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# Panmen ready to die for Williams Bay land

By **SEAN NERO**

**MEMBERS of Pan Trinbago's central executive at a media conference on Friday morning said "the steelband fraternity was prepared to die" for the parcel of land at Williams Bay, Chaguaramas, for the purpose of building its headquarters.**

The response was prompted by a media release issued on Wednesday by the Ministry of Culture with respect to validity of the steelband body's claim to ownership.

According to the one-page document, the Ministry said following consultations with the Chaguaramas Development Authority (CDA) and itself it was clear that Pan Trinbago had no claim to the parcel of land at Williams Bay.

It further stated that in the absence of documentary support in the form of a letter, Cabinet decision or any written statement from the reported donor of the land to Pan Trinbago, the CDA has assured the Ministry it had no objection to considering a lease to Pan Trinbago for the parcel of land at Chaguaramas, and that the steelband body was free to apply for such a lease.

"We have been paying WASA bills for years," said the Organisation's head, Patrick Arnold, "and most recently we paid a bill in the amount TT\$5,000;

and WASA did not refuse our money charging that the land wasn't ours."

Arnold said for him, what was most interesting was the fact that water bills are being addressed to the steelband association (the name used before being christened Pan Trinbago).

Subsequently, he announced Pan Trinbago's decision to sever all ties with Culture Minister Senator Dr Daphne Phillips citing that "she and her Ministry were trying to torment panmen, as well as her continuing disrespect, when it came to the business of the nation's panmen."

"Imagine this! The Minister was assigned the task to handle the paper work with respect to formalising Pan Trinbago's ownership of the parcel of land. This was three years ago (1997)," recounted Arnold.

He continued: "Instead of updating Pan Trinbago on whether there had been any progress, she issued a statemnt to the media, so we had to read about the outcome in the press."

However, Arnold declared he was willing to give Prime Minister Panday another chance on the issue because he felt the UNC leader was genuine in his desire to resolve the pending land issue so the pan fraternity could finally build its heaquarters. "He said he would honour the decision of former governments," related Arnold, "so this is his chance."