

Pierre pinpoints errors by Elder

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Mr. Lennox Pierre, solicitor, in a letter to the "Sunday Guardian", replies to statements made by Dr. J. D. Elder on the problems of panmen.

"Permit me, if only in the interest of accuracy for the historical record, to correct two statements of Dr. J. D. Elder made in his article captioned "Problems of panmen are so complex" on page 10 of your "Sunday Guardian" of 11th February.

Dr. Elder mentioned (para. 9) that in 1950 when he was attached to the Extra Mural Department he "had the opportunity to work with Errol Hill (now Prof. Hill), Lennox Pierre, Lisle Lashley and Mr. Scoon and many others (many of whom worked on the Gomes Committee) . . ."

I do not remember a "Gomes Committee." Dr. Elder, I am sure, is referring to the "Government Steelbands Committee" set up in November 1949 by the then colonial government under the Chairmanship of the late Canon M. E. Farquhar. Mr. Albert Gomes was not a member of the Committee. Nor did he appoint it though he was instrumental as a member of the Governor's Executive Council in securing its appointment. The credit for instigating the appointment of the Committee belongs to the Trinidad and Tobago Youth Council.

ACTION GROUP

Dr. Elder also said (para. 10) that "I was able to study some of their problems at close hand as I observed the TASPO expeditions being set up by Lennox Pierre for the United Kingdom."

It was not Lennox Pierre who "set up" the TASPO expedition. The TASPO expedition was proposed by the then Trinidad and Tobago Steelbands Association and sponsored by the "Operation Britain" Action Committee.

The General Management and

Finance Committee of "Operation Britain" comprised Canon M. E. Farquhar as Chairman, the late Mr. Wilson Minshall, then Manager of the Tourist Board, Messrs. L. A. Caracciolo and G. E. Gomez of the Junior Chamber of Commerce, Mr. Sydney Gollop, the then President of the Steelbands Association, and Messrs. Ulric Nesbitt, Lennox Pierre and Carlisle Kerr of the Youth Council. The last named officer of the Youth Council was Secretary of the Committee.

SHARE CREDIT

I point out these corrections also to express my dissent with the popular fashion of ascribing to "individuals" a disproportionate share of the credit for events that in retrospect acquire historical importance.

It was not even the "Operation Britain" Action Committee that was responsible for sending TASPO to the Festival of Britain in 1951. It was the people of Trinidad and Tobago in one of the most magnificent manifestations of community spirit that did it.

Individuals, like myself in this instant, play a part in the collective effort which succeeds to the extent that individual efforts complement and reinforce each other, release the collective energy of the community and coincide with one of those "tides in the affairs of men" that Shakespeare noted.

May I add in conclusion that historical tides are of different kinds but may be identified broadly as having two opposite characteristics. They may carry affairs forward or they may carry them backward. Permit me, Mr. Editor, to hope that in spite of the general backward drift in the affairs of Trinidad since April 21, 1970, the recent steelband "Consultations" represent forward motion. I have my doubts, though."

SG. Feb 18, 1973