

Trinidad Guardian

Established September 2, 1917

THE NATIONAL NEWSPAPER OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

Faithfully serving Trinidad and Tobago for 52 years

22-26 St. Vincent Street, Port-of-Spain, Trinidad and Tobago.

MONDAY, APRIL 6, 1970

Ill-timed outburst

SINCE its inception shortly after the Second World War the steelband movement has been going through pretty rough times. Today, in 1970, this unique contribution by Trinidad and Tobago to the world of music, is at least beginning to see the light of day with varying help from Government.

However, in the midst of all the personal interest exhibited by the Prime Minister, Dr. Eric Williams, in the movement, it is still troubled by some rough moments — the kind that might well tend to throw everything out of gear in light of the present situation.

Playing it cool

Take Mr. George Goddard's remarks about Dr. Williams, for example. While Mr. Goddard may be justified in exercising his constitutional rights, we deem his public outburst against the Prime Minister to be ill-timed. Worse yet, since his remarks are contradicted by his own steelbands' association colleague, Mr. Edgar Alleyne.

What does Mr. Goddard impute by stating that he would have felt awkward to leave the meeting and walk the lonely 300-yard stretch from the Prime Minister's house to the gate entrance? Of course, he couldn't be serious.

As president of the Steelbands' Association we would think that Mr. Goddard would have been more level-headed in playing it cool, if only for the benefit of the steelbandsmen themselves. Especially at this time, when Government seems to be bending backwards to accommodate the panmen.

While we do admire Mr. Goddard

and his outspoken stand on various matters in an era when Government-employed people like him are scared to speak out, we still think there is a time and place for everything.

How embarrassing it could be for other officials of the Association to sit down and face the Prime Minister in future discussions for the benefit of panmen, after Mr. Goddard's outburst.

Mr. Goddard's attack on the Prime Minister could never be in the interest of panmen who have been battling for the longest while against socio-economic odds. We can only urge all to keep it cool and get on with the constructive measures.

The future of the steelbands seems to be assured. Cabinet only last week agreed to the establishment of a Steelband Research Council and allocated \$120,000 for research on the steel pan. On the Council will be representatives of the University of the West Indies, the private sector, the Industrial Development Corporation and accomplished musicians. These men would not take their task lightly.

Only one recourse

There are also plans for the formation of a co-operative or company for steelbandsmen. And at a joint meeting of the National Joint Action Committee and officials of the Steelbands' Association it was decided to ask Government for an annual grant of not less than \$250,000, for development of the steelbands.

Surely, Mr. Goddard does not wish to let all this go to waste because of a little hot air? Mr. Goddard has only one recourse and he knows what it is.