

TERRY JOSEPH

THE NATIONAL musical instrument will have a million dollar home on some five acres of land by August 1996 and security of tenure well into the 22nd century, according to Port of Spain Mayor, Ethelbert Paul.

Mayor Paul was virtually replying to a sermon delivered by Dean Knolly Clarke at the Trinity Cathedral yesterday morning, during the service to mark the end of City Week.

Dean Clarke said in his sermon he could not believe that after the struggle pan has had to endure in the last 50 years and well after being designated the national musical instrument, that Pan Trinbago had been put in the embarrassing position of having to wonder about accommodation.

At the end of May, Pan Trinbago's landlord, Andre Cox (who is also Chairman of government's Rent Assessment Board) served warning of eviction to the pan body, in lieu of their meeting an increased rent.

The steelband body declared that it was unable to meet the new figure of \$4,600 per month (up from \$3,000) and had no place to go.

On June 16, Culture Minister Joan Yuille-Williams called in Pan Trinbago President, Owen Serrette and announced that the ministry would meet the differential, allowing them to retain their address.

Now Mayor Paul, who has been pilloried by Pan Trinbago for having evicted more steelbands than any other mayor, has come through with 4.8 acres on the Mucurapo Freeway for a new home for pan.

That was not the end of the good news.

Works Minister Colm Imbert has promised that upon receipt of the land from the Port of Spain Corporation, the ministry is prepared to identify \$1 million for the new headquarters for pan.

Owen Serrette, Pan Trinbago President, told the *Express* yesterday that it was the best news that the steelband movement had received for many years.

He hoped that it would materialise much sooner than the promise of \$7.5 million, made by the government in 1990, just two days before the Muslimeen insurrection of July 27.

Mayor Paul said he and his council were intent on bringing

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to fruition this promise and ventured to say that the building would be up by August 1996, when he is due to demit office.

Serrette said that there had been no specific plans for their headquarters, having regard to the fact that the parcel of land had hitherto not been identified.

Mayor Paul would not confirm that the area just opposite the National Stadium had been earmarked for what is being touted as the New Port of Spain, but well placed sources told the *Express* that there are major plans afoot for the development of what is now mangrove, into a major commercial centre, with Pan

Trinbago properly poised in the middle of the area.

Phase II Pan Groove and the Starlift Steel Orchestra have also been offered spaces there, on the premise that they move from their present location on other Corporation lands before the end of this year.

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