dealt relations between political parties and Trade Unions within the British Commonwealth, industrial relations and legislation among other things.

Mr Speaker, Critchlow attended other Empire Labour Conferences in England during 1930s and during these visits he established firm links which are in existence today for local Trade Unionist to obtain training in industrial relations and related topics either through correspondence courses or scholarships to British training centres. Critchlow was insatiable in widening his education and knowledge about trade unionism. Around the end of 1931, he went to Germany for the Conference of the International Committee of Trade Union workers and took time off to visit the Soviet Union in 1932.

As it was alluded to earlier, on his return, Critchlow bought back the term *comrade*, which was at once accepted by the entire Caribbean to emphasize quality and fraternity among the workers.

Critchlow represented the Local Labour Movement at a Founding Conference of the International of Confederation of Free Trade Unionism in

London. Critchlow was elected first substitute to Mr Robert Bradshaw of St Kitts as a member of the Executive Council representing the West Indies. During 1949, Critchlow went to the second Conference of the International Confederation of workers in Havana, Cuba. Mr Speaker, Critchlow was instrumental in calling a conference of Trade Unionists from British Guiana and the West Indies, which was held in British Guiana from 12 to 14 January 1952 at Parliament Buildings.

Participants including the Rt Hon FO Roberts of the British Labour Party and the International Trade Union Congress, Captain AA Cipriani and Mr Howard Bishop both of Trinidad and Tobago, Messrs Lesperance and Bastick of Suriname and Sir Grantley Adams of Barbados. This meeting led to the formation of the Caribbean Labour Movement, which was called the British Empire and West Indian Labour Federation. This Conference inter alia passed a resolution recommending the introduction of a system of compulsory education throughout the West Indies.

Mr Speaker, Mr Critchlow was untiring in his efforts to establish education in all these territories and even during the trials with his union, he never lost sight of the need to have education placed on a firm footing in this country.

In or around the 6 November and 12 December 1952, Critchlow's Union and the British Guiana Labour Union held Elections for office bearers and the Chairmanship of the union fell to one Mr L F S Burnham, a then Member of the PPP. During the interval, Critchlow resigned his appointment as the General Secretary of that Union and this post fell to this assistant Mr Ashton Chase who was also reputed to be a member of the PPP.

Mr Ashton Chase was awarded a scholarship by the Trade Union Congress and attended a one-year course in 1948/1949 at Ruskin College, Oxford. When Mr Burnham returned to Guyana after qualifying as a lawyer, he became a member of the British Guyana Labour Union on 15

April 1949. By 1952, he became the President of the Union. It is respectfully submitted, Mr Speaker, that this presage a symbiotic relationship between the party which Mr Burnham founded the People's National Congress (PNC) and the British Guyana Labour Union. Wherein, from thenceforth the leaders of the People National Congress were also the heads of British Guiana Labour Union.

This relationship eventuated in the Burnham's PNC being able to implement many of the aspirations of Critchlow and the ideals he fought for. The Burnham's administration upon assuming the reins of the coalition Government in 1964, established a Critchlow Labour Institute as a Trade Union Educational Institution on 12 October 1967, naming it after Hubert Nathaniel Critchlow and it was then situated at South Road and Garden Street.

In 1968, the Critchlow Labour Institute was shifted to its permanent location on Woolford Avenue, renamed Critchlow Labour College and was officially opened in 1969 by the then Prime Minister Mr LFS Burnham. The first principal of the Critchlow Labour College was one Maxford Lowe, a Canadian born International Labour Organisation adviser on labour education.

The long term objective of the Critchlow Labour College was to upgrade it to a Community College. The Critchlow Labour College now offers courses which provide its students with necessary skills to proceed for vocational at tertiary level training. These courses include a one-year programme in Industrial Relations and Social Studies, short courses in Industrial Relations and Labour Economics, Communication and effective speaking, Clerical Office Practice and Supervisory Training, Business Management and Accounts.

It is apposite to noted, Mr Speaker, the hundred of graduates from the University of Guyana have pre-qualified for entry thereto by graduating from the Critchlow Labour College. At every public meeting he held, Critchlow promoted technical and vocational training. In tribute to Hubert Nathaniel Critchlow, the Guyana Industrial Training Centre was built

and administered by the Trade Union Congress with financial aid from American Institute for free labour development..

In 1978, Mr Winslow Carrington the Director of Critchlow Labour College and Co-ordinator of worker's education announced that the Workers Education Co-ordinating Centre and Secretariat would hold classes specifically for Trade Unionists.

Mr Speaker, the Constitution gives recognition to the status and role of Trade Unions of Guyana, in the 1980 Constitution by Article 149: Trade Unions were guaranteed the right to participate in the decisions in the management and the decision-making processes of the State.

Mr Speaker, one other aspect of Mr Critchlow's endeavours which I would wish to address my mind to in this Honourable House, was Critchlow's class position in his work for securing a living wage for the worker in this country. He had adopted a class position and as a result, he was not motivated by any racial considerations.

Critchlow was not a racist and so he had no difficulty in organising both the urban workers and also the sugar workers from the different estates. In fact, it is said that when the workers from the Ruimveldt Estates were proceeding to Georgetown they were intercepted and shot and killed by the then police, those workers were going to see Critchlow. You know, they called him the *black crossbie* as it was mentioned earlier, because they recognised the genuineness of his work, but what more came out from that is, we sorely need more Critchlows today in the way which we approach our work and our commitment to this country. In fact, Critchlow was colour blind and it is my respectful proposal that we have some signs designated outside of these Chambers, before you enter its portals, which state *colour-blind zone*, I hope you hear me, Mr Ramotar.
[Laughter]

Mr Speaker, in concluding, I wish to posit that Hubert Nathaniel Critchlow's world outlook was coincident with the admonition of Emerson as he expressed him in these words:

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There is a time in a every man's education when he arrives at the conviction that envy his ignorance; that imitation is suicide; that he must take himself for better, for worse, as his portion; that though the white universe is full of good, no kernel of nourishing corn can come to him but through his toil bestowed on that plot of ground which is given to him to till. The power which resides in him is new in nature and none but he knows, what that is which he can do, nor does he know until he has tried.

Thank you, Mr Speaker. *[Applause]*

The Speaker: Thank you Honourable Member.

The Honourable Member Mr Donald Ramotar

Mr Donald R Ramotar: Mr Speaker, it is a great honour and privilege to stand here today to support this Motion to honour Hubert Nathaniel Critchlow. I know the emphasis these days on Critchlow is that he was a great Trade Unionist and that he was. There is absolutely no doubt in my mind that he was great Trade Unions, but he was also one of the first labour politicians in our country.

This year we are celebrating the centenary of the 1905 riots and the strikes that brought into prominence Hubert Nathaniel Critchlow. He was part of that strike in 1905, not yet a leader, but part of that strike. The strike was for improving the conditions of the working people of the colony. The strike was significant for another reason that was mentioned here earlier by other speakers. In the sense that it was the first time a united city workers and country workers as represented by the sugar workers. That was a marvellous feat. It was spontaneous and that is why, I believe, a lot of the instinctively people knew that they had to unify themselves to fight for the betterment of their own conditions. You have to take into consideration in 1905 that the conditions that working people existed under, particularly the sugar workers who at that point in time were in bondage, they were still under the indentured system and to

come out to march, to join their fellow workers - the waterfront workers - in the city was indeed an act of bravery and courage.

The strike did not win the demands that they made in 1905 and that is why one year later in September 1906, there was another strike with these same demands because the conditions remained the same, if not gotten worse. There was an additional element into the 1906 struggle:

- (i) It was the first time that they made a demand not necessarily for more money, but they made a demand for cutting the working hours of the day. The first demand was for a nine-hour working day.
- (ii) The second to note about that struggle is that they develop organisational skills, I do not know if it came from the church or where it came from, but the develop organization al skills, because when they struck in 1906 it was time when it would have had the maximum effect with three ships in the port.

But Critchlow lead us into another direction that we must recognise. He led the labour movement and urged not to be narrowed nationalist, but he linked the labour movement with the international struggles, not immediately, not at the beginning, but if you remember that in 1905, when we had our first great strike here, working people in Europe were also in turmoil and you had one of the first attempt in the last century of working people trying to grab political power as occurred in Russia in 1905.

Obviously it is cleared that some of these events although the communications then were very poor, it was clear that events which were occurring in Europe, news of those events were filtering into the colony and were inspiring people in a more-class type of struggle.

In 1905/1906 struggle made the Guyanese working people distinguished themselves as a class fighting to promote their own interest.

Mr Speaker, after the defeat of the 1906 strike, there was a long period of time when we had quietness in the labour movement. From 1906 to

1916, the only strikes that we had in that ten-year period occurred on the sugar estates, but basically the other part of the industrial relation was quiet.

But in 1916/1917, because of the war, the cost of living shot up sharply, Critchlow then having been dismissed from work as was said by the mover of the Motion, because he had made a petition for eight-hour working day ... again that showed Critchlow was in tune with the times; he was in tune with that very type of struggle that was taking place internationally and in my view, he saw very clearly there was a need to link the struggle of the Guyanese working people with the struggles of workers in every part of the world and more particularly in Europe, and because we were the British colony, I believe, more particularly with the British working class.

In 1916/1917 they demanded an improvement in conditions; the workers showed great flexibility and great reasonableness, they were sometimes even ready to bargain with the Government, okay, if you do not accept increases in wages then you must pass legislation to control rents.

However, eventually the movements irritated by the war continued and I suppose also with what was taken place internationally. Again, in Europe we saw the massive upsurge of the working people trying to liberate themselves and trying to do better for themselves.

We saw the uprising in Germany and then we saw the response of the ruling class and the beginnings of fascism when Roza Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht were murdered. We saw the uprising in Hungary and of course, there were two revolutions that year in Russia in February and November of 1917. Clearly it was seen that Critchlow put Guyana on link with these events, these events had powerful impact throughout the world and we ourselves felt that effect and it was pushed forward even more by Critchlow. It is interesting to note that in this period of time - in 1906 for the first time, workers had the opportunity to sit down and negotiate with employers. Again in 1916/1917, they were able to sit down and negotiate their conditions directly with their employers. They

gained great successes then. I believe, they gained great success not only because of their own strength here in Guyana, but because of the solidarity and what was taking place in the rest of the world and that is one of the reasons why Critchlow was able to form the British Guiana Labour Union in January 1919..

Critchlow was a committed member of the working class, but since 1906 he became a professional trade unionist politician, in the sense that having not being employed, he was able to use his skills to move around to organise workers in different parts of the country. He also tried with the sugar workers to get common fronts with them on several instances.

It is remarkable to note, at that time Critchlow was extremely a young man. He was twenty-one in 1905 and twenty-two in 1906. In 1906, he became the recognised leader of the working people in our country and a true role model for our young people in this country.

He was a role model in another way that was touched by Honourable Member Mr Basil Williams. The man hardly had completed primary education, but he studied and read and educated himself. He was a heavily self-educated man and while snubbed by those with titles of lawyers and doctors and those who plight themselves of being able to speak the Queens English better than anyone else, Critchlow's depth, his grasp of the situation was far superior to any of his contemporaries of that point in time.

So I submit that Critchlow was not only a Trade Unionist. As a trade Unionist he could have grasped trade union consciousness, but to develop his socialist position, he had to be a worker intellectual. That he was, because if you look at the original rules of the British Guiana Labour Union, you will see that this man had a very, very astute political mind. He had worked out in his mind strategy and tactics way beyond any of his contemporaries. He spoke about the economic struggle not being sufficient and the need to engage in political struggle to advance the conditions of the working people. He called for universal adult suffrage, this was a political demand. He was making not only economic demands,

but also political demands. He called for all of these things, because he was trying to promote the demands of the working people into laws and into these hallowed Chambers. As I said, it was very clear to me that he was making strenuous effort to keep in touch with the International Working Class Movement and here is what he said in the Preface of the first rules of the BGLU:

The Union has to play a positive and constructive role in the political struggle; it was to combine the struggle for the immediate objectives with the struggle for the proletarian dictatorship.

These were Critchlow's words and if you take it into consideration, this was the term which described the workers, Government in Russia at that point in time. It is very clear to me that Critchlow's horizon were not limited merely to what was taking place on our own doorsteps.

In the same Preface, a strong case was made to use democratic openings to promote the interest of the workers in relation to what was happening in the United Kingdom. The Preface said:

The workers have allowed the capitalist class to monopolised political power and have refused to use their unions to fight the battles as workers on the political as well as the ordinary trade union lines.

Clearly this man was a thinking man, this man had rooted himself, he had a taken a position on the side of the working people of our country.

And it was even more in explicit in the same rules:

The BGLU will carry out all the essential characteristics of a real-life trade union organisation, but the union will not rely chiefly upon such methods, but will, and hereby thus openly and unmistakeably declare in favour of political organisation for the enforcement through, and by means of the court of policy of such measures that are deemed essential to help on

the realization of a collective estate.

Clearly these were not words that were used accidentally. Mr Speaker, these were carefully considered terms, very carefully weighed words that were used in the first rules of the BGLU, because Critchlow himself had seen the need for political advancement of the working people.

Mr Speaker, Critchlow himself travelled a lot and his travels helped him enormously to broaden his vision. He came into contact with some of the most powerful labour leaders in the Caribbean and we heard already that he was at the very cradle of the beginning of the Caribbean Congress Labour.

But more than that, he was probably the first in his time to travelled to Europe, Germany, to several other countries in Europe and ended up in the then Soviet Union, that country that was capturing the imagination of working people in different parts of the world.

When he returned home, Critchlow spoke glowingly about what he saw in the Soviet Union. He tried to crush what he saw at that time were the lies by the media of what was taking place, one of which, was that the Soviet Union did not have religious freedom. Critchlow stated openly that he went to church in the Soviet Union and he knew that they were not conning him, because they were singing some of the same hymns that he had learnt to sing right here at that time in BG

Mr Speaker, Critchlow was threatened. He was probably the first worker who tried to change the conditions that existed for the benefits of his fellow workers. He was trying his best to change those conditions and he was probably the first in our country and in the region that was threatened because of his belief. When he came back from the Soviet Union and spoke about what he saw there, one newspaper said:

We are very interested in the account Mr Critchlow brought back to the West Indies of his activities in the Soviet Union. We believe all he said of his experiences and wish to assured

him that if and when it suits him we will accommodate him in a cell.

This was a clear threat, a clear violation of one of the things that we hold near and dear to us - the freedom of conscience, the freedom of expression had hardly excess faith at that point in time.

I have had the cause to have said before that Critchlow's struggle was not only a struggle against employers and Government that were trying to oppress workers, but the struggle had been with the narrowed-minded people within his own organisation, who tried to make their own egos the main thing, and missing the general picture.

I am very proud to say despite the many problems that workers still have and still experience and face. Many of the things that Critchlow struggled for have been achieved, many of the laws that he fought were passed in this House and unanimously showed what togetherness can do. For instance, the Trade Union Recognition Bill, universal adult suffrage that was one of the first major victories of the People's Progressive Party in the beginning in the 1950s ... *[Interruption: Shared Governance, you are coming around in shape now.]* We will debate it later. *[Laughter ...* Occupational safety and health; the Termination and Severance Pay Bill; one of the first Acts of the PPP/C government in 1992/1993 was the Abolition ... something that we promised. The Labour Movement was pushing at an open door, because this time we removed the means test as a demonstration of our commitment to the working people and poor in our society. Several ILO Conventions -

- the Convention on Child and Forced Labour;
- freedom of Assembly; and
- freedom of expression.

These were all things that were unanimously passed by the Government with the support from our friends in the Opposition. Clearly, Sir, when have togetherness, we can move mountains. I thank you for your atten-

tion. *[Applause]*

The Speaker: The Honourable Member Cyril Mr Belgrave.

Mr Cyril C L Belgrave: Mr Speaker, something worried me a bit, when Honourable Member was making mention of Critchlow's experienced, an experienced which we are honouring today and particularly when it is mention that he visited the Soviet Union, there was some chatter over there about the Honourable Member spoiling the debate.

Now let us look at the facts. We are talking about Critchlow's life. We are talking about a man whom many of you sitting in this House did not know. *[Interruption: 'Including you.']* That is most unfortunate of that Member who was not even in liquid form when I was born. *[Laughter]* As I stand here, I knew Critchlow. *[Noisy Interruption]*

The Speaker: Please let us have some order Honourable Members.

Mr Cyril CL Belgrave: That is ugliness of the other side, they are promoting a Motion, we are giving support to the Motion, but you are making a mockery out of the Motion. I knew Critchlow, I spoke to Critchlow, I sat in Critchlow's home in Regent Street. I saw Critchlow when they used to be called them a pack of clowns walking in the streets of Georgetown on Labour Day, nicely dressed in their red shirts and their white pants, their leggings and their hats. They were called clowns picking up pennies. *[Interruption]*

The Speaker: Honourable Member, please let us have some order. I think, this is a Motion that has the support of the entire House.

Mr Cyril CL Belgrave: I come here ... *[Interruption]*

The Speaker: Just a minute Honourable Member, let us have some order and conclude our business as soon as possible or else I will have to suspend 16:00h according to the Standing Orders and we all have to return at 16:30h. If you prefer that way, we can go that way.

Mr Cyril CL Belgrave: I come here to tell you of some of Critchlow's thoughts and I know very well it was supported by many including myself. Critchlow had a thought not only to represent waterfront workers, Critchlow supported many other unions, organisations that gained prominence in this country. He had a reason, because after the two strikes had failed, it was found that many of the agencies were sending the necessary things to the waterfront and the workers were on strike. For instance:

- the sugar estates - sugar used to come despite there is a strike and his intention was to merge that thought together,
- timber which was one of our biggest areas of revenue of that time. The British who came and loaded along side the ships by scabs, despite there was a strike outside.
- Rum went to Europe, a large scale and there was Critchlow standing with the boys thinking that we will be able to force the employers, to give more than half percent was what was offered - half percent increase in wages.

He was saying that if I can fused them together, it means that we can hold hand and our demands can be met.

I can remember Critchlow in thoughts in which I was able to sit with him in 1955, after joining the waterfront in 1953. I had that privilege of talking to him in Regent Street at his home and he was saying that some of these things were his expectation -

- to get the clerks together;
- to get the sugar workers together;
- to get the timber workers together,

as one unit, so we can hold one hand to demand from the employers just conditions of employment. Critchlow did that, but then we talked all

about the glories things in the books, but we did not attempt to capture the memory of the man.

Critchlow died a grieved man. [*Interruption: 'Do not let us cry.'*] You better shed some tears. He was standing in the middle of the blue sea against the employers and against some of his own Unionists, who were bitterly attacking Critchlow after he had visited the Soviet Union. In some cases, he was a communist. Can you remember Critchlow's words *I got something up my sleeves*; it never came down from his sleeves because he was never allowed to be the man that he ought to be.

It was further recorded that the union which he served so well down-sized him, they took away the only cherished thing he had, his bicycle. [*Laughter*] They took away his bike and that was his cherished property in which Critchlow used to ride around this town to organise the labour in the various areas. They took away his bike from the Union, because there was always what you call *room at the top*, many of those persons who were sitting there wanted to get into Critchlow's shoes. Some of the friends I knew, I met some of them I do not want to call their names, but I met them, I worked with them I was in the union with them. I joined the Guiana Labour Union in 1954 and to date I am still recognized as a member of that same union. Do you know what Critchlow suffered - like I suffered? I am one of the oldest members who is in operation and the only time I was invited to a celebration was last night. When I was invited, I challenged it, then I heard that invitations were sent out to me, but they had never reach me. It is the same, thing that Critchlow suffered.

Let us discuss the part of the statue there in which I am positive that he is smiling now when he hears me speak of it. That statue was to be torn out to this Parliament - a statue made to honour the man for his work.

Burrows said that he sculptured the man as he saw him, as he remembered him. The first thing that we heard is that it was not Critchlow's face, but that Cuffy face is still standing up there, but that is not Critchlow's face. A man set out to make Cuffy and he made the 1763 Monument -

no Cuffy - but Critchlow outside there is not his face we will put it in the Parade ground where it is right. Yes, the Parade ground is good, because this is where all the Trade Union meetings on Labour Day used to be kept and some of the Members here, who are old enough knew that they used to march from Bourda Green unto the Parade Ground near to the Government's palace so they can make their resolutions at challenge the plantocracy, the capitalist for the changes of the working class.

Do you know that after Critchlow was able to have the restrictions done, a woman went down with tears and kneel to Critchlow's feet? You would not know that. That was the man, because they liked the idea.

Do you know this is not the first time the call for a Critchlow day has been made? Critchlow day was proposed before and Critchlow day was proposed in his house by me. *[Interruption: 'What year?']* In 1985/1986 ... In this Parliament, Minister Denny and others opposed the thought of a Critchlow day and what they said we will have a Critchlow week - something broader. We will have education and programmes, et cetera. Critchlow Day was proposed in this House before. So, you come here to challenge who is supporting this Motion. This is what you doing over there. You are dampening the thoughts that we are giving as correct. You spoke well of Critchlow, but nobody else must speak well of Critchlow, that is the attitude of our colleagues here. You spoke well, eloquently - I heard Mr Williams, he was eloquent in his whole discussion on Critchlow, but he never known the man. I am trying to tell you who was Critchlow, he died an aggrieved person and it is a lesson to trade unionist in this country. The man has given his all, he died poor in the back of a yard, he was getting \$60 per month as a pension. He died poor, but he gave his whole life for the workers of this country. But you are laughing at it. They took away his bike; you laughed at it They down- sized him at the TUC; you laughed at it. I am telling you, Critchlow was a good man. I had that privilege to get his thoughts. I attempted to capture some of them in my work having been the Chairman for ten years on the Waterfront Branch of the Guyana Labour Union. I headed that branch as Chairman for ten years until it was taken away from me by the powers to be.

I think, it was the Honourable Member Williams, who got up and said that Critchlow would have never agreed that the leadership of the Guyana Labour Union should come from some political source. I challenge him. Critchlow felt that at that time the leadership of the union must come from within the union itself, the workers involvement, et cetera. Today, there have been three successive President Generals, his dynasty passing from Hon Mr Burnham unto Hoyte both deceased ... *[Interruption: 'We will nominate you.']* I challenged Burnham on that already, you would not know sweetheart, I challenged that, I was nominated to challenge him in the Guyana Labour Union. Onto now, the Hon Mr Corbin's dynasty passing from brother to brother to brother, but what is happening in the trade union movement must be a concern to all of us. Is the trade union movement today carrying out its mandate as it ought to do when Critchlow formed it? I will say, no. I am saying that at this time, the trade union movement must look at the interest of the workers, not themselves and their salaries. This is what the trade union movement must do. They must not only look after their own salaries.

I am saying that the trade union movement has come a long way. Critchlow's name is carved with it. We must honour it the way we ought to. We are doing it here today, but then we must continue the lessons of Critchlow. Critchlow Labour College started to give lessons to workers of the Trade Unions Movement. It has stopped after Denny died, the workers education unit died with him. I was one of the members who used to speak with Critchlow at that workers unit. One of your Honourable Members who was sitting there, who ended up to be called a creature took over from Denny. It died - we must run with Critchlow's thoughts and try to trained workers to understand their role in giving assistance to the development of this country. There was a man over there, who was called a creature, you did not know that? *[Interruption: 'No, we do not know.']* Oh, you do not know ... *[Interruption]*

The Speaker: Thank you Honourable Member.

It is now 16:00h and we have to suspend for half an hour.

Mr Cyril C L Belgrave: Mr Speaker, I will not be long

The Speaker: We will take the suspension now.

16:05H

THE SITTING IS SUSPENDED

16:30H

THE SITTING IS RESUMED

Mr Cyril CL Belgrave: Mr Speaker, it is most unfortunate that the situation was as ... but it is now cooler, maybe the break could have helped.

I want to make one important point that I did not get to make. When I moved my motion earlier in 1985 the intention was to create a day for Critchlow and even at my suggestion at that meeting, I suggested that it is not the thought of having a new holiday, what we can do is to utilise the same day that is considered Labour Day, instead of saying Labour Day, we say Critchlow Day because Labour Day is a holiday. That will bring some understanding to us that we honour and respect the man as he is. I am still forcing on that. You see, Critchlow had some woes. I could remember he said to me as a budding trade unionist and he gave me the history of something that occurred with him and it is recorded in the volumes. There was a waterfront meeting in which Mr Seaforth had invited the waterfront branch - the British Guiana Labour Union as it was - to a discussion with him in relation to some grievances they had. They had stopped worked. He took along with him ten persons, eleven persons went up the stairs and they entered Mr Seaforth's Chambers and when Critchlow started to speak, he said, Sir, we ... so Mr Seaforth said, who we, so he made like this and when he looked back, he saw that he was alone. Everybody ran out on him and because this, I am trying to draw to the Members' attention the experience that Critchlow

had, it was not only the glory that was mentioned from the volumes, he had some bitterness. He was called *a sell-out man* which was not true. They said that he sold out Linden, it was not true, to some of his own waterfront workers, they said that he was a sell-out, all because of one thing, Critchlow attempted to see the international scene in terms of other workers in the world. After leaving Germany, he got a personal invitation to go to the Soviet Union. I think, in their thinking - the employers, the plantocracy, the capitalists - this is the worst thing that he had done in his life. They alleged that he went to interact with communist people. But today, we have seen Bush going over to the Soviet Union, Russia, but Bush is not a communist allegedly. He is going to China. That was the concept, from the time you interact with persons who have a socialist upbringing or a socialist background, you are a bad, stinking communist. But the communist they are talking about has workers with the same problems like us. The communist that they talked about have the same habits and systems like us. So I would like to draw the lessons of Critchlow to our Guyanese people whether by way of radio or by this Parliament. Do not attempt to honour a great man one hundred years after he has died. You had all the years in your life to honour him after 1958. Nobody remembered Critchlow, they forgot him, he was a good man, good orator, good words, a pleasant working class man, not only a worker, an intellectual, a prophet, they will call him all kinds of things, but they waited one hundred years to honour Hubert Nathaniel Critchlow. I am saying, let that be a lesson that we honour people for the work they do when they have done it and Critchlow should be honoured. I am saying, let us use 1 May, other than the Motion here, stating where it is here. Maybe we can rethink it. Let us use 1 May which is a holiday and which is Labour Day and instead of naming it Labour Day, we name it Critchlow Day. To my mind it will have more meaning and more value to the man and honouring the man's name, who has made his contribution. I thank you. *[Applause]*

The Speaker: Honourable Member Mrs Melville

Mrs Shirley J Melville: Mr Speaker, on behalf of the Guyana Action Party, I stand in support of this Motion before this Honourable House

this afternoon.

I am very pleased to hear that my colleagues on both sides on the House have come to recognize the great works of a fellow Guyanese Hubert Nathaniel Critchlow. We hope that this would be a time for us to take the lessons that could be learnt from such an honourable person to move forward from here onward. We have heard all the extensive speeches from both sides of the House it is definitely the responsibility of each and everyone of us in this Honourable House to carry on and to take the lessons learnt from the past to be able to move forward. It is our responsibility to be able to provide better working conditions for our workers; our public servants, we definitely need to realise that their contribution is great and despite the economic situation in our country, we must say they have done well so far.

So once again, I stand in support of this Motion before this Honourable House. I thank you, Mr Speaker. *[Applause]*

The Speaker: The Honourable Member Mr Murray

Mr Winston S Murray: Mr Speaker, I shall be very brief Sir. Since I gathered the sentiments of all those who have spoken I suggest that there is a consensus on this Motion.

I wish to thank all those who have spoken, some spoke from the head, some from the heart and some from the practical realities of knowledge on the waterfront. But altogether sir, I think, it added up to a very good and healthy debate. I think, we together, ought to congratulate ourselves in the effort. *[Applause]*

Mr Speaker, all that remains for me to do, Sir, would your kind permission to acknowledge the presence of friends from overseas on this important occasion when such an important Motion is being approved by the National Assembly. These are the heart and soul of workers' representation here in our midst. First of all, I would like to acknowledge:

- Mr Stanley Franks - Asst. General Secretary, St Kitts

- Nevis, Trades & Labour Union
- Mr Ernest Wigley - Vice President – St Kitts Nevis Trades & Labour Union
 - Mr Henk Shields - Executive Member – Caribbean Congress of Labour
 - Mr Kertist Augustus - President – Dominica Waterfront & Allied Workers Union
 - Mr Joseph Goddard - General Secretary – National Union of Public Employees (Barbados)
 - Sir Leroy Trotman - General Secretary – Barbados Workers Union
 - Mr Howard Saltus - 2nd Vice President – Bermuda Industrial Union
 - Mr Orin Simmons - Asst. General Secretary – Bermuda, Public Service Union
 - Mr Armell Thomas - President – Bermuda Public Service Union
 - Mr David Cockcroft - General Secretary – International Transport Workers Federation
 - Mr William A Reed - Executive Member – Windward

Island Civil Service Union

- Mr Vincente Cabrera - General Secretary – National Trade Union Centre of Trinidad & Tobago
- Mr Robert Guisseppi - President – National Trade Union Centre of Trinidad & Tobago
- Mr Leo J Bernard Nicholas - General Secretary – Dominica Trade Union

In addition, we are privilege to have in our midst the General Secretary of the International Transport Workers' Federation all the way from the United Kingdom. The fact that these persons have taken the time to join with us today is something that we cherish and we wish to thank them for this. We hope that they will enjoy their stay in our country. Thank you very much. *[Applause]*

Question put and agreed to.

Motion carried.

The Speaker: Honourable Members, this brings to the end our business for today, but before we take our leave, Mr Murray, I had in my notes to express my recognition and welcome to the distinguished visitors from outside of Guyana, who have come with us to join the National Assembly in supporting this activity here today. So I joined with Mr Murray, on behalf of the National Assembly to welcome our distinguished guests and visitors from overseas.

I would also like to recognise our Guyana Trade Union leaders, some of whom you mentioned, who are here today and also to thank the sup-

porters of the Trade Union Movement, many of whom I see are very beautifully decked out in our visitors gallery. So I would like to thank everybody for being here and I hope that you enjoyed the debate and the National Assembly.

Workshop on the Draft Revised Standing Orders

I have one matter of local business if I may put it that way. We have a conference planned for coming Monday, 2 December at the Le Meridien, Pegasus on our Draft Revised Standing Orders. We are targeting special members to attend this conference. These will be members of the Parliamentary Management Committee, the Standing Orders Committee, members of the Special Select Committee on the Davies Report and Chairmen and Deputy Chairmen of the Sectoral Committees. However, all the Members of Parliament are invited to this event and between now and the end of the week, we will have circulated to you an invitation and a copy of the Revised Draft Standing Order for you to look at.

You are invited to attend this conference to make your contributions. However, as I said, we are targeting specifically the groups and the members that I mentioned and I hope that all will find it possible to attend.

Those members who are not members of these groups or who are not included in this category, but who wish to attend, please indicate your intention to do so to the Clerk's Office before the end of the week so that we can make proper arrangements for catering, accommodation and so on.

Hon Reepu Daman Persaud, OR, JP, MP

Hon Dr Henry B Jeffrey, MP

Hon Carolyn Rodrigues, MP

Hon Dr Leslie Ramsammy, MP

Hon Manzoor Nadir, MP

Hon Bibi S Shadick, MP

Hon Doodnauth Singh, SC, MP

Hon Gail Teixeira, MP

Mrs Indranie Chandarpal, MP

Mr Odinga Lumumba, MP

Mrs Pauline Sukhai, MP

Dr Moti Lall, CCH, MP

Mr S Feroze Mohamed, MP

Mr Komal Chand, MP

Mr Bernard DeSantos, MP

Mr Ramesh C Rajkumar, MP

Mr Cyril Belgrave, MP

Mr Donald Ramotar, MP

Mr Zulfikar Mustapha, MP

Mr Winston S Murray, MP

Mrs Clarissa Riehl, MP

Mr Vincent Alexander, MP

Mr E Lance Carberry, MP

Mr C Stanley Ming, MP

Mrs Volda Lawrence, MP

Dr Carl Max Hanoman, MD, MP

Mrs Deborah J Backer, MP

Mr Basil Williams, MP

Mr Ivor Allen, MP

Mr James K McAllister, MP

Mr Abdul Kadir, MP

Ms Judith David, MP

Mrs Sheila VA Holder, MP

Mr Ravindra Dev, MP

This brings us to the end of our business today. Thank you very much.

Honourable Minister of Parliamentary Affairs

Hon Reepu Deman Persaud: Mr Speaker, I move that the National Assembly stands adjourn to Thursday, 15 December at 14:00h.

Wednesday, 30 November 2005

The Speaker: Thank you Honourable Member. The Assembly is so adjourned.

Adjourned accordingly at 16:45h