

Panmen again ML 1043

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IT will come as a painful shock to citizens when they hear that the last three cruise ships to visit Trinidad heard no steelband music in what is supposed to be the home of the pan.

This is after the marvellous success of the last few weeks, which have seen the return of the Cunard liners to Trinidad and a welcome boost to the cruise ship trade. Several of those earlier cruise ships left the docks with the last sound in their ears being the melody of pan music.

But that is no more. Pan Trinbago has decreed that no more steelbands are to play for cruise ships until their "conditions" are met. They have made their ritual charges that certain people are trying to destroy the steelband movement, and that they were not consulted about the appearance of the bands at the docks.

We have been informed that officials of Pan Trinbago are fully informed of all that is taking place and their representatives have been attending meetings of the Committee planning entertainment for the visiting cruise passengers. But as usual panmen can't help making the sort of demands that in the past have tended to sabotage their own progress as well as any enterprise that may be in the offing.

Pan Trinbago has always been a part of the committee organising the welcomes for the cruise ships. Minutes are there to show that the organisation has officially attended all the meetings and been part of the decision making. They have brought all the pan sides who played before, and it is shocking to hear them say they were not consulted.

\$1000 An Hour

Instead of appreciating that the cruise ship trade is now building up, Pan Trinbago insists on demanding its dividends even before the enterprise has gotten off the ground.

They are demanding that no band play without their permission, as if they owned the steelband movement. They are insisting that no sponsored steelbands play at the docks, meaning that sponsors cannot ask their bands to give a performance for the tourists.

Worst of all, Pan Trinbago is insisting that only unsponsored bands of their choice play at the docks, at the fantastic rate of \$1,000 a hour. For a four hour stint, they are demanding \$4,000 from a struggling committee that is trying without much money to revive the cruise ship industry.

Pan Trinbago is just operating in its old way of trying to get the maximum for itself with little regard for anything else. In short it is trying to kill the goose before it has even had time to lay a golden egg. It's the familiar complex of begging, demanding, bullying. For years they have been petted, pampered and spoiled to the extent where they are bound to fall-out with everybody before long.

Obviously the country is struggling to get the tourism thrust going. Clearly, we are short of money. Taking part in these welcomes should be seen as an investment until a later time when the cruise trade builds up to the point where it can pay properly. All the other artistes are taking that approach.

But not Pan Trinbago. They want their \$1,000 an hour or else no pan will be played for the cruise ships. They don't care if they wreck the reviving cruise trade. If tourists come and hear no pan in the land of steelband its nothing to them. Just pass out the \$1,000 an hour or else.

If this attitude continues, we may well have to continue the tourism thrust and leave out pan. It's up to the panmen to make that decision.

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