

BRITISH COMPANY TO MASS-PRODUCE TRINIDAD - INVENTED INSTRUMENT

FOREIGN PANS MAY SOON BE ON LOCAL STORE SHELVES

LOCAL panmen may soon be buying pans off the shelves of our stores — pans manufactured in England.

A British company which calls itself "Steelband Promotions" has boasted that it has "pioneered technique in steelband production that is more advanced than Trinidad and Tobago where it originated."

The company's move to mass-produce pans came in the wake of steelband music being introduced in the curriculum for schools throughout England.

A steelband was started as part of the intercultural activities at the Elmwood Junior School in the borough of Croydon in 1971. This was as a result of discussions held between Mr. Allan Charles, Information Attache of this country's High Commission, and Mr. James Cummings, Croydon's Community Relations Officer.

The band made television and public appearances, and also did a series of radio programmes. The idea caught on and spread like wildfire, with schools throughout the land clamouring to start their own steelband.

A statement from the Croydon Council for Community Relations said: "The demand for steelband — instruments throughout the country has grown so rapidly that Steelband Promotions were forced to consider methods that were more productive than the traditional ones that had been

in use ever since the steelband originated in Trinidad and Tobago in 1946.

"They obtained the co-operation of the Croydon Light Engineering firm, with whom they were able to so design methods of production, that steelband instruments will now roll off the assembly line."

Mr. Roy Augustus, President of Pan Trinbago, said: "As far as we are concerned, no matter what the machine does we are firmly convinced that you need the touch of the mas-

ter's hand in the last analysis."

However, Mr. Augustus advised local businessmen to take note of the kind of support the English business community gave to Steelband Promotions.

"They should realise that it is time to begin to support financially the programme that is going on at the University of the West Indies," he declared.

He pointed out that the programme at UWI was designed to discover a way in which pans could be pressed so as to groove

them to get the notes. "They have reached very far," he added, "but a lack of funds is going to offset the advantages."

On the question of pan music being taught in British schools, Mr. Augustus said: "The Ministry of Education should immediately introduce pans, even if it is in the junior secondary schools where they have the facilities and the teachers."

He also attacked the ministry for wasting time arguing about irrelevant matters and not starting to think of introducing music on the curriculum of primary schools.

Mr. Augustus scathingly commented that the "dunderhead principals" should encourage music in schools. "Even if we don't have a piano," he declared "we have the indigenous instrument- pan."

By RODERICK LEWIS,
SOCIAL AFFAIRS REPORTER