

IT TO GET STEELPAN FACTORY — GORDON

By VERNON KHELAWAN

TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO will soon have its first authentic steelpan factory. This was disclosed Tuesday afternoon by Minister of indus-

try of Industry, Enterprise and Tourism, Senator Ken Gordon.

He made the disclosure during a ceremony to mark the formal launching of Metal Industries Company's (MIC) Computer Numerical Control (CNC) Advanced Machining Facility at the company's premises in Macoya, Tunapuna.

MIC's Board of Directors recently gave approval for implementation of the first phase of a factory to produce spin-formed steel pans. Senator Gordon said, "while there still remains continued development work to be done on this project, this represents an achievement for which the entire country has been waiting for a long time."

Positive Response

Plans for such a factory began several years ago at the University of the West Indies (UWI) and was continued at Cariri for years, but according to the Minister, "Within recent times Metal Industries Company has taken a fresh approach and has established the spin-forming process as a technically and commercially viable method of sinking pans."

Senator Gordon added that the steelband fraternity had responded positively to the public demonstrations



SPIN FORM BLANK: INDUSTRY Minister Senator Ken Gordon, left, examines a spin-form blank at Metal Industries Company Limited (MIC) during a function at the company's premises Tuesday to formally launch the Computer Numerical Control (CNC) Advanced Machining Facility. Others in photo are Jeff Sooknarine, (left) MIC Chairman and Dave Bhajan, Managing Director of MIC. Photo by KRISHNA MAHARAJ.

of spin-formed pans over the last 12 months. On public display during Tuesday's function was a live performance by Jit Samaroo and his band with the spin-formed pans.

Mr Gordon said that inspite of the enormous interest displayed by large interest groups, including the Tourist Board and Pan Trinbago in respect of setting up a pan factory in this country, "Trinidad and Tobago is today in danger of losing its claim to the steelpan, as other countries have already started to produce pans on a limited scale."